

RUINS TO REDEMPTION

Written by
Derrick Vernon

Producer-facing revised draft

INT. KANE'S NEW HOUSE - DAY

Half-unpacked boxes crowd a modest Chicago living room.

KANE, early 40s, powerful and disciplined, carries in the last lamp.

KRISTINE, late 30s, smart and composed, studies the place with cautious hope.

KRISTINE

Tell me the truth. You miss the field.

KANE

Some days.

KRISTINE

And some days?

KANE

Some days I remember I still got a wife and a son.

She smiles. It almost takes.

A television in the corner plays local news.

Archival footage shows a chaotic street shootout. A CHILD'S BIRTHDAY TABLE. Sirens. Screaming.

ANCHOR (V.O.)

Fourteen years after the Samuel Hart shooting, the city remains divided. Gang leader Trey Combs was convicted. The officers involved were cleared of wrongdoing.

Kristine stiffens.

KANE

You know this case?

KRISTINE

Everybody in Chicago knows this case.

Outside, LITTLE KANE, 8, runs through the yard with headphones on and a toy pistol in his hand.

EXT. KANE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Tires SCREAM outside.

Two patrol cars jump the curb.

OFFICER DELANEY

Drop the weapon!

Little Kane cannot hear them.

He turns, confused, the toy gun still in his hand.

Kane rushes outside. Sees one officer drawing down on his son.

KANE

He is a child!

The second officer swings toward Kane.

Kane fires once.

Officer Delaney drops.

The other officer freezes, shocked.

Little Kane rips off his headphones and starts crying.

Kane lets the gun fall.

He kneels in the grass and puts his hands behind his head.

INT. HOLDING ROOM - NIGHT

Kane sits bruised and cuffed to a table.

A PUBLIC DEFENDER slides a file toward him.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

The surviving officer says you
fired before they identified
the threat.

KANE

They had my son in their
sights.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

I know. But "I know" is not
evidence.

Kane stares through the one-way mirror.

He has been on the other side of rooms like this his whole career.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Packed gallery. Press everywhere.

Kristine watches from the front row, holding herself together by force.

SURVIVING OFFICER

We were trying to de-escalate.

KANE

That is a lie.

The judge silences him.

JUDGE

Mr. Kane, your record in service to this country is extraordinary.

JUDGE

But the law does not allow me to excuse the killing of a police officer.

Kane looks to Kristine. To Little Kane. To the badge on the dead officer's memorial photo.

JUDGE

Life without parole.

Kristine closes her eyes.

Kane never does.

EXT. KRISTINE'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A cruiser crawls past the curb.

Then another.

Kristine stands on the porch with Little Kane tucked behind her leg.

INT. PRISON PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

Kane grips the phone hard enough to whiten his knuckles.

KRISTINE

They keep driving by. Slow.
They want me to see them.

KANE

Take our son and stay with
your mother for now.

KRISTINE

They are not going to stop.

KANE

Call Patrick McCarthy. Tell
him I need him.

KRISTINE

The ghost from Europe?

KANE

He owes me his life.

A guard SLAMS the glass.

GUARD

Time.

KANE

Keep Little Kane close. No
school. No routine. Nothing
predictable.

KRISTINE

Come back to us.

The line dies.

INT. CHICAGO STATE PRISON - DAY

Steel doors. Concrete. Noise that never stops.

Kane enters with a duffel and a target on his back.

REESE, 50s, hollow-eyed but decent, watches from the cell.

REESE

You are the cop killer.

KANE

I am the father.

REESE

In here, those are not the
same thing.

At chow, a SOLDIER from another table steps in front of Kane.

SOLDIER

Trouble wants a word.

KANE

Then Trouble can walk over here.

The soldier swings.

Kane catches the fist, twists, and drives the man face-first into the table.

The cafeteria goes dead quiet.

Across the room, TROUBLE, 40s, massive, calm, and impossible to read, keeps eating.

INT. PRISON SHOWER CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Trouble blocks Kane's path.

TROUBLE

You embarrass one of mine, you embarrass me.

KANE

Then be embarrassed.

TROUBLE

I can keep every inmate and every guard off you.

TROUBLE

All I need is your wife on the outside. Clean record. Simple deliveries.

KANE

Ask me again and I will break your jaw.

Trouble studies him.

TROUBLE

Pride gets men buried in here.

KANE

My pride kept my son alive.

Trouble steps back.

A beat later, guards rush in with batons and gas.

So do Trouble's men.

Kane fights until he cannot stand.

They drag him to solitary on bloodied feet.

INT. SOLITARY - DAYS LATER

Kane hangs from cuffs bolted to the wall.

A small television outside the bars rolls through another news report.

ANCHOR (V.O.)

