

FRANK AND CARSON

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE - DAY

WAYLON OWENS (13) and his sister CALLIE OWENS (5), are playing Fur Elise on the piano together.

MAE OWENS, a petite-framed woman (37), sees a white car pull up out of the window.

A woman in the car leans over and kisses the man passionately on the lips. They both exit the car.

Mae locks eyes with the angry-looking man from the window.

MAE
(To Waylon and Callie)
Hide!

Mae is cooking dinner and setting the table. DANTE OWENS (37), a tall, muscular man with no feeling in his eyes, comes through the door belligerent.

DANTE
Why isn't dinner on the table?

MAE
It's almost ready, Dante. I made
your favorite, pork chops and eggs.

Mae puts down a big mixed salad bowl.

DANTE
What's this salad? I want some
meat, not some stupid salad.

Dante throws the salad bowl on the floor.

DANTE (CONT'D)
Pick that up, make yourself useful,
woman!

Waylon and Callie are peeking out from their room. Mae catches their eye and gives them a scared look to stay put.

Mae is picking up the salad. The eggs start to smoke.

DANTE (CONT'D)
You can't do anything right!

MAE
I'm sorry!

Mae takes the burnt eggs off the burner and starts over.

EXT. OWEN HOUSE/ HALLOWEEN - NIGHT

It's Halloween, and all of the houses are decorated. Only a handful of kids are running door to door in costumes.

It's windy outside.

The Owens house has no decorations. It's a single-family home that looks neglected. A child in a devil costume rings their bell. No one answers.

It's starting to rain, and all the children are running for shelter.

Callie is staring out her window and sees the neighbor lady looking over at her. She is watching all the kids in costumes trick or treating.

Callie waves to trick-or-treaters.

The child in the devil costume hears a woman scream behind the door and runs.

The lady across the street looks out her window and pulls her shade down as she looks at Callie.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Waylon is in a single bed next to bed, Callie. Waylon wakes up to the sound of Mae screaming.

His sister wakes up afraid.

WAYLON

Stay here.

CALLIE

They're always fighting.

He motions for her to be quiet. Waylon creeps out of the room, closing the door behind him.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mae is getting punched in the face by her abusive husband, Dante.

Mae struggles to get up.

MAE
Is that all you got?

Mae's nose is bleeding. She wipes her face, smearing the blood.

Dante hits her again.

MAE (CONT'D)
You can hurt me all you want. I'm taking these kids and leaving you.

DANTE
Bitch! You ain't taken my kids anywhere.

MAE
They're my kids, and I'm taking them so far away you'll never see us again. This is the last time you're ever going to abuse me.

Mae runs to attempt to grab her keys on the counter. Dante beats her to it.

Mae looks at the phone hanging on the wall.

DANTE
You won't have time to call the cops.

Mae runs and grabs the phone. Dante takes the cord and wraps it around Mae's neck.

Mae is fighting for her life.

Waylon jumps on Dante's back, smacking his father in the face.

WAYLON
Get off her!

Waylon gets thrown off of Dante, hitting his head hard on the wall. He struggles to get up off the frayed carpet.

Dante continues to strangle Mae. He is completely out of control.

Mae can't breathe; her face is turning purple. She trying to pry Dante's hands off her. She scratches Dante's face. She is starting to go unconscious. Life is draining out of her.

Waylon is trying to pull Dante off of his mother, but he can't.

WAYLON (CONT'D)
Stop it, Daddy, you're killing her!

Mae's eyes roll to the back of her head. She is like a rag doll.

Callie comes into the room and sees all of the chaos. She is crouching behind a chair, watching her brother.

Waylon picks up the metronome on top of the piano and bluntly hits Dante in the head.

A sea of blood runs down Dante's face. He stands up and sees his reflection in the mirror.

DANTE
Waylon, what did you do?

Dante falls to the floor. Waylon drops the metronome and runs to Mae.

Waylon pushes his dad off of his mother. He is trying to revive her.

WAYLON
Mama, wake up! Mama, wake up! Mama,
please!

Waylon takes the phone and calls 911.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
This is 911, what's your emergency?

Callie is crying in the background.

CALLIE
Waylon, why did you hurt Mommy and
Daddy?

WAYLON
I need help, I'm at 632 Live Oak
Drive.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
Is anyone hurt?

WAYLON
My parents.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
Is anyone else in the house?

WAYLON
My sister is five. I'm thirteen.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
Are there any weapons in the house?

Waylon looks at the Metronome covered in blood.

WAYLON
No, please hurry.

Callie is screaming from seeing all of the blood.

WAYLON (CONT'D)
Callie shut up!

CALLIE
Don't hurt me. Get away from me!
You killed them!

The sound of sirens is getting closer.

The police burst into the room. Waylon is covered in his father's blood. Callie is hiding under a blanket.

EXT. OWEN HOUSE - DAY

Neighbors are gathered outside the Owens' house. Police yellow tape is everywhere.

Two men carry out a body in a bag, and minutes later, they carry out another body.

The neighbors are talking to the police.

MISS CAST (40s), a chain smoker who looks years beyond your age, is speaking to OFFICER CLAUDIA BERTLING (30s),.

OFFICER CLAUDIA
Did you also call the police?

MISS CAST
No, I was asleep when it happened.

OFFICER CLAUDIA
It happened around six thirty. How well did you know the Owen family?

MISS CAST
I don't know them.

OFFICER CLAUDIA
How long have you lived here?

MISS CAST

About thirty years. It was my mother's house before.

OFFICER CLAUDIA

Your window overlooks their house. Did you ever see or hear anything out of the ordinary?

MISS CAST

I keep to myself. I expect the neighbors to do the same.

OFFICER CLAUDIA

Did you ever witness any kind of neglect or abuse of the children?

MONTAGE OF MOMENTS OF ABUSE - Day

-- Waylon and Callie are sitting outside in the winter on the porch with no coats, huddled together.

-- Dante beating Waylon with his belt on the porch.

-- Callie knocks on Mrs. Cast's door and asks her for food. Miss Cast shuts the door in her face.

-- Waylon and Callie are walking to school in the snow, and Miss Cast sees them from inside her warm car.

-- Dante is burning Mae with a cigarette on the porch.

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. OWEN HOUSE - NIGHT

MISS CAST

Like I said, I keep to myself. I never saw anything.

OFFICER CLAUDIA

Here's my card if you remember anything.

Claudia hands her the card as they carry Dante's body out.

Miss Cast goes inside.

INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Waylon, still covered in blood, is being interviewed by OFFICER BIMSON (40), a large, muscular man much like his father.

Waylon is frightened, trying to give his side of the story. He is acting out exactly what happened.

OFFICER BIMSON

So did you hurt your mother before
you killed your father?

WAYLON

I told you I was trying to save my
mom. Why doesn't anyone believe me?

OFFICER BIMSON

Why not just call the police? The
phone was right there.

WAYLON

I did call the police.

OFFICER BIMSON

After you killed your parents.

WAYLON

I swear I didn't ask Callie, she
saw everything. I had to stop my
Dad, he was killing my Mom!

OFFICER BIMSON

So you took matters into your own
hands instead of calling the
authorities.

WAYLON

Yes, I mean no!

OFFICER BIMSON

Sounds like you need to get your
story straight.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

They are interviewing Callie separately from Waylon. Callie is in her nightgown. Her hair is matted, and her feet are dirty.

OFFICER LISA SHARPE (42), is conducting the interviews.

Callie is playing with a doll.

OFFICER SHARPE

Callie, I just want you to tell me what you remember. Where were you when you woke up?

CALLIE

I was in my room. Waylon told me to be quiet and stay there.

OFFICER SHARPE

Do you remember what time that was?

CALLIE

No, I don't know how to tell time.

OFFICER SHARPE

Was it dark?

CALLIE

Yes.

OFFICER SHARPE

What's the next thing you remember?

CALLIE

Everyone was yelling, and then Waylon was hurting Daddy.

OFFICER SHARPE

Was Waylon hurting Mommy?

CALLIE

I don't know. He hit Daddy in the head with the piano thing. His head was bleeding.

OFFICER SHARPE

What did the piano thing look like?

Callie draws a skinny triangle.

CALLIE

Like this. You wind it up and it makes noise.

Callie imitates the noise.

OFFICER SHARPE

That's a great drawing, can I keep it?

CALLIE

Yes, I'm tired, can I go home now? I want my mommy.

OFFICER SHARPE
Why don't we go get you something
to eat? Do you like ice cream?

CALLIE
Yes, Ma'am.

OFFICER SHARPE
What did you dress up as for
Halloween?

CALLIE
What's Halloween?

INT. OFFICER SHARPE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Officer Sharpe is looking through Waylon's school files. They
are as thick as a phone book.

There are reports of violence and write-ups from teachers.

OFFICER SHARPE
This kid never had a chance.

She notes all the missed days of school.

She is reading to herself.

OFFICER SHARPE (CONT'D)
On February ninth had to be removed
from class for showing off a pocket
knife. When asked about it, he lied
and said he found it at recess. He
was suspended.

Officer Sharpe is looking at all of the sad things in the
file.

The artwork that was from Waylon showed chaos and violence.

OFFICER SHARPE (CONT'D)
He was placed in the system on and
off since age four. There was every
kind of public assistance you could
get.

She is looking at school nurse evaluations and psychologists.

OFFICER SHARPE (CONT'D)
Appears to exhibit signs of ADHD,
depression, anxiety, and obsessive-
compulsive disorder.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Waylon is in a crowded courtroom. He is sitting with his lawyer. He looks terrified. He is handcuffed in a prison jumper.

Waylon is looking around for his sister.

WAYLON
Where's Callie?

JUDGE LEE (54), is sitting in his seat as the jury comes in.

JUDGE LEE
It's the sentence of the court that follows. In the murder of Dante Owens, the court finds you guilty in the second degree. In the murder of Mae Owens, the court finds you guilty of manslaughter. The court sentences you to thirty years.

The gavel slams down.

INT. PA PRISON - DAY

WAYLON (42), a mixed-race model-looking man, and his friend BIZZY DUNCAN (28), a quirky inmate with a bubbly personality, are making license plates.

They both have headphones on. The long roll of license plates is rolling out.

They are lined up assembly style, checking the plates. Waylon is checking each plate and putting them in neat piles.

An officer motioned for Waylon to come into the hall.

Waylon complies by taking off his headphones and making sure the cord is wrapped perfectly.

INT. PRISON CAFETERIA - DAY

Waylon and Bizzy are sitting with their group of inmates. Everyone is eating.

BIZZY
Why did they pull you out?

WAYLON
They switched me to making dentures!

All the inmates laugh.

BIZZY

Some of you may be wearing them
before you get out of here.

Everyone laughs at Bizzy.

WAYLON

You've got to make these molds,
then peel all the plastic away. I
like the whole process.

BIZZY

I requested to be moved to the
kitchen.

WAYLON

I didn't know you liked cooking.

BIZZY

I need to brush up on my knife
skills.

WAYLON

I'm going to miss your humor.

BIZZY

I like to eat, so I learned early
on how to make a few things.

WAYLON

When I get out, I'm going to find a
place that makes real food. I want
a real steak for a change. I still
think of my sister as a little
girl. I hope she can cook or teach
me.

BIZZY

You know what I always tell you...

