

Bend in the River

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John Ciarlo  
received one of the five Academy Nicholl Fellowships awarded in 2002

Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences  
Academy Nicholl Fellowships in Screenwriting  
17th Annual Competition

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FADE IN:

EXT. FOOTHILLS IN NEW MEXICO, RYAN HOME - JUST AFTER DAWN

A lonely house nestled in a lonely valley. The rising sun reflects softly off a battered van parked in the driveway.

We hear faint SPLASHING NOISES and someone HUMMING the opening notes of "**Star Dust.**"

INT. RYAN HOME, BATHROOM - DAY

The HUMMING continues.

FRANCIS "BUDDY" RYAN, still robust at seventy-five, sits on a camp stool next to the tub squeezing water from a sponge.

The HUMMING stops. From the tub...

GRACE (O.S.)

Where'd you say we're going?

BUDDY

Seattle.

GRACE

Why are we going there?

Buddy puts the sponge on the sink behind him.

BUDDY

To see Audra.

We now see GRACE RYAN, the same age as her husband, but much younger looking, sitting in the tub.

AUDRA

Our little girl?

BUDDY

She's not little anymore.

Grace is confused.

GRACE

She's not?

BUDDY

No.

GRACE

How old is she?

BUDDY

She turned fifty-one two weeks ago.

GRACE

She did?

BUDDY

Yeah.

GRACE

(making light of her  
mistake)

Well, aren't I a darn fool then.

Buddy gets up and grabs a towel from the wall. Grace stands up. He kisses her on the forehead.

BUDDY

You're not any kind of fool.

He wraps the towel around her.

GRACE

Did I ever tell you what a handsome  
man you are?

BUDDY

Nope.

GRACE

That's not true, and you know it.

INT. SEATTLE-TACOMA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, ARRIVAL  
LOUNGE - EVENING

Part of the small group who have yet to spot their arrivals, AUDRA and MIKE KNUTSON, both in their early fifties, anxiously watch arriving passengers exit the Jetway.

The Ryans are among the last to appear. Buddy holds Grace's arm while she apprehensively surveys her new surroundings. Audra, on her tiptoes, spots them.

AUDRA

(to Mike)

There they are!

Audra rushes to her parents. When Buddy sees her, he stops and releases Grace's arm.

AUDRA

(continuing)

Mom. It's so good to see you!

Grace isn't quite sure who this woman is.

GRACE

It's good to see you, too.

Audra hugs Grace, then turns to her father. Neither says a word, finally...

AUDRA  
Dad.

BUDDY  
Audra.

They are frozen. Mike steps forward to break the ice.

MIKE  
I'm Mike.

Mike extends his hand. Buddy shakes it.

BUDDY  
What number are you?

MIKE  
Number?

BUDDY  
Husband.

Mike doesn't know how to answer.

MIKE  
(almost laughing)  
The third. That I know of.

Buddy doesn't find any humor in Mike's answer.

EXT. KNUTSON HOUSE, ESTABLISHING SHOT - NIGHT

A huge, waterfront home. A sailboat is moored to a wooden dock.

INT. KNUTSON HOUSE, AUDRA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The nightstand light is on. Audra and Mike sit up talking in bed.

AUDRA  
Did you see the stunt he pulled at  
the airport?

MIKE  
You mean the divorce jab? I am number  
three, right?

AUDRA  
That son of a bitch! He purposely  
didn't say a word until I spoke  
first. I gave in, just like always.

MIKE  
Who cares who said hi first?

AUDRA

He does.

INT. KNUTSON HOUSE, GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moonlight shining through the window illuminates a snoring Buddy.

From across the room we hear FOOTSTEPS, a BUMP, then the sound of a framed picture SHATTERING on the wooden floor.

INT. KNUTSON HOUSE, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Mike, dressed in a T-shirt and boxers, knocks on a door. No answer. Audra stands next to him wearing an expensive bathrobe.

AUDRA

Mom? Dad?...Mom?!

INT. KNUTSON HOUSE, GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Audra and Mike burst into the room. The overhead light is on, but the room is empty.

AUDRA

Mom!

The bathroom door to Audra's right opens. Buddy, wearing a sleeveless undershirt and ridiculously baggy jockey shorts, walks into the room. He's followed by Grace who wears a tattered nightgown.

GRACE

Hello.

MIKE

Hello.

AUDRA

Are you okay?

BUDDY

We're fine.

Buddy helps Grace sit on the bed.

AUDRA

What happened?

BUDDY

Your mother knocked a picture down.  
I'm sorry.

AUDRA

It's okay.

Buddy walks to a corner by the dresser.

BUDDY

It's a new room. She didn't know  
where she was going.

AUDRA

It's okay, Dad.

BUDDY

She gets up sometimes...at night.

He puts his hand on the dresser, and squats to the floor.

AUDRA

I'll clean it up.

Buddy ignores her and picks up shards of glass. We see a small, but nasty lump of scar tissue, under and behind Buddy's right armpit. Audra helps her father. It's clear he doesn't like her next to him, but he doesn't say anything.

Mike picks up the broken picture, turns it over and we see it is a Ryan family photograph, circa mid-1950's. A beaming Audra sits on her father's lap. A boy, a few years older than Audra, sits on Grace's. The family poses on a riverbank in a picturesque river valley.

INT. KNUTSON HOUSE, DINING ROOM - EASTER SUNDAY, AFTERNOON

The Ryans and Knutsons sit at the table which is elaborately set for Easter.

BUDDY

(to Mike)

Could you pass the turkey, please?

MIKE

Sure, Buddy.

Mike passes the turkey platter to Buddy. Buddy takes a moment deciding which piece of meat to choose. He selects a slice, stabs it with the serving fork, deposits it on Grace's plate, and cuts the meat into little pieces.

MIKE

(continuing)

If the weather holds, maybe we can  
take the boat out before dark.

Grace picks up one of the small pieces and starts chewing it.

GRACE

(with food in her  
mouth)

You won't get Buddy on a boat.

MIKE

Okay, scratch that idea.

GRACE

(after she has  
swallowed)

He hates boats. He spent three weeks  
on a hospital ship, and has hated  
them ever since. When he was...

(to Buddy)

You tell them, Dear.

BUDDY

They don't want to hear about it, Hon.

GRACE

I bet they do. Go on.

Buddy tries to smile his way out of it. Grace won't budge.

GRACE

(continuing)

You tell it better than me.

BUDDY

When I was on the hospital ship I  
promised myself I'd never get on  
another boat. Except for the  
transport back after VJ day, I  
haven't.

MIKE

What was it like?

BUDDY

What was what like?

MIKE

The war...being wounded.

BUDDY

It hurt.

GRACE

When he was on that ship, Buddy wrote  
a letter every day. I could barely  
read them because his good arm was  
bad, but I couldn't wait to open them  
just the same.

BUDDY

The post office delivered them all  
out of sequence.

GRACE  
One didn't even come until 1948.  
(to Buddy)  
Isn't that right?

BUDDY  
I think it was '47.

GRACE  
No, it was '48. We were in Evanston:  
you were just starting law school and  
I was pregnant with Audra. We got the  
letter the day Jimmy broke his arm  
when he fell off his tricycle.

BUDDY  
You're right.

GRACE  
(to Audra and Mike)  
Jimmy's our son.

BUDDY  
Hon, they know who Jimmy is.

GRACE  
Oh, you know Jimmy?

Neither Audra nor Mike answer.

Grace leans back and drifts through her memories.

GRACE  
(continuing)  
Jimmy was a good boy...he was my  
favorite even though he was always  
getting into trouble. He always had  
to be the best at whatever he did. I  
guess that's why he got jets when he  
graduated from flight school.  
(to Buddy)  
Where's he stationed at now, Dear? I  
can't seem to remember.

BUDDY  
He's not stationed anywhere.

GRACE  
He's got to be stationed somewhere.  
(she chuckles to  
herself)  
That darn kid. We always figured he  
went to Annapolis to spite us since  
Buddy hated being on the water so  
much. Buddy was on a hospital ship  
during the war, and...



BUDDY  
Hon, we just talked about that.

GRACE  
Yeah?

BUDDY  
Yeah.

GRACE  
(to Audra and Mike)  
I'm sorry, I don't know where my mind  
was.

INT. KNUTSON HOUSE, KITCHEN - DUSK

Through the window above the sink we see Grace, wearing an Easter bonnet, and Mike walking toward the dock.

In the kitchen, Buddy rinses dishes and hands them to Audra, who places them in the dishwasher.

BUDDY  
You've got a nice place here.

AUDRA  
Mike's business is doing very well.

BUDDY  
What about you? Still doing pro bono  
work?

AUDRA  
A couple days a week.

BUDDY  
That's good.

AUDRA  
Dad?

BUDDY  
Yeah?

AUDRA  
Mom doesn't look so good.

BUDDY  
She's fine. She just gets confused  
sometimes.

Audra pulls a box of dishwashing crystals from the cabinet underneath the sink.

AUDRA  
She doesn't even recognize me.

BUDDY

How many times has she seen you since Annapolis?

Audra starts, visibly shaken.

AUDRA

More times than I've seen you.

BUDDY

Whose fault is that?

Ignoring the question, Audra pours the box's contents into the dishwasher's detergent tray. There's not enough detergent to clean the dishes.

AUDRA

Damn it!

Audra goes to the trash closet and slam dunks the empty box into the wastebasket.

Buddy looks at her like she's crazy. He grabs the liquid detergent from the ledge by the faucet.

BUDDY

We'll just use the sink.

AUDRA

I don't care about the dishes!

Buddy turns the faucet on and squirts the bottle into the sink.

BUDDY

I've taken her to a doctor...to a couple of doctors.

EXT. KNUTSON HOUSE, WATERFRONT - DUSK

The wind blows hard. Through the window, we see Audra gesturing. Mike, ahead of Grace, walks onto the dock.

After a few steps, Mike realizes Grace isn't following. He turns around and sees that she's stopped just short of the dock. He returns to her and extends his hand.

MIKE

I'll help you.

Grace grabs his hand and they walk toward the sailboat, Grace gaining confidence with every step. We hear a loose rope SLAPPING the sailboat's mast. Mike and Grace stop at the end of the dock in front of the boat.

MIKE  
(continuing)  
That wasn't so bad, was it?

GRACE  
No.

MIKE  
I love it here. When we were house  
hunting, I took one look at this dock  
and told Audra this was the place.

GRACE  
Who's Audra?

MIKE  
Your...my wife.

GRACE  
I'd like to meet her.

MIKE  
I'd like that, too.

A gust of wind blows Grace's bonnet onto the boat.

GRACE  
Damn it.

Grace releases Mike's hand and steps onto the boat to  
retrieve it.

MIKE  
I'll get it.

Grace stands fast as Mike climbs aboard the boat and reaches  
for the hat. His fingertips brush the bonnet, but another  
gust of wind blows it toward the sound.

When the hat hits the water Grace goes into hysterics.

INT. KNUTSON HOUSE, KITCHEN - DUSK

Through the window, we see Mike reaching to Grace. She slaps  
at his hand. Buddy and Audra are oblivious to what's going on  
outside.

BUDDY  
It might get better for a while,  
maybe even longer, but when it's all  
said and done there's not a whole lot  
they can do.

AUDRA  
Well, we can do something about it.  
We'll just have to see what kind of --

BUDDY

We?

AUDRA

You're not going to be able to --

BUDDY

I can take care of my wife!

AUDRA

You may be able to take care of her now, but what are you going to do when she gets worse?

BUDDY

We'll be fine.

AUDRA

You're not the same person you were twenty-five, thirty years ago.

BUDDY

It looks like you still are.

AUDRA

I'm trying to help you.

BUDDY

I don't want your help. We've gotten along fine without you.

AUDRA

It doesn't look that way to me.

BUDDY

I don't know why I even bothered coming out here.

AUDRA

Why did you?

Buddy hesitates, collecting his thoughts.

BUDDY

I wanted to make things...I wanted you to see your mother while she still recognizes you.

AUDRA

You waited a little too late for that.

Before Buddy can reply, Audra, having spotted her mother's distress through the window, bolts outside.

EXT. KNUTSON HOUSE, WATERFRONT - DUSK

Audra steps onto the boat to join Mike and a still hysterical Grace. Buddy steps onto the dock.

AUDRA  
Mom! It's okay.

Her words have no effect on Grace. Audra grabs her mother by the arms. Grace tries to shake her off, but isn't strong enough.

Buddy reaches the boat.

BUDDY  
Grace!

All three on the boat look at Buddy.

BUDDY  
(continuing)  
It's okay, Hon.

He extends his arms and Grace jumps off the boat into them.

BUDDY  
(continuing)  
It's all right. I'm here now.

Grace, no longer hysterical, sniffles.

BUDDY  
(continuing)  
What happened?

GRACE  
(still breathing hard)  
The boat, his hat, the boat...I don't know.

Still protecting Grace, Buddy turns his head to face Audra and Mike.

MIKE  
I don't know either. Her hat blew into the boat. She got on to get it. Then it blew into the water, and...I guess that set her off.

BUDDY  
(looking at Audra)  
You'll be fine, Hon.

INT. KNUTSON HOUSE, DEN - EVENING

Buddy sits on the sofa, carving a small figurine out of a piece of driftwood with the blade of his "Leatherman" (basically a deluxe Swiss Army knife). The wood shavings are neatly piled on the coffee table.

Grace also sits on the sofa intently watching the television. The volume is set very high. The lions, tigers, and bears scene of "**The Wizard of Oz**" is on-screen. Grace mouths the words.

Audra and Mike, dressed semiformally, enter the room.

AUDRA  
(speaking over the  
television)

Dad?

Buddy fumbles to find the remote to turn the volume down. Grace cranes her head forward to better hear the movie.

BUDDY  
Yeah?

AUDRA  
I can stay.

BUDDY  
That's okay.

Audra reaches into her purse and pulls out a business card.

AUDRA  
Here.

Audra hands the card to Buddy.

BUDDY  
What's this?

AUDRA  
It's my cell phone number, in case  
you need to reach us.

Buddy puts the card in his wallet.

AUDRA  
(continuing)  
Can I see what you're working on?

Buddy hands her the carving. Audra examines it closely.

AUDRA  
(continuing)

This is great, Dad. Remember when you  
used to make these for me?

BUDDY  
(warmly)  
Yeah.

AUDRA  
You know what? I have some of them in  
the basement. I can get them out when  
we get back if you want to take a  
look at them.

BUDDY  
I'd like that...I'd like that a lot.

MIKE  
(re: the figurine)  
Can I see it?

Audra hands it to Mike. He looks it over quickly.

MIKE  
(continuing)  
Cool. What is it going to be?

BUDDY  
An animal.

MIKE  
What kind of animal?

BUDDY  
A jackass.

INT./EXT. KNUTSON'S SPORTS UTILITY VEHICLE  
(SUV)/NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NIGHT

The wiper blades fight a steady downpour.

