

The Reckoning
Written By Nick Nelsen
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Nnelsen2970@gmail.com
402-278-2970

THE RECKONING

EXT. SIDE STREET - MIDDAY

A quiet Midwestern town of about fifty thousand people.

Saltbox homes line the streets near a modest downtown strip of local businesses. A grocery store. A diner. A hardware store. The bank. Church steeples rise above the rooftops.

Beyond town, small acreages stretch toward open farmland. Scattered houses sit behind tree lines and gravel drives on the edge of the community. Grain bins stand in the distance beyond town. Midday traffic trickles through Main Street.

In the distance, an ARMORED TRUCK turns the corner and heads toward the bank.

A MINIVAN sits parked at the curb, a few blocks from the bank, with the sliding door open.

A MAN (mid 30s, average, dark hair, scraggly, longer hair, full beard, forgettable) leans into the backseat, adjusting a CAR SEAT.

His face is calm and focused as he brushes something off the seat.

He speaks softly inside.

MAN

Almost ready... hold still, Buds...
There we go...

He tightens the straps carefully. Checks the latch. Tugs once more. Done.

In the far background, down the street, the truck pulls up to the bank.

The man glances up. Sees it, then finishes adjusting the seat.

EXT. BANK - CONTINUOUS

The TRUCK idles at the curb.

A SECURITY GUARD (early 40s, slightly overweight) steps out, lifting a heavy cash bag.

He and the DRIVER (30s, similar build) move toward the bank entrance. Routine. Procedural. Traffic hums around them.

Moments later-

The Driver and Security Guard exit the bank. They exchange nonverbal acknowledgments and go their separate ways. The Driver gets back in the truck and pulls away.

The Security Guard remains outside, adjusting his vest, blocking his eyes from the sun. Alone. He looks about the street. Analyzing the day.

EXT. SIDE STREET - CONTINUOUS

The MAN opens the driver's door, then gently slides the side door shut. A quiet click.

He walks to the driver's seat and gets in. The engine is already running.

EXT. BANK - CONTINUOUS

The SECURITY GUARD walks. Normal city noise surrounds him.

A suppressed rifle shot. Soft. Distant. Swallowed by traffic.

The guard drops instantly. No scream. Only the body hitting concrete. Silence settles as cars continue driving past.

No one reacts.

INT. MINIVAN - CONTINUOUS

The MAN's eyes in the rearview mirror. Still and controlled. No emotion, just confirmation. The van eases away from the curb.

INT. MINIVAN - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

We see the back seat of the van from inside the vehicle.

Through the rear window, we see:
The bank in the distance. The faint shape of a body on pavement.

In the foreground:
No baby, only the empty car seat.

Straps tremble slightly with the motion of the van.

INT. POLICE STATION - ELEVATOR LOBBY - DAY

The elevator doors slide open. PETE (30s) is waiting with two steaming mugs. He's dressed in a wrinkled shirt, looking like he's already been at his desk for a few hours.

Pete shoves the coffee toward RILEY (30s-40s female, sharp, tired eyes) before she can step out of the elevator. She has folders in one hand; she takes the coffee with the other. No "thank you" or glance upward. She takes a sip.

PETE

Welcome back, boss. Litigation went your way?

RILEY

Nope. Pretty sure the alimony will be nullified. We both make the same money, so the judge decided I'm not entitled to his. But hey, at least he isn't entitled to mine. Still have some of the possessions to figure out, though.

PETE

Does he still think you and I...?

Riley stops walking. She gives him a look that is equal parts exhaustion and irritation.

RILEY

Yep. Dumbass. He couldn't accept the fact that the reason I was at work, actually working.

PETE

Hey, to be fair, you are kind of a psycho when it comes to that. You slept at the station for five months. On a case that wasn't even active.

She shoots him a look. Eyes narrow, jaw tight. The "Don't even start with me" look.

PETE (CONT'D)

Heard.

They reach the conference room door. Pete glances at her mug.

PETE (CONT'D)

Glad you're back, though. Shit, check the mug.

She looks down. It's custom, scuffed, clearly a home job. It has a purple peony on it.

RILEY
Kelly made this?

PETE
Yep.

Riley pauses to respectfully admire the mug.

RILEY
Tell her thank you for letting me
crash on the couch for a few nights
and listening to my bullshit.
(beat)
You out-punted your coverage on
that one there, Peter.

PETE
No shit.

INT. POLICE STATION - CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They push into the conference room. Controlled chaos. Phones ring. Officers are moving. Monitors flicker with security footage. The bullpen noise dies down as they enter.

Riley walks straight to the front, hands slapping the table with her folders. Pete takes a seat at the front of the room near Riley.

RILEY
Paul Lansing. Dead at noon.

The room doesn't budge. Everyone is wide-eyed at Riley.

RILEY (CONT'D)
Why are we all staring at me when
the shooter is hours ahead of us?
What do we have?

On the monitor - a paused frame of the bank entrance. The security guard lies on the pavement. Riley studies the still image. Another officer scrolls through footage.

PETE
Security guard. Worked the bank six
years. You questioned him for the
Bowman case last year.

Riley's eyes catch something in the file. A flicker. She blinks it away before it becomes an expression.

RILEY
(flat, moving on)
Yep. Keep going.

PETE
Armored truck made a delivery at
twelve nineteen. Driver leaves.
Four minutes later, the guard's
alone outside.

RILEY
Money taken?

PETE
No.

RILEY
Attempt?

PETE
Doesn't look like it.

Riley watches the footage replay. The guard walks, then
collapses. No visible shooter.

RILEY
Cameras?

TECH
Nothing useful. No clear vehicle.
No one running. No one approaching.

RILEY
Witnesses?

OFFICER ONE
A couple people heard something.
Thought it was construction, or
they didn't know what it was.

Riley leans closer to the screen.

RILEY
So someone waits until the truck
leaves... ignores the money... and puts
one round in his head.

No one answers.

RILEY (CONT'D)
Pretty good chance this is not a
robbery.

Riley scrunches her face, half annoyed.

PETE
Probably personal.

RILEY
I mean, has to be.

Police officers straighten.

RILEY (CONT'D)
Get me everything on the driver.
Contracts, routes, schedule
changes. I want to know who knew
he'd be there.

The room moves into motion. Phones picked up. Keys typing.
Riley keeps watching the frozen image of the fallen guard.

INT. CELLAR - DAY

A narrow STAIRWELL descends from a cellar door.

From the bottom of the stairs, looking up. The cellar door
CREAKS open. Light spills down. Boots descend down the steps.

JEANS. WORK BOOTS. A FLANNEL SHIRT. A SKI MASK covers his
face.

The Hitman (mid 30s, average build, dark hair, forgettable)
reaches the bottom step and turns left.

HITMAN
Thank you for that information.
Everything's been taken care of.
I really appreciate that.

We see who the Hitman is talking to. A rickety, makeshift
JAIL CELL built from welded bars and hardware-store hinges
sits in the corner of the cellar.

Inside: JACK (mid-20s, finance type, disheveled, exhausted).

A bucket. A thin cot. A couple of books. Empty water bottles.
A protein bar wrapper. Jack stares at the Hitman.

JACK
I still don't understand who you
are, what you're doing, why I'm
fucking here. Someone has to be
looking for me. And when they find
you, they're going to-

The Hitman walks calmly across the room and interrupts Jack.

HITMAN

Actually, you took a vacation.
Called into work. Said you needed
a nice long road trip to clear your
head.

(beat)

Two months.

Jack freezes in place.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

I made you sound really fucking
stupid on the phone. They bought
it. They actually sounded pretty
happy you were gone. Kinda made me
sad honestly.

He sets a bottle of water just outside the bars.

JACK

What about Judge?

The Hitman pauses.

HITMAN

Who?

JACK

My dog.

(beat)

He's old. Twelve. Fuck man.

The Hitman stares at him.

JACK (CONT'D)

If nobody's there, he'll die.

A long pause.

HITMAN

That sucks.

JACK

What kind of monster are you?-

HITMAN

(cuts off Jack)

Oh, you also broke up with your
girlfriend via text. What an
asshole, Jack. Really low of you.

Jack stares. Processing.

JACK
What the fuck? What is this about?

HITMAN
My boss is upset. You, Paul and at least three others stole a shit-ton of money from him. He didn't even know it was happening. Now he wants to know how and/or who.

JACK
I don't know what you're-

HITMAN
We got Paul. So now we're talking to him.

JACK
(frantically)
What did you do with him? Is he okay?

HITMAN
I honestly have no fucking clue. And that really doesn't matter in your predicament right now. You're in a cage in the middle of nowhere. Why do you give a shit about Paul? Worry about yourself.

Silence. The Hitman steps back, resetting to calm.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Let's keep this simple. One name at a time. Makes it easier for me.

JACK
I'm not giving you anyone.

The Hitman just stands there. Still.

HITMAN
I'm pretty sure you're already compromised and also sure this isn't a negotiation.

JACK
You don't even know what the fuck you're talking about. We didn't do shit. Who the hell are you anyway, some lowlife nobody in a mask playing dress-up-

The Hitman moves fast. In a blink, he's at the bars, grabbing Jack through them, slamming him hard against the metal. The cage rattles violently.

HITMAN
Don't do that.

Low. Controlled. But barely. He tightens his grip.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Don't pretend you're in control.

Jack winces, his breath knocked out of him.

JACK
You're a nobody. You're just-

The Hitman SLAMS him again. Harder. Silence. The Hitman's breathing shifts.

HITMAN
You have absolutely no idea what I am.

He releases him abruptly. Then he steps back and adjusts his flannel like nothing happened. The corporate tone returns.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
One name. If you cooperate, my boss might decide you were desperate. Maybe he lets you go.

Jack swallows.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
I'm going to send a couple emails. In five minutes, we'll get the next name.

The Hitman walks to a small desk across the cellar. He opens a laptop that is sitting there. He starts typing and moving the mouse.

Jack watches. Then he looks around the cage, trying to find something that might help him. He nods his head, trying to process the situation. Thirty seconds pass. The Hitman closes the laptop and walks back.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Actually... I got bored. Let's do it now.

JACK
You said five minutes.

HITMAN
Yes, I did.

The Hitman stands there silently, waiting for Jack to speak.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Next name.

Jack hesitates, then-

JACK
Brian. His name's Brian.

HITMAN
Brian.

JACK
He and his wife go to the Italian place every Thursday at six. He's meticulous. He'll be there. Maybe five minutes early. But he'll be there.

The Hitman nods.

HITMAN
See? That wasn't hard.

He turns toward the stairs.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
You stay here. I'll go figure that out. Then we'll go from there.

He ascends the stairs. The cellar door closes. The echo from the door rings through the cellar. Jack stares at the laptop across the room. He shifts, straining to see the screen.

ON THE LAPTOP: MICROSOFT PAINT. CRUDE BLACK LETTERS, DRAWN WITH A MOUSE: "FU JACK"

Nothing else open. No email or inbox. Jack stares. Confusion. Then something worse.

EXT. SHED - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The cellar door opens. The Hitman steps out into open land. Nothing around but empty fields, trees, and sky. He looks around before removing the SKI MASK quickly. It's the same man from the minivan near the BANK.

He tosses it through the open window of a pickup truck, then rubs his face. He opens the driver's door and gets in.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The Hitman starts the engine, pulls out his phone and calls someone. Two rings. Then a woman's voice comes through the car speakers.

WOMAN (V.O.)

Hey, I can't answer the phone right now. Please leave a message.

The Hitman leaves a voicemail.

HITMAN

Hey, I'll be home in like twenty minutes. Going to the store, need me to grab anything?

As the Hitman is on the phone, something catches his eye. A diaper bag is sitting on the passenger seat floor. He stops, unzipping it.

Inside are the usual items. Wipes. Bottles. Burp cloths. He reaches in and pulls out a small bib.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Just wanted to check in. See how you guys are doing.

A faded stain near the collar. The Hitman runs the fabric between his fingers. He has a soft smile. He folds the bib neatly, places it back inside the bag, and zips it shut.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Call me back if you need anything.
Love you.

He hangs up and drives off.

INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY - DAY

Riley walks down the hallway, carrying the Bowman case file. Her phone buzzes. She checks it, lets out a short, bitter laugh, and deletes the text.

RILEY

(under her breath)
Asshole.

She pushes into the bathroom.

INT. WOMEN'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Riley sets the file down on the counter and stares at the photo of Brooke on top. She takes a breath.

RILEY
(quietly)
Get your fucking shit together.

She turns on the faucet and splashes cold water on her face. When she lowers her hands, she looks down. The file is sitting in a small puddle of water on the counter. The bottom edge of the folder is soaked. Riley stares at it for a beat, jaw tightening.

She grabs a handful of paper towels and starts blotting the file, annoyed. A toilet flushes behind her.

The stall door opens. KELLY (30s) steps out and walks to the sink next to her.

KELLY
You look like you're running on fumes.

Riley keeps drying the file, not looking up.

RILEY
Hey. Uh, no- I'm fine.

KELLY
You're not, but we both know you'd never admit it. So, I'm telling you now-if you need to disappear for one night, I got you.

Riley finally glances over. She doesn't smile, but something in her face softens for half a second.

RILEY
Thanks for the cup, by the way.

Kelly gives her a small nod and walks out. Riley looks back down at the damp file, tosses the wet paper towels in the trash, and follows her out.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - PARKING LOT - DAY

The automatic doors to the store slide open. The Hitman steps out carrying a large bag of dog food over one shoulder. He checks the receipt with his other hand and sticks it in his pocket. He crosses the parking lot and reaches his pickup.

In the back seat:

A German Shepherd lifts its head. The rear window is cracked slightly. Its tail thumps once against the seat.

The Hitman opens the rear door. The dog is standing on a blanket that covers the seat.

The dog nudges his hand. The Hitman scratches behind its ears and on top of its nose. The dog relaxes instantly. A familiar routine.

The Hitman glances down and sees a worn collar. The metal tag catches the sunlight: JUDGE.

HITMAN

Judge, huh?

The Hitman gives the dog one last scratch and closes the door. Then he walks around to the driver's side. The truck starts.

Judge settles back onto the blanket as they pull out of the parking lot.

EXT./INT. DRIVEWAY - GARAGE - DAY

The garage door rises to a two-story farmhouse with a built-in garage.

The Hitman's truck rolls in. The minivan sits parked beside shelves of tools and storage bins. The truck engine cuts. The echo of the engine fades slowly. The Hitman gathers his things. He takes one long, deep breath, opens the truck door.