WAYLON

If you don't keep busy, that's when
the sadness creeps in.

BIZZY

That's why we always have to stay B-
I-Z-Z-Y. Are you gonna eat that?

WAYLON

Help yourself. I can't eat it when
it's touching.

Waylon's mashed potatoes are mixed with his canned, soggy, green beans.

Waylon eats one thing at a time. He folds his napkin neatly and makes sure his silverware is straight.

Bizzy savors the green beans.

BIZZY

You know, I never cared for vegetables much. God, I would give anything for a fresh green bean or even a garden carrot. It's funny what you miss when everything is taken away.

INT. DENTURE MAKING ROOM - DAY

All of the inmates are sitting at a long table making dentures.

VICTOR POPOV (32), a Russian inmate, is sitting next to Waylon. He is playing with the dentures like a toy.

VICTOR

(Russian accent)

You're getting pretty good at that. Maybe you can get a job on the outside making these? How much longer?

WAYLON

Two days, seven hours, and thirteen minutes.

VICTOR

You're lucky, I got six years left. Where will you live?

WAYLON

My younger sister inherited the house. She had brain surgery last year after a seizure, that's why she never visits. They told her she can't drive anymore.

VICTOR

Got any pictures?

WAYLON

She's too young for you.

VICTOR

Never hurts to ask. What does she think about you moving back?

WAYLON

She was five, she doesn't remember anything. We never talk about it. Maybe it's better that way.

VICTOR

You should tell her the truth. She's old enough now to understand.

WAYLON

I couldn't put that guilt on her. It's over now, and I just want to have the second half of my life to be better than the first.

VICTOR

You lost thirty years because of her statement.

WAYLON

I lost thirty years because no one believed me, hell, I didn't believe in myself some days. I did kill my father, and I don't regret it a day that goes by.

INT. PRISON HALL - DAY

It's Waylon's final day. He is walking down the hall, shaking hands with some of the inmates. He sees Bizzy.

WAYLON

Hey, man, I want you to have this.

Waylon gives him a book. The title of the book is:

THE ILLUSTRATED
GRAND GRIMOIRE.

BIZZY

What's it about?

Bizzy flips through the book.

WAYLON

It's about spells to protect you from evil spirits. I just always liked it for the illustrations.

BIZZY

Wow, this here is some serious
shit! Is this like witchcraft or
something?

WAYLON

I never used it for that. Some
crazy fan sent it to me years ago.
The illustrations are freaky. It's
said to be from the original
written work of King Solomon.

BIZZY

King Solomon? Yeah, you did have
some crazy fans. I'll miss some of
the letters from the ladies.

WAYLON

Look him up, you've got the time.
The Lord had some beef with
Solomon.

BIZZY

Thanks, brother. You remember what
I said, stay B-I-Z-Z-Y or you'll
end up back in here. Take up a
hobby or something.

WAYLON

I'll be busy helping take care of
my sister, but yeah, I'll find
something to do.

Bizzy hugs Waylon goodbye.

BIZZY

You take care man. Don't let me see
you back here.

WAYLON

I'll write to you.

BIZZY

You better brother.

INT. PRISON FINAL EXIT ROOM - DAY

LOUISA VIRTUE (35), hands Waylon a pair of pants, underwear,
shoes, socks, a shirt, and a belt.

LOUISA
These should fit. I have the
clothes you came in with but they
won't fit.

WAYLON
Burn them.

He comes back dressed.

WAYLON (CONT'D)
Thanks for these. I would hate for
my sister to see me in prison
clothes. I'm nervous to meet her.
I've only seen her photos all these
years.

Louisa looks at a file.

LOUISA
You're sister CALLIE?

WAYLON
Yeah, Callie can't drive, I'm
taking a cab to the house.

Louisa pulls out a newspaper article.

LOUISA
I'm afraid there's been a
misunderstanding. Callie died three
months ago, I'm sorry for the
miscommunication.

WAYLON
What did you say?

LOUISA
You're sister passed away, I'm so
sorry.

Waylon reads the newspaper article:

ANOTHER DEATH AT
THE OWEN MURDER
HOUSE.

CALLIE OWEN, THE
SISTER OF
CONVICTED
MURDERER WAYLON
OWEN, DIED IN
HER HOME ON

AUGUST 5TH FROM
IMMUNE
COMPLICATIONS.
WAYLON OWEN WAS
CONVICTED OF HIS
PARENTS' MURDERS
ON HALLOWEEN
1996 AND IS SOON
TO BE RELEASED
IN OCTOBER 2026.

Waylon's eyes are filling up with tears.

INT. CAB - DAY

Waylon slams the cab door, and they start to drive. He rolls the window down and sticks his head out, feeling the cold air on his face.

WAYLON
(To cab driver)
632 Live Oak Drive.

They drive for a while, and Waylon can hardly hold back his emotions. All of the trees are turning colors. It's the most beautiful time of the year.

It's starting to rain. The leaves are blowing all over the road.

EXT. WAYLON'S HOUSE - DAY

The cab stops in front of the worst house on the block. All the other houses have Halloween decorations and pumpkins on the steps.

Waylon stares up at the small house. It has peeling paint, a shot roof, cracks in the siding, and an overgrown yard.

WAYLON
How did I end up back here?

There are boarded-up windows with the words Owen Murder House painted on the front of the porch.

He sees a Miss Cast watching him through her window. She's a broken hag.

He walks up the porch stairs and unlocks the door. There are piles of junk mail and mail from crazy murder fans.

INT. WAYLON'S HOUSE/ LIVING ROOM - DAY

Waylon flips the lights, but there is no electricity. He looks for a match and finds a candle to light.

He scans the room. The house is empty except for the daunting piano. A few of the upper keys are missing. An old, sunken, dirty couch.

The walls are all punched and kicked in. The walls read:

R.I.P. DANTE AND
MAE.

Evidence of rodents is everywhere.

He plays a few keys on the piano.

He turns on the faucet, and brown water comes out. The house is a mess.

He wipes his hands with a towel and sits on the couch. Waylon falls asleep.

FLASHBACK: WAYLON (13), CALLIE (5), MAE (37). IT'S WAYLON'S 13TH BIRTHDAY.

There are no presents, only a cake with thirteen candles.

Mae is dressed up, and the house is tidy.

Callie is helping Waylon set the table. There is roast chicken, some mashed potatoes, and green beans on the side table.

WAYLON

Thank you for the cake, Mom.

MAE

Thirteen years old. You're a young man now.

CALLIE

When it's my birthday, can we have a strawberry cake?

MAE

You can have whatever kind of cake you want on your birthday.

Mae puts down a small wrapped present.

WAYLON
Can I open it?

MAE
Yes, it's nothing much, I'm sorry I
couldn't do better.

Waylon opens it. It's a full-size chocolate bar.

WAYLON
Thank you, Mom!

A door slams and Dante comes in wasted. Mae and the kids are quiet. Waylon looks scared.

DANTE
What's all this?

MAE
It's your son's birthday today,
he's thirteen.

DANTE
How much did all this cost?

MAE
I used the money I made sewing for
the Stevensons.

DANTE
I didn't ask where you got the
money, I asked how much it cost.

Dante sees the candy bar and eats it in front of Waylon.

Dante holds a hand up to hit Mae.

Mae flinches.

MAE
Nineteen dollars.

Dante sticks his dirty hand in the cake and starts to eat it.

DANTE
Nineteen dollars that we needed to
pay for bills.

He is destroying the cake. Callie starts to cry. Waylon gives him a look and she stops.

Dante takes the chicken off the table and goes to the sofa to eat by himself.

They all start to feverishly clean up the mess.

END OF FLASHBACK.

INT. WAYLON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Waylon wakes up and makes a list of items he needs from the hardware store.

The candles are the only light source. He looks at the walls and sees the images from the Grand Grimoire come to life. Evil sounds surround him.

Waylon wakes up in a sweat.

EXT. WAYLON'S GARAGE - DAY

Waylon pulls up the garage door to reveal an old white Pontiac car covered in dust.

He tries to start the engine. It's trying to turn over.

WAYLON
Come on! Come on!

Finally, the engine starts. HETTY'S HARDWARE - DAY

HETTY SIMMONS (55), a bubbly lady with a curvy figure, is stocking the store shelves. She hears the bell as Waylon comes inside.

HETTY
Good morning, how can I help you?

WAYLON
I need these things.

Hetty looks at the list.

HETTY
We don't sell car batteries here.
You can get one at Garcia's Auto up
the street.

Hetty grabs a basket and fills it with the items.

WAYLON
Could you recommend a plumber?

HETTY

Orion Smetton is a local handyman,
a lot cheaper than a plumber and
He'll give you a discount if you
tell him I sent you.

Waylon can't help but notice Hetty's wig is slipping.

HETTY (CONT'D)

Oh, this darn wig!

In frustration, Hetty whips off the wig and has a bald head.

HETTY (CONT'D)

This is hotter than Summer in hell!
The heck with it!

WAYLON

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to stare.

HETTY

I'm three months free of cancer.
Chemo nearly killed me.

WAYLON

Couldn't you have employees run the
store?

HETTY

I run the whole ship. I didn't want
my customers going to a big chain
store, so I stayed open. I stock
what they need and carry a few
things that no one has from local
vendors. Take a whiff of this.

Waylon sees a display of soap and smells a bar.

WAYLON

Sold!

HETTY

That's made by a local family here
in town. Coffee soap. Smells as
good as the real thing.

Hetty writes down an address on a piece of paper.

HETTY (CONT'D)

I trust Orion with all my work. You
can walk from here, it's just a few
blocks up.

Customers are giving Waylon and Hetty the stink-eye.

Waylon pays Hetty and leaves the store with his bag.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Walking down the street, he notices how the stores have all changed. Some people are whispering to each other.

Everyone seems to know who Waylon is, and they are not happy about having him back in town.

Waylon looks over at a newspaper cover.

NEWSPAPER
HEADLINE:

WAYLON OWENS WAS
RELEASED FROM
PRISON AFTER
THIRTY YEARS FOR
THE MURDERS OF
HIS PARENTS

DANTE AND MAE
OWEN.

Waylon ignores them and keeps to himself. He hears piano music playing.

It's so soothing to him, he's drawn to the store. He looks at the address. It's the one Hetty wrote down.

INT. SMETTON & SON PIANOS - DAY

The store is empty except for the brilliant piano player BENJI SMETTON (43), playing behind the piano. There is no sheet music in front of Benji. Benji is wearing dark glasses.

Waylon just takes it all in. After a closer look at Benji, he realizes that Benji is blind.

Benji finishes the song. Waylon applauds.

WAYLON
That was unbelievable. How long
have you been playing?

Benji yells behind him.

BENJI
Dad. Someone's here.

ORION SMETTON (65), a silver-haired portly man walks over to Waylon.

ORION

Are you in the market for a piano?

Benji starts to play another song.

WAYLON

Hey, I know that song, that's Beethoven.

BENJI

Fir Elise, coming right up.

ORION

Benji has hundreds of songs in his head, he's like a music computer.

WAYLON

I got your name from Hetty. I'm having some plumbing issues. Where did he learn to play like that?

ORION

Self-taught. He took to the piano like a duck takes to water. You play?

WAYLON

I'm afraid I never had the opportunity to take lessons.