MIKE  
Okay, I'll concede the point that  
asking him what it felt like to be  
wounded might not have been the  
smartest question I've ever asked,  
but the question about the carving,  
that was legitimate. I think your  
father was a little out-of-line there.

AUDRA  
I think he likes you.

MIKE  
Yeah?

AUDRA  
Yeah.

MIKE  
Really?

AUDRA  
No.

Mike laughs.

MIKE  
You made a joke.

AUDRA  
Yeah, so?

MIKE  
You haven't done that lately, least  
not since your dad called and told  
you he was coming to visit.

AUDRA  
That's not true.

MIKE  
Yeah, it is.

A figure runs onto the road from behind a tree. Mike turns the steering wheel hard to the left and pumps the brakes, narrowly missing the person. The vehicle skids to a stop.

MIKE  
(continuing)  
Jesus. What the --

Audra is out the door because the woman in the street is -- Grace, dazed and soaking wet.

Audra runs to her mother. Grace pulls back, wary of a stranger.

AUDRA  
Mom!

Recognition flickers across Grace's face.

GRACE  
Hello.

AUDRA  
Mom, what are you doing out here?

Grace looks around at her surroundings.

GRACE  
I don't know.

Mike brings a small umbrella and covers Grace. His company's logo **Knutson.com** is emblazoned on the side.

AUDRA  
Where's Dad?



GRACE  
He's dead.

AUDRA  
He's dead!?!

GRACE  
Uh-huh. He died in a hunting accident  
in Wisconsin.

AUDRA  
Not your Dad! Your husband. Buddy!

GRACE  
I don't know...He's not with you?

INT. KNUTSON HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mike runs into the kitchen and finds Buddy, unconscious on the floor, a plastic cup by his hand. Water overflows from the running faucet.

MIKE  
He's in here.

Audra and Grace, clutching the umbrella, enter to find Mike kneeling over Buddy, checking his pulse.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - MORNING

Audra walks down the hallway checking room numbers.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Buddy, back against his hospital bed which is set in the upright position, talks with a NURSE.

NURSE  
Okay, Mr. Ryan, if there's anything  
I can get you, buzz me.

BUDDY  
There is one thing.

NURSE  
What's that?

BUDDY  
I know I've seen you before. I just  
can't remember where.

NURSE  
I don't think so.

BUDDY  
I got it. Atlantic City.

NURSE  
I've never been there.

BUDDY  
Sure you were. You were in the Miss America pageant. I was a judge and you came in second.

NURSE  
Second? Why didn't I come in first?

BUDDY  
I must have marked my card wrong when my glasses fogged up.

The Nurse laughs. A KNOCK at the door. Buddy and the Nurse turn to see Audra entering the room.

AUDRA  
(smiling)  
Hi, Dad.

The Nurse doesn't notice Buddy's mood darken.

NURSE  
(to Audra)  
Your Dad is so funny. He's been a joy to have with us.

AUDRA  
I'm glad to hear that.  
(to Buddy)  
It looks like they're treating you well.

BUDDY  
(coldly)  
They are.

The Nurse notices the undercurrent of hostility.

NURSE  
I've got to finish my rounds.

The Nurse exits. Audra moves to her father's bedside.

BUDDY  
Where's my wife?

AUDRA  
She's at home, with Mike. I thought it would be best to talk some things over, just the two of us.

BUDDY  
You've got a captive audience.

AUDRA  
I want you, you and Mom, to come stay  
with us.

BUDDY  
No.

AUDRA  
It doesn't have to be permanent, just  
until things settle down.

BUDDY  
No!

AUDRA  
You won't have to worry about money  
and we've got more than enough room.

BUDDY  
I'm not worried about money and we've  
got plenty of room at our house.

AUDRA  
If you're still painting, we can set  
up a studio. It'll be nice. We just  
bought a piano, and --

BUDDY  
(dripping sarcasm)  
When over the last thirty years did  
you decide you wanted us close to  
you?

AUDRA  
Don't do this.

BUDDY  
I want to know.

Audra bites her lip.

BUDDY  
(continuing)  
Was it after you got arrested?

Her face flushes.

BUDDY  
(continuing)  
Was it?

AUDRA  
We were protesting a war that you  
said was stupid and unwinnable.

BUDDY

So what? We were in it. Your brother was in it.

AUDRA

I'd give anything if Jimmy were alive today, but --

BUDDY

Get out of here!

Audra isn't going anywhere.

AUDRA

The doctor's worried about your liver. He wants you to see a specialist.

BUDDY

I don't need to see anybody.

AUDRA

This is serious, Dad.

BUDDY

I don't need to see any more doctors.

Buddy reaches for the nurse's call box, and furiously presses the button.

BUDDY

(continuing)

I told you to leave.

AUDRA

You can't run away from this.

BUDDY

You're lecturing me about running away?

The Nurse enters the room.

BUDDY

(continuing)

Get her out of here!

The Nurse doesn't know what to make of the situation.

NURSE

Ma'am, you should probably leave.

AUDRA  
 (to the Nurse)  
 Okay.  
 (to Buddy)  
 We're going to have to talk about  
 this at some point.

INT. KNUTSON HOUSE, BASEMENT/MUSIC ROOM - MIDDAY

The room, Mike's pride and joy, is adorned with framed concert posters of Bob Dylan, The Grateful Dead, and the like.

In one corner guitars, electric and acoustic, sit in their stands.

Mike and Grace sit on a bench in front of a baby grand piano. Mike stares hard, while Grace looks blankly, at the sheet music displayed on the instrument's rack: an extremely easy to play version of "**Misty**."

Mike attempts the first few measures. His effort is marred by miskeys and a total lack of rhythm.

MIKE  
 Does that sound right?

GRACE  
 No.

MIKE  
 No?

Grace shakes her head "no."

MIKE  
 (continuing)  
 Wait a second.

Mike hops off the piano bench and grabs the nearest acoustic guitar. He stands behind Grace and plays the first few chords. Grace hums along.

AUDRA (O.S.)  
 Is that "**Misty**?"

Grace and Mike turn to see Audra standing in the doorway.

GRACE  
 Hello.

AUDRA  
 Hi, Mom.  
 (to Mike)  
 I thought she was the one who was  
 supposed to be playing.

Mike walks to Audra so Grace can't hear.

MIKE  
I wasn't having much luck sight-  
reading on the piano. I figured if  
she heard me play, it would help.

AUDRA  
And?

MIKE  
She knows how to hum.

AUDRA  
The doctor said it might take awhile.

A beat.

MIKE  
Did he go for it?

AUDRA  
(glumly)  
No.

MIKE  
He'll come round.

AUDRA  
You don't know him.

MIKE  
No, but I know you. You'll convince  
him. Just go easy on him when you do.

AUDRA  
The easy way doesn't always work with  
him.

MIKE  
Nor with his daughter.

We hear the first few measures of a very musically  
complicated rendition of "**Misty**."

Mike and Audra turn to see Grace's fingers flying over the  
keys as she plays the song without looking at the sheet music.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COURTHOUSE, CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Buddy, wearing the shirt and bolo tie he wore at Easter  
dinner, sits at a long table across from Audra and Mike.

At the head of the table a MAGISTRATE, who is Mike and  
Audra's age, sets aside the file she has just finished  
reading.

MAGISTRATE

Mr. Ryan, is there anything else you would like to add before I make my decision?

BUDDY

No Ma'am, I mean Your Honor, I've said what I have to say.

The Magistrate takes a moment to look over those gathered at the table.

MAGISTRATE

Mr. Ryan, your daughter has brought forward some issues that concern me as to your ability to care for your wife. So I've decided to award temporary guardianship of Grace Ryan to Audra Knutson. This guardianship will extend until we reconvene at another hearing in two weeks where you will show me a written opinion from an oncologist. I'll also want you to show me proof that you have sufficient funds to provide adequate care for both your wife and yourself. If you do so, you can take your wife home. Good luck, Mr. Ryan. This hearing is adjourned.

Audra and Mike are restrained in their reaction to the magistrate's decision. Not Buddy.

BUDDY

(to the Magistrate)

You're taking my wife from me?

MAGISTRATE

Only temporarily. If you comply with the court's instructions then you can --

Buddy stands up and glares at his daughter.

BUDDY

(to Audra)

Why are you doing this to us?

Audra struggles to find the words that will placate him.

MIKE

We're just try --

BUDDY

(to Mike)

This doesn't concern you!

MAGISTRATE

Mr. Ryan! I will not have this hearing turned into --

BUDDY

(to Audra)

I knew I was making a mistake when I got on that plane. I should have...

Buddy doesn't complete his sentence because a wave of pain courses through his body. He clenches his teeth, grabs the table, and slumps into his seat. Nobody says a word. Audra gets up and goes to him.

BUDDY

(continuing; to Audra)

You stay away from me.

Audra stops in her tracks.

MAGISTRATE

Mr. Ryan, I can call for medical help.

BUDDY

I don't want a doctor. I want my wife.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. KNUTSON DRIVEWAY - EARLY AFTERNOON

Buddy gets out of a cab that's parked at the end of the driveway. The cab waits while he walks toward the open garage door.

INT. KNUTSON GARAGE - EARLY AFTERNOON

The garage is big, three car big. Mike works in the space not taken by his two parked vehicles: the SUV and a new model Mercedes sedan. He holds a local microbeer in one hand and uses the other to apply a coat of lacquer to a four foot section of knotted and gnarled log that's propped atop two sawhorses.

Unnoticed, Buddy walks up behind him. When Buddy clears his throat Mike jumps and almost spills his beer. He turns to face Buddy.

MIKE

Jesus, you scared me. I almost spilled my...

Mike lets the sentence trail off.

BUDDY

I'm here to get my wife.



MIKE  
(conciliatory)

I know why you're here. Come on in.

Mike turns and walks toward the door that opens to the house. Buddy doesn't follow him.

BUDDY  
I'll wait here.

MIKE  
Of course you will.

Mike enters the house. Buddy uses this time alone to inspect the log that Mike is varnishing. Unimpressed, he surveys the rest of the garage: Mike's workshop, the two vehicles. His eyes stop on the wall where several different state license plates are displayed in a pattern roughly resembling a map of the United States. Only a handful of states are not represented.

MIKE (O.S.)  
She'll be out in a minute.

Buddy doesn't turn around when Mike addresses him. Mike walks up, without his beer, and joins him.

MIKE  
I started that collection with my Dad.

BUDDY  
Did you?

MIKE  
Yep. The ones that are missing are the ones I haven't been to.

BUDDY  
Really?

MIKE  
Only seven more to go. It's been seven for a while now. I guess I'm just not as interested in traveling as I used to be.

BUDDY  
I'm dying to get away.

MIKE  
I should go and get Montana. It's so close.

Buddy walks to the log on the sawhorses.

BUDDY  
You've got a lot of hobbies.

MIKE

I try to keep busy. It's going to be my mailbox post.

BUDDY

If you say so.

MIKE

Look, Buddy, no one likes what's happened. I know you don't think so, but we're only trying to do what's best for everybody. Why don't you stay with us? At least until we get things figured out.

BUDDY

Wouldn't want to impose on you, Mike. At least this way your wife lets you keep beer in the house.

GRACE (O.S.)

(excited)

Buddy!

Buddy turns to see Grace opening the door, and lights up.

EXT. SEATTLE, PUGET SOUND WATERSIDE PARK - LATE AFTERNOON

The park is filled with people taking advantage of the beautiful weather. Joggers and roller bladers pass by Buddy and Grace who sit on a bench overlooking the water.

Buddy glumly watches a FATHER show his SON how to cast his fishing line. Grace notices her husband's apathy.

GRACE

Buddy?

BUDDY

Yeah?

GRACE

What's the matter?

BUDDY

Nothing.

GRACE

Don't you try to pull that with me. We've been together...we've been together for...How long have we been together?

BUDDY

A long time.

GRACE

That's right. A long time. Long enough to know when something's troubling you. I'm not getting off this bench until you tell me what it is.

BUDDY

They took you away from me, Hon.

GRACE

Who did?

BUDDY

Audra.

GRACE

Audra?

BUDDY

Audra and Mike.

GRACE

What do you mean they took me away from you? We're sitting right here together, aren't we?

BUDDY

Right now we are, but --

GRACE

Look at that!

Grace excitedly points toward the Father and Son fishermen. The Father shouts words of encouragement to his Son who has hooked a fish.

BUDDY

(under his breath)

They took you away and you don't even understand what's going on.

GRACE

Come on! Don't let him get away.

Grace turns to Buddy.

GRACE

(continuing)

You remember when Jimmy caught that big fish at that bend in the river?

BUDDY

I remember.

GRACE

What kind of fish was that?

BUDDY  
A cutthroat.

GRACE  
That's right, a cutthroat. Remember  
how excited he was?

BUDDY  
Yeah.

GRACE  
He wouldn't let you touch it. Had to  
clean it and cook it himself...And  
remember how jealous Audra was? She  
didn't like Jimmy catching that fish.  
Did she?

BUDDY  
Not one bit.

GRACE  
She told him that the fish might have  
been big, but it didn't taste that  
good.

BUDDY  
She was never much of a fisherman.

GRACE  
She didn't have enough patience. Just  
like her father.

The Son reels the fish from the water. The Father reaches to  
take it with a net.

GRACE  
(continuing)  
How come we never go there anymore?

Buddy grins.

EXT. SEEDY MOTEL - NIGHT

A small sign advertises rates by the day and by the hour.  
Most of the parking spaces are full.

INT. SEEDY MOTEL, BUDDY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Buddy, suitcase by his feet, looks out the window. The  
flashing neon light advertising the Native American gambling  
establishment across the street intermittently lights his  
face.

A cab pulls up. Buddy locks a magazine into the handle of a  
pistol, then puts the weapon in his duffel bag.

EXT. KNUTSON HOUSE - NIGHT

Buddy pays the driver, then gets out of the cab. As the taxi pulls away, he walks to a tree by the front door.

A birdfeeder hangs from the tree. Buddy reaches underneath it and pulls out a key.

INT. KNUTSON HOUSE, GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

The only light comes from the window. Grace sits on the corner of the bed as Buddy packs her clothes into a suitcase.

GRACE

Where are we going?

BUDDY

(whispering)

I told you. The place we used to go camping.

GRACE

The place we used to take Jimmy and Audra?

BUDDY

(whispering, but  
clearly pleased)

That's right. Hon, you have to whisper.

GRACE

(whispering)

Okay.

Buddy shuts the suitcase.

BUDDY

(whispering)

I think that's everything.

GRACE

You forgot my umbrella.

BUDDY

(whispering)

You didn't bring an umbrella.

GRACE

I know I didn't bring one. That nice man gave it to me.

BUDDY

(whispering)

Where is it?

Grace goes to the closet and pulls out the umbrella that Mike brought to her on the street.

GRACE  
See?

BUDDY  
(whispering)  
I see. Now don't say a word until we get in the car, okay?

Grace nods.

Light KNOCKING is heard at the door.

INT. KNUTSON HOUSE, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Audra, her head cocked at an angle, listens at the door.

AUDRA  
(softly)  
Mom?