He goes to the back of the truck and picks up the bag of food, slings it over his shoulder, then opens the door to the back seat as Judge jumps out. They reach the door to go in the house. The Hitman opens it.

HITMAN

Come on, boy.

INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

The garage door opens as the Hitman and Judge enter the home.

HITMAN

I'm home. I have a gift that you
may or may not like.

Nothing. He slips off his boots, grabs two bowls and a cup from the kitchen.

He uses the cup to scoop out the dog food from the bag and places it in the bowl. He then sets down the second bowl filled with water.

Down the hallway- a closed nursery door with a small name plaque. He walks toward it and raises his hand to knock but stops to listen. Nothing.

He lowers his hand and moves to a small side table as he tears a sheet from a notepad and writes. The Hitman then slides the note under the nursery door. It disappears inside.

INT. POLICE STATION - RILEY'S DESK - LATER

Riley is at her desk. Kelly's coffee mug sits on the side, halfway full. She opens the Bowman file, finds Lucas's number, and calls. It rings a few times. Lucas answers.

LUCAS (V.O.)
This is Lucas.

RILEY
Mr. Bowman. This is Detective Riley. We spoke during your wife's investigation.

A long silence.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Yeah, I remember.

Riley feels the temperature drop immediately.

RILEY
I'm sorry to call out of nowhere. There's been another incident connected to the bank.

Nothing from Lucas.

RILEY (CONT'D)
A security guard was killed today. Paul Lansing. I wanted to ask if Brooke ever mentioned him. Anything about him, anything that felt-

LUCAS (V.O.)
Are you serious?

RILEY
I know this is difficult but-

LUCAS (V.O.)
No. You don't.

Riley is taken aback.

LUCAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You call me after what, months? To ask about some random guy from the bank?

RILEY
I- I am just trying to-

LUCAS (V.O.)
Did you find who killed my wife?

Riley has no answer.

LUCAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Did you?

RILEY
No.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Then don't call me asking about Paul whoever. You had your chance.

He hangs up. Riley lowers the phone, stunned but not angry. She's defensive for half a second. Then she lets it pass.

RILEY
(to herself)
Yeah. That's fair.

She puts the phone away and goes back to work.

INT. FARMHOUSE - BEDROOM - EVENING

The Hitman kneels at the foot of the bed and pulls out a small LOCKBOX. He opens it.

Inside:
Thick-framed glasses. Gray beard spray. A neutral jacket. Disposable gloves. A small UNLABELED VIAL of clear liquid.

He picks up the vial and holds it for a moment with no emotion. Then he slips it into his pocket.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

He stares at his beard. Then at the can of gray beard dye. He runs his fingers through it, then puts the spray back in his bag.

He puts on the glasses and the medical mask and watches himself in the mirror. He adjusts his posture: shoulders lower, spine bending slightly.

He looks more forgettable. He pulls on the neutral jacket, slides gloves into his pocket, and turns off the light.

EXT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Warm lights. Dinner rush. Laughter inside. The Hitman parks down the block and gets out of his truck.

He walks calmly toward the entrance. He's wearing a long overcoat, scarf, black stocking hat, glasses, and medical mask.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

The Hitman steps inside and approaches the HOST (20s).

HITMAN
How long tonight?

HOST
About forty-five minutes.

He nods and steps aside. The door opens again. BRIAN (40s) and JULIA (40s) enter. Well-dressed. Familiar faces. The Hitman pretends to send a text to someone.

HOST (CONT'D)
Brian, good to see you. Same table?

BRIAN
(nodding)
Like always.

HOST
Red for you, white for Julia?

BRIAN
Does a shit bear in the woods?

The Host lets out a polite, fake laugh. The Hitman grimaces at the joke, but confirms the target. He turns and exits.

EXT. RESTAURANT - BACK ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

The alley is dimly lit.

The Hitman pulls the gray spray from his pocket and touches up his beard. He takes off the long jacket. Underneath is a nice white dress shirt with a black tie.

He puts on disposable gloves and adjusts his glasses while moving toward the service entrance and slips inside.

INT. RESTAURANT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Busy. Steam. Shouting. Plates moving. A WAITER pours wine. Red wine in one glass. White in the other.

The red sits alone for half a second on the prep counter while the waiter grabs a basket of bread from the line.

WAITER

Hey!

The Hitman freezes in his tracks as the waiter walks towards him. Then he looks around for something he can use for defense.

WAITER (CONT'D)

Shit- uh- shoot. Thought the inspection was scheduled tomorrow.

The Waiter looks at the Hitman, worried.

WAITER (CONT'D)

Sorry, I'll get out of your way.

The Waiter heads back into the kitchen area to grab a basket of bread. The Hitman turns towards the platter holding the wine. His movement is one smooth motion. From his pocket- the unlabeled vial.

A single, controlled drop into the red wine. The liquid disappears instantly.

He keeps walking towards a prep counter and pretends to fidget with something. The Hitman watches the waiter grab both glasses and head out into the dining area.

EXT. RESTAURANT - FRONT WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

The Hitman stands across the street. Through the window, we see Brian and Julia seated. The waiter sets down the wine.

INT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Julia lifts hers immediately. Brian is just about to taste his red wine as Julia makes a face.

BRIAN

What?

JULIA

It's fine.

The way she says it makes it clear it isn't. Brian sets down his wine, reaches for Julia's glass and takes a sip.

BRIAN

Yeah.

Brian looks as if he is searching for the words to say.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

The tannins are a little...
aggressive.

Julia raises an eyebrow.

JULIA

You have no idea what that means.

Brian gives Julia an annoyed look and turns to the waiter.

WAITER

If you'd prefer something
different, we just opened a bottle
of twenty-twenty-one Puligny-
Montrachet.

Julia looks interested.

WAITER (CONT'D)

It's one-twenty-nine a glass.

A brief silence. Brian slowly looks up. Julia simply nods. Not asking, but expecting. Brian forces a smile.

BRIAN

Let's do it.

The waiter nods and leaves as Brian watches him go.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

I liked the first one.

JULIA

Of course you did.

She shakes her head and returns to the menu.

EXT. RESTAURANT - FRONT WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

Brian looks up at Julia and forces a smile. He lifts his red wine and takes a large swig.

The Hitman watches, still. Then he turns and walks away into the night.

INT. RANCH OUTBUILDING - OFFICE - MORNING

A cramped, poorly finished farm office built inside an old metal outbuilding. Exposed insulation. Visible sheetrock seams. A small space heater hums in the corner. A wood stove sits unlit in the other. A metal desk sits crooked on uneven concrete.

On the desk: A half-empty coffee mug, farm ledgers, worn down keyboard. A security monitor split between grain bins and pasture cameras.

The Hitman sits in a rolling chair, entering numbers into a spreadsheet. Outside, wind rattles the siding.

The RADIO on the desk crackles to life.

RANCH BOSS (V.O.)

Hey, thanks for shoring up the security on our system. You know, I don't know how to do that tech shit.

HITMAN

Yep.

RANCH BOSS (V.O.)

While I got you, we got another mangy coyote running the south pasture. You close enough to take it?

He keeps typing for another second before responding.

HITMAN

Yeah.

RANCH BOSS (V.O.)

I can get someone else to do it, I know you've-

HITMAN
(assertive)
I got it.

RANCH BOSS (V.O.)
Okay, man. Just making sure you're good. We're moving cattle into that yard tomorrow. Don't want it hanging around.

HITMAN
It won't be.

He sets the radio down and closes the spreadsheet. Then he pushes back from the desk.

INT. STORAGE CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

A narrow utility closet beside the office. Shovels. Fence posts. Fuel cans.

Mounted neatly along the back wall of the closet: A bolt-action hunting rifle with a suppressor attached.

The Hitman reaches for it without hesitation and checks the chamber. He pulls the bolt back slightly. Confirms the round. Closes it. The motion is automatic and familiar.

He slings the rifle over his shoulder, grabs a pair of gloves from a hook and puts them on.

EXT. GRAIN BIN - LATER

The wind is stronger out here. Open land stretches for miles. He walks toward a tall grain bin, boots crunching gravel.

He begins climbing the ladder, rifle slung behind him. Halfway up, he pauses briefly - not from fear, just habit. He scans the horizon. Then continues.

At the top, he settles into position. Lies prone against the red metal lid of the grain bin and rests the rifle. The Hitman peers through the scope. He reacts to seeing the mangy coyote.

His expression shifts to disappointment as he winces at the sight of the mangy animal.

There is mostly silence. Only the wind and the subtle micro-adjustments of his breathing. Safety off. The slow turn of the elevation dial. A final exhale.

A suppressed shot rings out. A dull, contained thud of recoil. The wind continues. The radio crackles.

RANCH BOSS (V.O.)
You get it?

HITMAN
Yeah.

There is a brief silence as the Hitman continues to stare through the scope.

RANCH BOSS (V.O.)
Where'd you hit it?

HITMAN
Where do you think? Get the loader.

He lowers the rifle and switches off the radio. Then he climbs back down the ladder.

EXT. TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

The Hitman leans the rifle carefully in the back seat and shuts the truck door. He pulls out his phone. His jaw tightens slightly as he stares at it. He picks up the radio again.

HITMAN
Hey, you mind if I step out for a bit? I just need to go home for a little.

RANCH BOSS (V.O.)
Yeah, of course. We've got it covered. You've had a lot to handle.

HITMAN
Appreciate it.

He sets the radio down and gets into the truck.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The engine starts. The Hitman grips the steering wheel but doesn't move yet. The farm spreads out in front of him through the windshield. He unlocks his phone and scrolls to find a saved voicemail labeled "Lover" with a yellow heart emoji and presses play. A woman's voice fills the quiet cab.

WOMAN (V.O.)

Hey... just wondering where you're at. Me and the buddies are going to run some errands. I'll see you when you get home from work.

In the background of the voicemail- there is a faint ambient noise. A car door shutting. A distant coo.

The message ends. The phone screen goes dark. He keeps staring at it. Breathing shallowly. He lets out a whisper, barely audible.

HITMAN

I need to get this over with.

He places the phone face down on the center console and shifts the truck into drive.

Through the windshield, we see the fork in the dirt road. One path leads toward town while the other leads toward the isolated outbuilding. He turns toward the outbuilding.

The truck disappears into the open land.

INT. CELLAR - DAY

The cellar door above CREAKS open. Light spills down the narrow stairwell as boots descend.

The HITMAN steps down the stairs, still in work clothes from the ranch. He's calm and controlled; like returning to an office.

JACK sits in the makeshift jail cell. Same thin cot, same bucket, same scattered wrappers. The Hitman walks across the room, almost cheerful.

HITMAN

Good news. Brian's situation is progressing nicely. Boss says he's cooperating as well. Everything's moving along exactly how we hoped.

Jack sits up immediately.

JACK

What are you going to do with him?

The Hitman shrugs.

HITMAN

Honestly? I don't know. I'm pretty low on the totem pole around here. I just handle the field work. Boss makes the big decisions.

(beat)

But you're doing great, Jack. Seriously. You're helping us move forward.

Jack stares at him, exhausted.

JACK

If Brian's talking to you, why the hell do you need me?

The Hitman smiles slightly.

HITMAN

Just due diligence and cross-checking your bullshit. You know how it is... corporate stuff.

He paces slowly in front of the cell.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

So let's keep the momentum going. Give me the next name. Who else worked with you on this?

JACK

No.

The Hitman stops walking.

HITMAN

Come on.

JACK

No. I'm not giving you another name.

The Hitman sighs and pats his back pocket.

HITMAN

You know what? I even brought you something.

A candy bar wrapper crinkles with each pat.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

I have a Snickers in my back pocket.

Jack doesn't react.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

You give me the next name, this is yours.

JACK

You must think you're so funny, huh?

HITMAN

Sometimes.

Jack leans forward, angry now.

JACK

You're a joke. Some psycho in a mask bootlicking for some rich asshole. You don't even-

The Hitman suddenly moves, cutting off Jack. In one fast motion, the Hitman reaches in, wraps a gag around his mouth and pushes him back onto the ground. Jack's eyes go wide as he struggles to get up, hands still tied.

Then-

He slowly pulls out a flip phone and dials as Jack watches, looking confused. Then Jack's face changes as realization hits.

HITMAN

Hey... is this Amy?

Jack's eyes go wider.

JACK

(muffled scream through the gag)

No-

The Hitman puts a finger over his lips.

HITMAN

Yeah, hi. Sorry—friend of Jack's. I know you two are together so-
(pauses to listen)
Oh, not anymore. Sorry to hear that.

Jack shakes his head, panicking.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Anyway, I've been trying to get
ahold of him. Couldn't find his
number and someone gave me yours to
get to him.

The Hitman listens in on the phone.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
No, nothing bad. I actually owe him
some money.

Jack, still struggling.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
I was thinking I could just give it
to you. Save me the trouble.

The Hitman gives a small smile.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Public place. Wherever you're
comfortable. I know this sounds
weird. Trust me, but I-
(listens)
Yes, of course. Me owing people
doesn't sit well, and at least if I
give it to you I will at least
sleep at night.
(listens)
Perfect. I appreciate it.

Jack is finally able to stand up and spit out the gag. The
Hitman slams the flip phone shut as Jack screams.

JACK
Amy! Please!

Jack is now in shock.

JACK (CONT'D)
You don't touch her.

HITMAN
I might not.
(beat)
I might even stand her up.

The Hitman gives a slight tilt of the head.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
She sounded nice.

Jack is breaking.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

So.

He steps closer. Motions Jack to turn around. Jack does. The Hitman pulls out a pocket knife and cuts off the zip ties.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

You give me the last name... and she spends her afternoon wondering where I am.

JACK

Jones.

The Hitman looks up.

HITMAN

Jones.

Jack avoids eye contact.

JACK

He hunts every Saturday morning. At his farm up north. Him and a friend or two go out early... they're usually done by eleven.

The Hitman nods slowly and releases Jack.

HITMAN

Aww, he doesn't invite you?

Jack scoffs and rolls his eyes.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

See? 'Twasn't hard, was it?

Jack shakes his head while sitting back on the cot, sulking.

JACK

I don't know if I can do that again.

The Hitman shrugs.

HITMAN

We'll burn that bridge when we get there.

He turns toward the stairs.

JACK

Amy—

The Hitman pauses halfway up.

HITMAN
She'll be fine.
(shrugs)
Worst case... she wastes an
afternoon.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Oh right.

The Hitman starts up and stops again. He reaches into his pocket. He looks at the candy bar in his hand.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Here you go!