ORION

How does eight-thirty tomorrow sound?

WAYLON

Perfect, do you have a pen? I can give you my address.

ORION

I know where you live, son.

WAYLON

I guess everyone knows who I am. Alright then, eight-thirty tomorrow.

Waylon leaves the store.

EXT. WAYLON'S HOUSE - DAY

Waylon gets the bags out of the car. There is a metronome sitting on the porch splashed with red paint. There is a note beside it that reads:

WELCOME BACK
FROM YOUR
GREATEST FAN.

He looks around and sees the disapproving woman looking at him through the curtains.

He picks it off of the porch and goes inside.

INT. WAYLON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Waylon takes out some of the candles from the bag and lights them.

He removes all the items he bought and puts them into neat organized piles.

He sniffs the bar of coffee soap.

WAYLON
It does smell like the real thing.

He is staring at the piano.

FLASHBACK OF WAYLON (13) and CALLIE (5).

-- Waylon gives Callie a red sucker to her delight.

-- Waylon and Callie are sitting at the piano playing Fir Elise.

-- They are goofing around and having fun together.

-- Waylon is teaching Callie how to play.

-- Waylon plays the lower keys, and Callie plays the upper keys.

-- Dante comes in furious and slams the piano door down on Waylon's hands.

-- Callie is screaming.

END OF FLASHBACK

WAYLON (CONT'D)

Stay bizzy, don't let the sadness
creep in.

Waylon takes out the broom he bought and sweeps up all the garbage left by intruders. He throws the trash bags out the door.

WAYLON'S HOUSE/ KITCHEN - NIGHT

Waylon opens the cabinets in the kitchen. All empty, only some garbage left.

The candles are glowing all over the house.

Waylon is eating a gas station sandwich. He is sitting on the floor. Most of the things in the house are gone.

WAYLON (V.O.)

It had become a rite of passage with teenagers to come and take things from the Owen murder house. Kids would dare each other to come and take something. I had become an urban legend. People claimed they heard screams at night coming from the house. I had heard those screams in my head for the past thirty years, and there was no sign of them stopping.

INT. WAYLON'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Waylon starts to write a letter to Bizzy.

WAYLON (V.O.)

Dear Bizzy, just wanted to let you know I made it to the other side. It's a long story, but I'm here by myself. The house is a disaster. There are more projects than I know what to do with. It may take me a lifetime to complete them. My whole routine is gone now. I got to stay B-I-Z-Z-Y to not let the sadness creep in. Take care, and stay Bizzy. Waylon.

Waylon jumps up at the sound of breaking glass.

INT. WAYLON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Waylon sees a rock by the sink in his kitchen. He hears a car driving off fast outside.

He starts to pick up the glass and cuts his hand. When he turns on the faucet, brown water sprays out at him.

He takes a dirty towel and wraps his hand.

Waylon falls asleep on the couch. He hears his mother's voice whispering.

MAE (V.O.)

Waylon, wake up, we have to go.

INT. HETTY'S HARDWARE - DAY

Waylon is the only one in the store.

WAYLON

Hello Hetty. I need some paint.

HETTY

Interior or Exterior?

WAYLON

Interior.

HETTY

Matte, Semi-gloss, or glossy.

WAYLON

What do you think?

HETTY

I'd go with semi-gloss. What color are you thinking?

WAYLON

Color? I had not even thought that far. I'm not used to all these decisions.

HETTY

There used to be people who wanted colorful walls. Now everything is white. My favorite color is purple, but I guess most people don't want to live in a purple room.

WAYLON

I also need some sparkle and a brush. I'm going to have to patch some of the holes.

Waylon looks through the colors. He chooses purple.

HETTY

Purple Rain excellent choice, about four gallons should do it.

Hetty starts to mix the paint.

HETTY (CONT'D)

My dream is to have a little purple house with a garden. I live above the store, and all those stairs at my age aren't getting easier.

WAYLON

Do you think you'll ever move?

HETTY

Every dime I have is invested in this place. Don't get me wrong, I love what I do. I pride myself on my store is small but has some unique things. I just got these in today from a local artist, Dona Elly.

Hetty cuts open a box of crocheted knit frogs.

WAYLON

Frog dolls?

HETTY

Aren't they divine?

INT. WAYLON'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Waylon is patching the holes and getting ready to paint. The carpet is shredded.

He turns on the radio, getting lost in the music.

He pulls back a corner of the carpet. Under the carpet is a drawing that Callie did of them when they were kids. It's disturbed and haunting.

His eyes are playing tricks on him as he sees shadows and movement on the walls.

Waylon sees hardwood floors under the carpet.

He wakes up to Callie's voice.

CALLIE (V.O.)

Waylon, wake up. We have to go now.

INT. WAYLON'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Waylon answers the door, It's Orion and Benji.

BENJI

You hurt your hand.

WAYLON

Yeah, the kids broke my window last night. I get it, people don't want me back here. I had some sick fans leave me a present on my doorstep.

ORION

What did they leave?

WAYLON

This.

Waylon shows him the paint-splattered Metronome.

ORION

Things will die down after a while. Small towns are filled with small-minded people. When we had Benji, we were the talk of the town.

WAYLON

How long have you lived here?

ORION

Forty years. After I retired, I bought the piano store. I wanted to stay active. Turns out not many people want to learn to play piano anymore.

BENJI

I love playing piano.

ORION

That's right, Benji loves the store, and he makes people happy by giving the gift of music.

Orion seats Benji at the piano, and he starts to play.

ORION (CONT'D)
What's your favorite song?

WAYLON
The only song I ever learned was
Fir Elsie. I used to play it with
my sister. It was my mom's piano.

BENJI
Beethoven died during a
thunderstorm at age fifty-six.

WAYLON
She would play that song over and
over. I couldn't read the music. I
studied where she placed her hands.

Benji starts to play the song, hitting every note but in a
jazzier version.

WAYLON (CONT'D)
He's remarkable.

ORION
He intuitively knows what sound the
keys make. I've taken him to see
specialists, they can't believe his
ability.

Waylon is in awe.

ORION (CONT'D)
He's the whole reason I opened a
piano store. When you're a parent,
you would do anything to make your
kids happy.

FLASHBACK/ BENJI AS A CHILD/ DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

ORION (V.O.)
I was at Castillo's Department
Store. Benji was five, and I turned
around and he was gone. I dropped
all of my things and was frantic!

-- Orion is in line getting out his wallet and paying for
merchandise.

-- Orion sees Benji is gone and leaves the merchandise at the
till.

-- Orion runs all of the store, calling for Benji.

-- Customers shaking their heads.

ORION (V.O.)

I saw a huge crowd at the back of the store and ran, fearing the worst. I didn't even notice the music playing until I got closer.

-- A huge crowd of customers is in a circle watching Benji masterfully playing the piano.

-- Orion pushes his way through the crowd and gets to Benji.

ORION

Benji, why did you run off like that? How do you know how to play piano?

BENJI

I heard a song on the intercom playing. I just knew how to play it.

-- Customers are clapping at the talent of Benji.

END OF FLASHBACK

ORION

I bought that piano the same day. I had never seen anything like it. It was the first thing he went to in the morning, and sometimes he would even fall asleep on it at night. That piano changed our world.

WAYLON

Do you still have it?

ORION

It's the one he plays in the store. We call it our lucky piano, isn't that right Benji?

BENJI

Our lucky piano, yes.

Orion is working on the kitchen pipes under the sink.

Waylon sees kids in his yard and yells out the window.

WAYLON

Hey you! Get off my property!

The kids scatter and run away.

WAYLON (CONT'D)
Probably the brats that keep
targeting my house.

ORION
If you asked me, it's bad
parenting. You served your time,
that's good enough for me. Can I
ask why you moved back?

WAYLON
This is the only thing that I own.
I thought if I could fix it up and
sell it, I could move to another
place without all the history.

Benji starts to play another song.

WAYLON (CONT'D)
I wish I could play like that.

ORION
Benji's mother died shortly after
he was born. I wish she had lived
longer to see him play.

WAYLON
I'm sorry, it must have been hard
raising him alone.

ORION
Easier than most kids, I would say.
The piano became a mother to him.
If he was fussing, I would put him
in front of the piano, and he would
soothe himself. The doctors say
he's severely autistic, but all I
know is if he is a gift from God, I
would never want him any other way.

Orion finishes fixing the pipes, and clear water comes out.

WAYLON
You're a miracle worker!

Orion starts coughing.

ORION
Do you happen to have water? I need
to take my pills.

WAYLON
Are you alright?

ORION

When you get older, they make you
take a pill for everything. I'll be
fine.

INT. WAYLON'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Waylon gets Orion a bottle of water. Orion takes out a bunch
of pills. His hands are kind of shaky.

EXT. WAYLON'S HOUSE - DAY

Waylon, Orion, and Benji are outside. Orion is assessing the
roof.

ORION

All these drain pipes are clogged.
It's ruining your siding. Water is
flowing directly into the house.

WAYLON

I wish I had more money. Chances
are, I won't be getting hired by
anyone in this town.

ORION

Then you have to get creative. What
are your skills?

WAYLON

In prison, I learned how to make
molds and dentures.

ORION

There you go, that's a skill.

WAYLON

I'm just not sure how to apply it
on the outside.

ORION

You'll figure it out. Oh, I almost
forgot. I teach lessons at the
store on Thursdays We would love to
have you right Benji?

BENJI

You should come and play piano with
me.

WAYLON

I can't say I have a lot of cash right now, but thank you for the offer.

ORION

The lessons are free. I used to charge, but it's a way for me to get people in the store to buy something. It might help take your mind off things.

WAYLON

Thanks, I'll think about it.

ORION

Thursdays at ten. We'll expect you.

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Waylon is looking at mold-making books. He sees a book about gargoyles on a nearby shelf.

A homeless man is sitting by himself at the table.

WAYLON

Mind if I sit here?

The homeless man takes a look at Waylon and gets up and moves.

He becomes emersed in it, reading how gargoyles were used as drain pipes to keep water away from the house.

ARTICLE:

THE HISTORY OF
GARGOYLES IN
ARCHITECTURE.

Waylon is reading the article to himself. Some men at a table are whispering about him, giving him dirty looks.

WAYLON (V.O.)

Gargoyles were the guardians and protectors of people. They are said to ward off evil spirits and protect the building and the people inside. Originally, gargoyles were designed to dispose of water. A trough was carved in the back of the gargoyle so the water would spurt out of the gargoyle's mouth.

(MORE)

WAYLON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It saved the siding of houses and structures from water damage while providing an ethereal aesthetic in Thirteenth-century France. They are traced as far back as ancient Egypt.

On every page, there are magnificent examples of gargoyles in and around Europe.

Waylon turns around to get a paper and a pencil. On the desk behind him is the original article in the newspaper about Waylon's release from prison.

As he looks around the library, he's getting nothing but angry vibes from the other people.

WAYLON (V.O.)

They all had their minds made up about me, and nothing could change that. The sooner I can leave this town, the better. I miss Bizzy, he was the only one who ever really knew me. I've got to stay B-I-Z-Z-Y. The sadness is creeping in.

Waylon walks over to the front desk.

WAYLON

I'd like to get a library card.

Waylon hands her his ID card.

The crabby woman behind the desk throws him an application and says nothing. She laminates a card and hands it back to him.