Audra opens the door and sticks her head in the room.

INT. KNUTSON HOUSE, GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Grace is under the covers. Buddy lies on the floor between the bed and the wall so Audra can't see him. Audra walks up to the bed. Satisfied, she turns to leave.

AUDRA  
(barely audible)  
Good night, Mom.

GRACE  
Good night.

AUDRA  
I thought I heard voices.

GRACE  
I was just talking to your father.

AUDRA  
You were?

GRACE  
Uh-huh. We're going on a trip...Do you want to come?

Buddy grimaces at the invitation.

AUDRA  
That sounds like fun. Can we talk about it tomorrow?

GRACE

Sure.

AUDRA

I love you, Mom.

GRACE

I love you, too.

INT. KNUTSON HOUSE, AUDRA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Audra climbs into bed.

MIKE

Everything okay?

AUDRA

She finally recognized me as her daughter.

MIKE

(sitting up)

That's good.

AUDRA

When I told her I thought I heard voices from her room she said she was talking with Dad.

MIKE

That's not good.

INT. KNUTSON GARAGE - NIGHT

Grace helps Buddy lift the garage door so it doesn't make any noise.

BUDDY

(whispering)

Don't forget your umbrella.

She picks the umbrella up from the floor. Buddy escorts Grace toward the SUV's passenger side. He stops in front of the license plate display.

BUDDY

(continuing;  
whispering)

Which ones do you like?

Taking the question seriously, she takes her time deciding.

BUDDY

(continuing;  
whispering)

We've got to hurry.

She points to three. Buddy takes them off the wall, then takes a fourth.

GRACE  
I didn't pick that one.

BUDDY  
(whispering)  
I know you didn't, but we need another one and no one's going to miss Rhode Island.

INT./EXT. KNUTSON SUV/INTERSTATE 5 - NIGHT

Buddy and Grace travel south on I-5, leaving the Space Needle and the Seattle skyline behind.

BUDDY  
You had me worried there for a second when Audra came in, but I knew you wouldn't let me down.

GRACE  
It's too bad that nice lady didn't come. Isn't it?

BUDDY  
If you say so.

GRACE  
How come she didn't want to come?

BUDDY  
I don't know, Hon. Some people are just hard to figure out sometimes.

GRACE  
You think that fish will still be there?

BUDDY  
The one that Jimmy caught?

GRACE  
What other fish would I be talking about?

BUDDY  
We ate that fish.

GRACE  
But suppose we hadn't. What if we'd thrown it back? It'd be pretty old by now. Wouldn't it?

BUDDY  
Yep.



GRACE  
How long do fish live?

BUDDY  
I don't know. I doubt it'd still be  
around.

GRACE  
Do you think that its children, or  
its grandchildren, are in that river?

BUDDY  
We'll know in a day or two.

GRACE  
I hope they are.

Buddy grabs her hand.

BUDDY  
So do I.

INT. KNUTSON HOUSE, HALLWAY - DAWN

Audra, dressed in a bathrobe and holding a cup of coffee,  
lightly RAPS on the door.

AUDRA  
Time to get up...Mom, time to get up.

INT./EXT. KNUTSON SUV/INTERSTATE 5 - DAWN

The rising sun promises a beautiful spring day as the vehicle  
crosses the Oregon state line.

Grace sleeps in the passenger seat and Buddy, dog-tired,  
struggles to stay awake behind the wheel.

His eyelids close and the vehicle drifts onto the shoulder.  
The grated, safety road surface jars him awake. He brings the  
SUV back onto the right-hand lane.

His eyelids get heavy again. He lowers the window and sticks  
his head out for invigoration.

After pulling his head back in he channel-searches on the  
radio. Several "modern" songs do not suit his taste. Finally,  
he settles on a station playing an EDITH PIAF SONG. He hums  
the melody, looks at Grace, and smiles.

INT./EXT. KNUTSON GARAGE, DRIVEWAY/FRONT YARD - DAWN

Mike stands where he normally parks his SUV.

MIKE  
You better get out here.

AUDRA (O.S.)  
Is she out there?

MIKE  
No, and neither is the truck.

Audra rushes out to join him.

AUDRA  
I can't believe he did this.

MIKE  
You don't know it was him.

AUDRA  
Who else would it be?

MIKE  
Maybe she took it.

AUDRA  
I bet he was in her room last night  
when I talked to her.

Audra runs out to the birdfeeder, and finds the magnetic key  
box empty.

AUDRA  
(continuing)  
How'd he get the truck out without us  
hearing?

MIKE  
He must have put it in neutral and  
coasted.

Mike walks to the chain that controls the garage door, and  
finds that it is disconnected from the control box. Audra  
joins him. Mike pulls on the chain and the door moves.

MIKE  
(continuing)  
You've got to hand it to him.

AUDRA  
For what? Grand theft and kidnapping?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KNUTSON GARAGE - MORNING

Two Seattle Police DETECTIVES interview Audra and Mike in  
front of the license plate display.

MIKE  
We don't want to press any charges.  
We just want them back, safely.

DETECTIVE #1

It may not be that easy. If this is a kidnapping, then we're talking felony.

MIKE

Hold on a second. I'm sure it's just a mis--

AUDRA

You can do whatever you want to him!

The three men are taken aback by the passion of Audra's declaration. After a moment...

DETECTIVE #2

Anything else you can think of that might help us find them?

Audra mulls it over.

AUDRA

My father is a retired FBI agent.

EXT. PORTLAND, WAL-MART PARKING LOT - MORNING

Buddy and Grace sit on a bench by the store's entrance watching a YOUNG MOTHER transfer an INFANT from her car to a stroller. The mother yells at her other child, a THREE YEAR OLD BOY who doesn't like waiting for his sister. She then slams the rear passenger door without locking it.

The family walks past the bench. Grace smiles at them. The Mother returns the smile and doesn't notice a beanie baby fall out of her Infant's hand.

Grace hops off the bench and retrieves the beanie baby.

GRACE

Your toy.

The Mother turns around and Grace hands her the beanie baby.

MOTHER

Thank you.

GRACE

You have a nice family.

The Three Year Old is tugging as hard as he can on his mother's arm.

THREE YEAR OLD BOY

I want to look at the toys!

MOTHER

Thank you very much.

GRACE  
You're welcome.

The Mother turns and enters the store. Grace and Buddy watch them. After they are out of his line of sight, Buddy gets up and walks toward the family's car. Grace is still looking into the store.

BUDDY  
Come on, Hon.

Grace follows Buddy. He looks around the parking lot to see if anyone is watching, and satisfied that no one is he opens the unlocked door.

INT. SEATTLE FBI HEADQUARTERS, SPECIAL AGENT - IN -  
CHARGE'S OFFICE - MORNING

AGENT JOHN CALHOUN, late twenties, sits across from his boss, NICK LEVANANSKY, who sits behind a large desk.

CALHOUN  
I respectfully request that I not be assigned to this case.

LEVANANSKY  
Sorry, John, you're low man on the totem pole.

CALHOUN  
I've got seniority over Shea.

LEVANANSKY  
He's too wet. This will be a good first lead investigation for you.

CALHOUN  
That's final?

LEVANANSKY  
It's final. We don't have a lot to give you on this one. Still, it shouldn't take too long. As soon as you wrap it up, you go back to the bank job.

CALHOUN  
Okay.

LEVANANSKY  
Any questions?

CALHOUN  
No.

Calhoun rises to leave.

LEVANANSKY

One last thing. Let's keep this low profile.

CALHOUN

Roger.

LEVANANSKY

One more last thing. This guy gave us thirty-five years. Don't let him hurt himself. We owe him that.

EXT. PORTLAND SKID ROW MOTEL, PARKING LOT - MIDDAY

The stolen car is parked next to a dumpster in the corner of the lot. Buddy sits on the pavement and, using his "Leatherman", screws a Utah license plate onto the front bumper.

Grace stands over him holding an Oregon plate in her hand.

GRACE

That was a nice family.

Buddy doesn't reply.

GRACE

(continuing)

You don't know what it's like trying to take care of two little ones by yourself.

Buddy pulls himself off the ground. He takes the Oregon plate from Grace and walks to the dumpster. She trails him.

GRACE

(continuing)

I'm not saying what you did was easy, but it's hard sometimes, raising two children when your husband's gone so much.

Buddy throws the plate into the dumpster.

GRACE

(continuing)

Audra used to have nightmares when you were away. She'd wake up screaming, and wouldn't go back to bed until I promised you were coming home soon.

BUDDY

I know it wasn't easy.

INT. KNUTSON HOUSE, DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Audra and Mike sit across from Calhoun at the dining table.

AUDRA

You tell me exactly what you plan to do to get my mother back.

CALHOUN

Everything that we can.

AUDRA

(exploding)

Just what the hell does that mean?

MIKE

Audra, he's trying to help us. The best way to get your...to find them is to stay calm and work together.

AUDRA

I am calm. I just want to know where we stand.

(to Calhoun)

You wouldn't even be here if my father wasn't a retired agent, would you?

CALHOUN

Ma'am, I wouldn't be here if your father hadn't kidnapped your mother.

MIKE

You can't argue with that.

Audra glares at her husband.

CALHOUN

I've got a couple more questions I'd like to ask.

AUDRA

I've already told you everything I know.

CALHOUN

A few more questions might help you remember something about your parents that could give us an idea where they're going. Did your father --

AUDRA

You should really talk to someone else about my father, because up until three weeks ago, I've spoken with him twice since 1971.

INT. PORTLAND SKID ROW MOTEL - NIGHT

Buddy's snoring. By the foot of the bed Grace dances in front of the television, trying to move like the people she's watching on a rap music video. The volume is turned low.

The PHONE RINGS. Grace turns to the source of the noise. The PHONE RINGS again. Grace turns the television volume lower. Another RING. She picks up the phone.

GRACE

Hello...Who is it?...Hello!

Buddy stirs, but doesn't awaken. Still holding the phone, Grace gently shakes Buddy's shoulder.

GRACE

(continuing)

Buddy...Someone called...Buddy.

She shakes him harder.

GRACE

(continuing)

Buddy!

Buddy wakes with a start. He doesn't know where he is.

BUDDY

What...What's wrong?

Grace hands him the phone.

GRACE

Telephone.

Buddy speaks into the phone.

BUDDY

Hello.

He turns on the nightstand light, looks at his watch, hangs up the phone, and looks at Grace who wears a confused expression.

BUDDY

(continuing)

That was the front desk.

GRACE

The front desk?

BUDDY

The wake-up call. We got to get going. We've still got a long way to go.

He reaches into his duffel bag to grab a clean pair of trousers and inadvertently spills his pistol onto the floor. He quickly picks it up, and puts it back in the bag, but not before he realizes Grace has noticed. He wears a guilty expression. She starts to say something, but thinks better of it.

INT. SEATTLE FBI HEADQUARTERS, CALHOUN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Calhoun sits at his desk speaking into the phone handset. Items from Buddy's expansive FBI hard file are arrayed on the desktop, most prominently a photocopy of his WW II Bronze Star Citation. Calhoun flips the page and reveals the next item: a photocopy of the same award, this one from the Korean War.

CALHOUN

I don't know. Don't wait up.

He looks up to see, through a window, an elderly man, MR. HALVORSON, being escorted by a NIGHT DUTY FBI AGENT toward his office.

CALHOUN

(continuing)

I got to go...I know you do. Make sure you tell Lauren I love her when you put her to bed...Bye.

He hangs the phone up, gets up and opens the door, ushering Mr. Halvorson into his office.

CALHOUN

(continuing)

Thanks for coming down, Mr. Halvorson. Have a seat and we'll try to get through this as quickly as possible.

Mr. Halvorson takes a seat, and Calhoun sits across from him.

MR. HALVORSON

What can I do for you?

CALHOUN

We're interested in a Francis Ryan. He's a retired agent, and his file says you two worked together in the New Orleans office.

MR. HALVORSON

That's right. I was Buddy's deputy for a couple years.

CALHOUN

You called him Buddy?



MR. HALVORSON  
Didn't call him Francis.

CALHOUN  
How'd he get that nickname?

MR. HALVORSON  
No idea. I just know he didn't like being called Francis.

CALHOUN  
We're trying to find him. We think Mr. Ryan, Buddy, has kidnapped his wife.

MR. HALVORSON  
He kidnapped his own wife?

CALHOUN  
Mrs. Ryan has Alzheimer's. Their daughter has recently won custody of her in a court proceeding. And, like I said, we think he took her.

MR. HALVORSON  
I heard that he and his daughter didn't get along. That surprised me because I sat a lot of surveillance with him, and all he'd do was talk about his kids, especially her. He used to carve these little wooden figurines for her to pass the time.

CALHOUN  
Any idea what caused the rift?

MR. HALVORSON  
I heard rumors. They say she got pretty wild, big into the anti-war scene. If it's true, that probably didn't sit too well with Buddy. His boy got shot down and killed over there. That's when he started hitting the bottle. I lost touch with him after Jimmy died.

CALHOUN  
Anything else?

MR. HALVORSON  
Nothing other than good luck. I never worked with a better field agent.

EXT. OPPORTUNITY, WASHINGTON, GAS STATION - VERY EARLY MORNING

A gas station/convenience store on the side of the highway. A van pulls up next to the parked, stolen car Buddy is now driving.

INT. OPPORTUNITY, WASHINGTON, GAS STATION, BATHROOM - VERY EARLY MORNING

Buddy stands next to a closed stall door.

BUDDY

Do you need any help?

From inside the stall we hear the toilet FLUSH. The stall door opens and Grace walks out. Her pants are around her ankles. When Buddy pulls her pants up, a cassette tape falls to the floor.

He picks it up, and examines it: a Doris Day compilation.

BUDDY

(continuing)

Where'd you get this?

GRACE

That nice man was giving them away. He set a bunch of them out on the counter.

BUDDY

He did, did he?

Grace nods "yes", and after a moment's hesitation...

GRACE

(concerned)

I'm worried about you.

BUDDY

I'm fine.

GRACE

You don't look so good.

BUDDY

Hon, you're not the first one to tell me that recently.

GRACE

When you're sick you get bags under your eyes and become irritable. It's no fun to be around you when you're irritable.

Buddy look into the mirror. He's definitely got bags under his eyes.

BUDDY

I'll be fine once we get where we're going.

He kisses her.

CUT TO:

INT. OPPORTUNITY, WASHINGTON, GAS STATION - VERY EARLY MORNING

A man in his early twenties, CASH REGISTER THUG, rifles through the cash register drawer with one hand. With the other, he holds a pistol on the CASHIER.

A second man, roughly the same age as his partner, FRONT DOOR THUG, stands guard at the entrance.

FRONT DOOR THUG

Hurry up!

CASH REGISTER THUG

Relax.

FRONT DOOR THUG

I'll relax when we're out of here.

The bathroom door opens, both Thugs turn and point their weapons. Buddy and Grace walk out. Distracted by the Ryans, the two Thugs don't notice the Cashier move a few steps to his left.

Buddy immediately recognizes what's happening and steps in front of Grace.