The Hitman tosses the candy bar through the bars. It lands near Jack's feet. The Hitman heads up the stairs.

JACK
I'm allergic to almonds!

As the Hitman opens the cellar door, he calls back.

HITMAN
I know!

The cellar door closes. The small light from the lamp is enough so Jack can see. Jack stares at the ALMOND JOY on the floor. Jack's eyes don't move. They look tired and empty.

INT. BANK - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Jack's eyes appear light and full. The bank is closed.

Folding tables line the lobby. A catered buffet sits where customers normally wait for tellers. Christmas lights hang around cubicle walls. Half-empty drink cups clutter the desks that have been pushed aside.

Employees and spouses mingle throughout the building. The bank appears less like a workplace and more like a neighborhood gathering.

JIM stands with PAUL and JONES near the bar.

JIM
Where's Brian?

PAUL
Probably at Home Depot.

JONES

Again?

PAUL

His wife's remodeling something.

JONES

Didn't they just do that?

PAUL

(rolls his eyes)

Yep.

JIM

One way to spend your money, I guess.

The men laugh.

JONES

Must be nice.

Jones notices Jim's watch as the polished steel peeks from beneath his cuff.

JONES (CONT'D)

That's new. Woah... holy hell that's nice.

Jim instinctively pulls his sleeve down.

JIM

Birthday gift.

PAUL

Hell of a birthday, huh?

Another laugh.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Thought Wade was gonna make it tonight. Was excited to meet him finally.

JIM

You know he never comes to these.

PAUL

Doesn't he live just outside town?

JIM

Yeah. Regional commercial lending.
Covers a few counties. He's hardly
ever in the office.

JONES

He the guy who resells our loans.
Besides... Brooke's here.

Paul looks over. Across the room, BROOKE (30s) laughs
politely with a couple coworkers.

PAUL

What?

JONES

Dude's had a crush on her forever.

Small chuckles. Jack steps up beside them.

JACK

You guys should probably cool it.

Jim's smile fades.

JACK (CONT'D)

Seriously.

JIM

I'm grabbing another drink.

Jim nods and walks away. Jones watches him go.

JONES

(to Jack)

Man, relax. Nobody's looking at
anything.

Jack doesn't respond.

JONES (CONT'D)

Only way anybody catches on is if
somebody starts acting weird.

Jones casually looks back toward Brooke. Brooke glances over.
Their eyes meet. She immediately looks away. Something about
it bothers her. Jack notices.

The music continues. The smiles continue. But the room
suddenly feels different.

INT. POLICE STATION - MEETING ROOM - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

A tired room. Burnt, old coffee. Too many files. Not enough sleep.

On the whiteboard:

LANSING - SECURITY - DECEASED - 11/04/2026

MURPHY - INVESTMENTS - DECEASED - 11/13/2026

Riley stands at the board. Pete sits nearby with a tox report. No one talks over her.

RILEY

Two bank employees in five days.

She taps Paul's name.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Lansing gets shot outside the bank.
Midday. Not a thing was stolen.

She taps Brian's name.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Murphy dies at home. Medical
examiner says thallium, which is
pretty hard to get ahold of.

PETE

Poison.

RILEY

Heavy metal. It's very hard to
trace if you're not looking for it.
Symptoms can look like a hundred
other things.

She writes:

THALLIUM

RILEY (CONT'D)

Could've been administered hours
before he died. Could've been a
fucking week.

An officer studies the board.

OFFICER ONE

That's a hell of a jump. Rifle shot
in public, poison in private.

Riley is visibly annoyed at the questioning.

RILEY
(assertive)
I know.

OFFICER ONE
You sure we're looking at one
offender?

Riley doesn't answer right away. She adds a third name to the board above the others:

BROOKE BOWMAN/BOWMAN FAMILY - MORTGAGE - DECEASED -
02/17/2025

The room shifts. Pete looks at her. He knows what that case means to her.

PETE
Riley. I know that-

RILEY
She worked mortgage at the same
bank. Killed in what was called a
botched home invasion.

OFFICER TWO
Called?

Riley caps the marker.

RILEY
Nobody took shit. Same as the bank.
I mean, there was a truck full of
cash sitting right there, and he
didn't touch any of it?

OFFICER ONE
But Bowman was months ago.

RILEY
Yeah, and now two more from the
same bank are dead.

Another officer looks at the board, not convinced but increasingly unsure.

OFFICER ONE
Different departments. Security,
investments, mortgage. They may not
even really know each other.

Pete opens a file.

PETE

Jim Carter says the same thing.
He's head of mortgage. According to
him, Lansing and Murphy barely
crossed paths.

RILEY

They're in the same bank. You don't
have to be best friends to do
something that makes someone want
to kill you.

(beat)

It's gotta be something they did.

Pete flips another page.

PETE

Carter's outside with HR records.
Employees, past, present,
everything you could want.

RILEY

Good. I want Murphy's last two
weeks. Everything, phone location,
favorite restaurants, whatever.
Talk to the wife.

She points to Paul.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Same with Lansing. Who all knew the
truck's schedule, and when he'd be
standing alone outside that bank.

She points to Brooke.

RILEY (CONT'D)

And pull Bowman back out. Every
piece of evidence we wrote off.

Pete watches her carefully.

PETE

You really think this started with
her?

Riley looks at the three names.

RILEY

I think if we keep treating these
like separate murders, we're going
to find the next connection dead on
the board.

No one has a comeback.

RILEY (CONT'D)
The method changes because the
victim changes. Public street.
Dinner. Home invasion. Whoever this
is, they're not following a ritual.
(beat)
He's likely going down a list.

That captures the room's attention.

RILEY (CONT'D)
So find the list.

Chairs scrape. Detectives move. Pete lingers.

PETE
And Carter?

Riley looks through the glass toward the hall, where Jim
Carter waits with a banker's posture and frightened eyes.

RILEY
Definitely don't let him leave.

Pete looks at JIM (50s). A tightly wound banker wearing a
recently steamed suit.

RILEY (CONT'D)
Witness, suspect, victim. I don't
know yet.

She turns back to the board then looks at her phone. She
hovers over the contact for Lucas Bowman. She is about to
push call but instead locks her phone and puts it away.

EXT./INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT (PREDAWN).

The house is dark. Inside, there's a faint rustle.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The HITMAN moves quietly through the dark. Boots in one hand.
He accidentally bumps a small object on the floor.

CLACK. He freezes.

HITMAN
(sharp whisper)
Shit.

He stands perfectly still. Then softer, pleading.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Please don't wake him... please don't
wake him...

He waits. The house remains silent. After a long moment, he exhales slowly. He sits on a chair and pulls on his boots.

Judge walks up to him and lays down by the chair. He tears a sheet from a small notepad and writes quickly.

INSERT: NOTE

"Went hunting with some guys from work.
Back later this morning.
Love you. Text if you need anything."

He walks into the kitchen and places the note on the coffee maker. The paper disappears into the dark. He pets Judge, then turns and leaves.

INT. RILEY'S SUV - NIGHT

Riley's phone rings. She looks at the screen on the dash: Lucas Bowman. She quickly hits the phone icon on her steering wheel.

RILEY
Mr. Bowman?

LUCAS (V.O.)
Detective.

Not warm. But not as hostile as before.

RILEY
Everything okay?

LUCAS (V.O.)
Yeah, sure. Hey, I shouldn't have
talked to you like that.

Riley absorbs it.

RILEY
You never have to apologize for
anything Mr. Bowman- Lucas.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Yeah, but still.

A quiet moment. Riley drives past the bank.

LUCAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You caught me off guard. Hearing
the bank again. Hearing one of
their names again. I thought I was
done with that place.

RILEY
You moved?

LUCAS (V.O.)
Montana. Back where I grew up.
Started working again out here.
Couldn't stay there anymore.

RILEY
Someone still watching the house?

LUCAS (V.O.)
Yeah. A friend checks on it. Mail,
utilities, stays there sometimes,
all that. I'll sell it eventually
just haven't wanted to move our-
their stuff out.

RILEY
Yeah.

LUCAS (V.O.)
You asked about Paul Lansing.

RILEY
I did.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Brooke never really mentioned him.
I saw him when I came in sometimes.
He'd say hello. That's about it.

Riley nods, disappointed but not surprised.

RILEY
Okay.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Why him?

Riley hesitates.

RILEY
I can't really get into that.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Right.

That lands colder than he intends, or maybe exactly how he intends.

RILEY
It's not that I don't want to tell
you.

LUCAS (V.O.)
It's that you can't.

RILEY
Yeah.

The sound of the car on the road fills the slightly awkward void.

LUCAS (V.O.)
You think it connects to Brooke?

Riley doesn't answer immediately.

RILEY
I think it might connect to the
bank.

Lucas lets that sit.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Then talk to people who worked
there. I used to take her to lunch
and-

Lucas can't finish the sentence on the other end. Riley almost says something.

RILEY
There was another employee who-

She stops herself.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Who what?

Riley shakes her head at herself.

RILEY
Never mind.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Detective.

RILEY
I shouldn't have said that.

Lucas stays quiet.

RILEY (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Yeah.
(beat)
For what it's worth, I know you
tried.

Riley does not know what to do with that.

RILEY
I should've done more.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Yeah, probably.

Honest, not comforting.

LUCAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(softer)
But I know you tried.

Riley is quiet.

LUCAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Call me if you think of anything
else.

Lucas hangs up before she can say bye. Riley continues to drive. Slowly shaking her head listening to the white noise of the car engine.

INT. RANCH OUTBUILDING - OFFICE - MORNING

The same small, worn office attached to a large farm building.

The Hitman enters. He opens the gun closet. On the top shelf sits a small UNLABELED WHITE AMMO BOX.

The Hitman flips it over to show the label written in black marker:

30-06 220 GRN SUB. The lid is open. The Hitman grabs it.

Behind where the box sat on the shelf, another ammo box: Hammond 30-06 165 GRN. Different brand. He ignores it.

He grabs the first AMMO BOX and the RIFLE and goes back to his desk. He looks up and down his bolt-action. Suppressor mounted. The Hitman sits down and looks closer into the box.

INSIDE: ALL EMPTY SLOTS BUT ONE.

He reaches in and picks up the single loose 30-06 ROUND. He sets the round carefully on the desk. The empty box sits there for a moment.

He stands up and squeezes it in his hand. The Styrofoam inside makes a squeak. He tosses it into the wood stove.

He picks up the single round from the desk. He racks the rifle's bolt back, places the round in, throws the bolt forward, and flips the safety to safe. Then he leaves.

EXT. HARVESTED CORNFIELD - DAWN

Cold morning air. An undulating acreage spans out. Wooded area surrounded by freshly cut stalks stretching across the field.

JONES (30s) sits against a tree at the edge of the field. Beside him is his hunting FRIEND (30s). Both hold rifles. Jones lifts a pair of THERMAL BINOCULARS. The friend notices.

FRIEND

(quietly)

Where the hell did you get those?

Jones shrugs slightly.

JONES

(quietly)

Raise at work.

FRIEND

Those are like fifteen grand.

JONES

Yeah.

FRIEND

Jesus. Let me see.

JONES

They're pretty frickin' sick.

The Friend scans the tree line with the binoculars.

FRIEND

Damn. You're right.

A moment passes. The Friend suddenly stiffens.

THERMAL POV:

The binoculars spot a DEER-SHAPED HEAT SIGNATURE in the distance.

FRIEND (CONT'D)
(whispering)
I think I see one.

He stands slowly.

FRIEND (CONT'D)
I'm going to push that direction.

JONES
Those are my Nocs. It's my deer.

FRIEND
Fuck off...

Jones rolls his eyes. The Friend starts to move toward where he saw the deer. Jones grabs him harshly.

JONES
(whisper-yelling)
You're not running around the woods
with those!

The Friend laughs quietly.

FRIEND
Fair enough.

Jones nods.

JONES
Don't shoot me.

The Friend hands Jones back his Thermal Binoculars and moves off through the stalks. Jones lifts the thermals again.

THERMAL POV:
The Friend's bright silhouette is moving through the field. Jones scans slowly. Nothing.

Then- Another heat signature. Human-shaped. Far off to the left. Jones squints.

THERMAL FLASH.

At the same moment- BANG! The Friend fires at a deer somewhere in the field.

The thermal viewpoint drops and is upside down watching the human heat signature disappear into the trees.

Jones slumps against the tree. A clean bullet hole through his head. Blood runs down the bark. The field is quiet.

The wind moves the half-cut corn stalks and tailings across Jones' feet. Time passes. Still looking into Jones' blank eyes. Then- A pair of boots steps into frame. Another pair. Police boots.

EXT. CORNFIELD - LATER

Crime scene tape. Officers move carefully through the field. One officer hands out orange reflective vests.

OFFICER TWO

Put these on. Plenty of hunters out here today.

Riley and Pete pull the vests on. Another officer kneels near Jones' body.

OFFICER ONE

Looks like a hunting accident to me.

RILEY

He worked at the bank.

Pete stops.

PETE

Seriously?

She nods.

RILEY

Same bank.

The officer examining the body speaks up.

OFFICER ONE

Round went straight through.

Another officer holds up a small evidence bag.

OFFICER ONE (CONT'D)

Recovered the bullet from the tree behind him.

PETE

What caliber?

OFFICER TWO

Looks like thirty-aught-six.

Pete sighs.

PETE

Mostly 'Fudds' use that.

He laughs at his own joke. But realizes no one got the reference. Another officer approaches, holding the THERMAL BINOCULARS.

OFFICER ONE

Detective... you might want to see this.

He hands them over.

PETE

Holy shit.

RILEY

What?

OFFICER TWO

Those things are like ten-to-twenty grand.

He gestures toward Jones' rifle and gear.

OFFICER ONE

Rifle's expensive too. This guy dumped serious money into hunting equipment.

Pete frowns.

PETE

What was his job again?

RILEY

Deposit clerk.

PETE

They don't make that kind of money.

RILEY

Get everything photographed.

She scans the field.

RILEY (CONT'D)

And start pulling hunting licenses for every landowner around here. Find the landowner and who they let hunt.

Riley's phone buzzes. She looks, confused, and answers it.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Yeah. I can't right now, I'm-

Pete looks up at Riley.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Fine, I'll be there in-

(checks the time)

Twenty-five minutes.

PETE

You good?

RILEY

No. I have to meet an appraiser at my house right now for the litigation.

PETE

Shit.

RILEY

It's fine. Just scope the area and keep me posted. I'll be back in hopefully an hour.