When he turns to get his jacket at the desk, he sees that there is a stack of books on true crime and murder.

Several of the patrons of the library are laughing at his expense.

Waylon checks out the gargoyle book and leaves.

INT. HETTY'S HARDWARE - DAY

Hetty has just finished decorating a window for Halloween. The whole store is orange and black-themed.

Hetty is in the spirit with a pink wig and a witch hat.

Halloween music is playing in the store.

Waylon is buying plaster of Paris and mold-making supplies.

HETTY

How big is your mold going to be?

WAYLON

I hadn't thought about it.

Waylon takes a yardstick out and measures.

WAYLON (CONT'D)

At least three feet.

HETTY

Then you are going to need to build a box for it. The plastic containers will be too shallow. I got some scrap wood out back, you can have. In return, can you move a couple of boxes for me? They are at the door upstairs.

WAYLON

No problem.

EXT. HETTY'S HARDWARE - DAY

Waylon is going up and down the stairs with heavy boxes.

WAYLON

That should do it.

HETTY

Thank you, Waylon. I would have broken my neck.

WAYLON

Anything you need, you just let me know. You, Orion, and Benji have been so good to me.

HETTY

I hate to depend on people. I'd rather do things myself, but I'm not as strong as I used to be. If my cancer comes back, I'm going to sell the store and travel until I go.

WAYLON

Where would you go?

HETTY

Somewhere warm, maybe Dubai. I could have some spicy food, and my money would last until I went.

WAYLON

Something tells me you'll be around for the long run.

HETTY

The secret of life is to stay busy.

INT. PA PRISON/ CAFETERIA - DAY

Bizzy is reading Waylon's letter to the inmates.

Bizzy takes a bite of the food and spits it out.

BIZZY

This tastes like garbage!

Bizzy walks up to MARTY MONEAR (28), a cocky inmate with a strong Southern accent.

BIZZY (CONT'D)

What the hell kind of food are you feeding us here?

MARTY

I just heat it and serve, don't shoot the messenger.

BIZZY

Taste this!

Marty takes a bite and spits it out.

MARTY

As a Southerner, I do apologize for that. Can someone get me a drink of water?

INT. HETTY'S HARDWARE - NIGHT

Waylon shows Hetty a sketch of a gargoye.

WAYLON

So this is what I had in mind.

HETTY

'Tis the season. Are you trying to create a Frank and Carson?

WAYLON
Frank and Carson? Who is that?

HETTY
Eastern State Penitentiary has a
Halloween Scare show every year.
Frank and Carson are the three-
hundred-pound gargoyles. It's a
scary tour.

WAYLON
I don't know what scares me
anymore.

HETTY
Sorry, I didn't mean anything. Mind
if I take off this wig?

WAYLON
Yeah, of course.

Hetty takes off her crazy-colored Halloween wig.

HETTY
Just waiting for the day my hair
grows back.

WAYLON
That's a historic prison. Maybe
I'll check it out.

Customers are glaring at Waylon.

HETTY
People need to mind their own
business. It's about five miles
from here, just on Fairmount.

INT. WAYLON'S CAR - DAY

Waylon is blasting the radio, singing along to tunes.

Waylon slows down his car and stops in front of the Eastern
State Penitentiary.

He looks up and the giant gargoyles. He rolls down the
window.

Cars are racing by him.

WAYLON
The guardians.

Waylon jumps at the sound of brakes squealing.

Two stray dogs are running together. A car almost hits them.

Waylon jumps out of his car. He is calling for the dogs.

WAYLON (CONT'D)
Hey, hey! Come here!

EXT. STREET - DAY

Cars are swerving to avoid hitting the dogs. Waylon is trying to catch them. He's almost getting hit by cars.

Waylon gets one of the dogs and puts it in the car. The other dog follows.

INT. WAYLON'S CAR - DAY

Waylon looks back at the energetic dogs.

WAYLON
Jesus Christ! They say cats have
nine lives!

INT. VETERINARY CLINIC - DAY

The office is busy. Waylon comes in the door.

Vet technicians are running around. JOLIE KOBLIN (60), a short and sweet receptionist, is behind the counter on the phone.

JOLIE
Massive diarrhea, throwing up, you
need to bring Tombo in.

Waylon catches Jolie's eye.

WAYLON
Can I borrow two leashes?

JOLIE
Sure. Anything for you.

Jolie hands Waylon the leashes.

The vet technicians laugh at Jolie shamelessly flirting.

JOLIE (CONT'D)

If I were twenty years younger and
forty pounds thinner, that man
would be coming home with me.

Waylon comes back with the two dogs.

JOLIE (CONT'D)

Checking in? Who do we have here?

WAYLON

Their not mine. I found them
running in the road. I thought they
might be chipped.

JOLIE

Have a seat. Dr. Pernelli is the
only vet here right now. It may be
a while.

WAYLON

That's alright, I'll wait.

JOLIE

(To the vet technicians)

Take a look at that eye candy. Note
to you young ladies...take A hard,
long look at the parents of the
person you marry. That's what you
end up with.

Waylon watches as the crowd thins out; he is the last
appointment.

Waylon lets the dogs drink out of a paper cup. They are
making a mess.

WAYLON

Sorry, I'll clean that up.

JOLIE

Don't you worry, that's what we do
here. The vet is ready to see you.
Santino, take him to room six.

INT. DOG PATIENT ROOM - DAY

DR. FRANKIE PERNELLI (40), is a veterinarian who radiates
beauty and kindness.

FRANKIE

Sorry for the wait. They said you found them in the street? I'm Doctor Pernelli.

WAYLON

Just in front of the Eastern State Penitentiary. I had a tough time getting them in the car. They almost got hit.

Frankie is giving them exams. She is checking their teeth.

FRANKIE

They're underweight. They look like a Lab-Pitty mix. This guy is about eight. His friend is a senior, maybe twelve. Probably strays or neglected.

WAYLON

Do you think they are from the same home? They were together.

FRANKIE

Stray dogs stay together in groups for their protection. They depend on each other.

She takes out a microchip scanner and scans both of the dogs. No chips are detected.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

No chips, sorry. We don't have any room here to keep them. I'm afraid they'll be transferred to a shelter.

WAYLON

It's not a kill shelter, is it?

FRANKIE

I'm afraid it is.

WAYLON

I don't want that, then. What other options are there?

FRANKIE

Could you keep them for a while?

WAYLON

How long are we talking?

FRANKIE
Do you have a yard?

WAYLON
I do, it's not fenced. There's no
other place for them?

FRANKIE
All the shelters are a maximum
capacity.

Both dogs are giving Waylon the saddest looks.

WAYLON
What if I take them for a few days?
Could we put up a poster for
adoptions?

FRANKIE
Sure. They need to put some weight
on. I can give you some food.

Frankie takes a photo of each dog and one of them together.

Waylon walks to the counter to pay. Jolie looks at the
veterinary notes.

JOLIE
You're good. Dr. Pernelli doesn't
charge to scan chips. We'll call
you if anyone wants to adopt them.

Waylon leaves with Dr. Pernelli, and Jolie gives Dr. Pernelli
a look. She fans herself like she's hot.

JOLIE (CONT'D)
Oh, my God!

EXT. VETERINARY BUILDING - DAY

Frankie helps Waylon get the dogs in the car. She gives him
food, leashes, and collars.

FRANKIE
Here's my card. Call me if you have
any questions. I'll put up a flyer
tomorrow. It's a shame, we see it
far too often now with the economy.
People can't afford food, let alone
dog food.

WAYLON
Just a few days, right?

FRANKIE

I'll do my best. Their older, and not many people are looking for seniors to adopt. I'll reach out to some past clients who are older and have lost pets; that's the best I can do.

Waylon drives away.

INT. VETERINARY CLINIC - DAY

Jolie is packing up for the day. Everyone is gone. Dr. Pernelli walks in the door smiling.

JOLIE

Is he single?

FRANKIE

Jolie!

JOLIE

I'm not asking for you, I'm asking for myself.

FRANKIE

I didn't ask him about his personal life, I was just concerned for the dogs.

JOLIE

He lives close to here.

FRANKIE

I need to keep my mind on work.

JOLIE

Work will always be here. It's time you went out and had some fun. When was the last time you went out on a date?

FRANKIE

Jolie! He's probably married.

JOLIE

There was no ring on that finger. I checked.

FRANKIE

Jolie!

JOLIE

This shop may be closed, but a girl
can still window shop. That man
looks like he walked off the cover
of a fitness magazine. I felt like
I was having a hot flash.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Waylon brings the dogs inside the house. They are very
curious, running around and sniffing everything.

WAYLON

Don't touch anything and be
careful!

Waylon gets them a bucket of water. He fills their bowls full
of kibble.

They are making a huge mess. Waylon is having a hard time.

WAYLON (CONT'D)

Ok, could you just not spill so
much? Just sit here while you're
eating and don't walk around.

Waylon is picking up all the spills.

WAYLON (CONT'D)

You know...this place is shit!
Spill away, I've got to let go of
the control.

He sits at the piano and watches the dogs eat. He starts to
play. He's rusty.

WAYLON (CONT'D)

What am I going to call you guys?

One of the dogs comes over to Waylon. He drops his phone and
clicks on the website of The Eastern State Penitentiary.

He reads about the Frank and Carson Gargoyles.

WAYLON (CONT'D)

Every year, the three hundred-pound
gargoyles are a feature at the
Eastern State Penitentiary.

One of the dogs sits for Waylon.

WAYLON (CONT'D)

I think I'll call you Frank. You look like a Frank.

The older dog comes over.

WAYLON (CONT'D)

That means you're Carson. Carson seems like an old man's name. It's perfect for you. Don't get attached to these names. Your new owners will probably name you something else. I only have one rule. No dogs in the bed. This is my bed, do you understand?

The dogs lay down on the floor, and Waylon fell asleep.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Waylon wakes up. Both of the dogs are in bed with him. He puts a blanket over them and gets up. Waylon takes his coat and throws it over him.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

He gets a glass of water. He looks out the window and sees someone in his yard with a flashlight.

Frank and Carson come running, barking fiercely at the man outside.

He sees the man run to a car and drive away.

WAYLON

Guardians. You were protecting me, weren't you?

INT. SMETTON & SON PIANOS - DAY

It's nine-fifty on Thursday. Waylon walks in the door and sees Benji playing the piano. Four other students sat at pianos with sheet music.

MARY HAD A
LITTLE LAMB.

Waylon panics as he sees the young kids. He rushes for the door.

ORION

Come on in, Waylon, you can take that piano over there.

WAYLON

I wasn't here to take lessons, I was just stopping by to say...

ORION

Take a seat. Class, this is Waylon, he's our newest student.

Waylon reluctantly sits down.

WAYLON

Hello.

They are all practicing the song. Waylon is the worst.

GRANT MCKAY (8), a chubby kid with glasses, is sitting next to Waylon. Grant is a natural and never makes a mistake. He is a show-off.

Waylon can't seem to get the hang of things. He slams his hands down hard on the piano keys, making a scene.

WAYLON (CONT'D)

Son of a bitch! Why is this so hard?

Everyone stops playing and looks at Waylon.

GRANT

My mom says it's rude to swear.

WAYLON

Sorry, I lost it. I'll try not to swear again.