Relieved, the Cash Register Thug finds the elderly couple amusing.

CASH REGISTER THUG

You shouldn't sneak up on people.

He beckons Buddy and Grace with his weapon.

CASH REGISTER THUG

(continuing)

Come here!

Buddy turns to Grace.

BUDDY

(speaking low)

Stay behind me!

GRACE

Uh-huh.

FRONT DOOR THUG

Let's go!

CASH REGISTER THUG

I told you to relax.

The Cash Register Thug turns his attention back to Buddy and Grace who slowly approach him.

CASH REGISTER THUG

(continuing)

Move it! You heard the man. We're in a hurry.

Buddy and Grace stop an arm's length away from the Cash Register Thug. Buddy's still shielding his wife.

CASH REGISTER THUG

(continuing; to Grace)

What are you hiding back there for?

GRACE

I don't know.

CASH REGISTER THUG

Well, come on out so I can see you.

Grace tries to step out from behind Buddy, but he moves to keep her behind him.

The Cash Register Thug slides past Buddy too quickly for him to continue to screen Grace.

CASH REGISTER THUG

(continuing)

That's better. Hello, Grandma.

GRACE

(uncertain)

Hello.

CASH REGISTER THUG

How you doing?

Grace doesn't know how to answer. She looks to Buddy for guidance. He smiles at her.

BUDDY

It's okay.

GRACE

We're going to visit our children.

CASH REGISTER THUG  
 (sweetly)  
 How many children do you have?

Once again Grace looks to Buddy for guidance.

BUDDY  
 Tell him how many children we have.

GRACE  
 Two. Jimmy, he's thirteen, and Audra,  
 she's nine.

CASH REGISTER THUG  
 (to his partner)  
 You hear that?

FRONT DOOR THUG  
 Don't mess with them. Let's grab the  
 money and go!

CASH REGISTER THUG  
 I'm not messing with them. I like old  
 folks.

(to Buddy)  
 That right? You got a thirteen and a  
 nine year old?

Buddy doesn't answer.

CASH REGISTER THUG  
 (continuing)  
 I asked you a question.

When Buddy still refuses to answer, the Cash Register Thug  
 shoves the pistol in his face.

CASH REGISTER THUG  
 (continuing)  
 I asked you a question, Old Man. Are  
 you deaf?

BUDDY  
 I heard your question.

CASH REGISTER THUG  
 Then answer the motherfucker.

When Buddy doesn't say anything, the Cash Register Thug cocks  
 his pistol.

FRONT DOOR THUG  
 This is crazy. Come on, Dave.

CASH REGISTER THUG  
 I swear to God, I'll...

BUDDY

We don't have any children.

The Cash Register Thug uncocks the weapon.

CASH REGISTER THUG

That's all I wanted to know.

FRONT DOOR THUG

Let's go!

CASH REGISTER THUG

(to his partner)

One more thing and then we're out of here.

(to Buddy)

Unlike you, I got kids, and things being the way they are these days, it's getting harder and harder to support them. So even though I hate to do it, I'm going to have to take your wallet.

BUDDY

No.

CASH REGISTER THUG

What'd you say?

BUDDY

You heard me.

The Cash Register Thug puts the weapon in Buddy's face again.

CASH REGISTER THUG

I'm tired of fucking around with you, Mister. Give me your goddamn wallet.

Buddy doesn't say anything and he doesn't grab his wallet.

The Cash Register Thug starts laughing.

CASH REGISTER THUG

(continuing)

Jesus, I don't think I'd have wanted to tangle with you when you were a young buck.

He moves the pistol to Grace's face.

CASH REGISTER THUG

(continuing)

Let's not make this any harder than it needs to be.

This development is too much for the Front Door Thug. He moves toward them.

FRONT DOOR THUG

What the fuck are you doing? She's an old lady.

CASH REGISTER THUG

She's going to be a dead old lady if he doesn't give me his wallet.

The Front Door Thug walks up to Buddy and in so doing forgets about the Cashier.

FRONT DOOR THUG

Mister, just give him your wallet, pl--

The back of his head explodes. Having killed the Front Door Thug, the Cashier draws a bead on the Cash Register Thug. He's not quick enough.

The Cash Register Thug fires and hits him dead center in the chest. The Cashier bounces off the wall and slumps over the counter, knocking a cassette tape display rack to the floor.

CASH REGISTER THUG

Eric? Eric!

The Cash Register Thug squats over his partner, who is sprawled on the floor. Buddy, gore on his face and chest, grabs a two liter plastic soft drink bottle and hits the Thug on the head. The blow knocks the Thug to his knees. Buddy kicks him in his face and he drops the pistol.

Buddy picks it up and points it at the still stunned Thug.

BUDDY

Get up.

The Thug stands and leans against the glass door of an ice machine.

BUDDY

(continuing)

Don't move.

Buddy looks at Grace who is also blood-splattered with a shocked expression on her face.

BUDDY

(continuing)

Come here, Hon.

Grace doesn't move. Keeping the gun on the Thug, he goes to her and puts his free arm around her.

BUDDY

(continuing)

Are you okay?

GRACE

Uh-huh.

Grace smiles wanly through the blood coating her face.

BUDDY

We're going to be okay.

The Thug tries to flee. Buddy fires a round into the ice machine's glass window.

BUDDY

(continuing)

I told you not to move.

The Thug freezes.

BUDDY

(continuing)

Stay put, Hon.

Keeping his pistol trained on the Thug, Buddy walks to the Cashier and checks him. He's dead.

Buddy approaches the Thug.

BUDDY

(continuing)

I want your wallet.

The Thug looks at Buddy in disbelief. Buddy cocks the pistol and points it at the Thug's face.

BUDDY

(continuing)

You can give it to me, or I can take it.

The Thug hands Buddy his wallet. Buddy looks through it and pulls out an ATM card.

BUDDY

(continuing)

What's your number?

CASH REGISTER THUG

What?

BUDDY

What's your ATM number?

CASH REGISTER THUG

Fuck you, Old Man.

Buddy shoots the Thug in the left knee. He drops to the ground, clutching his leg, and MOANING.



GRACE  
Everything's okay. Buddy's an FBI  
agent.

Buddy yanks the Thug by his hair and presses the barrel of  
the gun under his eye.

BUDDY  
What's your number?

CASH REGISTER THUG  
There ain't any money in the account.  
I swear to God, Mister. On my  
mother's grave.

Buddy lets go of his head, which slams against the bottom of  
the ice machine.

BUDDY  
You should have listened to your  
partner.

Buddy walks to the cash register, and pulls a wad of money  
from the till.

BUDDY  
(continuing)  
We need to get some things to clean  
up.

Grace squats to the floor and picks up some of the cassette  
tapes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT./EXT. STOLEN CAR/INTERSTATE - JUST BEFORE DAWN

Grace wipes her face with a paper towel.

BUDDY  
Let me see.

Grace turns her face to him. Buddy squints at her. He reaches  
to the instrument panel and fumbles around.

BUDDY  
(continuing; to  
himself)  
Where's the goddamn light?

GRACE  
What?

BUDDY  
Nothing.

Buddy finds the switch and lights the interior. He looks at Grace and finds she's been less than successful at cleaning herself; streaks of dried blood cover her face.

BUDDY  
(continuing)  
Give me a towel.

Grace hands him a paper towel. Buddy cleans her face while trying to keep the vehicle on the highway. Grace grimaces, but doesn't say anything.

BUDDY  
(continuing)  
Shit, I forgot the surveillance tape.

A vehicle rapidly approaches from the opposite direction.

Buddy wipes his face, then looks in the mirror. Satisfied with his effort, he throws the towel at his feet.

The oncoming vehicle passes them, and Buddy sees it is a police car. He fumbles to turn the light switch off.

Grace sniffles.

GRACE  
I want to go home.

BUDDY  
We can't.

GRACE  
Why not?

BUDDY  
(exasperated)  
Because of what just...  
(softening)  
We can't. We're going to Montana,  
where you said you wanted to go.

GRACE  
(brightening)  
To visit our children?

BUDDY  
We don't have any children.

GRACE  
Yes, we do. We have two, Jimmy and...

BUDDY  
Jimmy's dead.

GRACE  
No, he's not. He's...

BUDDY  
 ...Jimmy's dead, and Audra may as  
 well be for all she is to us now.

GRACE  
 Audra's the lady with the piano?

BUDDY  
 Audra's your daughter.

Grace takes a moment to think about what Buddy's told her.

GRACE  
 You keep telling me that, but I can't  
 put it together.

Buddy doesn't reply. They drive over the Idaho state line.

FADE TO BLACK:

GRACE (V.O.)  
 Everything's okay. Buddy's an FBI  
 agent.

BUDDY (V.O.)  
 What's your number?

FADE IN:

On a grainy copy of the gas station surveillance video, Buddy holds the Thug's hair and presses the barrel of his pistol to his face.

CASH REGISTER THUG  
 There ain't any money in the account.  
 I swear to God, Mister. On my  
 mother's grave.

Buddy let's go of the Thug's head and it bounces off the bottom of the ice machine.

BUDDY  
 You should have listened to your  
 partner.

We pull back to...

INT. SEATTLE FBI HEADQUARTERS, CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

Audra, Mike and Calhoun huddle at one end of a conference table, watching the surveillance tape. On the screen they watch Buddy pull money out of the cash register.

BUDDY (V.O., FROM TAPE)  
 We need to get some things to clean  
 up.

Calhoun stops the tape and turns to Audra and Mike, who are both speechless. Finally...

CALHOUN

Mrs. Knutson, what do you remember about living in Missoula?

MIKE

You think that's where they're going?

CALHOUN

Maybe. It's the only place in this part of the country where he was posted.

(to Audra)

Ma'am?

AUDRA

We were happy there. It was the last place we were together, as a family...I want you to promise me you won't let her get hurt.

CALHOUN

We're doing everything we can. We've got Troopers from Washington --

AUDRA

This is the second time that son of a bitch took my mother away from me. Promise me you'll find him before he gets her killed.

EXT. CHARTERED EXECUTIVE JET - MIDDAY

A chartered jet flies through the clouds.

INT. CHARTERED EXECUTIVE JET - MIDDAY

Audra and Mike sit across from each other at a table. Audra looks listlessly out the window. Mike looks at her, concern evident in his eyes.

MIKE

I don't understand what the deal is between you two.

AUDRA

I've told you.

MIKE

You told me about things that happened up until Jimmy's funeral; but he's still your father, and that was a long time ago...I'd give anything to talk to my father, just once.

Audra puts her hand on top of his.

AUDRA

I know you would. I wish I felt the same way about mine.

MIKE

I'm having a hard time dealing with how you're handling this.

She pulls her hand away.

MIKE

(continuing)

Before I met him I was sure he was going to be the biggest son of a bitch ever. That was the only way I could comprehend your relationship. How could a father not love his daughter, especially when it's you? But your old man's not a son of a bitch. You know what he is?

AUDRA

What is he?

MIKE

He's a lot like you.

AUDRA

I'm not --

Mike overrides her.

MIKE

He can be a pain in the neck, but he's got a lot of love to give. He's also got an ugly switch, and when he turns it on, it gets pretty ugly.

AUDRA

That man has no love to give.

MIKE

That man loves his wife.

AUDRA

So much so, he almost got her killed in that robbery.

MIKE

And I'm not convinced he doesn't love you.

EXT. FOOTHILLS IN NEW MEXICO, RYAN HOME - SUNSET

The same shot as the beginning of the movie, except the van is no longer there. Its absence reveals an early 1970's model Cadillac convertible which is up on blocks in the driveway.

INT. RYAN HOME, LIVING ROOM - SUNSET

The only light comes from the dying sun through the sky lights, and a sliding glass door that leads to a balcony. What we can see is unkempt. Newspapers are stacked in a corner, and dead potted plants hang from macrame holders screwed into the ceiling.

Audra studies a half-completed painting, held in an easel, of a creek and a copse of trees tucked in a small valley which is revealed through the sliding glass door she stands in front of.

She turns and shines a flashlight on a bookcase that is lined with ceramic and wood-carved figurines. In the lowest corner of the bookcase sits an open cardboard box. Styrofoam packing peanuts cover all but a small part of a wooden figurine.

She reaches for the box.

INT. IDAHO MOTEL ROOM - EVENING

MOANING and HEADBOARD THUMPING from a partially open window disturbs Buddy's sleep. He rolls over and throws his arm across the empty bed. He pats around and wakes with a start when he realizes Grace isn't next to him.

BUDDY

Grace?...Grace!

INT. IDAHO MOTEL, KARAOKE BAR - EVENING

A handful of locals sit at the bar, amongst them an enthralled Grace, listening to a woman, BETH, belting the lyrics of Patsy Cline's "**Crazy**" into a microphone.

Beth hits the last note with a flourish, then hops off the small stage to only a smattering of light applause, except from Grace, who claps energetically.

PATRON

Nice job, Patsy. How about a refill?

BETH

Why dinn't you help yourself just like you usually do when I'm up there.

Beth steps behind the bar and approaches Grace.

BETH  
(continuing)  
What can I get you, Dear?

GRACE  
I'd like a Tom Collins.

BETH  
Tom Collins it is.

Beth scoops ice into a glass.

GRACE  
You have a lovely voice.

BETH  
Thank you.

GRACE  
I used to sing myself.

BETH  
Did you?

GRACE  
I gave it up when I had my first one.

BETH  
Why don't you give it a whirl?

GRACE  
It's been a long time since I've  
stood on a stage in front of people  
I don't know.

BETH  
I'd love to hear you sing.

Seriously considering the offer, Grace looks over her potential audience.

BETH  
(continuing)  
Don't worry about them. They wouldn't  
know talent if Doris Day walked in  
and sat on their laps.

Beth picks up a three ring binder with lyrics in it.

BETH  
(continuing)  
We got the words to a lot of songs.

GRACE  
I don't need that.

CUT TO:

INT. IDAHO MOTEL, KARAOKE BAR - EVENING

Grace stands on the stage, microphone in her hand.

GRACE  
(tentatively at first)  
I'd like to sing a song tonight --

PATRON  
You go ahead, Grandma!

BETH  
Shut up, Bob.

PATRON  
Is that anyway to talk to a customer?

Bob elbows his bar buddy. They both laugh.

GRACE  
The first time I danced with my  
husband it was to this song...The  
next time we danced to it was at our  
wedding. It's called "**Star Dust.**"  
(singing, a cappella)  
"And now the purple dusk of twilight  
time. Steals across the meadows of my  
heart. High up in the sky the little  
stars climb..."

INT. RYAN HOME, MASTER BEDROOM - EVENING

Mike sits on the floor next to a bookshelf. Several photo albums are piled around him. He shines a flashlight on the open album he holds in his lap, Buddy and Grace's wedding album.

INT. IDAHO MOTEL ROOM - EVENING

Buddy tucks his pistol into the back of his waistband, puts a jacket on and leaves the room.

INT. IDAHO MOTEL, KARAOKE BAR - EVENING

Grace sings her heart out, totally capturing her audience.