EXT. RANCH OUTBUILDING - LATE MORNING

A metal target stands about 100 yards from the building.

PING. A rifle shot rings out.

The Hitman lowers the rifle. It does not have a suppressor on it. Adjusts the scope. Loads another round. PING. Another hit.

Police vehicles roll up in the distance. The Hitman notices them approaching. He keeps shooting. PING. Suddenly-

OFFICER ONE (O.S.)

Rifle Down!

The Hitman turns. Several officers approach. They have their pistols drawn.

OFFICER ONE (CONT'D)

Put the gun down!

The Hitman immediately lowers the rifle.

HITMAN

Okay! Okay!

He sets it down slowly. Pete steps forward.

PETE
Easy, brother... he's not pointing it
at you. Calm down.

He gestures for the officer to lower his weapon while shaking his head, annoyed.

PETE (CONT'D)
What are you doing out here?

HITMAN
Sighting in my rifle.

He points calmly toward the target. Pete studies the rifle.

PETE
We had a shooting about 2 miles
from here this morning. We're going
to need to take your rifle.

The Hitman nods.

HITMAN
Okay. I'm a decent shot but not
that good.

Dead air.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
That was a joke I-

PETE
And the ammo you're using.

The Hitman hands the loose handful of rounds next to him to Pete.

PETE (CONT'D)
All of the ammo you're using.

HITMAN
Okay, it's in my shop.

INT. RANCH OUTBUILDING - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The Hitman opens the nearby locker. Inside: Tools. Equipment. A pistol. The Hitman's eyes briefly flick to the pistol. A long moment. Then-

He reaches just past it. He grabs an ammo box and hands it over.

PETE
You been shooting all morning?

HITMAN
Not all morning. Probably about the
last half-hour.

He gestures toward the office.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
I clocked in at five-thirty, been
here ever since.

Pete takes the rifle.

PETE
Give me your ID.

The Hitman pulls out his wallet. Pete pulls out his phone,
takes a picture of both sides, and hands it back to him. The
Hitman is not impressed.

PETE (CONT'D)
Now sit in that chair while we wait
for your boss to verify your alibi.

The Hitman's phone rings. It rings again. Pete gets annoyed.

PETE (CONT'D)
You need to get that?

The Hitman looks at the phone and kills the call.

HITMAN
Old lady. I'll call her back.
Rather not explain why I have cops
staring into my soul.

One of the police officers scoffs and walks away with the
weapon as the hitman sits at his desk. Both hands flat on the
table. Calm. Still.

Pete steps around the desk and looks at the video footage
from this morning. Sees the Hitman sitting there at the
computer during the time of the murder. Pete sends himself an
email of the recording.

Pete gives the Hitman one last look, shakes his head then
exits with the officers.

EXT. RILEY'S HOUSE - DAY

Riley's SUV pulls into the driveway. The APPRAISER (30s, Male, scraggly), stands on the front porch with a clipboard taking notes and tapping the siding.

Riley gets out of her car and walks to the front door.

RILEY

Hey! Sorry, got caught up at work.

INT. RILEY'S HOUSE - DAY

The front door opens. Riley steps inside with the appraiser. Riley is still half in the Jones crime scene mentally. The Appraiser looks around, professional.

APPRAISER

I appreciate you meeting me.
Shouldn't take too long.

RILEY

Yeah. My lawyer said I had to be
here to point out everything wrong
with the place.

The Appraiser pauses.

APPRAISER

Okay.

Riley hears herself. Knows she sounds like an asshole.
Doesn't have the energy to fix it cleanly.

RILEY

Sorry. That came out bad. You're
fine. I just don't care right now.

The Appraiser gives a small nod. No judgment.

APPRAISER

I'll stay out of your way.

RILEY

Do what you need to do. I'll be
upstairs if you need anything.

She starts up the stairs, then stops.

RILEY (CONT'D)

And if my lawyer asks, I showed you
all the problems.

APPRAISER

Got it.

Riley heads upstairs.

INT. RILEY'S HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A small office half-packed from the divorce. Boxes. Old files. A printer that probably hasn't worked since 2019.

Riley sits at the desk. Her mind is still on Jones. The thermal binoculars. The rifle.

She grabs her phone. Finds LUCAS BOWMAN. She calls. It rings. Once. Twice. Lucas answers.

LUCAS (V.O.)

Lucas.

RILEY

It's Riley.

A short silence.

LUCAS (V.O.)

Detective.

RILEY

There's been another one.

LUCAS (V.O.)

Another what?

RILEY

Another bank employee.

LUCAS (V.O.)

You're kidding.

RILEY

I wish I was.

LUCAS (V.O.)

Who?

Riley hesitates. She should not say it. Then she does.

RILEY

Jones.

LUCAS (V.O.)

Skinny guy?

RILEY

Yeah.

LUCAS (V.O.)

What happened?

Riley stands, paces.

RILEY

I can't get into all of that.

LUCAS (V.O.)

Right.

That word has a little edge. Riley hears it.

RILEY

I have a weird question.

LUCAS (V.O.)

Okay.

RILEY

Do you know if Jones had family money?

LUCAS (V.O.)

Family money?

RILEY

Inheritance or rich parents. Anything like that.

LUCAS (V.O.)

No. I have no idea.

RILEY

Brooke never mentioned anything?

LUCAS (V.O.)

About Jones's family? No. I barely talked to him. Most I ever got was a nod in the lobby.

Riley rubs her forehead.

RILEY

Yeah. That's what I figured.

Riley starts to sit back down and flip through a notebook on the desk.

LUCAS (V.O.)

Why?

Riley stops at a page half-full with writing, debating how much to say.

RILEY

He had expensive hunting gear. Like really expensive. Thermal binoculars. Nice rifle. Things that don't exactly line up with his job at the bank.

Lucas says nothing for a moment.

LUCAS (V.O.)

People at that bank had money.

Riley stops pacing.

RILEY

What do you mean?

LUCAS (V.O.)

I don't know. Just... Brooke used to mention things.

RILEY

Like what?

LUCAS (V.O.)

Jim had a watch. Ridiculous thing. Brooke said everyone made fun of it.

RILEY

Jim Carter?

LUCAS (V.O.)

Yeah, the head guy, right?

RILEY

I know who Jim is.

LUCAS (V.O.)

It was probably a thirty, thirty-five grand watch. Something stupid. I remember Brooke laughing about it because the pompous ass tried acting like it wasn't a big deal.

Riley writes: JIM WATCH

RILEY

Are you sure?

LUCAS (V.O.)
No. I'm not a watch guy. It just
looked expensive.

Riley keeps writing.

RILEY
Anyone else?

Lucas thinks. Or pretends to.

LUCAS (V.O.)
There was the guy with the wife
nobody liked.

Riley looks up.

RILEY
Who?

LUCAS (V.O.)
I can't remember his name. Uh-
started with a B. One of those
names that you know their mom
packed them lunch every day.

LUCAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Brian, maybe? Yeah, Brian.

Riley freezes.

RILEY
Brian Murphy?

LUCAS (V.O.)
Yeah. Brooke said he and his wife
were always doing something to
their house. Kitchen, bathrooms,
addition, whatever. Every time we
saw them, it was another project.

Riley's face changes.

LUCAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I mean, I think she had a good job.
I don't know. I didn't exactly hang
out with these people.

Riley lowers the pen.

RILEY
Did Brooke say anything else about
Brian?

LUCAS (V.O.)
No. Why?

Riley doesn't answer right away.

LUCAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Detective?

RILEY
Brian Murphy.

Silence. This time Lucas lets the silence last. He knows he has to.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Brian's gone too, huh?

RILEY
I didn't say that.

LUCAS (V.O.)
I- Oh my- Are you saying Jim is involved?

RILEY
I'm saying I need to go.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Riley-

That stops her, as it's the first time he uses her name.

RILEY
Bye!

She hangs up before he can say anything else.

INT. RILEY'S HOUSE - STAIRS / ENTRY - CONTINUOUS

Riley comes down the stairs fast.

The Appraiser is measuring the open to below from the first floor.

APPRAISER
I just need the basement after this, then-

RILEY
Lock it up when you're done.

The Appraiser turns.

APPRAISER

What?

Riley grabs her coat.

RILEY

Lock it up. I don't give a fuck
anymore.

She is already out the door.

The Appraiser stands there with the laser measure still
pointed at the wall.

APPRAISER

Okay?

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY

Pete walks in carrying a file. He heads toward Riley's desk,
then stops. Riley isn't there.

PETE

Riley said she had something for
me.

An officer at the next desk doesn't look up from his screen.

OFFICER ONE

She left. Got up, said "fuck it,"
and walked out. Said she was going
to lunch.

Pete stares at the empty desk for a second. Then nods once to
himself. He already knows.

CUT TO:

INT. DELI - DAY

A small neighborhood deli. Quiet. A couple customers at the
counter.

Riley sits at a two-top by the window, eating a sandwich and
reading a file. Mustard is all over her chin. She eats in an
unmannerly way. She looks back to her laptop, cross
referencing. She doesn't look up when Pete pulls out the
chair across from her and sits.

PETE

Of course you're here.

Pete takes a sip from the soda he bought. Riley takes another bite. Chews. Finally glances at him.

RILEY
Ethan always hated this place. Said
the sandwiches gave him food
poisoning.

She sees Pete silently judging her a bit.

RILEY (CONT'D)
(talking with mouth full)
I don't care.

Pete watches her for a moment more.

PETE
You could've come here without him.

Riley looks at him. Flat. No smile.

RILEY
I could've.

PETE
FBI called again asking how the
case was going.

Riley pretends like she didn't hear him and goes back to her sandwich and the file. Pete stays seated across from her. Neither of them says anything else. Riley continues to scroll through Jones's payroll records.

RILEY
Jones got a raise.

PETE
Okay.

RILEY
October twenty twenty-four. Ten
percent.

PETE
Promotion?

RILEY
Then another raise. December.

Pete shrugs as Riley keeps scrolling.

RILEY (CONT'D)
January of twenty-five, bonus.
February, bonus. March.
(MORE)

RILEY (CONT'D)
(she stops, looking
confused)

Pete leans forward.

RILEY (CONT'D)
Nothing. April, nothing. May,
nothing.

PETE
Nothing?

RILEY
Nothing. June, nada.

Riley sees something in the records that makes her sit up in her seat.

RILEY (CONT'D)
July. The bonuses start up again.
Pretty much bi-monthly from July of
Twenty-five through October twenty-
six. Last month.

She scrolls.

PETE
That's odd.

RILEY
Yeah. Not at the end of the year,
not performance based. Just...
random.

Pete watches her continue.

RILEY (CONT'D)
Except it isn't random.

She opens another file.

RILEY (CONT'D)
Paul Lansing.

A few clicks. Riley's expression changes.

PETE
What?

Pete comes around next to Riley to see what she is looking at.

RILEY
Same pattern.

PETE
Same amounts?

RILEY
No, but it's the same timeline.
Raises, bonuses. Everything stops,
then starts again.

Pete slowly sets down his drink. Riley opens another file.
Scroll. Then she stops.

RILEY (CONT'D)
Brian Murphy.

PETE
Don't tell me.

RILEY
Same thing.

Pete stares at Riley then looks at the three files.

PETE
Three dead bank employees.

RILEY
With the exact same compensation
pattern.

She then pulls up Brooke Bowman's file and points to the
table next to them. Also full with papers and folders.

RILEY (CONT'D)
Grab Brooke's file.

Pete grabs Brooke's file and sets it down next to Riley as
she scrolls through the spreadsheet and cross-references with
the file.

RILEY (CONT'D)
Brooke got a raise in October of
twenty-four, then-

Riley starts to frantically look through the files closer.

PETE
Then?

Riley lets out a small sigh of relief.

RILEY
No additional bonus.

PETE

So she's not connected.

Riley pauses and thinks for a moment as she scans the room.

RILEY

No. She's the *most* connected.

PETE

You just said-

RILEY

Four dirty employees. One clean one. And the clean one dies first.

Riley pauses, then it hits her.

RILEY (CONT'D)

She wasn't in on it, Pete. She caught it.

PETE

Holy shit.

RILEY

Pull every compensation record from the bank.

PETE

Looking for what?

RILEY

Everyone who matches them.

Pete takes one last swig of his drink and heads for the door.

RILEY (CONT'D)

And don't tell Jim why. Say, it's protocol for investigations linked to a financial institution or some shit. He's been pretty cooperative; shouldn't need a warrant.

Pete exits. Riley continues to work.

INT. CELLAR - EVENING

The small lamp is still on, slightly filling the cellar. Jack sits against the wall. Breathing shallowly. Thinking.

A faint drip somewhere in the dark. His eyes drift toward the corner.

The BUCKET. Then the bars. The hinges.

CUT TO:

The bucket. Cracked plastic. Bent metal handle.

Jack grips it and twists hard.

SNAP. The handle tears free.

He studies the jagged metal ends.

The door hinge has rust flaking around the pin.

Jack wedges the metal underneath it and pushes.

Nothing.

He adjusts his grip and tries again. His hands tremble from exhaustion.

Still nothing.

Jack tosses the bucket handle to the side hard and punches the cot.

INT. POLICE STATION - RILEY'S DESK - EVENING

The bullpen is empty.

Overhead fluorescents hum. One flickers slightly and stops, but there's nobody around to notice.

Riley sits at her desk alone. Three empty coffee cups crowd the workspace. A sleeping bag sits rolled up in the corner. Family photos are absent.

Coffee has gone cold beside her keyboard.

On the desk - an open banker's box. Worn label on the side:

BOWMAN FAMILY - 02/17/25 - UNSOLVED

She's been going through it.

Photos and files are spread across the desk. With the particular disorder of someone who has looked at them enough that the order has stopped mattering.

Crime scene. Kitchen floor. Evidence tags. Photo of Brooke Bowman at a Bank Gathering. Jack, Jones, and Wade are there.

Riley looks at this one longer than the others. She picks it up and studies it. She sets it back down and pulls out a separate, thinner folder.

Personal notes in her own handwriting from the original investigation.

She flips through it slowly. She has it memorized.

She stops on a page. A name crossed out. Hard. Multiple times. She stares at that crossed-out name for a moment. Closes the folder. She leans back in her chair and looks at the ceiling. The flickering fluorescent does it again.

She speaks to the room - low, not really to anyone.

RILEY

Yeah.

(nodding her head)

I promised.

She pauses, gets up, and spins back around at the desk. She looks down at the files. She smiles; there are no tears, but her eyes show a deep sadness.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Fuck!