GRANT

E-D-C-D-E-E-E start with that.

WAYLON

Have no idea what key is what?

GRANT

Look at my hands. This is E, this is D, and this is C.

Waylon copies Grant.

WAYLON

Sorry, what's your name?

GRANT

It's Grant McKay the third, but you can just call me Grant.

WAYLON

Waylon the first. How long have you been taking lessons?

GRANT

Not long, I've only had a few. Practice is key.

WAYLON

I'll keep that in mind.

Benji plays an elaborate version of Mary Had a Little Lamb.

GRANT

When I grow up, I want to be able to play like Benji.

WAYLON

At this rate, I'll be happy to learn this song.

GRANT

It's ok, older people take longer to learn things.

WAYLON

Thanks, kid, I'll keep that in mind.

INT. WAYLON'S GARAGE - DAY

Waylon is working on making the gargoyle mold in the garage. Frank and Carson are making a mess with the plaster.

He is listening to some music, eating a sandwich, and sharing food with the two dogs.

The dogs are filthy, covered in plaster. Paw prints are everywhere.

Neighbors are spying on him threw their windows.

Waylon waves to the neighbors. They close the curtains. Waylon turns up the music.

Waylon is trying his hardest to keep everything neat and orderly.

WAYLON

Ok, you guys are making a huge mess.

INT. WAYLON'S HOUSE/ BATHROOM - NIGHT

Waylon is bathing the dogs. They are shaking all over. It's a mess. He finishes and dries them both off.

WAYLON

Now I have to take my shower. Stay out of trouble.

INT. WAYLON'S HOUSE/ LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Waylon feeds the dogs some of their food and eats spam out of a can that he ends up sharing with both of them.

WAYLON

We've got to buy some better groceries.

The dogs are tired. Waylon is working on painting and fixing up the place. He puts on some music, and the dogs fall asleep.

The house is starting to come around.

He takes a break and practices the song on the piano. He's getting better.

He gets through Mary Had a Little Lamb with no mistakes.

WAYLON (CONT'D)

Yes! I did it!

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Waylon has the dogs in the shopping cart.

MR. FRED DAILY (57), the store manager, stops Waylon.

MR. DAILY

Excuse me, there are no animals allowed in the store.

Everyone at the store is staring at Waylon.

WAYLON

I'm just here to pick up some knives and duct tape, maybe some zip ties. I won't be long. It says you allow service animals.

MR. DAILY

We do.

WAYLON

These are my service animals.

MR. DAILY

I need to see some paperwork.

WAYLON

Do you ask everyone for paperwork or just criminals?

Waylon sees a woman with a small dog in her cart.

WAYLON (CONT'D)

(To the Woman)

Hey, did you have to show paperwork for your service dog?

The woman shakes her head.

Mr. Daily walks away defeated.

Waylon is in the produce aisle. He picks up an orange and smells it. Everyone is watching him.

He takes a bite of an apple.

WAYLON (CONT'D)

(To customers)

You don't get fresh fruit in prison, only canned.

Waylon walks over to the meat aisle and sees a tray of cubed raw meat.

Waylon breaks open the package and starts feeding the dogs in the cart.

WAYLON (CONT'D)

Do you like that boy?

Frank and Carson love the grocery store.

Waylon gets a roasted chicken and shares it with the dogs, tearing pieces for them off the bone.

He grabs some paper towels and wipes his hands and face.

Waylon sees freshly baked bread and takes a banquette, breaking a piece off and eating it.

He takes a tub of butter and opens it, dipping the bread into the butter.

Waylon takes a large beer out of the cooler and downs it.

When he rings up his cart, it's all empty containers. Mr. Daily is furious but still afraid of Waylon.

Waylon pays, smiles, and leaves the store.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Waylon lets the dogs pee on the side of the building.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Waylon is attaching the gargoyle to the roof, securing it. He sees a car pull into the driveway.

Frankie yells at Waylon.

FRANKIE

I thought I'd stop by and check on the dogs.

WAYLON

Hold on, I'll come down.

Waylon climbs down the ladder. Frankie looks completely different in her work clothes.

WAYLON (CONT'D)

I didn't recognize you at first.

FRANKIE

Do I look that bad at work?

WAYLON

You had the lab coat, and your hair was pulled back. You looked great both ways, sorry, I don't know what I'm trying to say.

FRANKIE

It's ok. I know I look tired at the end of the day.

WAYLON

Did anyone ask about adopting?

FRANKIE

I'm afraid not, it might take some time. Where did you buy that?

WAYLON

I made it, it's one of the few skills I have.

FRANKIE

I was fascinated by them when I visited Notre Dame in Paris. Le Stryge is the most famous gargoyle in the city.

WAYLON

Why is Stryge so famous?

FRANKIE

He looks like he's guarding the whole city. Looking down with his head in his hands, watching everyone. He looks demonic, but he has angel wings.

WAYLON

I've only read about them in books. They remind me of a book of illustrations I had.

FRANKIE

You should see Paris. It's a beautiful city. I went a few years ago by myself. They ward off bad spirits, you know.

WAYLON

By the time I'm done fixing up this place, I'd be lucky to get as far as Paris, Texas.

Frankie grabs a heavy bag of dog food.

WAYLON (CONT'D)

Let me help you with that.

INT. WAYLON'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAY

The dogs are happy to see Frankie.

FRANKIE

Wow, they've settled in.

WAYLON

Frank and Carson have taken over my bed. Carson is a big-time snorer, and Frank takes over the entire bed.

FRANKIE

You've named them?

WAYLON

After the gargoyles at Eastern State. That one is Frank, and this is Carson.

FRANKIE

Sounds like you're becoming attached.

WAYLON

No, they need a better home than this. I'm not here long, just long enough to get a little money out of this and move on.

FRANKIE

Interesting color, I like it.

WAYLON

Hetty at the hardware store helped me pick it out. She said it was a color associated with royalty worn by emperors and Roman magistrates. This house needs a fresh start.

FRANKIE

I know Hetty, she's born and raised here.

Frankie notices the sheet music on the piano.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Mary had a Little Lamb. Do you have kids?

WAYLON

Oh, no, the sheet music I'm learning to play piano. I'm taking lessons with a bunch of kids. I enjoy it.

FRANKIE

That's nice. It's good to have an outlet.

WAYLON

What do you do when you are not saving animals?

FRANKIE

I collect uranium glass. It glows under a black light. Sometimes I just sit and stare at it. It calms me.

WAYLON

I've never heard of it. Everyone should have something that calms them.

FRANKIE

What calms you?

Frank and Carson run to Waylon.

WAYLON

Frank and Carson do, but it's only temporary. I never had a pet growing up.

FRANKIE

We'll see about that. They seem to have made themselves at home.

WAYLON

I won't be around here for very long.

FRANKIE

Have you thought about where you'll go?

WAYLON

As far away as the money will take me from the sale of this house.

FRANKIE

I'm sure you know the history of this house.

WAYLON

It was my parents' house.

FRANKIE

I'm sorry, I didn't realize you were...

WAYLON

The new owner of the Owen murder house. You should probably go. Thanks for the food.

FRANKIE

I remember being dared to walk on the porch when I was young.

WAYLON

You shouldn't get involved with me. You're a nice lady.

FRANKIE

OK, I'll let you know if anyone calls about the dogs.

Frankie reaches down and says goodbye to Frank and Carson.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

You both be good.

Frankie leaves and Waylon watches her drive away.

INT. SMETTON & SON PIANOS - DAY

The sound of music draws him in from the street.

Waylon comes in with Frank and Carson. He sees Benji playing the piano.

Waylon brings the dogs over to Benji. Benji stops playing and pets the dogs.

BENJI

They're soft.

WAYLON

I'm taking care of these two temporarily till someone comes for them. The one you're petting is Carson. The other one is Frank.

Benji starts to play another song. The dogs are lying down, soothed by the music.

Orion comes in.

ORION
I see we have visitors.

WAYLON
I'm sorry, I should have asked if I
could bring them in first.

ORION
It's alright, I grew up with dogs.

Orion is petting Frank and Carson. Waylon is fixated on
watching Benji play the piano.

WAYLON
(To Orion)
He has such inner peace.

ORION
He plays from his heart. He feels
it inside. I've got some chores to
do, I'll leave you two.

Waylon sits across from Benji, and he tries to finish the
notes that Benji started. It's starting to get dark.

INT. SMETTON & SON PIANOS- DAY

Waylon plays the Mary Had a Little Lamb song perfectly.

ORION
I knew you'd get it. It just takes
practice.

WAYLON
I couldn't let an eight-year-old
show me up. No offense, Grant.

GRANT
(To Waylon)
My Mom said I can't talk to you
anymore. She said you are a bad
person.

WAYLON
It's ok, kid, listen to your
Mother.

GRANT
What did you do? She wouldn't tell
me.

WAYLON

I don't want to say it was a long time ago.

GRANT

Maybe we can just be secret friends?

WAYLON

No, Grant, you need to listen to your Mother. She's just trying to protect you, that's what Mothers do.

FLASHBACK/ MAE GETTING BEAT BY DANTE - NIGHT

MAE is getting a beating with a belt from Dante. Dante is trying to get to Waylon, who is behind her.

DANTE

Give me the boy!

MAE

(To Waylon)

Hide!

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. WAYLON'S HOUSE/ LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Waylon is listening to music, training the dogs to sit with treats.

WAYLON

OK, sit, boy.

The dogs both sit and get treats.

WAYLON (CONT'D)

Down, down.

The dogs both lay down. Waylon is proud of his progress.

Waylon is counting his money. It's dismal. He checks the dog food supply, it's low.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Waylon sees a sign in the window of a diner.

DISHWASHER

WANTED. ENQUIRE
INSIDE WITH
LETTY.

INT. DINER - DAY

Waylon enters a busy diner. As soon as he comes in, everyone stops talking.

LETTY POOLE (50), the owner of the diner, is behind the register.

WAYLON
Are you Letty?

LETTY
What's your business here?

WAYLON
I saw your sign about the
dishwasher position.

LETTY
Sorry, that position is filled. I
guess I forgot the sign was still
up.

WAYLON
I can do other jobs, I have some
kitchen experience.

LETTY
We don't have any jobs for any
murderers.

Waylon walks out.

INT. WAYLON'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

It's the middle of the night, and Waylon can't sleep. He is getting some water in the kitchen.

He picks up the sledgehammer and starts to demo all of the cabinets in frustration.

The dogs are nearby but are staying away from him.

He finishes and sits in the pile of broken cabinets. He immediately starts to clean everything up.

He stays up all night painting and patching the kitchen.

INT. HETTY'S HARDWARE - DAY

Frankie is shopping at the hardware store. She's just walking around the store with no purpose.

HETTY

Good to see you, can I help you find anything, Frankie?

FRANKIE

Sponges.

HETTY

Did you come all the way here for sponges?

FRANKIE

What do you know about Waylon Owens?

HETTY

I knew it wasn't sponges you were after.

FRANKIE

I feel like a stalker. He came into my clinic with two stray dogs he picked up. I stopped by his house yesterday. It wasn't until I pulled up that I knew that house.

Hetty goes and gets a newspaper out of the garbage can. Frankie skims the article.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

He doesn't look like a murderer.