GRACE  
(singing, a cappella)  
"Love is now the Star Dust of  
yesterday, The music of years gone  
by..."

INT. IDAHO MOTEL, REGISTRATION DESK - EVENING

The CLERK, late teens, leans back in his chair picking at his fingernails with a Buck knife. He wears Walkman earphones.



The volume of the HEAVY METAL SONG he's listening to is so loud we can almost distinguish the lyrics.

Buddy enters the lobby area and approaches the desk.

CLERK  
(loudly)  
Can I help you?

BUDDY  
I'm looking for my wife.

The Clerk leans forward and turns his Walkman off. We can now hear Grace SINGING from the bar.

CLERK  
What's that?

Buddy rushes toward Grace's voice and we follow him into...

INT. IDAHO MOTEL, KARAOKE BAR - EVENING

Buddy walks toward Grace on stage as if drawn by a magnet. When he's halved the distance, she notices him, smiles, and motions for him to join her on stage. Buddy smiles and shakes his head "no." She steps off the stage and sings the last verse to him.

GRACE  
(singing, a cappella)  
"You are in my arms, The nightingale  
tells his fairy tale of paradise  
where roses grew. Tho' I dream in  
vain, In my heart it will remain: My  
Star Dust melody, The memory of  
love's refrain."

When Grace finishes, she's greeted by enthusiastic applause. She takes a slight bow.

GRACE  
(continuing)  
Ladies and Gentlemen, I'd like you to  
meet the man I was talking about  
before, my husband, Buddy.

Self-consciously he acknowledges the crowd.

PATRON  
Encore!

PATRON'S BUDDY  
One more time.

GRACE  
(still holding the  
mike)  
No. That was enough.

She steps off the stage and joins Buddy.

BUDDY  
You were great up there.

GRACE  
It was fun.

Patsy Cline's "**WALKING AFTER MIDNIGHT**" starts playing on the jukebox.

GRACE  
(continuing)  
How about giving a girl a dance?

BUDDY  
I don't know.

GRACE  
Come on. You're a wonderful dancer.

BUDDY  
I would, but my knees been acting up.

Grace looks at him dubiously.

BUDDY  
(continuing)  
I'll buy you a drink.

He leads her to the bar.

GRACE  
You have no romance.

Beth approaches as they take their seats.

BETH  
That was great.

GRACE  
Thank you.

BETH  
Another Tom Collins? It's on me.

Grace nods "yes." Beth looks at Buddy.

BUDDY  
Ginger ale, please.

BETH  
Coming right up.

She leaves them to make their drinks.

BUDDY  
I know how much you loved singing.  
I've always wondered if it was the  
right thing, you giving it up.

GRACE  
We raised two wonderful children. I  
wouldn't trade that for anything.

BUDDY  
You're right, Hon.

GRACE  
I know I am.

BUDDY  
Audra. She's turned out to be a fine  
woman. Hasn't she?

Before Grace can answer...

STATE TROOPER #1 (O.S.)  
Mr. and Mrs. Ryan?

Buddy and Grace turn to face two State Troopers, standing  
apart with their right hands close to their pistols.

GRACE  
Yes.

STATE TROOPER #1  
Are you Francis and Grace Ryan?

GRACE  
Yes.

STATE TROOPER #1  
Would you come with us, please?

GRACE  
Is something wrong?

STATE TROOPER #1  
If you could just come with us,  
please, now.

Grace looks at Buddy for guidance.

BUDDY  
It's okay, Hon.  
(to the Troopers)  
I have a pistol in my waistband. I  
want to give it to you without  
getting shot.

INT. RYAN HOME, LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Mike enters the room carrying a photo album. Audra's back is turned toward him.

MIKE  
Guess what I found?

Audra doesn't respond.

MIKE  
(continuing; playing  
Audra)  
What'd you find, honey?  
(as himself)  
Well, dear, I found our wedding  
pictures in a photo album.

Audra stands up. She holds a letter and the wooden carving from the box, a dove carrying an olive branch. When she turns to him, he sees her face is tear-streaked. She lifts the carving.

AUDRA  
This is our wedding present. He made  
it, but never sent it.

She hands him the letter. He reads for a moment and looks at her.

MIKE  
Oh no.

He hugs her.

AUDRA  
That's why he came to visit.

She pulls back and looks her husband in the eyes.

AUDRA  
(continuing)  
Why didn't he tell me he was dying?

Mike strokes her hair.

MIKE  
I don't know.

EXT. IDAHO MOTEL ROOM - EVENING

Buddy and Grace, escorted by the two Troopers, stop in front of a motel room. Buddy pulls a room key out of his pocket.

BUDDY

I'm almost glad you found us. I don't know how much longer my heart would have taken it, even with the medicine.

Buddy opens the door and they enter...

INT. IDAHO MOTEL ROOM - EVENING

As they step into the room...

GRACE

What medicine?

BUDDY

My heart medicine.

Buddy starts to reach for his duffel bag on the floor.

STATE TROOPER #1

I'll get it.

The Trooper bends down and opens the bag.

GRACE

You don't take heart medicine.

BUDDY

Yes, I do. Remember when I went to Dr. Stoteraux last month?

GRACE

I didn't know he was a heart doctor?

BUDDY

(to the Trooper)

I think it's at the bottom.

The Trooper reaches further into the bag.

GRACE

(to Trooper #2)

Buddy was a policeman.

STATE TROOPER #2

Is that right, ma'am?

GRACE

Yes, but he didn't wear a uniform like you.

Buddy clutches his chest.

GRACE  
Buddy?

STATE TROOPER #2  
Mr. Ryan?

BUDDY  
My chest.

Buddy drops to his knees, then falls over on his side.

STATE TROOPER #1  
I'll call an ambulance.

He rushes out the door.

The second Trooper bends down to help Buddy. Buddy takes the Trooper's weapon. The Trooper doesn't realize his weapon is gone until Buddy cocks it.

BUDDY  
Put your hands up and step back.

The Trooper does as instructed. Buddy stands up.

BUDDY  
(continuing)  
Drop your pistol belt.

STATE TROOPER #2  
Don't do this. You're only making it worse.

BUDDY  
I don't think so. You going to drop that belt?

The Trooper unbuckles his belt. As it falls to the floor we hear the approaching FOOTSTEPS of his partner.

STATE TROOPER #1 (O.S.)  
It's on its way. What's going on in here?

The second Trooper enters the room, face flushed.

BUDDY  
Your partner seems to have lost his weapon.

INT./EXT. STOLEN CAR/MAIN STREET OF SMALL IDAHO TOWN -  
EVENING

Buddy scans from left to right.

GRACE  
Why do we have to keep getting new cars?

BUDDY  
We just have to.

GRACE  
But why?

BUDDY  
Because if you keep them too long  
they lose their trade-in value.

Grace's eyes light up. She points to a Cadillac parked in front of an old house with a large front porch.

GRACE  
There. Right there. That's the one I  
want!

Buddy looks in the direction she's pointing, and sees a FATHER walk onto the porch with his SIX YEAR OLD DAUGHTER.

BUDDY  
That one's no good.

GRACE  
Before we got married you told me  
that we'd get one some day.

BUDDY  
Things didn't work out like I'd  
planned.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL DUGOUT - EVENING

The dugout sits next to a full parking lot.

JUSTIN, seventeen, wearing a letterman's jacket, and, AMANDA, sixteen, sit in the dugout taking hits from a pot pipe.

JUSTIN  
Mr. Stegner's a dick.

AMANDA  
What'd he do now?

JUSTIN  
He said if I keep missing classes,  
he's going to kick me out of honor  
society.

AMANDA  
That sucks.

JUSTIN  
Big time.

AMANDA  
I thought you hated Honor Society.

JUSTIN

I do, but it's one of those things  
you got to put up with to get ahead.

AMANDA

I guess.

JUSTIN

My mom will kill me if I get tossed.

AMANDA

What are you going to do?

JUSTIN

Suck up to Mr. Stegner and go to all  
my classes for a couple of weeks.

AMANDA

Good plan.

JUSTIN

I know.

AMANDA

Wanna go back inside and dance.

JUSTIN

Not until I'm a little more fucked up.

INT./EXT. STOLEN CAR/HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - EVENING

Buddy and Grace drive through the lot.

BUDDY

We have to get one here.

Grace doesn't answer. She stares out the window.

They stop next to a Jeep parked at the end of a row, close to  
the baseball diamond.

BUDDY

(continuing)

That'll do. Just stay here a second.

He reaches back, grabs his duffel bag, then exits the  
vehicle. Grace stays put.

Buddy checks the Jeep's doors. They're all locked. He pulls  
his pistol out and smashes in the back window with the pistol  
butt.

INT. BASEBALL DUGOUT - EVENING

Amanda passes the pipe to Justin. He inhales too deeply and  
coughs, sending the bowl's contents flying.



They both laugh.

JUSTIN

It's okay. I've got more in my ride.

INT./EXT. JEEP/HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - EVENING

Buddy hot-wires the Jeep. Grace still hasn't left their "trade-in."

BUDDY

(loudly)

Let's go.

Grace shakes her head "no."

BUDDY

(continuing)

We don't have time for this.

Grace doesn't move. Buddy gets out of the Jeep and goes to get her. Grace reaches over and tries to lock the door, but can't figure out how to use the electric locks. Buddy opens the driver's side door.

BUDDY

(continuing)

We have to go.

GRACE

I don't want to.

BUDDY

Why don't you want to?

GRACE

I don't like that car. I want a Cadillac.

BUDDY

We'll get a Cadillac next time.

GRACE

You always say that.

BUDDY

When we get to the river, we'll get a Cadillac.

GRACE

What river?

BUDDY

The place we're going. Remember, we talked about it? Where we used to go camping.

GRACE

Where Jimmy caught that cutthroat?

BUDDY

That's right, Hon. The sooner we get there, the sooner we get the Cadillac.

GRACE

Why is there a Cadillac at the river?

BUDDY

I'll tell you in the Jeep.

Buddy reaches into the back and grabs her umbrella. Then he walks around and opens the door for her. She gets out and he takes her gently by the hand and leads her to the Jeep. He opens the door to make sure she gets in. An object falls to the ground. She picks it up.

GRACE

What's this?

Grace is holding a plastic bag of pot in her hand. She hands it to Buddy, who looks at it closely, opens it, smells it, and throws it on the ground.

BUDDY

It's potpourri.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASEBALL DUGOUT AND PARKING LOT - EVENING

Justin and Amanda round the dugout corner only to see Justin's Jeep pulling away. Both are too dumbfounded to move.

JUSTIN

Whoa!

AMANDA

They just took your Jeep.

JUSTIN

I know.

They walk to the recently vacated parking space. Amanda bends down to pick up the bag of pot. She hands it to Justin.

AMANDA

What are you going to do?

Justin sits on the hood of the car the Ryans have left behind.

JUSTIN

I don't know.

AMANDA

You should call the cops.

JUSTIN

I will, but I got to wait. I'll get kicked out of honor society for sure if I'm wasted when I talk to them.

EXT. SANTE FE AIRPORT, PASSENGER LOUNGE, CHARTER RAMP - EVENING

Mike stands next to Audra who talks on her cell phone.

AUDRA

His liver...Three months, maybe six...Okay, I'll call you then.

She collapses her phone.

AUDRA

(continuing)

He wants us to come to Couer d'Alene.

INT./EXT. STOLEN JEEP/REST AREA - NIGHT

Light snow has just started falling. A semi rumbles past the parked Jeep.

Buddy, asleep behind the wheel, wakes with a start and exits when he realizes Grace is gone.

INT. REST AREA WOMEN'S RESTROOM - NIGHT

Buddy frantically checks stall doors.

BUDDY

Grace! Grace!

He opens the last stall door. She's not there.

He doesn't know what to do. He turns around and sees his reflection in a mirror.

BUDDY

(continuing)

Please, God, just let us get to the river.

The outer door opens.

A YOUNG WOMAN enters, looks at Buddy, then rechecks the door to see if she's in the correct bathroom.

YOUNG WOMAN

I don't think you're supposed to be in here.

EXT. REST AREA RESTROOMS - NIGHT

Dejected, Buddy walks back to the Jeep.

GRACE (O.S.)  
I don't know where he is?

Buddy's head snaps up. He looks around, but still can't see her. He heads to a parked semi.

GRACE (O.S.)  
(continuing; getting  
louder as he nears)  
This isn't like him. He's never late.

Buddy clears the front of the large vehicle, and finds Grace talking to a large TRUCKER.

Grace notices Buddy.

GRACE  
(to Buddy)  
There you are.  
(to the  
Trucker)  
This is my husband, Buddy.  
(to Buddy)  
This is...  
(to the  
Trucker)  
I'm sorry, I can't seem to remember  
your name.

TRUCKER  
I'm Tom.

The Trucker steps forward and shakes Buddy's hand.

GRACE  
Thomas?

TRUCKER  
Last person to call me that was my  
mother, and only when I was in  
trouble.

GRACE  
Then I'm sure she didn't call you  
that very often.

TRUCKER  
Oh, once or twice.  
(to Buddy)  
Your wife says you're heading to  
Montana. Road's pretty bad that way.  
Wouldn't try it without chains. Maybe  
not even then.

BUDDY  
 (so Grace can't hear)  
 She gets confused...We just left  
 there.

TRUCKER  
 Shouldn't be a problem if you're  
 heading that way.

INT./EXT. STOLEN JEEP/MOUNTAIN ROAD - NIGHT

Snow flurries dance past the window as the Jeep slowly winds  
 its way up a steep mountain road. A tape of DORIS DAY singing  
 "**Que Sera Sera**" plays on the stereo. Buddy takes a sharp  
 curve slowly. Even at a reduced speed the Jeep fishtails.

BUDDY  
 You can't go running off without me.

GRACE  
 Okay.

BUDDY  
 It's not okay, Hon.

GRACE  
 Okay.

BUDDY  
 If you go running off, people will  
 try to stop us. Promise me you won't  
 go anywhere without me.

GRACE  
 Okay.

BUDDY  
 Goddamn it, you're not listening to  
 a word I'm saying. We don't have much  
 time. We --

GRACE  
 Don't you raise your voice to me!

As the Jeep takes another curve, brightening headlights warn  
 of another vehicle's approach. Buddy steers to the right.

BUDDY  
 All I want is to take you there one  
 last time.

GRACE  
 I know what's going on here. Don't  
 think I don't.

A semi rounds the bend, traveling much too fast. It almost  
 clips the Jeep, and Buddy steers more to the right.

The Jeep fishtails violently and Buddy needs all his strength to control it.

BUDDY

What?

GRACE

You're drinking again. You think I can't see. It's plain as the nose on your face. You're making up excuses and stories. We're getting a Cadillac at the river. Do you think I'm stupid? You're walking around like a zombie, sleeping late, it's making you sick. You fell down in front of those men. It's just like when, when, when...Where's the bottle? Where are you hiding it?

BUDDY

You don't know what you're saying, Hon.

GRACE

Where is it?