She pushes the box hard as it slides across her desk.

The sound of glass breaking startles her. She gets up and looks on the other side of the desk to see what it was.

The mug that Kelly made her is shattered. The shards are spread across the floor.

Riley closes her eyes and stretches her neck. She then heads back to her desk. She starts to put the remnants of the case back into the box. The crime scene photos. The notes. The folders. Last - the photo of Brooke.

She holds it for just a second longer than necessary then places it face up on top of everything else.

Closes the box while looking at the label.

She picks up a marker and uncaps it. She aggressively writes on the lid of the box.

BOX LID: "NOT CLOSED"

She pushes the box to the corner of her desk and sits there in the quiet.

She then picks up her cold coffee and takes a sip anyway. She makes a face, stands up, then heads back to the front of her desk.

Riley sweeps the shards with her hands onto a folder. Then she gets up, walks to a trash can, and throws it in.

Pete enters the room and sees what Riley is throwing away.

PETE

Hey, if you hated it that much, you could've told me.

Riley shakes her head in disappointment.

RILEY

I'm sorry. I was going through the old Bowman file and-

PETE

Hey.

RILEY

Yeah?

PETE

It's okay.

RILEY

Yeah.

A brief pause.

PETE

We made progress on the bullet from today.

PETE (CONT'D)

Oh, and I tried tracking down that regional lender Jim mentioned.

RILEY

Wade?

PETE

Yeah. Doesn't work out of this branch. Corporate says he covers a few counties. They've been trying to get ahold of him, too.

RILEY

Did they say why they couldn't?

PETE

Just that he's out in the field
somewhere. They'd let him know we
called.

RILEY

Okay. Let's go.

Riley catches up to Pete as they head out the door. The
banker's box in the dark. Not closed.

EXT. SHOOTING RANGE - EVENING

The last bit of daylight exposes an outdoor range. Three
lanes. A twelve-foot pile of dirt behind the targets. Riley,
Pete, and a TECH sit under a covered patio area where the
shooter stands.

Three bolt-action rifles sprawled out on the range table.
Three ballistic gels sit on a chair down range.

At the end of the table, the different case files. Crime
scene photos. The tech picks up one of the rifles and shoots.
Misses. Riley and Pete stand nearby, watching.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Here.

Riley grabs a rifle and hands it to Pete. She picks up one as
well.

TECH

(pointing at Pete)
You have the seven mil.
(pointing at Riley)
You have the thirty-aught-six. The
three-oh-eight is definitely not
it.

RILEY

Oh, you were able to hit one then.

The tech just stares at her.

RILEY (CONT'D)

(she looks at Pete)
Go!

Pete doesn't flinch. Aims. BANG! The report rolls across the
open field like thunder. Pete's shot goes right through the
center of the ballistic gel.

Riley does the same. Aims. BANG! A good shot, hits the
ballistic gel, but slightly left.

PETE

Oof!

RILEY

Shut up. Can still get a good read on it.

Riley, Pete, and the Tech walk to get the gels. They bring them back to the range table. The MEDICAL EXAMINER (50s) is now sitting at the table. He flips through the photos of Jones, Paul, and Brian.

The tech sits there with a laptop, the ammo box the Hitman gave, and two bullets in separate evidence baggies. He stares at each ballistic gel. Looks at his computer again.

TECH

Thirty-aught-six. For sure now.

PETE

That narrows it down to every hunter over forty..

The tech doesn't react; he keeps working.

TECH

Round's slightly deformed, but we've got enough to compare. No clean striations, though. It passed through soft tissue, hit wood.

He gestures to another tray. The HITMAN'S RIFLE sits tagged in evidence.

TECH (CONT'D)

Your guy's rifle is the same caliber.

PETE

So?

TECH

So... it could be the weapon.

PETE

Or one of a few thousand others in this county. The guy's boss showed me the clock-in time and we have the footage. He was there the whole time.

TECH

But we swabbed his hand! It had powder all over it.

PETE

Yeah, we also saw him actively shooting and sighting in the rifle.

TECH

But he was right there, he-

RILEY

It is unfortunately never that easy.

Riley studies the bullet, thinking.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Ammo?

The tech reaches over and grabs the Ammo box.

TECH

This is what he gave us. Hammond. Factory load.

Pete shrugs.

PETE

And?

The tech flips the box, reading.

TECH

Lot number's clean. No modifications or signs of it being reloaded. Nothing special about it.

He glances back at the bullet.

TECH (CONT'D)

Can't match it to that box. But I can say it's consistent with the caliber. However, I'm ninety-nine point nine-nine percent sure the murder bullet is reloaded. I've never seen that black coating on the tip. Don't know why it has that.

He holds up the second baggie.

TECH (CONT'D)

And here's the fun part. Bank bullet came back this afternoon. Two-twenty grain. Same coating.

(beat)

Same load. Same shooter.

That lands. The Medical Examiner lowers the file.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
The friend says he never heard the
shot, right?

PETE
Probably because he was shooting at
a deer himself.

The Medical Examiner shakes his head.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
Maybe. But a thirty-aught-six in an
open field? Would've definitely
been loud enough out there.

He nods down range, toward the gels.

MEDICAL EXAMINER (CONT'D)
You two just proved it. I could
hear those from my car.

That thought lingers with Riley.

RILEY
...It wasn't loud enough.

Pete looks at her.

RILEY (CONT'D)
Suppressor.

PETE
Shit. Two-twenty is heavy enough to
be subsonic.

The tech is already digging in his kit. He comes up with a
SUPPRESSOR and a single loose round.

TECH
Loaded one to match the weight.

He threads the suppressor onto the thirty-aught-six. Chambers
the heavy round. Nobody reaches for ear protection. He aims
at the last gel.

THUD. It sounds like a really loud nail gun. The gel rocks on
the chair.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
Well. That would explain why the
friend only heard his own rifle.

PETE

A can on a thirty-cal isn't silent.
But with that load? It's pretty
much hearing-safe.

Riley's brain is moving now. She stares down range.

RILEY

He was on the street.

PETE

What?

RILEY

The bank. We've been pulling
rooftops, parked cars. He didn't
need any of it. He could've been
standing on the sidewalk three
blocks down.

(beat)

Witnesses thought it was
construction. Because that's
exactly what it sounds like.

The tech unthreads the suppressor, almost admiring the murder
bullet in its baggie.

TECH

Nobody sells this, by the way. I
looked. Cast heavy, coated the tip
himself to keep it stable that
slow. This isn't hunting ammo, it's
good craftsmanship.

RILEY

Who handloads subsonic?

TECH

Precision guys. Long-range
competition crowd. They chase quiet
and consistency.

Riley pulls her notebook. Writes one word: COMPETITION. Her
eyes drift to a nearby evidence photo on the table. A printed
still image of MARK MERCER. Scraggly. Longer hair. Big full
beard. She stares at it a beat too long.

PETE

What?

She doesn't answer right away.

RILEY

...Nothing.

But she keeps looking. Her eyes narrow slightly. Something isn't sitting right.

PETE

You sure?

She finally looks away, forcing it off.

RILEY

Yeah. He just looks extremely familiar.

She taps the photo lightly.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Pull everything we have on him.
Employment, prior addresses, any
previous contact with law
enforcement.

PETE

You think he's our guy?

She shakes her head.

RILEY

I think he's close enough to keep
looking at.

She closes the notebook.

TECH

See, she's not sold on his story!

RILEY

And run registrations for every
thirty-caliber suppressor in the
county.

PETE

That's gonna be a long list.

RILEY

I know. Run it anyway.

The tech slides the bullet back into its evidence bag.

TECH

I'll run a full comparison. But
don't expect miracles.

PETE

We don't.

EXT. SHOOTING RANGE - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Riley and Pete walk to their cars. The last bit of daylight is slowly fading.

PETE (CONT'D)
Two shootings. Same load. Same bank.

RILEY
Not so psycho now.

PETE
Still stands.

RILEY
Fuck you, dude. Let's head back.

The two get into their cars.

INT. CELLAR - EVENING

Jack adjusts his grip on the bucket handle in the cellar door. Then he tries again. His hands tremble from exhaustion.

A faint CREAK. Jack stops cold and listens. Nothing above him. He pushes again.

CREAK. CREAK.

The hinge pin slowly begins to rise. Sweat runs down Jack's face. The pin slips free. He catches it before it hits the floor. Freezes.

Listens again. Still nothing. He moves to the second hinge. Faster now. The second pin comes easier. The door sags slightly.

Jack grips the bars and pulls. The frame shifts. Just enough. Jack squeezes through.

INT. CELLAR STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Jack climbs quickly but unsteadily. Each step groans beneath him. He flinches every time.

At the top, his hand rests on the door. One deep breath.

He pushes against the cellar door. It doesn't budge.

Through the double doors, he sees a simple lock glinting in the evening sun between them.

JACK
This fucking guy-

Jack refocuses and looks around the cellar for anything to pry it open. He sees the hinge pin he just knocked out and rushes over to grab it.

He almost laughs as he heads back up the stairs. He opens the cellar doors as wide as he can and places the hinge in the lock.

The hinge is lodged between the door and the lock as Jack slowly lets the doors fall back down. As the doors fall with the hinge in place. Jack lets out a sigh of relief.

Jack then musters all the strength left in his body, using his legs and back to throw himself upward against the door.

BANG! The lock breaks, and the cellar doors swing open.

INT. POLICE STATION - CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Riley and Pete walk toward the whiteboard. Riley carries a printed photo of the driver's license in one hand.

Riley writes something on the board:
SUSPECTS - MARK MERCER - RANCH HAND - SHOOTING SAME CALIBER
RIFLE 2 MILES FROM JONES SCENE

PETE
Corporate finally called back.

He hands her a slip of paper.

PETE (CONT'D)
Couldn't get ahold of Wade either.
Straight to voicemail. They gave me
his cell.

Riley takes the paper and pulls out her phone. She dials. The call rings once. Then:

AUTOMATED VOICEMAIL (V.O.)
The person you are trying to reach
has a mailbox that is full and
cannot accept new messages at this
time. Please try again later.

Riley hangs up. Pete heard the voice on the phone and makes a disappointed face.

RILEY
You keep trying. If he calls, I
want to know.

PETE
Yep.

Riley pockets the paper and looks at the board.

PETE (CONT'D)
What about Bowman's husband?

RILEY
I've been talking to him
occasionally. He moved back out to
Montana, where he's from.

PETE
Still the same number?

RILEY
No. Montana number.

PETE
Gotcha.

RILEY
He sounds hollowed out. Said he
couldn't stand to be in this town
anymore.
(beat)
Don't blame him.

PETE
You knew the guy?

RILEY
Barely. Honestly? I couldn't look
at him. Every day I didn't have an
answer, I found a reason not to be
in the room. Handed him to Roger.
(beat)
I think I shook his hand at the
funeral, told him I wouldn't stop
until I found who did it.

Riley's face fills with emotion for a brief moment. She
suppresses it, readjusts herself, and moves on.

RILEY (CONT'D)
But that's about it. I've been
trying not to drag him into this
more than I already have.

Riley looks up at the room. Her eyes widen as she writes something else on the board.

PETE

Maybe we should talk to that Jack guy too. Remember, that guy whose phone was near the house that night? His alibi was dogshi-

Riley finishes writing:

JACK ELLISON - INVESTMENTS

PETE (CONT'D)

Oh.

RILEY

Already did. Jim said he's on vacation for two months or something.

PETE

Well, that's convenient.

Riley continues writing.

RILEY

Yeah. House is empty. Car's not there. Looks like he even took his dog with. Big ass German Shepherd too.

Riley looks at something in the file beside her on the floor.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Nobody's seen him in days. Been trying to get hold of him, but his voicemail's full. I put someone over there to watch the house.

Now fully written on the whiteboard:

BROOKE BOWMAN/BOWMAN FAMILY - MORTGAGE - DECEASED -
02/17/2025
LANSING - SECURITY - DECEASED - 11/04/2026
MURPHY - INVESTMENTS - DECEASED - 11/13/2026
JONES - CLERK - DECEASED - 11/14/2026
SUSPECTS - MARK MERCER - RANCH HAND - SHOOTING SAME CALIBER
RIFLE 2 MILES FROM JONES SCENE
JACK ELLISON - INVESTMENTS - CELL PING NEAR BOWMAN HOUSE -
NOT CHARGEABLE ALIBI - CURRENTLY "ON VACATION" - LAST SEEN:
11/02/2026

PETE

Good. Vacation is a lot worse of an alibi than his friend's house.

RILEY

Let me know what the officers have from the bank interviews.

PETE

Will do. I'll let you know when that suppressor registration stuff comes back.

Riley gives Pete a nod. As they walk out of the room, Riley takes one last glance at Mercer's photo.

EXT. CELLAR - LATER

Jack slowly peeks his head out from inside the cellar.

He bursts out into setting daylight. He squints hard. Disoriented, he scans the horizon. No sign of anyone.

He runs across open ground toward the tree line.

EXT. FIELD - LATER

Jack pushes through waist-high grass. His breathing is ragged. His legs barely hold beneath him.

He looks back. Nothing. He keeps moving.

EXT. TREE LINE - LATER

Jack forces his way through thick brush. Branches tear at his clothes and cut across his face. He stumbles over a fallen limb but stays upright. He takes a second to lean against a tree. Gasping. Then forces himself to keep going.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - LATER

Jack emerges from the ditch and nearly collapses. A gravel road stretches in both directions. Empty.

Across the road sits an old FARMSTEAD. A weathered house. A machine shed. No lights. No movement. An old FARM TRUCK is parked beside the shed. Jack stares at it. Then runs.

EXT. ABANDONED FARMSTEAD - MOMENTS LATER

Jack reaches the truck and yanks open the driver's door. Unlocked. He climbs inside and searches the console. Nothing. Checks the cupholders. The floor. Under the seat. Nothing.

Jack pulls down the visor. A set of keys drops into his lap. He almost laughs. Jack jams the key into the ignition and turns it. The engine struggles.

JACK

Come on.

He turns it again. The engine coughs but does not start.

JACK (CONT'D)

Come on. Come on.

He pumps the gas and tries one more time. The engine ROARS to life. Jack throws the truck into gear and tears away.

EXT. RIDGELINE - SAME TIME

Tall grass moves with the wind. A rifle scope slowly rises above it.

Through the scope:

The farm truck races down the gravel road.

The Hitman lies prone along the ridge. An old scoped WINCHESTER .30-30 lever-action rests against his shoulder.

His finger settles near the trigger. He could fire. He doesn't.