HETTY

X-felon, he served his time. Trying to restart his life, I guess.

FRANKIE

What do you think of him?

HETTY

I think people deserve second chances. The town, on the other hand, disagrees. There are all kinds of rumors about what happened in that house on Halloween.

FRANKIE

What do you believe?

HETTY

I believe only one person knows the truth, and that person is Waylon Owens.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Frankie is at the library looking through microfiche articles about the Owen murder case.

She can feel the eyes on her at the library. All the articles seem inconclusive about the facts.

FRANKIE

He had a state attorney. He never had a chance. Tried as an adult at age thirteen.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Waylon is asleep when he hears his mother's voice.

MAE (V.O.)

Hide!

Waylon wakes up from a nightmare. It's the middle of the night. The dogs are asleep in his bed.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Waylon opens the refrigerator, takes out a jug of water, and downs it.

He takes out a few sheets of blank paper and starts to write.

WAYLON (V.O)

Dear Bizzy, I'm sorry I haven't written. I've been having nightmares. This place holds so many memories for me. I am staying bizzy. Don't laugh, but I've been taking piano lessons. I picked up two dogs from outside the Eastern State Penitentiary. Just taking care of them till I can find another family. I named them Frank and Carson after the gargoyles they displayed during the Halloween season. I met this nice lady, Frankie, who is a vet.

(MORE)

WAYLON (V.O) (CONT'D)

She and the local hardware store owner have been kind to me. I'm running out of money, I need to sell this place fast. Take care, you'll be out before you know it. Waylon.

EXT. HOUSE/ BEDROOM - NIGHT

Waylon is woken up by a pickup truck's headlights in his yard.

A shotgun goes off, and the gargoyle he made falls from the roof.

Shattering into a million pieces.

The dogs are barking madly, trying to protect their owner.

INT. VETERINARY CLINIC - DAY

Waylon comes in with Frank and Carson to the clinic. Frankie sees them and comes over.

FRANKIE

Is everything ok?

WAYLON

I just wanted to stop by and get some more of that food they like.

FRANKIE

It's cheaper to buy it in the store. I can write it down for you.

WAYLON

I lied... I wanted to see you again. I know I said to stay away from me, but for some reason, I couldn't stay away from you.

Frankie is blushing.

WAYLON (CONT'D)

I wanted to see if you wanted to go to Halloween Night at the Eastern State Penitentiary.

FRANKIE

Is that where you found the dogs?

WAYLON

Yes, that's how I met you.

More and more people are coming into the clinic. Some of the clients are whispering to each other.

Other clients are disgusted that he's talking to Frankie.

FRANKIE

When?

WAYLON

Saturday at seven. I can pick you up here at the clinic if that's better for you.

FRANKIE

Sure, I'd love that.

Jolie walks by smiling.

Frankie throws the dog food over his shoulder and exits.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

(To Jolie)

Alright...say it.

JOLIE

I'm not saying a word.

INT. SETH & SON PIANOS - DAY

Benji is seated at his favorite piano playing. Waylon sits at another piano.

WAYLON

I did it. I asked Frankie out.

BENJI

Frankie.

WAYLON

She's a vet. She takes care of animals.

BENJI

She's a good person, then.

WAYLON

Yes, Benji. She's a good person like you. I'm sure she's never dated an Ex-felon virgin.

BENJI
What's a virgin?

WAYLON
Never mind that. I've read enough
anatomy books, I should be able to
figure things out.

BENJI
Does she play piano?

WAYLON
I guess I'll find out.

EXT. WAYLON'S HOUSE - DAY

Waylon checks the mailbox. It's the usual bills, death threats, and a letter from Bizzy. He opens the letter and starts to read.

BIZZY (V.O.)
Dear Waylon, Thanks for your
letter. Life on the inside is
extraordinarily dull. Doug gets out
on Friday, me and the boys are
having a little going-away party
for him. I got transferred to
kitchen duty last week. I work with
this young kid Marty who's full of
vinegar and piss. I'll try and stay
on his good side. Piano lessons
sound impressive. I hope things are
going well for you. Keep Bizzy.
Bizzy.

There is a knock at the door. It's Miss Cast. She is
intoxicated.

WAYLON
Can I help you?

Miss Cast is slurring her words.

MISS CAST
I heard loud noises and wanted to
see what was going on over here.

WAYLON
That was me working last night,
I'll try not to work so late.

MISS CAST

I'm your neighbor, you look just like him.

WAYLON

Who?

MISS CAST

Your father. I was there the day they took his body away.

WAYLON

I don't remember him. If there's nothing else, I have to go.

MISS CAST

Another perfectly good black man's life cut short.

WAYLON

You really are drunk if you think my dad was a good man.

Waylon starts to shut the door.

MISS CAST

I just wanted to be neighborly and say hello.

WAYLON

I think you've had a few too many. Go eat something.

Miss Cast opens her robe. She is naked.

WAYLON (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I need to get back to my work.

Frank and Carson start to growl at Miss Cast.

MISS CAST

Get those mutts away from me.

WAYLON

Those mutts are my family!

Waylon closes the door.

WAYLON'S HOUSE/ BEDROOM - NIGHT

Waylon is dreaming.

FLASHBACK WAYLON THIRTEEN.

Waylon hears noises from his parents' bedroom. Callie, his sister, points towards the door.

Waylon slowly opens the door. He sees Miss Cast and his father in bed together. His father sees him and yells.

DANTE
Get out of here!

Dante throws a bottle at the door.

He runs to his bedroom and sees his mother.

MAE
Hide!

Waylon wakes up in a sweat.

INT. PRISON KITCHEN - DAY

Bizzy is working side by side with an inmate Marty, he's young and cocky with a strong Southern accent.

MARTY
Y'all pay attention. The first thing you learn is salads because it's a no-brainer. Lettuce, cucumber, and tomato, got it?

BIZZY
Got it! I've made a salad before. What about the dressing?

MARTY
Those bottles over there.

BIZZY
Why not make it, it tastes so much better.

MARTY
I'm not fixen to over-complicate my job.

Bizzy is prepping salads, and Marty is pouring a box mix of chicken seasoning into a bowl.

MARTY (CONT'D)
When you're done with that, you can help me with the chicken.

BIZZY

Who made you boss?

MARTY

You're the new one here, try and keep up.

BIZZY

Why have we got to use this box mix crap? It has no flavor.

MARTY

What do you suggest? Do we make it from scratch?

BIZZY

We have all the ingredients and all the time in the world. Don't you want to eat something that tastes good?

MARTY

Whatever dills your pickle, you do it then.

Bizzy looks through all of the spices. He takes out some flour, eggs, thyme, basil, oregano, buttermilk, ginger, and paprika.

BIZZY

We have everything we need right here.

MARTY

You're on your own, I never made my own fried chicken; I just used to buy it at Betty Liz's.

BIZZY

Watch and learn. Why don't you make a slaw? It's easy, just two kinds of cabbage and some carrots, and dressing. Throw some of those apples in there.

MARTY

How do you know so much about cooking?

BIZZY

A long time ago, before I messed up my life, I wanted to have my own restaurant.

(MORE)

BIZZY (CONT'D)

I read every cookbook I could get my hands on and memorized the recipes.

MARTY

I like eating more than cooking.

BIZZY

What's your favorite thing to eat?

MARTY

Gumbo, I grew up in Hammond, Louisiana.

BIZZY

We can do that. I'll show you. How long do you have left in here?

MARTY

Three more months, two days.

BIZZY

I'm just shy of two and a half months. I want to get a job as a short-order cook when I get out.

MARTY

What kind of restaurant?

BIZZY

Soul food. My mom didn't waste anything, she could make something out of nothing with just a few ingredients. She even had a spice garden out back.

MARTY

Is she still alive?

BIZZY

No, she died in her sixties. I miss her, but I'm glad she never had to go through seeing me in here.

MARTY

Same. When I get out, I want to work with animals, maybe on a farm somewhere. I've had enough of people for this lifetime.

The inmates are lining up for chicken. As they sit down to eat, they see the reactions of those enjoying real Southern cooking. They savor every bite.

No one is talking, and everyone is eating. They can't get enough. All you hear is the crunch!

MARTY (CONT'D)

I think you just became the most popular chef in the history of this prison.

BIZZY

You and I make a good team.

Bizzy and Marty watch all of the inmates eating, feeling proud of their efforts.

EXT. WAYLON'S HOUSE/ PORCH - DAY

Waylon's arms are full of lumber. He walks up and sees a raw steak on the porch. Next to it is a box of rat poison sitting in his dog's dish.

He throws it in the trash can.

He looks up and sees his neighbor, Miss Cast, peering out her window, smiling.

Waylon reacts and pounds on the door. She is scared.

WAYLON

Come on out and face me! You try and hurt my dogs again, and I'll kill you, you hear me?

MISS CAST

Get off my porch or I'll call the police.

Waylon is emotional.

WAYLON

That's just it, you could have called the police, but you didn't. We were just kids, and you could have stopped it!

MISS CAST

It was none of my business.

WAYLON

It was everyone's business. My dad was a horrible person, he deserved to die!

MISS CAST
You killed the only man I ever
loved.

WAYLON
Say hi to him in hell.

MISS CAST
I'm calling the police.

WAYLON
Great, call them and I'll tell them
how you tried to poison my dogs.
Just remember, you live next door
to a murderer.

Miss Cast shut the door, locking it behind her.

INT. WAYLON'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Waylon is getting ready for his big date. He's laid out his
clothes on the bed.

WAYLON
(To Frank and Carson)
OK, what shirt?

Waylon holds up one shirt. Then the other. Both dogs bark.

WAYLON (CONT'D)
Good choice.

Waylon styles his hair and checks himself out in the mirror.

WAYLON (CONT'D)
I'm going on my first date at forty-
three. How did we ever get here?

Waylon is using a lint roller to get all of the dog hair off
his clothes.

WAYLON (CONT'D)
No parties, no staying up late, and
no arguing. Do you hear me?

The dogs bark in response.

INT. WAYLON'S CAR - NIGHT

An excited Waylon is singing a song on the radio. He pulls up
and sees Frankie outside.

EXT. VETERINARY CLINIC - NIGHT

The sun is going down. The veterinary clinic has been vandalized. Someone has spray-painted the outside of the building.

MURDERER
SUPPORTER.

Waylon gets out of the car.

WAYLON
Frankie, let me help clean this up.
Do you have security cameras?

FRANKIE
No, I'll deal with this tomorrow.
Can we just go?

INT. WAYLON'S CAR - NIGHT

Waylon just drives, saying nothing. They arrive at the Halloween scare night.

INT. EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY/AL CAPONE'S FORMER CELL - NIGHT

They start in Al Capone's cell. GLEN SANDERS (25), a man dressed as a bloody prison guard, is giving the tour in the background.

Lots of screaming and people being scared around them.

Waylon takes Frankie's hand, as they navigate their way through the prison.

GLEN
Al Capone spent eight months in
this cell and as you can see, he
enjoyed the finer things in life.

WAYLON
(To Frankie)
Wow! Scarface was treated like
royalty! This looks like a hotel.

As they walk through the tour, they notice all the details.

WAYLON (CONT'D)
Look at the ceiling height.

FRANKIE
It feels so haunted in here.

WAYLON
A lot of sad events went on here.