Grace opens the glove compartment door and rummages through its contents. She pulls out an assortment of objects; including a cell phone, a pipe, and cigarette rolling paper. She drops every item except for the rolling paper at her feet. She thrusts the paper in Buddy's face.

GRACE

(continuing)

I suppose you're not smoking either.

BUDDY

You're sick. You don't understand what you're doing.

GRACE

I'm not going to ignore it this time. Where's the bottle?

BUDDY

There's no bottle.

Grace looks around the vehicle, searching for likely hiding places. She pulls down the sunvisor in front of her. No bottle, but we see a polaroid of Amanda (the girl we saw in the Jeep before Buddy stole it), dressed only in panties. Grace rips it off the visor and presents it to Buddy.

GRACE

Who is this?

BUDDY  
I don't know.

GRACE  
I want you to tell me who she is.

BUDDY  
I don't know. The picture was in the car when we got it.

GRACE  
Don't lie to me!

The snow is blowing much harder. Ice is starting to crystallize on the windshield. Buddy turns on the wipers. They SCRUNCH against the glass.

GRACE  
(continuing)  
You tell me who this trollop is!

BUDDY  
You have to believe me. There's never been anybody else.

GRACE  
Who is she?

BUDDY  
I shouldn't have taken you. I thought when we got to river things would be better, we could make...

GRACE  
....I don't want to hear your lies.

They round a corner. Buddy slows down. The wind gusts and actually blows the car onto the shoulder. The snow seems to attack them. Buddy leans forward to peer into the maelstrom.

BUDDY  
Audra was right. I should have left you with her.

Buddy's face flushes with pain. He GASPS and leans forward, losing control of the vehicle. The Jeep slides into the side of a cliff's face.

FADE TO BLACK:

We HEAR GRACE, speaking in urgent tones, over DORIS DAY still playing on the stereo.

GRACE (O.S.)  
Buddy?...Buddy?

FADE IN:

INT./EXT. STOLEN JEEP/MOUNTAIN ROAD - NIGHT

From the outside, the vehicle doesn't appear too badly damaged.

Inside, Grace leans over Buddy, who is slumped over the steering wheel.

GRACE  
Buddy, wake up.

She shakes his shoulder. He doesn't respond. She looks around the vehicle, sees the cell phone, picks it up and examines it closely before bringing it to her face.

GRACE  
(continuing)  
Hello...Hello...Operator?

Realizing no one is on the other end, she drops the phone. She shakes Buddy again. He doesn't respond.

She looks around the vehicle once more, and grabs a high school letterman's jacket and her umbrella. Grace gets out of the vehicle, puts on the jacket, opens the umbrella, and without looking back, trudges through the snow down the middle of the road.

INT. SMALL IDAHO TOWN, POLICE STATION CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Calhoun sits at the head of a table. The two Troopers, joined by their Chief, sit next to him.

STATE TROOPER #2  
I was down on the ground with him  
trying to remember my CPR when I  
heard him cock it.

INT/EXT. STOLEN JEEP/MOUNTAIN ROAD - NIGHT

Buddy slowly regains consciousness and pushes himself off the steering wheel. A small cut over his left eye has started to clot, but not before leaving its bloody mark on his face and the front of his shirt.

BUDDY  
Grace?...Grace!

He frantically tries to open his door, but can't because it's wedged against the side of the mountain. He crawls across the seat and exits the vehicle through the passenger's side door.

BUDDY  
(continuing; yelling)  
GRACE...



Buddy grabs his left side and bends over in pain. He fights through it and straightens himself.

BUDDY  
(continuing; yelling)  
GRACE! WHERE ARE YOU? GRACE!

He leans against the Jeep's front left fender, then listens for a reply to his plea, only to hear the howling wind as an answer.

He leans into the vehicle, grabs the cell phone, opens the glove compartment and extracts the flashlight. Then he walks around the Jeep, searching for a clue to see which direction Grace has gone. Her tracks are already covered.

Buddy trudges off in the direction opposite from which Grace went.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - NIGHT

Head down, Grace plods forward. Every few steps she looks up to chart her progress. When she does, we see ice crystallizing on her eyelashes.

INT./EXT. PICKUP TRUCK/MOUNTAIN ROAD - NIGHT

Inside the cab of a big diesel pickup that slowly pulls a horse trailer, DALE, late 40's, and wearing a cowboy hat, beats out, on his dashboard, the base line of the JOHNNY CASH SONG he is listening to.

He steers around a bend and catches a flash of motion to his right.

DALE  
What in the hell?

He pulls over to the side of the road and gets out. A person rapidly approaches from the vehicle's rear. Dale reaches under his driver's seat and pulls out a long barreled pistol, and shields it from the view of the oncoming figure whom we now recognize is Grace.

GRACE  
(out of breath)  
I...we...the car...my husband...

Frustrated, Grace slams a fist into her leg.

DALE  
Take your time, Ma'am. Your husband?

GRACE  
We were driving and we stopped.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - NIGHT

Buddy's halfway up a steep grade.

BUDDY  
(yelling, but losing  
strength)  
GRACE...Grace...

He sees a boulder on the cliff side shoulder, and leans against it.

BUDDY  
(continuing; weakly)  
Grace.

He puts his head in his hands, and his shoulders quiver.

EXT. WRECKED JEEP - NIGHT

Grace and Dale survey the wrecked vehicle.

GRACE  
He was right here, sleeping.

DALE  
At least we know he can walk.

GRACE  
Of course he can walk. Why wouldn't  
he be able to walk?

DALE  
I mean we know he's regained  
consciousness...Look, I bet he went  
that way.

Dale points in the direction in which Buddy left the wreck. .

DALE  
(continuing)  
I bet he went that way looking for  
you.

Grace brightens.

INT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - NIGHT

Buddy straightens up. We can see that tears have frozen on his cheeks. He shines his flashlight up and down the road. It's beam barely cuts into the white cascade of the snow.

BUDDY  
Where are you, Hon?

He blows onto his hands. Then puts the one not holding a flashlight into his jacket pocket. He pulls out a cell phone.

INT. SMALL IDAHO TOWN, POLICE STATION HALLWAY - NIGHT

Mike and Audra sit in the hallway outside of the conference room. Seated across from them are Justin, and JUSTIN'S MOTHER, a pretty, well-dressed woman in her late thirties.

JUSTIN

Being All-State in Idaho's okay, but it's tough to get attention from big time programs. If I don't get a scholarship from somewhere in the PAC-10, I'll probably go to a smaller school and concentrate on academics.

JUSTIN'S MOTHER

You just keep concentrating on your schoolwork and everything else will follow.

(to Mike and Audra)

Isn't that right?

MIKE

Schoolwork's important.

JUSTIN

Tulane would be cool. You know what they say?

MIKE

What do they say?

JUSTIN

Every day's Mardi Gras in the Big Easy.

Audra's eyes enlarge as if she's coming out of a trance.

AUDRA

Who says that?

JUSTIN

Everybody.

AUDRA

(vehemently)

Yeah, well, I lived there and it was far from easy.

Surprised by Audra's declaration, the others are silent. After a moment...

JUSTIN

Whoa, lady, it's just an expression.

Audra's cell phone rings. She answers it.

AUDRA  
Hello...Dad!?!? Where are you? How  
are you?

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - NIGHT

Buddy holds one hand over his free ear to reduce the  
background noise.

BUDDY  
(struggling to keep  
his emotions in  
check)  
We're on the highway, and things are  
going fine. Your mother and I, we  
were just talking about visiting you  
again, and we decided we should call  
you and let you know that we're doing  
fine.

INT. SMALL IDAHO TOWN, POLICE STATION HALLWAY - NIGHT

Mike leans close to hear the conversation.

AUDRA  
Dad, I can barely hear you. You sure  
you're okay?

BUDDY (V.O. FROM PHONE)  
Yeah, I'm fine.

AUDRA  
Mom, too?

BUDDY (V.O. FROM PHONE)  
Your mother's fine.

AUDRA  
I want to talk to her.

BUDDY (V.O. FROM PHONE)  
I just wanted to call, and see how  
you're doing. We should have done it  
earlier. I know you were worried  
about your mother, but...

After a moment.

AUDRA  
Dad?...Dad!?!?!?

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - NIGHT

Buddy, phone held at his side, is blinded by the glare of  
Dale's headlights. As he steps out of the beam we hear a  
truck door SLAM.

GRACE (O.S.)

Buddy!

Grace runs to Buddy, arms open for a hug. She loses her traction on the icy road and slides into him, knocking him on his rear end.

Buddy starts laughing. Grace laughs with him. Buddy tries to get up with no success. He laughs harder.

BUDDY

Help me up, Hon.

Grace gives him a hand getting to his feet. He hugs her.

BUDDY

(continuing)

I thought you walked off into the mountains, but you didn't. You went and got help.

Dale slowly approaches the couple. Grace sees him and breaks the embrace.

DALE

Hi.

BUDDY

Hello.

DALE

We were worried about you.

BUDDY

I was worried about her.

DALE

Your wife said you were unconscious.

BUDDY

I was.

DALE

Let's get out of this cold and get you to a hospital then.

BUDDY

I'm fine.

DALE

Getting knocked out, that's cause to see a doctor.

BUDDY

I said I was fine.

DALE  
(whispering so Grace  
can't hear)  
I think your wife got hit on the head  
too. She's not making a whole lot of  
sense.

BUDDY  
Mister, I appreciate your help, but  
we're not going to see a doctor.

DALE  
That's your call, I guess...We'll get  
your things and I'll take you to the  
closest authorities.

BUDDY  
We're not going there, either.

Buddy reaches into his wallet and pulls some money out.

BUDDY  
(continuing)  
Like I said, I appreciate your help.  
It's not much, but it's all I can  
spare.

He hands Dale the money. Dale doesn't take it.

DALE  
I don't want your money.

BUDDY  
I'll call the Troopers as soon as I  
can and let them know you're here.

DALE  
Shit.

Dale starts laughing. Grace follows his lead.

DALE  
(continuing)  
You sound like you think you're  
taking my truck.

BUDDY  
I promise you I'll take better care  
of it than the Jeep. You'll get it  
back soon.

DALE  
We're going to the hospital. You're  
talking nonsense, too.

BUDDY  
I told you, we're not going there.

Grace seems puzzled by Buddy's tone of voice.

DALE

I don't care what you do. I'm taking your wife to get some help. If you had any sense at...

Buddy pulls his pistol out.

DALE

(continuing)

That changes things a little.

GRACE

What are you doing?

BUDDY

Come here, Hon.

Grace seems hesitant.

BUDDY

(continuing)

Come here!

Grace takes a tentative step toward him, then stops.

GRACE

I have to find my husband.

She hand gestures towards Dale.

GRACE

(continuing)

We're looking for him. We were driving and we stopped. Have you seen him?

Defeated, Buddy lowers his weapon.

BUDDY

No.

GRACE

If you see him, tell him we're looking for him. He's a big, handsome man.

BUDDY

(destroyed)

I will.

GRACE

(to Dale)

Come on, we have to find him.

DALE

You go get in the truck, Ma'am. I'll be there in a second.

GRACE

Okay, but we have to hurry.

Grace goes to Dale's truck.

BUDDY

You go ahead and take her to the police.

Buddy pulls Audra's business card from his wallet and gives it to Dale.

BUDDY

(continuing)

Have them call that number. They'll explain things.

DALE

I'll do that, if you tell me where you were headed.

BUDDY

What does it matter?

DALE

I don't know, but you seemed pretty determined to get there a second ago.

BUDDY

She didn't hit her head. She's fine, physically. I thought maybe if I took her to a place we used to camp at, it'd help get her memory back.

DALE

Where'd you camp?

BUDDY

We had some land on the Yaak River in Montana...It's too late now. You make sure you give them that number.

Buddy starts walking to the side of the road.

DALE

That's not too far from my place. Why don't we go there tomorrow morning? If it doesn't work, we can call that number then.

Buddy mulls the offer over.



BUDDY

Why are you doing this?

DALE

Let's just say I haven't been fishing in a while. Least not since Ethel died.

BUDDY

Your wife?

DALE

My bulldog. She wasn't worth a damn on the ranch, but she was good company...It's lucky you ran into me.

BUDDY

(his hope rising)

Why's that?

INT./EXT. DALE'S PICKUP/MONTANA BORDER ROADBLOCK - NIGHT

The snow blasts the pickup and trailer as it approaches the border. Dale, the cab's only occupant, downshifts as he nears an Idaho State Police cruiser parked on the side of the road.

DALE

It's cold out. You stay in there where it's nice and warm and drink your coffee.

The TROOPER BEHIND THE WHEEL waves Dale through. Dale grins and waves back as he crosses the state line. A Montana State Police cruiser sits on the side of the road about thirty yards to his front.

DALE

(continuing)

You don't want to talk to me, either.

A MONTANA STATE TROOPER gets out and motions for Dale to stop.

DALE

(continuing)

Damn, doesn't anyone got enough sense to stay out of the cold tonight?

Dale stops his truck in front of the Trooper.

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE TRAILER:

Buddy and Grace are huddled between a large horse, KING, and the front wall of the trailer. Looking through a crack, Buddy watches the Trooper walk up to the pickup's driver's side window.

GRACE  
I'm cold!

BUDDY  
(whispering)  
You got to be quiet, Hon.

GRACE  
(whispering)  
I'm still cold.

Buddy tries to pull the blanket off the horse, but the blanket is secured by a strap that runs underneath the horse's belly.

Buddy reaches down and unhooks the strap, then pulls the blanket off and tucks it around Grace. King doesn't react at all to Buddy's pilferage.

Buddy looks back through the crack. The Trooper is speaking to an unseen Dale. Grace's teeth start to CHATTER. Buddy puts his arm around her.

BUDDY  
(whispering)  
It won't be long.

GRACE  
(whispering)  
It smells in here.

CUT TO:

DALE AND THE TROOPER:

DALE  
No, Sir, I haven't seen anyone out, but then I can't say I saw much of anything except snow and my windshield wipers. I guess most folks got enough sense not to drive tonight. You looking for anyone in particular?

MONTANA TROOPER  
Yes. Mind if I look in your trailer?

DALE  
No. Go ahead.

The Trooper turns toward the trailer.

CUT TO:

BUDDY AND GRACE:

Buddy tenses as he watches the Trooper approach. He pulls his pistol out and holds it at his side, ensuring Grace doesn't see it. We HEAR the pickup truck's door SLAM.

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE THE TRUCK AND TRAILER:

The Trooper whirls around to find Dale hopping out of the cab.

MONTANA TROOPER

Sir, I want you to stay in your vehicle.

DALE

I understand, but, King, my stallion back there, he's got an edge to him. Anytime I put him in the trailer, he gets excited 'cause he figures he's going to stud a mare. He's not going to be too happy to see you when that door opens. I wouldn't want you getting kicked.

CUT TO:

BUDDY AND GRACE:

Buddy jabs at King's flank with Grace's umbrella. It takes a few attempts, but finally, the horse snorts and stomps.