The city now links eight murders to the same unknown offender. Victims include police officers and known gang associates.

Trouble appears at the bars.

TROUBLE

You are still breathing because I said so.

KANE

I did not ask.

TROUBLE

No. You asked for something harder.

Trouble leaves.

Kane lowers his head, thinking.

Mixed targets. No robbery. No ransom. No random pattern.

INT. PRISON PHONE BOOTH - MORNING

Kane speaks low, every word measured.

KANE

Keep him off the street. Something is moving out there.

KRISTINE

What kind of something?

KANE

The kind that is counting
bodies.

KRISTINE

McCarthy called.

KANE

And?

KRISTINE

He said he can make people
listen. Not promise. Just
listen.

KANE

That is enough.

Kane looks back as guards pass.

KANE

Do not ever let Little Kane
out of your sight.

MONTAGE

News reports pile up. More dead officers. More gang
funerals.

Kane trains in the dark with prison-made weights.

Kristine and Little Kane move from one safe address to
another.

McCarthy's name opens doors Kane cannot.

Two years pass.

INT. CHIEF HOLLIS'S OFFICE - DAY

Kane sits in shackles across from CHIEF HOLLIS, 50s, hard,
exhausted, and angry.

PATRICK MCCARTHY, 60s, polished and military precise, stands
near the window.

HOLLIS

My brother is dead because of
you.

KANE

Your brother aimed at my son.

HOLLIS

You do not get to say his name.

MCCARTHY

Enough.

McCarthy places a crime scene photo and a handwritten note on the desk.

MCCARTHY

The killer left that.

KANE

Dvojce.

HOLLIS

Meaning?

KANE

Twin.

Hollis slides over a thick file.

HOLLIS

Help us stop him. You get five years instead of forever.

KANE

And if I fail?

HOLLIS

Then you die in prison where you belong.

Kane opens the file. Photos of officers. Gang members. Families.

KANE

I want every victim, every report, every ballistics sheet, every sealed appendix tied to the Hart shooting.

HOLLIS

Why start there?

KANE

Because killers who leave names want something understood.

Kane signs.

INT. PRISON HALLWAY - LATER

Officers escort Kane back through the block.

Trouble calls him over with a look.

INT. PRISON INTERVIEW ROOM - CONTINUOUS**TROUBLE**

I hear you are stepping back
into daylight.

KANE

News travels fast in here.

TROUBLE

News. Guards. Fear. Same
thing.

Trouble leans in.

TROUBLE

That child from the old
shootout did not die from my
bullet.

TROUBLE

My round hit his leg. The
fatal round came from a Glock.

Kane registers it.

TROUBLE

Find the ghost that is hunting
my people.

KANE

I am hunting him for my
family.

TROUBLE

Fine. But when you catch him,
say Trey Combs remembers that
little boy.

Kane is led away.

EXT. SAFE CABIN - DAY

Pine trees. Silence. One road in.

Kane steps out of an unmarked SUV at a federal safe cabin.

Inside, walls fill with victim photos, maps, case files, and timelines.

KRISTINE (ON PHONE)

Can you hear me okay?

KANE

Clear.

He smiles for the first time in years.

KRISTINE

Little Kane got taller.

KANE

He always did everything fast.

KRISTINE

He still sleeps with your dog tags.

That one lands.

KANE

When this is done, I come home.

KRISTINE

Just do not disappear inside the job.

Kane looks at the wall.

The victims are not random. Not even close.

EXT. MURDER SCENE - MORNING

An officer's house. Crime tape. Evidence markers.

Kane ducks under the tape and moves room to room.

He stops at a family photo wall.

Husband. Wife. Two girls.

Blonde hair catches on the couch seam.

Kane bags it.

KANE

Wife is brunette. Daughters too.

EXT. MURDER SCENE - DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

McCarthy arrives.

KANE

Run DNA on this.

MCCARTHY

You have had the scene for five minutes.

KANE

And the killer had the house for twenty. He still left something that does not belong.

Kane nods at the front window.

KANE

Every victim had children.

MCCARTHY

You think that matters?

KANE

I think it is the point.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Kane works the wall until exhaustion catches him.

He falls asleep in the chair.

A SHADOW slips through the unlocked back door.

A bloody knife lands on the table beside Kane.

A note is placed under it:

CALL AT 8.

Kane wakes before dawn, gun up.

The cabin is empty.

The knife is not.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Kane drops the knife into evidence.

Homicide detectives stare at him like he brought in a confession.

Hours later, alarms hit the floor.

Another officer is dead. So are his children.

EXT. NEW CRIME SCENE - LATER

Hollis meets Kane at the curb with rage in his face.

HOLLIS

Same knife.

KANE

It was planted.

HOLLIS

Convenient.

MCCARTHY

His phone never left the cabin.