He watches the truck disappear over the next hill.

INT. FARM TRUCK - MOVING - LATER

Jack drives hard, fighting to keep the old truck on the gravel road.

He checks the mirror. Nothing behind him. He checks again. Still nothing.

Ahead, beyond the rolling farmland, a WATER TOWER rises above the horizon. The edge of town. Jack stares at it. A breathless laugh escapes him.

JACK

Fuck you.

He pounds the steering wheel.

JACK (CONT'D)
Fuck you!

The engine sputters.

Jack's smile disappears.

JACK (CONT'D)
No.

The truck begins losing speed. Jack pumps the gas. The engine coughs again.

JACK (CONT'D)
No, no, no. Come on!

He slams his hand against the dashboard.

JACK (CONT'D)
Come on!

The engine catches. Jack presses the gas. The truck accelerates. A relieved laugh escapes him as the water tower grows closer.

Suddenly—

The rear tire EXPLODES. The truck drops hard to one side. Jack ducks instinctively as the steering wheel jerks from his hands.

JACK (CONT'D)
What the fuck?!

The truck swerves across the gravel. Jack grabs the wheel with both hands, fighting it.

JACK (CONT'D)
No! No!

EXT. RIDGELINE - SAME TIME

The echo of a RIFLE SHOT rolls across the countryside. The Hitman lies prone in the tall grass. An old scoped WINCHESTER .30-30 lever-action rests against his shoulder.

In the distance, the farm truck swerves violently across the road. Tires tear through gravel. The truck disappears into the ditch. CRASH.

Then silence.

The Hitman keeps his eye against the scope for another beat.

HITMAN

Dumb. Ass.

He lowers the rifle and gets to his feet.

He works the lever, ejecting the spent casing. He catches it mid-air. The Hitman picks up his rifle and heads down the ridge toward the wreck.

INT. CELLAR - DAY

Jack's eyes SNAP open. He gasps, disoriented. Tries to move. Pain hits him instantly. He groans, clutching his ribs, and winces.

The room comes into focus. He notices zip ties binding his hands behind his back. The door, now repaired. Reinforced. Clean hinges. No give. The bucket's gone. Jack stares at the door. Realization sets in.

He's worse off than before.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Riley sits across from Jones Friend.

RILEY

How long did you know Jones?

FRIEND

Long time. Fifteen years, maybe more.

RILEY

You two hunt together?

FRIEND

Whenever we could.

RILEY

Anybody else?

FRIEND

Sometimes.

RILEY

Who?

FRIEND

Wade. Every now and then.

Riley glances at her notes.

RILEY
Wade...

FRIEND
Regional lender.

RILEY
Was Jones any good?

The Friend chuckles.

FRIEND
Yeah.
(beat)
Wade was better.

RILEY
Better?

FRIEND
Best shot I've ever seen.

Riley writes it down.

RILEY
Anything else you think I should
know?

The Friend shakes his head.

FRIEND
No.

Riley closes her notebook.

RILEY
Alright. Thanks for coming in.

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY

Riley walks in. She is about to call Wade's number again but stops when she hears Pete and the Tech talking. She looks up and sees the Tech on his laptop and Pete standing next to him. He scans through registration records on a monitor.

TECH
Most are trusts, LLCs, or private
owners.

Scrolling.

TECH (CONT'D)

Wait.

Riley and Pete step closer.

TECH (CONT'D)

One suppressor tax stamp attached
to this property.

The tech hands Pete a piece of paper. Pete looks up.

PETE

That ranch guy?

TECH

Suppressor is thirty-caliber
capable.

Riley's face tightens.

RILEY

Did we recover a suppressor from
the ranch?

Pete thinks back.

PETE

...No.

TECH

Just the rifle and ammo.

Riley's already moving.

RILEY

Fuck.

PETE

Riley-

RILEY

I'm going. You stay, see if you can
figure anything else out. I'll have
a unit back me up.

INT. RILEY'S SUV - DAY

Riley is driving. A squad car follows behind. A phone ringing
echoes through the car. It reaches the automated voicemail
again. She hangs up.

RILEY
Dammit Wade. Answer your fucking
phone.

She sits there for a moment. Then-

She hits the phone icon on her steering wheel. A beep goes
through the speakers.

RILEY (CONT'D)
Call, Lucas Bowman.

It rings. Once. Twice. Lucas answers.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Lucas.

RILEY
It's Riley.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Detective.

RILEY
I need to ask you something.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Okay.

RILEY
Brooke ever mention anything about
raises? Bonuses? Weird money at the
bank?

Lucas says nothing for half a second.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Brooke didn't get bonuses.

Riley clocks how fast he says it.

RILEY
You're sure?

LUCAS (V.O.)
I handled most of our bills. She
got a normal check. That was it.

RILEY
Gotcha.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Why?

RILEY

I can't get into all of it yet.

Lucas exhales lightly. Tired of that answer.

LUCAS (V.O.)

Right. Like usual.

Riley pushes forward.

RILEY

There's something else.

No answer.

RILEY (CONT'D)

We think the shooter is using a suppressed rifle.

Silence. Longer this time.

LUCAS (V.O.)

What?

RILEY

A suppressor. Heavy thirty-aught-six round. Whoever this is knows what he's doing.

Lucas's voice tightens, but only slightly.

LUCAS (V.O.)

Why are you telling me this?

RILEY

Because you used to shoot competition.

Another silence.

LUCAS (V.O.)

That was a long time ago.

RILEY

Long-range stuff, right?

LUCAS (V.O.)

I don't do that anymore.

RILEY

I'm not asking if you do. I'm asking who around here would. Who knows that setup? Suppressed hunting rifle.

(MORE)

RILEY (CONT'D)
Good enough to make those shots.
Local guys from competitions.
People you knew.

Lucas breathes through his nose.

LUCAS (V.O.)
I don't remember.

RILEY
Okay, do you know a Wade. He was
also apparently a good hunter
around here. Was told he was a good
shot and also worked with Brooke.

Silence.

RILEY (CONT'D)
Lucas?

LUCAS (V.O.)
I said I don't remember.

Riley hears the wall come down.

RILEY
I'm not trying to drag you back
into this.

LUCAS (V.O.)
(harsher)
No?

RILEY
No.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Then what are you doing?

Riley has no clean answer.

LUCAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You call me about the bank. You
call me about the people Brooke
worked with. You call me about
money, murders, rifles. And every
time, I answer because I keep
thinking maybe this finally means
something. But it doesn't, does it?

RILEY
Lucas—

LUCAS (V.O.)
Did you find who killed my wife?

Riley closes her eyes.

RILEY
Not yet.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Then why are you calling me?

RILEY
I'm trying to make this right.

LUCAS (V.O.)
Oh, yeah, I bet! You know, that's
the part nobody tells you. You grow
up thinking justice is inevitable.
Cops get the bad guy, hang 'em
high, all of it. Like those old
cowboy movies where the villain
gets what's coming.

His voice hardens.

LUCAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But, half the time it isn't the law
that finds him. It's some random
ranch guy who finally has enough
guts to do what everyone else knows
what needs to be done.

Riley goes still. That line bothers her. Riley's eyes flick
to the GPS. Ranch and acreage homes sprawled across the
screen.

RILEY
Ranch guy?

Lucas catches himself. Barely.

LUCAS (V.O.)
What? Don't call me again. Unless
you find who actually did it.
(beat)
Unless you, you know, do your
fucking job.

Riley takes that.

LUCAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Bye.

He hangs up. Riley stares through the windshield.

INT. RANCH OUTBUILDING - OFFICE - DAY

The Hitman moves fast. Already pulling on his flannel. His boots are laced tight.

He opens the gun closet. Grabs the PISTOL from the shelf. He checks the magazine and puts it in his Kydex holster that's in his waistband.

He snatches the keys off the desk, rattling them as he does so. He clicks the radio one-handed.

HITMAN

Hey. I'm gonna rack out for a bit.
Resting up for tonight's shift.
Don't wake me. See you in a few.

RANCH BOSS (V.O.)

Copy. Get some sleep, man.

He tosses the radio down and reaches to open the desk drawer for a spare mag.

His hand stops.

Inside the drawer: a folded piece of paper. Olive-green note. A woman's handwriting. He picks it up and unfolds it.

It's a picture of the Hitman lying prone, rifle resting on a stabilizing sandbag.

Handwritten:

CONGRATS ON THE WIN! SO PROUD OF YOU LOVER! DON'T LET IT GO TO YOUR HEAD.

A pause. His eyes lift. Across the room, against the wall by the gun closet, the rifle rack sits empty. The space where the bolt-action used to hang. It's the same rifle from the competition.

HITMAN

Fuck my ass.

He pulls his hood up and opens the cabinet, revealing a false back. The suppressor is stashed here, along with the vial.

He grabs the suppressor and puts it in his coat. He starts to reset the false back, but then stops as he sees the vial. The Hitman snatches it quickly and puts it in his coat with the suppressor.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Yep, you're coming with too.

He hastily walks out the door as it slams shut behind him.
The engine starts and gravel spits.

INT. HITMAN'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The Hitman drives away from the ranch, the VIAL in his pocket
and the SUPPRESSOR hidden inside the truck.

He turns onto the county road. Makes another left.

Ahead, RILEY'S SUV and TWO SQUAD CARS come barreling toward
him. Emergency lights flashing. No sirens. The Hitman's eyes
narrow.

His right hand lowers beside his leg. A PISTOL sits secured
in a vehicle holster mounted beneath the dashboard. His hand
closes around the grip.

The vehicles approach fast. Riley's SUV passes first.

For half a second, Riley and the Hitman are separated only by
glass and speed.

Then the two squad cars rush past behind her. They continue
toward the ranch.

The Hitman watches them disappear in his side mirror. His
hand remains on the pistol.

He takes a deep breath, pauses. Then releases his grip and
returns his hand to the steering wheel.

The truck continues down the road.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Wind pushes through the open pasture.

Riley's unmarked SUV pulls up beside another arriving squad
car. The Hitman's Ranch Outbuilding sits in the distance. Two
uniformed officers step out behind her.

Ahead, the RANCH BOSS (60s) exits the farmhouse, already
irritated.

RANCH BOSS
What now?

Riley steps toward him quickly.

RILEY
Where's Mark?

RANCH BOSS
Working.

RILEY
Where do you keep your guns?

That catches him off guard.

RANCH BOSS
...Excuse me?

RILEY
The suppressor wasn't with the
rifle. We need to search the
property.

The Ranch Boss folds his arms.

RANCH BOSS
You got a warrant?

Riley stops.

RILEY
No.

The Ranch Boss exhales through his nose. Angry now.

RANCH BOSS
Riley, you're lucky Mark's nice.
(beat)
If I was here the first time, I
wouldn't've let you touch that
rifle without paperwork.

The officers glance at each other.

RANCH BOSS (CONT'D)
Now the government's already got my
property in evidence and you want
more?

He points toward the road.

RANCH BOSS (CONT'D)
Hell no.

Riley looks at the Ranch Boss with an "are you serious?"
look.

RANCH BOSS (CONT'D)
Get a warrant and I'll be more than
happy to let you go anywhere you
want.

Riley is still staring at him. She's frustrated because he's right.

RILEY
Fine.

She turns sharply and heads back toward her SUV. The officers follow suit and climb back into their squad car.

INT. RILEY'S SUV - CONTINUOUS

Door SLAMS. Riley grips the steering wheel.

THUD. Both palms slam hard against it. A vacuum of silence fills the car. Breathing controlled again. Her phone rings through the speakers.

PETE (V.O.)
Hey.

RILEY
Yeah?

PETE (V.O.)
You were right.

Riley waits.

PETE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Jim's compensation records match
Jones, Brian, and Paul.

INTERCUT TO: INT. RILEY'S SUV - CONTINUOUS

Riley's expression shifts.

RILEY
Exactly?

PETE (V.O.)
The raises, bonuses, stop after
Brooke's death. Then start right
back up again.

Riley sits there half-stunned.

RILEY
Oh my god. Okay, I need to-

INTERCUT TO: INT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

PETE
There are more.
(beat)
We've got six names so far.

INTERCUT TO: INT. RILEY'S SUV - CONTINUOUS

Riley looks back toward the ranch house. Thinking. She taps the steering wheel, then collects her thoughts.

RILEY
Keep him right there. Don't you dare let him leave.

PETE (V.O.)
Working on it.

RILEY
I'm calling the judge.

Riley starts the SUV.

RILEY (CONT'D)
I need a warrant for this place.

She throws the SUV into reverse.

RILEY (CONT'D)
I'll be back in thirty.

The tires crunch gravel as she pulls away.

EXT. COUNTY BRIDGE - DAY

The Hitman's truck idles on the shoulder. The Hitman steps out with the river moving below.

The Hitman's phone rings. He looks at the screen, then answers.

HITMAN
Yeah?

RANCH BOSS (V.O.)
Cops came back around trying to get into your office.

The Hitman looks out through the windshield.

RANCH BOSS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I knew what I was getting into
when you came to me. I'm still with
you. Only wanna keep my hands
clean, you know?

HITMAN
You don't know anything. Remember?

RANCH BOSS (V.O.)
Yeah... When they come back with a
warrant, I'll have to let 'em in.

HITMAN
I know.

Both of the men sit in silence for a moment.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
I can never repay you for what
you've done. But, if they get to
me, it ends there. That was the
deal and I stick to my word.

RANCH BOSS (V.O.)
Be careful.

The Hitman hangs up and gets out of his truck. He walks to the bridge. His hand brushes along the metal railing. He looks down at the river. Water rushing. He looks down at his feet.

He pulls the vial from his pocket and turns it in his fingers. Annoyed with himself.

HITMAN
Stupid.

He throws it along with the suppressor. They both make two faint splashes a second apart as they disappear into the water. The Hitman gets back in the truck and drives away.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

A thick stack of financial records sits on the table.

Jim Carter looks exhausted as Riley flips through the pages.

RILEY
October twenty twenty-four, raise.
December, raise.
(MORE)

RILEY (CONT'D)
January twenty-five, bonus.
February, bonus. March, bonus.

She slides the records across the table.

RILEY (CONT'D)
Recognize the pattern?

Jim glances down. His face falls.

JIM
Where did you get these?

RILEY
Your payroll records.

Jim leans back, defeated.

RILEY (CONT'D)
Paul had the same pattern.
(beat)
Brian too.

Riley stares at Jim.

RILEY (CONT'D)
And also your now once affluent
deposit clerk, Jones. Do you really
think a deposit clerk making
seventy-five k in bonuses alone
wouldn't be flagged at some point?