FRANKIE
It's like a time capsule.

They walk by a table where MADAME STELLA (55), an animated reader, is shuffling tarot cards.

A tip jar on the table reads:

PRISON DONATIONS

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Let's do a reading.

WAYLON
I don't know if I believe in that stuff.

FRANKIE
Let's try it, what's the harm?

STELLA
Come, sit down. Madame Stella knows all.

Waylon and Frankie take a seat at the table.

STELLA (CONT'D)
I do a three-card spread. I shuffle three decks. The first card is your past, the second is your present, and the third is your future.

FRANKIE
You go first.

Waylon sits down.

Stella starts to shuffle the first deck. A card flies out.

STELLA
In your past, we have the tower.

WAYLON
That doesn't look like a very positive card.

STELLA

The tower is crumbling down because it needs to undergo a sudden change to be rebuilt. Does that make sense to you?

WAYLON

Yeah, it does. I've had quite a few tower moments in my life.

Stella goes and starts shuffling the next deck. Immediately, a card flies out.

FRANKIE

Wow, that flew out!

STELLA

I call those jumpers. In your present, we have the three swords. Emotional pain, loss, and depression. The swords are the mind. This is you worrying about things and needing to let go. Are you having trouble sleeping?

WAYLON

Yes. You could say that.

Stella picks up the final deck of cards and shuffles. Another card flies out.

STELLA

Let's see what we get for your future. The star is the most positive card in the deck The star card is blessings from the universe, happiness, and fulfillment.

WAYLON

I could use some of that.

STELLA

Bottom of the deck... the tower again, wow! A major shake-up is about to happen for you.

WAYLON

Wonderful!

STELLA

Sometimes things need to be torn down before you can rebuild a better, stronger tower.

Frankie sits down, and Stella starts to shuffle. A card flies out.

STELLA (CONT'D)

In the past, we had the judgment card. New Beginnings, It's also called the resurrection card. Making decisions, self-doubt.

Stella picks up another deck.

FRANKIE

I felt like that's when I started my business, there were a lot of decisions and self-doubt.

STELLA

In our present, we have death.

FRANKIE

Death! Maybe this wasn't such a great idea.

STELLA

Do not fear the death card. It's a card of transformation. Out with the old and in with the new. Letting go to move on to something better. Phoenix rising from the ashes.

Stella picks up the third deck and shuffles.

A card flies out.

STELLA (CONT'D)

In your future, we have the lovers. The lover's card is all about relationships and choices. It's a card for connecting with a loved one, and as I can see, you already knew that. I see many couples come through here, but none with a connection like the two of you have.

FRANKIE

It's our first date.

STELLA

It won't be the last. Trust me, honey Madame Stella knows all.

(MORE)

STELLA (CONT'D)

The bottom of the deck is the Wheel of Fortune. The wheel is turning in your favor.

Waylon puts a tip in her tip jar.

Frankie smiles at Waylon, and the two keep going on the walking tour.

INT. EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY/ THE HOLE - NIGHT

GLEN

This is the hole, otherwise known as the Klondike. Isolation was a form of punishment.

WAYLON

It still is.

FRANKIE

Can we get out of here? The ceilings are making me feel claustrophobic.

WAYLON

Yeah, do you want to get something to eat?

FRANKIE

Sure, I'm up for anything.

INT. JACK'S FIREHOUSE PIZZA - NIGHT

They are seated at a small table, eating pizza and having drinks.

FRANKIE

Well, I can't say that I've ever gone to prison on a date.

WAYLON

Frankie, can I ask you something?

FRANKIE

Sure, what do you want to know?

WAYLON

Why did you want to come out with me?

FRANKIE

I make my decisions based on my intuition, not logic.

WAYLON

I shouldn't involve you in all of my business. For some reason, I couldn't stay away from you.

FRANKIE

Can I ask why you did it?

WAYLON

It's complicated. I don't regret doing it. It wasn't planned. I was trying to protect my family. My dad was a monster. He would have killed all of us eventually.

FRANKIE

I read you had a sister.

WAYLON

My sister California.

FRANKIE

California?

WAYLON

It's her actual name, but we called her Callie. My mom always dreamed of moving to California. Those plans didn't include my father. She thought it was the promised land. Callie died before I got out of prison. Now my only family is Frank and Carson.

FRANKIE

So you are keeping them.

WAYLON

The way I see it is that all we have now is each other. People disappointed me in my life. I can't let them down.

Frankie takes Waylon's hand. Waylon kisses Frankie.

FRANKIE

Let's get out of here.

INT. WAYLON'S CAR - NIGHT

Waylon and Frankie are making out like teenagers. The windows fog up.

EXT. WAYLON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Waylon arrives home to see that someone has vandalized his front door.

The front door is splashed with red paint, it's still wet.

Frank and Carson are barking.

EXT. VETERINARY CLINIC - NIGHT

Waylon hooks up his pressure washer and is trying to spray off the graffiti.

The sun is starting to come up. Frankie pulls up in her car.

FRANKIE

Waylon, you stayed up all night?

Frank and Carson are barking in the car.

WAYLON

I didn't think you'd be here so early.

FRANKIE

I have emergency surgery on a Newfoundland.

WAYLON

It was the least I could do. I don't want you to lose business because of me.

FRANKIE

Thanks, I have to open inside. Do you want some coffee?

WAYLON

No, I'm just going to finish up and be on my way.

INT. SMETTON & SON PIANOS- DAY

It's the usual suspects for piano lessons.

ORION

Let's start with a warm-up.

Orion plays a simple song on the piano. All of the children are mastering it as Waylon struggles.

WAYLON

(To Grant)

Did you get the sheet music in advance?

GRANT

No, it's a simple song.

WAYLON

Show off!

Benji is playing an elaborate version of the song.

ORION

How's everyone doing?

Everyone but Waylon has mastered the song.

WAYLON

You have got to be kidding me!

ORION

Waylon, you're overthinking it.
Watch Grant play it.

Frank and Carson are at Waylon's feet.

INT. VETERINARY CLINIC - DAY

Frankie and Jolie are the only two in the office. It's early.

Jolie plays the voicemail and typing on the computer.

FRANKIE

Who do we have in first?

JOLIE

We don't have anyone in this morning.

FRANKIE

We were booked solid yesterday.

JOLIE

We had a bunch of cancelations this morning.

FRANKIE

Did they give reasons?

JOLIE

No, I can call them to reschedule.

FRANKIE

That's ok, I know what this is about.

JOLIE

Tell me about your date. How was it?

FRANKIE

It was weird, great but weird. He's moving soon. I can't get attached. I don't blame him, no one in the town is ever going to give him a chance.

JOLIE

Maybe a long-distance romance?

FRANKIE

No, I need to stay away from him or we'll both get hurt. It was a mistake to go out with him. I need to follow my head, not my heart.

JOLIE

Love doesn't always make sense. How does he make you feel?

FRANKIE

Protected, calm, strong. Did you ever meet anyone that you felt like you had known before in another life?

JOLIE

Honestly, no. I do believe people come into our lives for a reason.

The door opens. It's Waylon carrying Carson.

FRANKIE

Waylon, what's wrong?

WAYLON

I think my neighbor poisoned him.

FRANKIE

What are his symptoms?

WAYLON

He's been vomiting all morning. He seems listless and drowsy. I let him out last night, maybe he ate rat poison.

INT. EXAM ROOM - DAY

Frankie is taking blood and running tests.

Waylon is doting on Carson.

WAYLON

(To Carson)

You're going to be ok boy, just hang on.

A vet tech comes in and hands her the lab results.

FRANKIE

They appear to be sedatives and sleeping pills. Do you have them in the house?

WAYLON

No, I know who did this. Will he be alright?

FRANKIE

He should be; the levels are not fatal. I'd like to keep him for a few hours and monitor him.

WAYLON

Can I stay with him?

FRANKIE

Yes, I'm going to move him to the back area.

Waylon carries Carson to the back and lies with him.

JOLIE

Seems like a keeper to me.

EXT. WAYLON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Waylon arrives home. He walks over to Miss Cast's car and punctures all four tires with a screwdriver. He goes and carries Carson into the house.

INT. SMETTON & SON PIANOS- DAY

Benji is playing a song. Orion is taking his medication, struggling with the bottles.

ORION
They make these darn bottles
impossible to open.

Orion is clutching his heart and falls to the floor, spilling the bottle of pills.

Benji runs to his dad. He sits next to him, not knowing what to do.

INT. PRISON KITCHEN - DAY

Bizzy blindfolds Marty. There are several ingredients laid out on the table.

One, by one he lets Marty taste them.

He starts with parsley.

Marty takes a bite and chews.

MARTY
Parsley.

BIZZY
Curley of Italian?

MARTY
Italian.

BIZZY
Correct! Now taste this.

Bizzy takes a spoonful of something out of a pot and puts it in Marty's mouth.

MARTY
That tastes like Hammond,
Louisiana!

Marty takes off the blindfold.

MARTY (CONT'D)
You made gumbo?

BIZZY
I wanted to surprise you.

MARTY
How did you do it?

BIZZY
It's all in the spices. I'll show
you next time.

The inmates are lining up. As they sit down to eat, they are pleasantly surprised at how good it is.

They are all focused on tasting the gumbo. It's a hit!

EXT. SMETTON & SON PIANOS - DAY

It's raining outside. Waylon goes to the door. It's locked. There are no signs on the door. He looks in the window, it's dark.

Waylon bangs on the door.

WAYLON
Orion, Benji, it's Waylon.

INT. HETTY'S HARDWARE - DAY

Waylon comes through the door, soaking wet.

WAYLON
Any idea where Orion and Benji are?
I stopped by their place, and it's
closed.

Hetty looks upset.

HETTY
Orion died last night. He had a
massive heart attack. Benji called
911.

WAYLON
Where's Benji?

HETTY
They took him to a group home.
Orion was his only family. I tried
to convince them to let him stay
with me. They said I'm not family.
He'll never survive in a home.

WAYLON
There's got to be a way to get him
out.

HETTY

Orion didn't have a will. Benji is
now a ward of the state.

INT. GROUP HOME - DAY

The group home is more like a mental asylum ward. Benji is listening to the scary sounds of the screams and wails of the patients.

Benji rocks back and forth, pretending to play the piano, trying to soothe himself.

Benji is crying under the covers. He is trying to block the noise out with pillows.

INT. HETTY'S HARDWARE - NIGHT

Hetty is about ready to close the store. Waylon comes in the door.

WAYLON

Hetty, I thought of a plan. Can I
borrow your wig?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Waylon is practicing the piano in the dark. The dogs are asleep.

He falls asleep on the couch and starts to dream.

INT. WAYLON'S HOUSE/ THIRTY YEARS AGO - DAY

Mae is looking at the clock.

Waylon's mother, Mae is rushing to pull out the piano from the wall. She uses a knife to pop a small hole in the back.

She has cash. She quickly puts it in a tin and pushes it back against the wall.

Mae points to the back of the piano and motions for Waylon not to speak.

END OF DREAM.

INT. HETTY'S HARDWARE - NIGHT

The shop is closed. Hetty is helping Waylon get ready. She hands Waylon a bra.

HETTY

I know it's not pretty but you're going to need this to pass.

Hetty is grabbing some socks to stuff the bra.

Hetty helps Waylon with the wig.