GRACE

(whispering)  
Someone's outside.

BUDDY

(whispering)  
That's why we've got to hide.

Buddy grabs her hand and pulls her down. BANGING is heard at the door.

DALE (O.S.)

Dang latch must have froze up out here. Let me go get a wrench.

GRACE

(whispering)  
Why are we hiding?

We HEAR the truck's cab door open.

BUDDY

(whispering)  
They want to find us.

GRACE  
 (whispering)  
 Why do they want to find us?

BUDDY  
 (whispering)  
 It's a game, like hide and seek.  
 Remember, we used to play that with  
 the kids.

GRACE  
 (whispering; excited)  
 I remember. Who's "it?"

BUDDY  
 (whispering)  
 Shhhh. Audra's it.

GRACE  
 (whispering)  
 I hope this is a good hiding place,  
 because she won't give up.

BUDDY  
 (whispering)  
 I hope so, too.

We hear Dale SLAMMING the cab door shut.

DALE (O.S.)  
 (whispering)  
 Here we go.

BUDDY  
 (whispering)  
 Now, Hon, they're going to open the  
 trailer door, but they won't find us  
 as long as we stay hidden down here  
 and don't make a sound. Okay?

Grace nods "yes", and puts her hands over her eyes. We hear the METALLIC CLANG of metal on metal as Dale strikes the doorlatch with a wrench. Grace moves her hands to her ears and now scrunches her eyes shut. Buddy puts the horse blanket over her head. Then he looks at the weapon he has in his hand, looks at Grace, and looks at the weapon again before ejecting the magazine and placing it into his coat pocket.

Deciding King isn't excited enough, Buddy pokes him once more.

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE THE TRAILER:

Dale strikes the latch with the wrench and it moves. He grabs the latch.

DALE  
You might want to stand back.

The Trooper dutifully complies. Dale pulls the door open. We see King's rear. He STOMPS and SNORTS.

DALE  
(continuing)  
Easy, boy. No female for you right now.  
(to the Trooper)  
Want me to pull him out. Take a look inside?

MONTANA TROOPER  
That won't be necessary; everything looks fine from this end.

DALE  
Hey, that's kind of funny.

CUT TO:

BUDDY AND GRACE:

We hear the door SLAM shut, and the LATCH CATCHING. Buddy pulls the blanket off his wife. Grace still has her eyes tightly closed and her hands over her ears. Buddy taps her on the shoulder. She opens the eye closest to Buddy, and takes her hand off the corresponding ear.

BUDDY  
(whispering)  
They're gone, Hon. We're safe. You did real well.

GRACE  
(whispering)  
Did we win?

BUDDY  
(whispering)  
It's still too early to tell.

EXT. WRECKED JEEP - VERY EARLY MORNING

Headlights and flashers from various law enforcement vehicles illuminate Audra and Mike, who watch a tow truck pull the jeep away.

In front of an RV(Winnebago type vehicle), Calhoun finishes addressing a small group, including HANDLERS with their dogs.

Calhoun walks up to Audra and Mike

CALHOUN  
(indicating the RV)  
Why don't you go inside. Get a couple  
hours of sleep. I'll wake you if  
anything breaks.

AUDRA  
Isn't there something more that we  
can do?

CALHOUN  
We'll get a chopper up as soon as the  
weather breaks.

AUDRA  
That's a long time for them to be out  
in this.

CALHOUN  
We're going to find them, and get  
your mother back to you.

AUDRA  
I want my father back, too.

EXT. DALE'S RANCH, ESTABLISHING SHOT - MIDMORNING

The modest, two-story house and nearby barn lie in the middle  
of a small ranch. No cars are seen. A satellite dish sits to  
the side of the two-car garage.

We HEAR NAT KING COLE and GRACE singing the last measure of  
**"Star Dust."**

INT. DALE'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - MIDMORNING

Buddy sits upright in bed. He reaches under the pillow for  
the pistol and is surprised to find it isn't there.

Grace and Nat start singing **"Star Dust"** again.

Buddy gets out of bed. He bumps into a dresser and knocks a  
framed picture over. He puts his hand along the wall and  
searches for the door. When he finds it, he opens it a crack.  
He finds a light switch, turns it on, and looks around the  
room. Most noticeable is one wall upon which hang blue  
ribbons from various fairs and several framed pictures of  
horses.

Buddy goes back to the dresser and sets the picture, which we  
now see is of a younger Dale and a woman, back in its place  
next to a framed picture of an English bulldog.

INT. DALE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - MIDMORNING

Grace sits on a couch across from a lit fireplace and sings while she rams a cleaning rod through the barrel of Buddy's pistol.

Buddy, shadowed in the hallway, watches her intently.

Dale walks in from the kitchen. Buddy COUGHS and Dale almost jumps out of his skin.

DALE  
You scared me.

BUDDY  
Sorry.

DALE  
Guess I'm not used to having company  
around.

Grace turns and smiles at her husband.

GRACE  
I'm almost finished.

BUDDY  
Thanks, Hon.

Grace goes back to singing and cleaning the weapon.

Buddy steps out of the shadows and sits next to Grace. In the full light we see he has two very black eyes. Dale sits on a recliner next to Buddy.

DALE  
Those are a couple of beauts.

BUDDY  
What?

DALE  
You got two black eyes. You look like  
the Lone Ranger.

Buddy lightly touches the puffed skin under his right eye.

GRACE  
Buddy used to get those when he  
played football, back before they  
wore face masks.

DALE  
You were a football player, eh? I  
played a little myself.

GRACE  
He was good.

BUDDY  
I was okay.

GRACE  
You practically won the city  
championship by yourself.

DALE  
What city would that be?

GRACE  
Chicago.

DALE  
You must have been good.

GRACE  
He was! The first day I saw him he  
had three female admirers following  
him around like he was Moses in the  
desert. I decided right then and  
there that I didn't like him. No, not  
one bit. I figured any kind of man  
like that had to be too vain for me  
to put up with.

DALE  
What changed your mind?

She puts a hand on Buddy's hand.

GRACE  
He was the handsomest man I ever saw.  
Still would be if he didn't have  
those shiners.

Grace takes her hand away and goes back to the pistol. She holds it up for better light and looks down the barrel. She starts singing with Nat again.

Dale leans towards Buddy.

DALE  
(under his breath)  
Don't worry about that pistol. She  
came walking out and said it needed  
cleaning. I tried to talk her out of  
it, but she says she always cleans  
your weapon.

BUDDY  
She used to.



DALE  
I checked and made sure it wasn't  
loaded.

Grace and Nat finish the song.

BUDDY  
Thanks.

INT. WINNEBAGO - MIDMORNING

Mike sleeps in the bed above the driver's compartment. He rolls over, and his arm falls off the bed. He wakes up slowly, and sees Audra at a table staring at her father's letter.

Mike gets out of bed.

MIKE  
Any coffee left?

Audra nods "yes."

Mike pours a cup and sits across from Audra.

MIKE  
(continuing)  
Can't sleep?

She nods in the affirmative.

AUDRA  
I just realized that the date on this  
letter is from the day he called and  
said he was coming to visit?

MIKE  
I guess he decided to tell you in  
person.

AUDRA  
Then why didn't he tell me when he  
had the chance?

MIKE  
I don't know. I wish he would have.

Audra picks the letter up.

AUDRA  
The last time he called me before  
that was the night they found out  
about my brother. He asked me to give  
part of the eulogy. I did all right  
at first.

(more)

AUDRA (cont'd)

I told them what a beautiful person he was, how he could play a piano like no one I've ever heard. But then I looked into the crowd, and all I could see were the officers dressed in their whites. I got so angry that they were safe and he was dead. So I told them what I thought of them, that I hated them, and held them responsible for Jimmy's death. When Dad tried to get me off the podium, I told him I hated him more than them, because the only reason Jimmy ever went to Annapolis was to try and please him, and that was the only reason we were speaking over his dead body. By this time, Mom had joined him and tried to get me to sit down. I walked out and that's the last time I saw my father until we picked them up at the airport.

MIKE

Do you still blame him for Jimmy?

AUDRA

No, I don't know if I ever really did. I don't know why I said that.

MIKE

Have you ever told him that?

AUDRA

I've started to try before, but I...

She let's her words trail off.

MIKE

I think it's about time you did.

INT. DALE'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - MIDMORNING

Grace sloshes around in the tub. Buddy sits on the tub's sidewall.

GRACE

Today we're going to find out for sure.

BUDDY

Find out what?

GRACE

Whether that cutthroat is still swimming that river bend.

BUDDY  
Or its children.

GRACE  
Or its grandchildren.

Buddy gets up, grabs a towel from the wall. Grace sticks her hand out. He helps her to her feet, then hands her the towel. She drapes it around her shoulders before stepping out of the tub. While she towels her body, Buddy grabs a smaller towel and rubs her hair.

GRACE  
(continuing)  
I always wanted grandchildren.

BUDDY  
I know you did, Hon. So did I.

When Buddy's done towelling Grace's hair, she glances at the mirror. A look of surprise crosses her face.

GRACE  
Who's that!?!

Grace backs away from their reflection in the mirror.

BUDDY  
It's me, Hon. I've just got a couple black eyes.

GRACE  
It's not...

BUDDY  
Yes, it is. We just talked about it, remember? I look like I did after that football game.

GRACE  
No. Her!

Grace points at her reflection.

INT. WINNEBAGO - MIDDAY

Audra's at the sink preparing a new pot of coffee. She looks out the window and sees that it's quit snowing, but the sky is still overcast.

Calhoun huddles with a group, pointing to a laminated map that's laid on top of the trunk of a State Trooper's SUV.

One of the group members reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out a plug of tobacco and a knife. He opens the knife, cuts a section of the plug, and sticks it in his mouth.

Audra stares hard at the tobacco chewer.

EXT. WRECK SITE - MIDDAY

Calhoun folds the map. The back door of the RV slams shut. The group turns to see Audra running toward them.

AUDRA

They're going to Johnson's Ford.

CALHOUN

What?

AUDRA

We used to camp there. It's on the Yaak.

CALHOUN

The Yaak?

TOBACCO MAN

It's a river in Montana.

AUDRA

I saw him cutting his tobacco and I remembered my Dad had a knife like that. Then I remembered camping there and getting up early every morning and walking its banks looking for driftwood. That has to be where they're going. It's the only place that makes any sense.

Mike joins the group.

MIKE

What's going on?

CALHOUN

Do you remember where on the river?

AUDRA

It's been a long time. I'd have to look at a map.

Calhoun unfolds his map and lays it out again. Audra leans over, and examines it for a moment.

AUDRA

(continuing)

Right there! Let's go.

CALHOUN

Wait a second. That may be where they're headed; but for all we know, they're still out here

(more)

CALHOUN (cont'd)  
 (gesturing to their  
 surroundings)  
 somewhere.

AUDRA  
 They're not. He wouldn't take her  
 into this. She might have wandered  
 into it without him, but he wouldn't  
 take her into it and we haven't found  
 him yet. They got a ride somehow.

Calhoun turns to a subordinate, JIM.

CALHOUN  
 The weather service still saying the  
 ceiling won't clear today?

Jim nods "yes."

Calhoun weighs his decision.

CALHOUN  
 (continuing)  
 Okay.

INT./EXT. DALE'S CADILLAC/BACK ROAD - AFTERNOON

A recent model Cadillac makes its way through an isolated  
 stretch of road.

Dale drives, Buddy unscrews a thermos top, and Grace sleeps  
 in the back. She wears the high school letterman's jacket.

BUDDY  
 Give us an hour, then make the call.

DALE  
 All right.

Buddy pours coffee into a cup.

BUDDY  
 You got any children?

DALE  
 Nope.

BUDDY  
 We've got a daughter. She's a lawyer.  
 Does a lot of free work for women and  
 children and poor people.

DALE  
 I guess you have to allow that some  
 lawyers do good things.

BUDDY

We're not so close anymore, but she's turned out just like I hoped she would...I've always wanted to tell her that, but never found the right time, or the right words to let her know...So I wrote her a letter.

DALE

What'd she think of it?

BUDDY

I don't know.

Dale doesn't respond. Buddy takes a sip of coffee.

BUDDY

(continuing)

This is good coffee.

DALE

Thanks.

BUDDY

You think I'm doing the right thing?

Before answering, Dale looks at Grace in his rearview mirror.

DALE

My wife -- one day we found out she was sick and it wasn't too much longer before she was gone. A blind man could see she didn't have a chance, but she thought she was going to beat it. I'd go see her in the hospital and pretend she'd be coming home soon. It got to the point that I'd wake up everyday and pray that it day would be her last because I couldn't stand to see her suffer anymore...but as painful as it was watching her die, I'd have killed anybody who tried to keep us apart. I figure you got your reasons.

INT./EXT. GOVERNMENT SUV - AFTERNOON

It has stopped snowing and the sun is starting to peek through the clouds. Calhoun drives, Audra sits next to him, and Mike sits in the back.

AUDRA

The fishing was great. Jimmy caught a huge cutthroat once.

(more)

AUDRA (cont'd)

He was so proud of himself, he had to clean it and cook it himself, although the cooking part was a mistake. They were going to build their retirement home there, but decided not to after Jimmy died.

Calhoun's cell phone RINGS.

CALHOUN

(into the phone)

Calhoun...Okay, this is what I want your men to do.

INT./EXT. DALE'S CADILLAC/BACK ROAD - AFTERNOON

The Cadillac winds its way over the craggy terrain. Grace is now awake.

BUDDY

We should be able to see the river.

They round a bend, and sure enough, to their right and below them, flows the Yaak; wide, quick-running and beautiful.

BUDDY

(continuing)

There it is! See it?

Grace puts her face to the back window.

GRACE

I see it!

The Cadillac takes another curve.

BUDDY

There was an old trading post right around here. Remember?

GRACE

Uh-huh. It was called Vic's.

They round another bend and Vic's appears to their left.

Vic's now looks almost like any other gas station/convenience store. The only vestiges of its former life are the old Texaco sign, and a weather-beaten utility shed that looks like it won't make it through the next blizzard.

A County Sheriff's patrol car is the lone vehicle parked outside.

GRACE

(continuing)

There it is!

INT. COUNTY SHERIFF'S PATROL CAR - AFTERNOON

The patrol car's occupant, SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #1, talks on the radio. Through his back window we see Dale's Cadillac drive out of frame.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #1  
You want to run that last part by me again?

PEG (V.O. FROM RADIO SPEAKER)  
I say again, suspects are in their mid-seventies and believed armed and dangerous.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #1  
Did you say they were in their seventies?

PEG (V.O. FROM RADIO SPEAKER)  
That's what I said.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #1  
Johnson's Ford?

PEG (V.O. FROM RADIO SPEAKER)  
Yep. Hold on, Bill wants to talk to you.

Another Deputy, SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #2, walks out of Vic's carrying two cups of coffee.

BILL (V.O. FROM RADIO SPEAKER)  
Listen up, Charley.

Sheriff's Deputy #2 gets in the car.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #2  
What's up?