HOLLIS

Then he has help.

Kane is cuffed, processed, then released before dawn.

Suspicion has officially attached itself to him.

INT. KANE'S SUV - NIGHT

Rain. Empty road. Kane drives alone.

His phone rings from a blocked number.

KANE

Talk.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

I hoped you would say that.

KANE

Dvojce.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

Good. You learned the word.
Now learn the man.

KANE

You are killing families.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

Families were killed first.

Kane pulls to the shoulder.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

Tell Trey Combs no cell can
save him.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

Tell him November
twenty-seventh belongs to me.

KANE

If you know Trey, you know
prison. If you know prison,
you know me.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

I know your wife. I know your
son. I know how long your
brother takes to answer the
phone.

Kane's face changes.

KANE

Leave my family out of this.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

Your family walked into this a
long time ago.

The line goes dead.

INT. ISAAC'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kane shoves the door open.

Furniture overturned.

ISAAC, late 30s, Kane's brother, lies bleeding but
conscious.

ISAAC

Blond guy. Glasses. Blue eyes.

ISAAC

Young. Maybe twenty-six.

ISAAC

Neck twitched when he smiled.

KANE

Stay with me.

Kane dials 911 with one hand and applies pressure with the other.

INT. HOSPITAL FAMILY WAITING AREA - NIGHT

Kane watches archived news footage on a tablet.

The Hart shooting plays again.

Samuel Hart drops.

Another boy runs to him and screams.

Kane freezes the frame.

Zooms in.

Same face. Two boys. Twins.

KANE

That is it.

He flips through the case file.

SAMUEL HART. Party victim.

MICHAEL HART. Surviving sibling.

Kane breathes once, deep and cold.

INT. HOSPITAL SERVICE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

A man in scrubs moves fast through a restricted hallway.

Kane sees the neck twitch.

KANE

Michael!

Michael bolts.

Kane tears after him through swinging doors and out to the parking structure.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Michael fires once. Kane drops behind a pillar.

They collide on the next level.

Fast. Trained. Violent.

Michael is younger and reckless. Kane is heavier and precise.

Kane buries a knife into Michael's side.

Michael head-butts him, grabs the blade out, and escapes into the dark.

INT. MICHAEL'S HIDDEN ROOM - NIGHT

A hidden room under a rented house.

Screens cover one wall. Files cover another.

Kristine and Little Kane are bound in separate chairs.

Michael paces in front of them, pale and shaking with rage.

MICHAEL

Your husband keeps getting close.

MICHAEL

He is better than the rest of them.

MICHAEL

But not better than what they made of me.

He crouches in front of Kristine.

MICHAEL

You stood in a courtroom and called my brother collateral damage.

KRISTINE

I was not lead counsel.

MICHAEL

You were still there.

Little Kane strains against the ropes.

LITTLE KANE

Leave my mom alone.

Michael looks at the boy for a long time.

MICHAEL

Brave. Same as your father.

He walks out, locking the steel door behind him.

INT. PRISON INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Kane sits across from Trouble again.

An armed detail waits outside the glass.

KANE

He wants you afraid.

TROUBLE

He already got that.

KANE

November twenty-seventh.

Trouble goes still.

TROUBLE

Samuel Hart.

TROUBLE

Birthday party across from the block.

TROUBLE

Wrong place. Wrong day. Wrong city.

KANE

Not wrong for him.

TROUBLE

I remember the little brother now.

TROUBLE

White kid. Could not stop screaming.

Kane watches the memory hit him.

TROUBLE

If he is coming after me, warn my daughter.

TROUBLE

Tell my people the blizzard is coming.

KANE

Blizzard?

TROUBLE

It means everybody moves.

INT. FEDERAL LAB - DAY

McCarthy hands over a DNA report.

Kane reads it in silence.

Possible paternal relation to Patrick McCarthy.

MCCARTHY

Looks like contamination.

Kane looks up.

KANE

You think?

MCCARTHY

It happens.

Kane pockets the report.

He says nothing more.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Kane stares at an old photograph from Europe.

Younger McCarthy. Two blond boys on either side of him.

Kane calls Kristine from a secure line.

KANE

Why did you never tell me you touched the Hart case?

KRISTINE

Because I was ashamed.

KANE

Shame is not a strategy.

KRISTINE

I was second chair. Fresh out of school. I told myself it was just one file in a city full of files.

KANE

That file buried a child.

Silence on both ends.

KRISTINE

I know.

KRISTINE

And I have hated that part of
my life ever since.

Kane softens, but only a little.

KANE

We both served broken things.

KRISTINE

Then come home and stop
serving them.

The call cuts out.

Kane checks the trace.

Her safe line just went dark.

EXT. EMPTY SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

One dead agent by the driveway.