Jim stares in silence at the paperwork.

JIM
I want a lawyer.

RILEY
Jim—

JIM
(assertive)
Now.

Jim doesn't raise his voice, but is stern. Riley studies him.

JIM (CONT'D)
I'm not saying another word.

INT. CELLAR - DAY

The door CREAKS open. Boots on wood. The Hitman comes down the stairs, calm, and unbothered. Like nothing happened.

HITMAN

Hey... man.

Jack doesn't respond. The Hitman steps off the last stair.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

So.

(beat)

That was rather ambitious.

He sets a small bag down near the bars.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

I respect it.

Jack stares at him.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Kinda.

The Hitman crouches slightly, looking at the repaired door.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

You made me do some upgrades.

He stands back up, pulls out a SNICKERS and holds it up.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Hunting was a success.

A small shrug.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

So I actually brought the right thing this time.

He tosses it in as it lands near Jack.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Still not touching that corner, though. That's your problem.

The Hitman studies him.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

You hungry?

Jack says nothing. Just breathing heavier.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Alright.

He steps closer to the bars. His tone shifts - quieter.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Let's not do that again.

The Hitman's eyes lower.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
(serious tone)
You run... I catch you. Simple.

The Hitman straightens up.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
(lighter tone)
Now.

He claps his hands once.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Where were we?

Jack looks away.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Right.

He leans slightly toward the bars.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
This is a pretty big operation you
guys had going.
(beat)
So let's finish it.

Jack shakes his head.

JACK
I'm not doing this again.

The Hitman watches him.

HITMAN
You are.

JACK
Just kill me.

HITMAN
No.

JACK
Just fucking kill me. I can't do
this anymore. Kill me!

HITMAN
(flat)
That's not how this works.

Jack's breathing picks up. Jack looks down at the snickers bar in his cell. He grabs the Snickers and crushes it in his hand. Then he throws it. The Snickers nails the Hitman in the chest.

The Hitman doesn't react. Doesn't even blink.

JACK
I'm not giving you anyone else. So
you can figure out what to do.

The Hitman studies him for a long moment. Then in a blink, he moves towards the bars. In one fast motion, the Hitman reaches in and is about to grab Jack when he stops.

HITMAN
Oh, wow.

Jack freezes.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
I completely forgot.

JACK
What?

HITMAN
Judge.

Jack's expression changes instantly.

JACK
What?!

HITMAN
Your dog. He's fine!

Jack stares.

JACK
Bullshit.

HITMAN
Nope.

JACK
How do I know you're not lying?

HITMAN

You don't.

(beat)

But... if there's one thing you should know by now, it's that I'm extremely straightforward.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

(shrugging)

Almost to a fault, honestly.

Jack searches his face.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

He tore up my couch cushion pretty good.

Jack doesn't know what to do with that information.

HITMAN (CONT'D)

Good doggo. Anyway.

(corporate tone returns)

Next name.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME TIME

A LAWYER (late 40s) is present. A quiet conversation. Jim leans in, whispering. The lawyer nods slightly. Then they both sit back.

LAWYER

My client is willing to answer limited questions.

Riley watches him carefully.

PETE

Why do your compensation records match the now-deceased Paul, Brian, and Jones?

Jim shifts in his chair.

JIM

Because we all got bonuses.

RILEY

The same raises. The same bonuses. I really am a generous boss-

The lawyer kicks Jim under the desk, cutting him off. Jim looks at his lawyer.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Jim, you were straight with me on the Bowman case. I need that again now.

Jim swallows. Then he leans in to whisper something to the lawyer. The lawyer nods and stares back at the detectives.

JIM

Yeah, and I'm in a different predicament currently, so—

The lawyer nudges Jim again, silently urging him to stop. Jim readjusts in his chair and gives his lawyer an understanding nod.

RILEY

Look, I'm gonna be honest. Three people with the exact same compensation history as you are dead.

Jim looks at his lawyer.

RILEY (CONT'D)

No. Look at me. Perception is reality, Jim. And right now, you are perceived as being pretty fucked.

The lawyer whispers something to Jim. Jim whispers something back aggressively. The lawyer raises his hand to calm Jim down and nods while the whispering continues.

JIM

(to his lawyer)
Yeah, I got it.

Jim turns to Riley and Pete.

JIM (CONT'D)

My lawyer and I will have a discussion.

RILEY

Anyone close to these guys?

Pete's phone buzzes. He looks at it and exits the interrogation room. Riley gives Pete a look but stays.

JIM

We're all close. We're a family down there.

The lawyer shakes his head in disapproval. Riley studies them both. She notices Jim doesn't have a watch.

RILEY
Where's your watch?

JIM
What?

RILEY
The watch. Brooke used to tease you about it. Where is it?

Jim looks at his lawyer. The lawyer is just as confused at the questioning.

JIM
What? I mean, yeah, she did. I had that for maybe a week. But that was Christmas about two years ago. It was a gift to myself. The bank did have a good year. But, I only wore it once, at the Christmas party. Then I returned it.

RILEY
Why'd you return it, Jim?

The lawyer gives a nod to Jim.

JIM
Because it was too much. Didn't feel right wearing something like that.
(beat)
People made fun of me. Wade thought I was crazy for taking it back.

RILEY
Wade Roberts?

Jim immediately realizes he said too much. The lawyer cuts him off before Jim can continue.

LAWYER
My client and I will discuss further and get back to you.

RILEY
What about Wade?

Silence.

RILEY (CONT'D)
(shaking her head)
What did you do, Jim?

Jim and the lawyer sit silently. The color drains from Jim's face. Riley exits.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Riley walks out into the hall.

PETE
You buying that?

RILEY
Hell no.

They walk toward Riley's desk.

PETE
Think he was protecting somebody?

RILEY
I don't know. But Jim said enough.

They reach Riley's desk. Riley immediately starts digging through the old Bowman case box.

PETE
What are you looking for?

RILEY
Roger pulled Brooke's phone records
during the original investigation.

She flips through folders.

RILEY (CONT'D)
If Wade was the regional guy who
sold off her loans...

She finds the phone records.

RILEY (CONT'D)
...maybe she called him.

Pete watches as Riley scans the pages. Then she stops.

RILEY (CONT'D)
There.

PETE
What is it?

RILEY
One call. Three days before Brooke
was killed.

Riley pulls Wade's personnel file and finds his home address.

RILEY (CONT'D)
I'm done calling him. Let's see if
he's back from his rounds.

INT. CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

HITMAN
Alright... Who is it?

JACK
Wade.

The Hitman waits.

JACK (CONT'D)
That's all I know.

HITMAN
What does he do?

JACK
Regional or... commercial lending.
Loan sales. I don't know. He wasn't
around much.

HITMAN
Why him?

JACK
Brooke talked to him. After that...
Everything changed.

HITMAN
Last name.

JACK
I don't know.

HITMAN
What was this conversation about?

JACK
She called him. Said something
didn't add up with one of his
mortgages. Thought there was a
mistake.

(beat)

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)
I think... I think she figured out
what we were doing.

HITMAN
(nods his head)
Where does he live?

JACK
I don't know. I swear.

The Hitman studies him.

JACK (CONT'D)
Met the guy once. He was hardly
ever in the office.

The Hitman nods slightly.

HITMAN
Wade. Regional lending.

He turns toward the stairs. The door shuts. Jack sits there.
Shaking. No way out.

INT. FARMHOUSE - NURSERY - DAY

Blackout curtains cover the window, but not completely. A
thin strip of daylight spills through the gap.

Dust hangs in the still air. The room looks as if it hasn't
been touched in a year.

The mobile above the crib hangs perfectly still. A rocking
chair sits with its feet reclined. The changing table has a
swaddle laid flat on top. Stuffed animals are on shelves and
in baskets.

Judge lies down next to the Hitman in the hallway.

On the floor near the doorway:

Dozens of handwritten notes spread across the floor. The
pages are covered in little notes to a woman and a child.

Months of communication scattered across the carpet. The
Hitman stares.

His jaw tightens. He takes a step inside. His breathing
begins to quicken. He kneels and grabs a handful of pages.

The notes tremble in his hands. A tear slips down his face.

He tries to stop it, but can't. He isn't full of rage, just grief. Raw and exhausting. He presses the papers against his forehead.

Eyes shut tight. A quiet, controlled sob escapes him as he drops the papers to cover his mouth.

He forces himself to breathe. In. Out. Again.

The tears stop. He's able to open his eyes fully. The emotion disappears behind the wall.

He gathers the scattered notes into a small pile near the door as he stands back up, tall.

He takes one last look at the room, then quietly pulls the door shut. Click.

The Hitman stands alone in the hallway. Composed once more. He turns and walks away. He sees Judge sitting there. The Hitman gives Judge a scratch under the collar. He looks at his dog tag. The Hitman removes Judge's tag and pockets it.

HITMAN

Come on, boy! Let's go outside.

Judge gets up and follows him out.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Judge sits on the porch of the house as the Hitman pulls away in his minivan.

The farmhouse becomes smaller and smaller behind the wind-break of trees.

Judge lifts his head up and watches the minivan pull away. Then sets it softly back down.

CUT TO:

EXT. WADE'S HOUSE - DAY

Police cars pull up. Fast. Detectives move in. The door is already slightly open. They enter.

CUT TO:

INT. WADE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The house is not trashed, but something is wrong. A chair knocked over, drawer half open. On the coffee table there's a wallet and a phone charging.

RILEY
He didn't leave.

PETE
How do you know?

RILEY
Door's open. Keys are still here.
He wasn't planning on going
anywhere. Somebody came for him.

INT. BULLPEN - EVENING

Riley is going through the box containing the Bowman case and the current evidence. Pete is looking at the board near her desk. Both tired and focused. The case is getting heavier.

PETE
So what, someone just grabs him out
of his house? In broad daylight?

RILEY
Now we know this is tied. I think I
need to call the FBI back.

PETE
Tied to who?
(beat)
Has to be someone at the bank.
Maybe a family member or ex-spouse.
I don't fucking know.

RILEY
Maybe.

She scans the board.

RILEY (CONT'D)
There was no forced entry. No
ransack. It was quick.

Riley moves towards her desk.

RILEY (CONT'D)
We need to interview each and every
employee at the bank. Even those
that worked there in the last five
years.

Riley pulls a file out of the "NOT CLOSED" box.

BOWMAN/HOUSE

Flips it open. Photos, reports, and a baggie of evidence.

PETE

I just don't get- why him, why
Wade?

Riley picks up a photo.

RILEY

(quiet)
He said ranch.

PETE

Who did?

She slams the photo down. Then she picks up a copy of MARK
MERCER'S DRIVER'S LICENSE. She stares at it, locking in.

She lifts up the MERCER driver's license in her hand and
raises both the ID and the photo side by side.

RILEY

Dammit! Dammit! Dammit!

She slams the files down. Already moving.

PETE (O.S.)

What did you find?

RILEY

(yelling as she moves)
He fucking played us.

PETE

Who?!

She's out the door. Pete runs after her.

Files are left open. One photo staring back. Lucas and
Brooke.

The Hitman/Mark Mercer has a clean face and short light hair.
Same eyes, same face, same man. Different soul.

The Hitman, fresh off a shooting competition win. He has a
big smile as Brooke kisses his cheek. The rifle is slung
behind him with a suppressor.

INT. RILEY'S SUV - CONTINUOUS

Riley drives fast. Pete sits beside her, working his phone. Riley hits the phone icon on the steering wheel.

RILEY
Call Lucas Bowman.

Pete looks over.

PETE
Are you serious? Why are you
calling him?

The call rings once. Then disconnects.

PETE (CONT'D)
Did he just hang up on you?

Riley immediately calls again.

PETE (CONT'D)
Riley, if you think it's him, why
the hell are you letting him know
we're coming?

The call goes straight to voicemail.

RILEY
I want to know if he runs.

PETE
What are you doing?

LUCAS (V.O.)
Leave a message.

A beep. Riley hesitates. Pete watches her. Riley keeps her eyes on the road.

RILEY
Hey, Lucas. It's Riley. Call me
back...

CUT TO:

EXT. RANCH OUTBUILDING - SAME TIME

The Hitman's truck rolls to a stop outside the outbuilding. Riley's voice comes through the phone in his hand.

RILEY (V.O.)
...we found something.

The Hitman ends the message and pockets the phone. He gets out and walks around to the rear passenger door. He opens it.

Wade lies across the back floorboard. Unconscious. His wrists and ankles bound with zip ties. The Hitman grabs him beneath the arms and pulls him out. Wade hits the ground hard.

The Hitman drags him toward the cellar doors. Wade's boots cut two uneven trails through the dirt. The Hitman unlocks the doors and pulls them open. Then drags Wade down into the darkness.

INT. CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

Wade is dragged in. His boots scraping against the cellar floor. Jack shoots up inside the cell.

JACK
Hey- HEY- don't- don't you fucking
touch him!

The Hitman says nothing. He hauls Wade upright and zip-ties him tightly to a pipe just outside the cell. Jack grips the bars.

JACK (CONT'D)
Wade, wake up! Come on - WADE!

The Hitman gives Wade a short, hard kick. Wade GASPS. Air floods back in. Wade's eyes snap open. He sees Jack and freezes.

WADE
...Jack?

Then, reality hits.

WADE (CONT'D)
What the fuck is this? What is
this? HEY - get this shit off me!
HEY!

He jerks against the ties. Pointless.

JACK
Stop just... stop moving.

WADE
Get me the fuck out of here!

HITMAN
I'm not gonna hurt him right this
second.

Wade stops. Breathing hard. The Hitman steps back. He watches them both, assessing.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Great, glad we could get the band
back together.

Jack shoots Wade a sharp look and slightly shakes his head no.

JACK
We're all here. Now what?!

HITMAN
Not really, Jack.

WADE
Just tell him what he wants.

JACK
(sharp)
Shut up.

Jack doesn't take his eyes off the Hitman.

JACK (CONT'D)
We're done.

Wade stares at him and doesn't get it.

WADE
What are you talking about?

JACK
(quiet)
Look at him.

Wade does. The Hitman stands still. Not rushed. Not angry. But certain. Wade swallows.

HITMAN
(small nod)
Good.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Now we don't waste time.

He steps forward.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Brooke came to you... Why?

Wade hesitates.

WADE

What? Brooke? She... thought there was a mistake.

HITMAN

(flat)

Was there?

Wade doesn't answer. The Hitman kicks him hard.

WADE

Fuck! Yeah!