HETTY (CONT'D)

I just don't understand.

WAYLON

What?

HETTY

How such a handsome man could make such an ugly woman?

Waylon takes a look in the mirror.

WAYLON

You're right.

HETTY

I could go with you and distract them.

WAYLON

I don't want you involved. If anything goes down, you had nothing to do with this.

HETTY

What if you get caught?

WAYLON

Then I get caught and go back to jail. I have to try, I can't leave him there.

INT. ANIMAL CLINIC - NIGHT

Jolie is packing up for the day. She reaches for her coat.

JOLIE

I swear, the older I get, the colder I get.

FRANKIE
Did you get everything?

JOLIE
All set.

EXT. ANIMAL CLINIC - NIGHT

Frankie and Jolie exit as Frankie locks the door. Frankie waves to Jolie as she drives off.

Frankie looks through her bag, she checks her pockets.

FRANKIE
My phone!

INT. ANIMAL CLINIC - NIGHT

Frankie sees her phone sitting on the edge of the counter.

As she goes to pick it up, she hears the door open behind her.

BOUDY FAXEL (29), a local drug user and addict, comes in, locking the door behind him.

Frankie is alarmed.

FRANKIE
I'm sorry, we're closed. Jolie,
someone is in the building.

BOUDY
I know you're alone, I've been
watching you for days.

FRANKIE
I don't keep money here.

BOUDY
I need drugs, and you're going to
help me.

Boudy pulls up his shirt and shows her he has a gun tucked down the front of his shirt.

Frankie tries to run out the door, and Boudy stops her, throwing her to the ground.

FRANKIE
Don't hurt me, I'll write you a
prescription and you can leave.

BOUDY
I need pills now, not a
prescription bitch!

Frankie gets a bottle of sedatives and throws it across the room.

BOUDY (CONT'D)
These are sleeping pills. I want
oxycodone.

Boudy pulls her from the floor like a wet rag. He rips her shirt. He's looking at her.

BOUDY (CONT'D)
You're pretty. Take off your shirt.

FRANKIE
No! Take your drugs and get out of
here.

Boudy pushes her back, and they are on the ground fighting. He's ripping her shirt, and she is fighting tooth and nail to get him off her.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Get off of me!

INT. GROUP HOME - DAY

Waylon is dressed as a woman in scrubs. He is carrying stacks of pizza boxes to hide his face. He has a lanyard around his neck with a woman's photo.

WAYLON
Hey, everyone, sorry I'm late, I
brought pizza. I'm from Kensington
Hospital. I'm Suzanne.

Everyone is excited for the pizza and dives in. Waylon picks up a chart and quickly locates Benji's room.

He takes a badge from another employee and puts it in his pocket.

WAYLON (CONT'D)
Can I ask where the bathrooms are?

A nurse points down the hall. They are all too preoccupied with the pizza.

INT. BENJI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Benji is in the corner on the floor rocking back and forth.

WAYLON

Benji, it's Waylon. We need to get out of here.

BENJI

Where's my dad?

WAYLON

I'll explain later, we need to go now. You need to stay quiet.

Waylon takes out another wig and puts it on Benji.

Waylon helps Benji into a wheelchair and throws a blanket over him.

INT. GROUP HOME/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Waylon is moving fast. He scans the card and hears the door click. He exits the back door.

WAYLON

It's ok Benji, you can trust me.

Benji takes Waylon's hand and gets in the car.

INT. WAYLON'S CAR - NIGHT

Benji is riding in the car with Waylon, Frank, and Carson.

Waylon notices that Frankie's car is parked in the parking lot. It's too late to be working.

WAYLON

Benji, stay with Frank and Carson. I'll be right back.

Waylon is cautious; he looks through the window and sees Boudy.

Waylon sees Frankie in the corner, she is beaten badly. Waylon comes in the door and makes a beeline for Boudy.

FRANKIE

He's got a gun!

Waylon struggles to get the gun from Boudy. Frankie is trying to get up to help.

Waylon tackles Boudy and grabs his gun. Waylon shoots him dead by emptying the gun barrel into Boudy's chest.

Waylon races to help Frankie.

WAYLON
Frankie!

FRANKIE
He came in and locked the door, I
couldn't overpower him.

WAYLON
Did he rape you?

FRANKIE
No, hurry, get out of her. I'll say
I did it. It's self-defense.

Frankie wipes the gun down and puts it in her hand.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Go now!

WAYLON
I won't be able to contact you.

FRANKIE
I'll be ok.

Frankie walks over and gets her phone.

Waylon is conflicted but knows he can't go back to jail.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
(On phone)
I'm at the veterinary clinic, and
I've just killed an intruder.

Waylon exits the clinic.

INT. FRANKIE'S HOUSE/ LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A beat-up Frankie is sitting in front of her blacklight uranium glass cabinet. She is crying in the glow of the room. She looks at the ticket stubs from Halloween Night.

INT. WAYLON'S CAR - NIGHT

BENJI
Where are we going?

WAYLON
I'll let you know when I figure
that out.

Waylon drives around aimlessly.

WAYLON (CONT'D)
Alright, Benji, we have to come up
with a plan. I just kidnapped and
murdered someone in the same hour.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

BENJI
Why are we stopping here?

WAYLON
I need to say goodbye to someone.

Waylon has Frank and Carson, he's shining a flashlight to
locate his parents' graves. There is a single piano key on
top of his father's grave.

Callie's grave is next to theirs.

Waylon walks over to his sister's grave. He brushes the
leaves off the headstone.

WAYLON (CONT'D)
I couldn't protect you or Mom. I
failed you both.

Waylon takes out two miniature gargoyle statues and sets one
on top of his mother's headstone and one on top of Callie's.

WAYLON (CONT'D)
I can't watch over you anymore. I
need to protect my own family now.

EXT. HOUSE BATHROOM - NIGHT

Waylon takes a quick shower, washing all the gun powder off
of him. He takes the towels with him.

EXT. WAYLON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The dogs are anxious. Waylon, with all his strength, pushes
the piano outside on the lawn.

He takes a flat screwdriver and finds the hidden compartment on the back of the piano. He pops it and sees a metal tin. He opens it and sees lots of cash.

Waylon takes a gas can and saturates the piano with gasoline. He soaks the towels with gas and the clothes he was wearing during the shooting. He takes a match and lights it on fire.

Benji, Frank, and Carson are all in the car with the engine running.

WAYLON'S CAR - NIGHT

Waylon has tears in his eyes as he looks back in the mirror at the burning piano.

Benji is petting Frank and Carson.

INT. HETTY'S HARDWARE/ WEEKS LATER - DAY

Hetty's mailman has dropped off the mail. Most of Hetty's hair has grown back.

HETTY

See you tomorrow, Herman.

As she sorts through the mail, she sees an envelope with no return address. There is a deed to the house in her name.

She opens the letter, and it has a key and an address.

EXT. WAYLON'S HOUSE - DAY

Hetty sees the remains of the burnt piano on the lawn. The door is painted Royal purple.

She opens the door slowly.

It's a beautiful little house. She can see the small garden outside.

She has tears in her eyes.

HETTY

Thank you, Waylon. I knew you were
a good man.

She sees a box in the corner. Hetty opens the box and sees all of the gargoyle drain pipes he has made for her store. She reads the note:

DEAR HETTY,

I KNOW YOU SAID
YOU LIKE TO HAVE
ORIGINAL
MERCHANDISE FOR
YOUR STORE. I
THOUGHT I WOULD
LEAVE YOU
SOMETHING TO
REMEMBER ME BY.

WAYLON.

Hetty is taking it all in. She looks out her window and sees a real estate broker taking a for sale sign down from Miss Cast's house. The real estate broker shakes hands with a handsome man the same age as Hetty.

EXT. HETTY'S NEW HOUSE - DAY

Hetty is locking up. She is walking to her car. She sees PARTH BAKSHI (50), taking some boxes to the trash.

PARTH
Hello, I'm Parth, your new
neighbor. I just moved in today.

HETTY
That makes two of us. I'm Hetty.

PARTH
You wouldn't happen to have a
Phillips Head screwdriver, would
you?

INT. AMADOR CITY, CALIFORNIA/GUARDIANS GARGOYLES SHOP- DAY

The shop is an old historic, gothic building. It's hauntingly beautiful. When you walk in, you are walking calf-deep in dried autumn tree leaves.

Candles are burning. No overhead lighting.

Gargoyles of all shapes and sizes are everywhere. Some are on pedestals.

Benji is playing beautiful music on a baby grand piano.

Waylon is working on his latest commissioned piece in a workspace area.

Bizzy comes in the door.

WAYLON

Hey, what did you bring today?

BIZZY

They let me make the special. Beef ribs, collard greens, and cornbread. I think if I can save up for another year, I can get my food truck.

Waylon dives into the food.

WAYLON

Man, this is good!

It's a huge gargoyle with a dog-like face and angel wings.

WAYLON (CONT'D)

I am almost done with this. The man from the company is coming in today to pick it up. I hope he will like it. He paid over two thousand for it.

BIZZY

That costs more than my car.

Benji continues to play the piano.

The shop door opens, and Frankie walks in. She is taking the store in.

WAYLON

Frankie!

FRANKIE

I'm here to pick up my gargoyle.

WAYLON

You're The Fast and the Furrier LLC? I should have known. How did you know it was me? I changed my name.

FRANKIE

It turns out there are very few gargoyle shops on the West Coast. You weren't that hard to find.

WAYLON

I read about it in the paper, I
wanted to call you.

FRANKIE

That creep could have rapped and
killed me if you hadn't come in.

WAYLON

What about Benji? Is anyone looking
for him?

FRANKIE

He was a ward of the state. No one
is looking to have him returned. I
only found out about him through
Hetty. She says you can keep the
wig, his hair is growing back.

Frank and Carson remember Frankie.

WAYLON

They remember you!

FRANKIE

I understand. You needed a change.
Me too. That's why I sold my
practice and bought the building up
the street.

WAYLON

You did?

FRANKIE

That's what the piece is for. It's
going on top of the building. I
might need your help with that.
This town is just what I need.

WAYLON

Can we start over? Can I take you
to dinner?

FRANKIE

Well, I didn't move halfway across
the country to eat dinner alone.

Bizzy walks over.

BIZZY

I'm glad to finally meet you, I'm
Bizzy. All this guy does is talk
about you.

WAYLON
He's right.

FRANKIE
Well, are you going to stand there
all day, or are you going to kiss
me?

Waylon and Frankie kiss. Benji is playing a love song.

EXT. BEACH/ SIX YEARS LATER - DAY

Waylon, Frankie, Benji, and WAYLON JR. (5) Waylon and
Frankie's son are playing in the sand at the beach.

Waylon Jr. runs to the ocean and gets a bucket of water for
his sandcastle.

A mother and her five-year-old daughter are picking up
shells. The little girl gives Waylon Jr. a beautiful seashell
to his delight.

Waylon Jr. comes back with the shell.

WAYLON JR.
Daddy, Daddy. A nice girl gave me a
shell. She said her name was Callie
and that she's ok now. She said
she's with her mother, and you
don't have to hide anymore.

WAYLON
What did you say?

Waylon looks up and sees his mother and sister smiling at him
and waving.

They fade into the sea.

FADE OUT.

THE END