Another at the back door.

No Kristine. No Little Kane.

Kane finds a note pinned to the wall with a kitchen blade.

YOU WERE TOO SLOW.

INT. MCCARTHY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kane moves through the dark with his weapon up.

Voices from the study.

He stops just outside the half-closed door.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

I have them.

MCCARTHY (O.S.)

Then finish it before Kane
finds you.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

He almost did.

MCCARTHY (O.S.)

That is because I taught him
too well.

Kane's eyes go dead.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Kristine is going to watch him
fail.

MCCARTHY (O.S.)

She helped clear the officers.
She can watch justice come
back around.

Kane steps into the doorway.

KANE

Justice died the day you chose
revenge over your own son.

McCarthy slowly turns.

MCCARTHY

You should have stayed in
prison.

KANE

You should have buried Samuel.
Instead you weaponized
Michael.

MCCARTHY

I tried to save what was left
of him.

KANE

You fed what was worst in him.

Kane records on his phone as McCarthy talks.

MCCARTHY

The city let Samuel die.
Kristine helped them walk.
Hollis covered the stain. Trey
kept breathing.

MCCARTHY

My son only gave them back
what they left us with.

KANE

Where is he?

McCarthy glances toward a drawer.

Kane sees it.

McCarthy lunges for the gun.

Kane fires first.

McCarthy falls against the desk, mortally hit.

MCCARTHY

Route seventeen. The old Hart
house.

He dies there.

EXT. HART HOUSE - NIGHT

Remote edge of the city. Burned-out neighborhood. One house
restored in the middle of ruin.

Kane parks far back and studies the property.

He checks McCarthy's phone.

Security app. Camera grid. Door controls.

Kane smiles without humor.

KANE

You really did teach me too
well.

INT. HART HOUSE - NIGHT

Michael paces the living room, bleeding through fresh
stitches.

He pours gasoline from a can around the fireplace.

Kane locks every door from the app.

Bolts slam shut through the house.

MICHAEL

No.

He rushes the front door. Dead.

He smashes a window with a chair. Reinforced.

KANE (V.O.)

You built yourself a tomb.

MICHAEL

Show yourself.

KANE (V.O.)

First I get my family.

Kane enters through a service hatch in the basement.

INT. HART HOUSE BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Kane finds Kristine and Little Kane behind a steel door.

He cuts them free.

Kristine grabs him and holds on.

KRISTINE

He said you would not make it.

KANE

He talks too much.

Little Kane wraps himself around his father.

LITTLE KANE

I knew you were coming.

KANE

Safe room. Now.

He locks them inside a reinforced pantry.

Then he turns back toward the stairs.

INT. HART HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Michael waits in the middle of the room with a knife in one hand and Kane's dropped pistol in the other.

MICHAEL

You should have shot me at the garage.

KANE

I was hoping there was still a man left under all this.

MICHAEL

There was. He died with Samuel.

Michael tosses the pistol aside.

MICHAEL

No excuses tonight.

They collide.

The fight is savage and close.

Kane gets driven through a glass table.

Michael hammers him with elbows and knees.

MICHAEL

They took my brother.

KANE

And you took everyone else.

Michael slams Kane into the mantle.

Kane is fading.

Then Michael drags the murder knife across Kane's cheek, taunting.

MICHAEL

Redemption is a lie.

Kane explodes forward.

Head-butt. Elbow. Wrist break.

The knife drops.

Michael recovers and nearly chokes Kane out.

Kane reaches the knife with his fingertips.

He drives it into Michael's side once. Then again.

Michael stares at him, shocked, almost childlike now.

MICHAEL

He was my twin.

KANE

I know.

Michael collapses.

EXT. HART HOUSE - DAWN

Fire crawls through one corner of the old house where the gas caught during the fight.

Kane leads Kristine and Little Kane into the yard as sirens approach.

Hollis steps from the first tactical truck.

Kane hands him McCarthy's phone and his own recorded confession file.

KANE

Everything is on there.

HOLLIS

My brother wore the badge
dirty.

Hollis swallows that truth with effort.

HOLLIS

I cannot give you back what
this city took.

HOLLIS

But I can stop lying about it.

Kane nods.

Agents move past them into the smoking house.

INT. MODEST HOME - EUROPE - DAY

Months later.

Sun through open windows. Quiet. No sirens.

Television news reports federal arrests tied to the Hart cover-up and the McCarthy conspiracy.

A chyron notes Kane's sentence was commuted after the findings.

Outside, Little Kane kicks a soccer ball across a yard.

Kristine watches him from the garden.

Kane stands in the doorway with a mug of coffee he still does not drink.

KRISTINE

You coming?

Kane takes one last look at the quiet street.

He sets the mug down untouched and steps into the light.