HITMAN

What mistake?

Wade rushes his words now.

WADE

Commercial loans. We moved money through them before they were sold off. Then we spread the rest across dormant accounts that hadn't been touched in years.

JACK

Wade god dammit!

WADE

Me and Brian handled most of it. Paul made sure nobody looked too hard. Jones was just... If something looked off, he fixed it, all right?

The Hitman watches, unimpressed. He uses his head to point at Jack.

HITMAN

And that one?

Jack looks at Wade to stop, but Wade doesn't look at him.

JACK

Don't.

WADE

He- he talked to clients.

JACK

Wade!

WADE

When clients asked questions, and man did they, Jack calmed 'em down.

JACK
You're making it worse!

WADE
I'm trying to keep us alive!

JACK
You can't.

Wade is stunned. Silence. The Hitman studies Jack now. A flicker of interest.

HITMAN
You figured it out faster.

Jack doesn't respond.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
Most don't.

Then-

HITMAN (CONT'D)
What about the one you missed?

Wade stiffens further.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
The woman.

Silence hangs heavily. Wade's breathing changes.

WADE
We- we didn't-

HITMAN
(interrupting)
You didn't what?

Wade looks at Jack. Jack won't look back.

WADE
She wasn't supposed to-

He stops. The Hitman takes a step closer.

HITMAN
She wasn't supposed to what?

Wade stares at him now. Really looks. Something shifts.

WADE
How do you know about that?

No answer. Just a look.

WADE (CONT'D)

No...

The Hitman reaches up slowly and removes his mask. Wade's face drains.

INT. BANK - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The holiday party is in full swing. Christmas lights hang around the teller line. Employees mingle with drinks in hand. Brooke is talking to Jim.

The front door opens as the Hitman steps inside. Work boots. Dirty jeans. Wrinkled button-up dress shirt.

Brooke is standing there talking to Jim. Brooke spots the Hitman immediately, and her face lights up.

BROOKE

There you are.

She pulls him into a quick hug.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

My mom and dad still have the buds?

HITMAN

Yep. Can't believe they still wanted to watch him. I mean y'all just visited them last month.

The Hitman looks at Jim. He notices Jim's watch and makes a face. Jim pulls his sleeve down. Brooke and the Hitman are both now staring at Jim.

BROOKE

That's the watch Wade talked you into buying, isn't it?

JIM

He didn't talk me into it.

BROOKE

Sure he didn't.

JIM

It wasn't *that* expensive.

BROOKE

Keep telling yourself that.

JIM
(sarcastic)
Alright, ha ha. I'll leave you to
it. Enjoy the evening!

Jim walks to a different group. As Brooke pulls away from the hug, she wrinkles her nose.

BROOKE
You stink.

HITMAN
Sorry. Just got done cleaning out
the old outbuilding. Which I'm
pretty damn sure you told me to get
done.

BROOKE
Yes, like four months ago. How'd
that go?

The Hitman nods.

HITMAN
Whole cellar was full of mold.

BROOKE
Sounds fun.

HITMAN
'Twasn't.

He looks toward the buffet.

HITMAN (CONT'D)
I'm starved, lady.

They head toward the food.

Near the buffet, JACK stands with a paper plate. A SERVER
refills a bowl of trail mix.

JACK
What's in that?

SERVER
Peanuts, almonds, cashews, raisins-

JACK
Damn.

SERVER
What?

JACK
Can't do almonds.

SERVER
Allergic?

JACK
Unfortunately.

The server shrugs and moves on. The Hitman grabs a handful of chips and watches Jack walk away.

HITMAN
Who the hell is allergic to almonds
but not other nuts?

BROOKE
Apparently Jack.

They continue down the hallway. Ahead of them, Jones exits the office area. He glances up and sees Brooke and The Hitman. His expression changes instantly. His head goes straight back down as he picks up his pace. He passes them without a word.

The Hitman watches him go.

HITMAN
Who's that?

BROOKE
Some ass.

She grabs his hand.

BROOKE (CONT'D)
Come on. I want to show you
something.

INT. BROOKE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

A small office decorated for Christmas. On the desk sits a six-pack and a wrapped gift. Brooke smiles.

BROOKE
Congratulations!

The Hitman looks confused.

BROOKE (CONT'D)
Open it.

He unwraps the gift:

A framed photograph. The Hitman lies prone behind his rifle during a competition. A handwritten note is attached:

CONGRATS ON THE WIN! SO PROUD OF YOU LOVER! DON'T LET IT GO TO YOUR HEAD.

The Hitman smiles as Brooke watches him. Proud. Happy.

HITMAN

I love it.

BROOKE

Good.

HITMAN

I love you.

BROOKE

No, you.

He leans down and kisses her.

HITMAN

I'm gonna throw this in the truck;
I'll see you back out there.

The Hitman heads out of the office as the door closes behind him.

Brooke sits at her desk and opens a drawer. Her smile fades. Inside sits a folded piece of paper. She unfolds it.

A short handwritten message:

BROOKE. DON'T BE A RAT.

Brooke stares at it with a concerned look. The sounds of the party drift faintly from down the hall. She slowly folds the note back up.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - EVENING

A squad car pulls up. Engine cuts. Riley sits for a beat, staring at the house.

RILEY

Haven't been back here since the investigation.

PETE

Wish I would've been on the force
sooner for this one.

RILEY

No, you don't.

Riley exhales.

RILEY (CONT'D)

It was-

She trails off. Looks at the house. Stretches her neck. One more deep breath. They open the car doors.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Car doors open. Paul, Brian, Jones, and Wade step out. Quiet and focused.

Jack is in the driver's seat. Jack's face is bare and visibly nervous.

The rest of the men put on masks. No talking, only intent.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The four men approach the house. Fast. Wade nods once.

Paul steps up and KICKS the door in. The door swings open, hard.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING (PRESENT DAY)

Riley and Pete move through the living room with clean movements. Photos on the wall: Lucas, Brooke, family, a baby. Normal life.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The same photos are on the wall, staring back as the men move through the house. The men move controlled and purposeful.

INT. HALLWAY - EVENING (PRESENT DAY)

Riley and Pete clear each doorway. Methodical.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The men move along the same path. Heavier. Louder.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING (PRESENT DAY)

The detectives approach. Slowly now. Riley's gun pushes through to the kitchen. Steady and unwavering.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The gun is shaking and pointed forward. It is now held by Wade. Brooke stands near the counter. The baby sits in a high chair. Soft sounds. Spoon clinks against glass.

BRIAN

Stop what you're doing.

Brooke freezes and drops the spoon.

PAUL

Brooke.

Paul lifts both of his hands up, surrendering.

PAUL (CONT'D)

We know you've been digging around the bank.

BROOKE

Don't hurt me or my boy. Please.

JONES

You don't know what you're stepping into. If you don't stop, something bad will happen.

Brooke backs up slightly. Not as scared. Eyes locked on them.

BROOKE

I know exactly who you are.

Brooke sizes up each man.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Get the fuck out of my house.

The baby starts crying. Brooke glances toward the door.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Luke'll be home any second.

A flicker of tension.

BROOKE (CONT'D)
You've met him. You know exactly
who he is.

Wade's grip tightens on the gun. Trigger finger shaking.
Brooke starts to inch toward the counter.

WADE
Stop moving.

Brooke slows her movements.

BRIAN
Look, we just want you to stop
looking. That's it, we only-

Brooke starts inching towards the counter again.

WADE
I said stop.

Brooke takes another step back as her hand brushes the
counter.

WADE (CONT'D)
Stop!

Brooke snatches a knife. She lunges toward Wade.

The gun FIRES.

The baby stops crying.

Instantly.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING (PRESENT DAY)

A deafening silence. The detectives stand frozen. Same space.
Different time. They stare at the kitchen floor.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Blood spreads across tile.

Brooke collapses as the knife clatters away. No one moves.

Wade stares, shaking.

WADE
No...

His hands drop slightly.

WADE (CONT'D)
No, no, no-

JONES
What the fuck did you do?!

WADE
I didn't- she- she-

PAUL
We gotta go. Now... NOW!

They scramble.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING (PRESENT DAY)

Riley takes a slow step forward. She looks at the clean tiled kitchen floor.

PETE
He's not here. Can we go? I don't
want to be in here any longer.

Riley doesn't respond. Her eyes scan the room. Everything connects.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - EVENING

The detectives exit the house as Judge comes up to them and barks.

Riley and Pete are startled. Then, Riley calms and gets on one knee at Judge's eye level.

RILEY
(not scared)
Hey boy!

Judge calms, walks up to Riley, and lets her pet him.

Riley looks at the dog's collar. The metal name tag is now missing.

PETE
Didn't you say Jack had a German
Shepherd?

Riley stands up quick and rushes back toward the car. There is no wasted motion.

RILEY
Bowmans had land!

Riley rushes to the driver's door.

RILEY (CONT'D)
Outbuilding. Twenty miles west of
town.

She yanks the car door open. Pete is just getting into the
passenger seat as Riley slams on the gas.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Car doors slam shut as the four men pile into the car. Jack
sits behind the wheel. Still not wearing a mask. The engine
is running.

JACK
What happened?!

Wade is shaking, barely functioning.

JACK (CONT'D)
I heard a shot. What the fuck
happened?!

JONES
Go.

JACK
What did you-

JONES
GO!

Jack slams it into gear as the car tears off. Wade breaks,
his hands in his face. The car disappears into the dark.

INT. CELLAR - DAY

Silence hangs heavy. Wade shakes, like he did that night.

WADE
I'm sorry! I'm so sorry, man, I
didn't mean, I didn't mean to.

The Hitman stands a few feet away, calm and still. Watching
him.

WADE (CONT'D)

We were just trying to scare her.
That's it, she came at me- I
panicked- I didn't-

HITMAN

(interrupting, quiet)
I know.

That stops Wade. For a second, he thinks it matters.

WADE

Then you- you understand- I didn't-

HITMAN

I understand exactly what you did.

Jack watches. Breathing heavier now.

JACK

Who the fuck are you?

No answer from the Hitman. Jack realizes who the Hitman is.
Wade keeps going. Desperate.

WADE

Please, I have a family, I- I'll-

Jack sits in the corner of his cell, shaking his head.
Wrapping it around who his captor truly is.

JACK

Wade, you... this is on you, man.
Stop talking, look sir, I'm sorry
we-

BANG. One shot.

Wade slouches further. Dead weight against the pipe. Jack
flinches back against the bars. Silence.

JACK (CONT'D)

(voice cracking)
Jesus- Jesus Christ-

Jack's eyes are wide. His head shaking as he stares at Wade's
body.

Jack tries to make a sound, but nothing comes out. The Hitman
doesn't look at Jack. He stares at Wade for a long moment. He
breathes in, slowly. Then turns to Jack.

LUCAS

Lucas Bowman.

Jack doesn't recognize it.

JACK

Yeah-

(the sound barely comes
out)

Jack clears his throat and tries again.

JACK (CONT'D)

I- I am so sorry-

Jack stops and looks at Wade, then looks at the Hitman, Lucas Bowman.

Lucas steps closer to the cell. Not aggressive. Just final.
Jack's starting to break now.

JACK (CONT'D)

I wasn't even in the house-I was
outside- I was only driving.

Nothing. Lucas just watches him.

JACK (CONT'D)

I heard the shot. I didn't know- I
didn't-

Lucas turns away and heads toward the stairs.

JACK (CONT'D)

Wait- wait- listen to me- I didn't-
I wasn't- I'm sorry.

Lucas stops at the bottom step. Back still turned.

LUCAS

You know, Jack...

Jack is crying now. Lucas takes one step back down the stairs.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

You knew what happened. You sat in
that car. You did nothing.

(beat)

And sometimes, that's worse.

Lucas runs his hand along the trim of the stairwell.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

They are probably about to figure
me out.

(MORE)

LUCAS (CONT'D)
She couldn't find y'all the first
time. But she's solid. She will
this time.

A small glance upward.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
So, I'm going to leave.

Jack grips the bars.

JACK
Don't leave me here. Please!

The Hitman doesn't turn.

LUCAS
If someone finds you, great.

Lucas nods to himself.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
If not...

He steps up the stairs. The door opens and light spills in.

JACK
Wait!

The cellar door slams shut. A heavy lock clicks. The room
drops into darkness. Pitch black.

Jack's breathing fills the space.

JACK (CONT'D)
I'm so fucking sorry.

Nothing. Just darkness.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

Darkness.

Then-

The sound of metal breaking as bolt cutters bite through a
lock. The door creaks open and light spills in.

Riley and Pete enter, guns up, flashlights out. They move
slowly and in a controlled manner. Clearing corners, and
breathing steady. They move deeper.

The light reaches Wade. Slumped. Still. Dead. They stop.

Then-

Jack. Alive. Shaking. Eyes wide in the dark. No one speaks. Pete moves to the cell door and starts working the lock.

Riley finds a lamp and turns it on. Her eyes shift to the unopened laptop plugged into a charger on the desk.

She steps toward it and opens it. The screen glows. A document sits open on the screen. Pete is fighting with the cell lock. Riley reads to herself silently for a moment.

Then-

RILEY

"I know you tried to find who
murdered my family. I don't have
ill feelings toward you. You did
your best."

A slight breath.

RILEY (CONT'D)

(whispered)

"So did I."

Pete turns to see emotion fill his partner's face. Not understanding yet.

Jack understands; his face drops.

RILEY (CONT'D)

(out loud)

"You promised you'd catch them.
Don't carry it anymore. I kept your
promise."

Pete turns back to the cell to try to open it.

RILEY (CONT'D)

...Wait.

Pete pauses and looks back at Riley. Jack looks as well. Terrified. The room is still. Riley stares at the screen.

CUT TO:

INT. MINIVAN - NIGHT

The road hums beneath the tires. Dark. Nothing ahead but headlights and blacktop.

Lucas drives calmly. One hand on the wheel, the other holding his phone. He taps the screen.

A voicemail begins to play.

BROOKE (V.O.)
Hey... we made it to their house.

A faint smile touches his face.

BROOKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
My mom says he looks like he's four
already.

A soft breath through his nose. Almost a laugh.

BROOKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I know you're working.
(beat)
Thank you for always supporting me
and the buddies.

Another small smile from Lucas.

BROOKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Love you.

The message ends. The road stretches on. He keeps driving.

The phone lowers slowly. He doesn't turn it off, just sets it
on the passenger seat.

In the back, an empty car seat. Still. Strapped in. Waiting.

The van disappears into the dark.

THE END