Sheriff's Deputy #1 gives his partner a hold on signal.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #1  
Go ahead, Chief.

BILL (V.O. FROM RADIO SPEAKER)  
This is the Fed's baby. You are not to apprehend. If you find them, you call me and monitor the situation. The only interaction you have with them is if there's imminent danger. You got that?

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #1  
Got it.



BILL (V.O. FROM RADIO SPEAKER)  
 Apparently our brother officers in  
 Idaho screwed the pooch on this. Now  
 you two get down there, and let's see  
 if we can show the Feds we know what  
 we're doing.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #1  
 Roger, Chief.

He puts his handmike down and grabs a coffee.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #1  
 (continuing)  
 You're not going to believe this.

INT. DALE'S CADILLAC - AFTERNOON

Grace points enthusiastically at steep bluffs across the  
 river.

GRACE  
 Look, you see?

Buddy doesn't say a word, but it's clear he's thrilled Grace  
 recognizes the landmark.

GRACE  
 (continuing)  
 Don't you remember?

BUDDY  
 I remember.

There's a turn off ahead and to the right of the vehicle.

BUDDY  
 (continuing)  
 That's it. Turn right here!

Dale slows the vehicle.

INT. GOVERNMENT SUV - AFTERNOON

Calhoun points to a river in the distance.

CALHOUN  
 That's your river. Anything look  
 familiar?

AUDRA  
 No. Not yet.

INT./EXT. DALE'S CADILLAC/RIVER CLEARING - AFTERNOON

The sun shines with full glory.

The Cadillac breaks from the woodline into a large clearing. (The setting from the Ryan family picture that Grace knocked over the first night in Audra's house.) The clearing is beautiful: hidden in the woods and covered by a fresh coat of snow, with a clear view of the broad expanse of water and the rising cliffs on the other side.

GRACE  
It's beautiful!

BUDDY  
It's exactly the same.

Dale stops the vehicle. Grace, clutching her umbrella, gets out and walks towards a small rise next to the trees. Buddy turns to Dale.

BUDDY  
(continuing)  
I don't know how to thank you.

DALE  
No need.

Dale extends his hand. Buddy shakes it, then gets out of the car.

Dale honks as he drives away. Grace, on top of the knoll, waves in return. Buddy joins her.

BUDDY  
This is it.

He walks a few yards closer to the river.

BUDDY  
(continuing)  
We were going to put the living room right here.

Grace doesn't acknowledge him. He's so caught up in the moment he doesn't notice her staring at the water.

BUDDY  
(continuing)  
Right here! This is where we were going to put that big bay window so we could watch the sunsets. Remember, Hon?

GRACE  
Uh-huh.

Buddy turns around and sees her looking at the water.

BUDDY  
You don't remember.

GRACE

I do too.

BUDDY

What do you remember?

GRACE

I remember...I remember watching  
sunsets through a window.

BUDDY

That's okay, Hon.

Buddy leaves her and walks to the river's edge. She remains on the knoll, wanting to join him, but too afraid of the water to move.

INT./EXT. DALE'S CADILLAC/BACK ROAD - AFTERNOON

Dale passes the Sheriff's Deputy's vehicle. In his rearview mirror he watches the Deputies turn onto the access road that leads to the river clearing.

DALE

You don't want to go there.

Dale drives around a bend, then pulls a U-turn.

INT./EXT. SHERIFF'S DEPUTY'S CAR/ACCESS ROAD - AFTERNOON

The Police Car drives slowly down the road.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #1

(looking at the fresh  
vehicle tracks)

Somebody's been here since the snow  
fell. Let's walk through the woods.

EXT. RIVER CLEARING - AFTERNOON

Buddy picks up a stone, cocks his arm to throw it into the river, but stops when he notices a cutthroat trout feeding by a half-submerged tree.

BUDDY

It's here, Hon.

GRACE

What?

BUDDY

The trout.

GRACE

The trout?

BUDDY  
The cutthroat.

Grace still doesn't understand.

BUDDY  
(continuing)  
The fish that Jimmy caught. It's  
right here. Come here, I'll show you.

Grace won't budge. When Buddy realizes she's not coming he  
throws the stone into the water. The cutthroat darts away.

He walks to Grace and hugs her.

BUDDY  
(continuing)  
I love you, Grace.

GRACE  
I know you do.

EXT. OBSERVATION POINT IN THE WOODS - AFTERNOON

The Deputies are watching Buddy and Grace through binoculars  
from a hidden vantage point in the trees.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #1  
(whispering into his  
portable radio)  
They're hugging each other.

INT. GOVERNMENT SUV - AFTERNOON

Audra, Mike and Calhoun listen intently to the radio  
conversation.

CALHOUN  
Is he armed?

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #1 (V.O. FROM RADIO SPEAKER)  
I can't tell.

EXT. RIVER CLEARING - AFTERNOON

Buddy and Grace are still holding each other. Buddy's  
fighting back tears.

BUDDY  
Well, we made it, Hon.

Grace looks at her husband's face and breaks their embrace.

GRACE  
We should get you inside out of the  
cold. Your face is turning red.

BUDDY  
I'll be okay.

GRACE  
Did I ever tell you what a handsome  
man you are?

BUDDY  
Never.

GRACE  
Francis Ryan, you are a liar. I told  
you that the night I took you away  
from Lucy Davenport.

BUDDY  
You didn't take me away from her.

GRACE  
I did so. I asked the bandleader to  
play "**Star Dust**", then I told my  
brother to cut in on you.

BUDDY  
I gave Freddie Blanchard five dollars  
to do the same thing. Your brother  
just beat him to it. Come to think of  
it, I never got my money back.

Grace hums the first few notes of "**Star Dust**." Buddy extends  
his hand.

BUDDY  
(continuing)  
Would you care to join me?

GRACE  
I'd like to, but I don't know if  
there's room on my dance card.

BUDDY  
I'm a pretty fair dancer.

GRACE  
Well in that case, I guess I can fit  
you in.

Grace falls into Buddy's arms, they start dancing as Grace  
sings.

GRACE  
(continuing; singing  
a cappella)  
"And now the purple dusk of twilight  
time. Steals across the meadows of my  
heart..."

EXT. OBSERVATION POINT IN THE WOODS - AFTERNOON

Dale has snuck up, unnoticed, on the two Deputies. Positioned behind a boulder some fifteen yards from them he has a clear line of sight on Buddy and Grace, as well.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #1  
(into his walkie-  
talkie)  
That's what I said.

INT. GOVERNMENT SUV - AFTERNOON

Audra, Mike, and Calhoun listen on the loudspeaker.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #1 (V.O. FROM RADIO SPEAKER)  
They're dancing.

EXT. RIVER CLEARING - AFTERNOON

Grace enthusiastically belts out the lyrics. Buddy reaches in his pocket, pulls his pistol out, and holds it behind Grace.

Grace stops singing.

GRACE  
You know the words. Sing it with me.

BUDDY  
No, I like to hear your voice. I'll  
only screw it up.

GRACE  
(singing, a cappella)  
"Love is now the Star Dust of  
yesterday, The music of the years  
gone by..."

EXT. OBSERVATION POINT IN THE WOODS - AFTERNOON

Both Deputies are transfixed by the scene before them.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #2  
He's got a pistol out.

INT. GOVERNMENT SUV - AFTERNOON

They can't believe what they're hearing.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #2 (V.O. FROM RADIO SPEAKER)  
What should I do?

With no hesitation...

CALHOUN  
Do what you have to.

EXT. RIVER CLEARING - AFTERNOON

Buddy unlocks the pistol's safety, lifts it up, and points it at the side of Grace's head. He places his index finger on the trigger.

EXT. OBSERVATION POINT IN THE WOODS - AFTERNOON

Deputy #2 focuses on his rifle's sight group.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #1  
Shoot him?

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #2  
I can't. I might hit her.

Dale comes out from behind his boulder.

EXT. RIVER CLEARING - AFTERNOON

The pistol still point at her head, Grace's back faces the deputies as she sings the last verse.

GRACE  
(singing, a cappella)  
"Tho' I dream in vain, In my heart it  
will remain: My Star Dust melody, The  
memory of love's refrain."

Buddy pulls his finger off the trigger, and lowers the weapon behind her back.

Grace finishes singing and pulls back a little from Buddy so she can see his face.

They smile at each other.

BUDDY  
We've got to get back to see Audra.

The CRACK of a rifle shot is heard.

EXT. OBSERVATION POINT IN THE WOODS - AFTERNOON

Deputy #2 wheels around, holding the right side of his face.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #2  
What the fuck?

Deputy #1 draws his pistol on Dale who's standing in front of the boulder.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #1  
Freeze!

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #2  
What the fuck?

Dale puts his hands in the air. Deputy #2 takes his hand away from his face and looks at the remains of a snowball.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #2  
(continuing)  
You hit me with a snowball.

DALE  
You tried to shoot him.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #1  
He was going to kill his wife.

DALE  
No, he wasn't. There's no firing pin in that pistol. I took it out this morning.

EXT. RIVER CLEARING - AFTERNOON

Buddy lies on top of Grace. They are protected from the deputies on the far side of the knoll where they planned to build their dream home.

He rolls off of her, and groans in agony. He's bleeding profusely from his right leg. A scarlet pattern slowly spreads in the snow.

GRACE  
Buddy, you're bleeding.

Buddy knows he's in trouble. Gritting his teeth, he applies direct pressure with his hand, trying to stem the blood flow.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #1 (O.S. FROM THE WOODLINE)  
Police! Throw down your weapon and put your hands in the air!

Buddy picks up the pistol he dropped when they tumbled.

BUDDY  
Watch your ears, and stay down.

Buddy points the pistol toward the woods, and pulls the trigger. The weapon doesn't fire. He drops it, then reaches into his other pocket, and takes the pistol from the Opportunity robbery out.

BUDDY  
(continuing; yelling)  
What'd you say?

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #1 (O.S. FROM THE WOODLINE)  
I said...

Buddy fires three rounds in rapid succession



INT./EXT. GOVERNMENT SUV - AFTERNOON

The vehicle takes the turn off the main road.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #1 (V.O. FROM RADIO SPEAKER)  
We're receiving gunfire.

CALHOUN  
Just maintain the situation. We're almost there.

EXT. OBSERVATION POINT IN THE WOODS - AFTERNOON

As Deputy #1 takes his walkie-talkie away from his face, Deputy #2 turns to Dale.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #2  
(to Dale)  
What's that about the firing pin?

DALE  
I don't know what happened. I took it out.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #1  
Cuff him.

Deputy #2 reaches for his belt.

INT. GOVERNMENT SUV - AFTERNOON

The SUV skids to a stop next to the empty police vehicle. All three exit and scramble into the woods.

EXT. BEHIND THE KNOLL - AFTERNOON

Still applying pressure, Grace sits up. Buddy reaches out and pulls her down, almost passing out from the effort.

BUDDY  
You've got to stay down.

GRACE  
We have to get you to a doctor.

BUDDY  
No. It's too late. I want you to tell Audra that I'm sorry. Okay. You have to remember this.

EXT. OBSERVATION POINT IN THE WOODS - AFTERNOON

Audra, Mike and Calhoun enter the observation point.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY #1  
He hasn't fired again?

CALHOUN  
Give me the bull horn.

EXT. BEHIND THE KNOLL - AFTERNOON

Buddy stares at his wound. He removes his hand.

BUDDY  
Say it!

GRACE  
Tell Audra we're sorry.

BUDDY  
No. Tell her I'm sorry.

CALHOUN (O.S. FROM THE WOODLINE)  
Mr. Ryan, my name is John Calhoun.  
I'm an FBI agent. I want you to throw  
down your weapon so we can help you.

BUDDY  
(weakly)  
Not today.

He shoots a couple rounds over their heads for good measure.

EXT. OBSERVATION POINT IN THE WOODS - AFTERNOON

Everybody takes cover even though the shots land nowhere near them.

AUDRA  
What's he doing?

DALE  
You his daughter?

AUDRA  
Yes. Who are you?

DALE  
I drove him here, and all he wanted  
to talk about was how proud he was of  
you.

Audra takes a moment to digest this new information, then bolts towards the knoll.

CALHOUN  
(to Deputy #2)  
Grab her!

Too late. She's gone. Mike tries to follow, but Deputy #2 isn't going to fail again.

CALHOUN  
(continuing; to the  
Deputies)  
Nobody else goes down there until I  
say so. Don't let him hurt her. You  
got that?

Both Deputies nod "yes." More cautiously than Audra, Calhoun  
moves toward the knoll.

EXT. BEHIND THE KNOLL - AFTERNOON

Buddy's face has turned ashen.

GRACE  
I'll tell her that you're sorry.

BUDDY  
That's it, Hon.

AUDRA (O.S.)  
Dad! Mom!

Shocked to hear his daughter's voice, Buddy, with great  
effort, lifts his head above the knoll to see Audra running  
towards them. He can't believe it.

BUDDY  
Audra?

Hearing the name Grace lifts her head up as Audra drops to  
her knees to join them. Audra immediately notices his wound  
and all the blood.

AUDRA  
Let me see.

Buddy, too weak to fight with her, removes his hand from the  
wound.

AUDRA  
(continuing; putting  
a brave face on)  
How're you doing?

BUDDY  
Not good.

GRACE  
Buddy says to tell you he's sorry.

AUDRA  
Oh, Daddy.

BUDDY  
I never wanted it to turn out like  
this. I was only trying...

He runs out of breath.

AUDRA

It's okay.

BUDDY

Your mother always kept me up on what you were doing. I never stopped loving you. You know that. Tell me you know that.

AUDRA

I know. Me too, Daddy. I never stopped either.

BUDDY

She told me about you marrying Mike. Didn't you Hon?

GRACE

Uh-huh.

BUDDY

She almost talked me into going...You've got to take care of her now.

AUDRA

I will.

BUDDY

(can barely get the words out)

You and Mike. He's a good one...

Buddy has to take more time to get enough strength to continue.

BUDDY

(continuing)

I wrote you a letter to tell you how sorry I am for every thing.

Calhoun comes up. Sees how bad off Buddy is and, not wanting to intrude, backs off after he picks up the pistol.

BUDDY

(continuing)

After I wrote it I decided I had to tell you face to face. But when we got there I didn't.

AUDRA

It's okay.

BUDDY  
No, it's not. I should have. Then  
none of this would have happened.

Buddy sees Calhoun in the background, and grabs Audra's hand.

BUDDY  
(continuing)  
You tell them I couldn't hurt your  
mother. And I wasn't trying to shoot  
them.

AUDRA  
They know that.

Buddy releases his grip.

BUDDY  
Good.

AUDRA  
Dad, it's my fault. If I hadn't been  
so st --

Buddy grabs her hand hard.

BUDDY  
I'm glad you're here.

AUDRA  
Me too.

Buddy lets go of her hand, and dies.

AUDRA  
(continuing)  
Dad! Daddy!

GRACE  
He's sleeping. He's been tired lately.

AUDRA  
Then we have to make sure he gets a  
long, peaceful rest.

FADE OUT: