

KILLING MERCY

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SLING AND STONE FILMS

FADE IN:

EXT. HAY FIELD - NIGHT

A new truck is parked on the side of the road overlooking a large hay field.

DAKOTA STRICKLAND (20s,M) is leaning against the hood of the. He takes a drink from a bottle of whiskey.

DAVIS STRICKLAND (20s,M) approached the truck from the field with a gas container in hand. He places the container in the bed of the truck.

Dakota passes Davis the bottle as he approaches.

Davis takes a large drink and pulls a white rag from his back pocket. He starts to shove the rag into the bottle.

Dakota pulls out a pack of cigarettes. He lights one with a zippo lighter and takes a long drag.

Davis holds the bottle out.

Dakota uses the zippo lighter to ignite the top of the rag.

Davis throws it into the field.

The field erupts in flames.

Dakota and Davis watch as the flames spread.

Dakota tosses the cigarette and signals for them to get in the truck.

The truck drives away from the inferno.

INT. CHAMBERS HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

OWEN'S BEDROOM

The door opens.

MARCUS CHAMBERS (mid 30s,M) slowly enters careful not to make a noise. He cautiously walks across the floor toward the bed.

He squats down and grips the edge of the mattress trying not to laugh.

Marcus lifts and flips the mattress off the boxsprings.

MARCUS

Rise and shine sleeping beauty.

OWEN CHAMBERS (17-20,M) falls to the floor as the mattress falls on top of him.

Owen scrambles out from underneath.

Marcus is laughing.

Owen charges at Marcus.

Marcus braces and shoves hard, pushing Owen backwards.

Owen trips and falls back onto the mattress.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Get dressed, Princess. There's work to do.

Owen scrambles and grabs a shoe.

Marcus leaves, closing the door as the shoe smacks into it.

Marcus enters...

KITCHEN

BILL CHAMBERS (60s,M) is sitting at the kitchen table. He is reading the newspaper and takes a sip of coffee.

Marcus walks over and pours a cup of coffee.

BILL

He's going to complain all day now.

Marcus props himself up by the sink and takes a drink.

MARCUS

How's that different than any other day?

BILL

You can deal with him. I don't want to hear it.

Owen enters still fuming.

Marcus smiles at him.

MARCUS

Good morning.

OWEN
Shut up, Marcus.

Owen walks over and pulls a carton of orange juice out of the fridge. He pours a glass and sits down at the table.

Bill slightly lowers the paper and looks at him.

BILL
Morning, Owen

OWEN
Morning, dad. What's for breakfast?

Marcus laughs.

BILL
Breakfast was an hour ago.

OWEN
Is there any left?

Bill looks at Marcus.

Marcus pats his stomach.

OWEN (CONT'D)
Oh, come on. Fine, I'll just make some cereal.

BILL
No time. Got things to do.

OWEN
Dad.

BILL
Don't dad me. It's not my fault you slept in so late.

OWEN
It's seven in the morning.

BILL
Breakfast is always at six. You know this. Get your boots on. I'll meet you outside.

Owen chugs the rest of the orange juice and mumbles under his breath.

BILL (CONT'D)
What's the rule?

OWEN
Work to eat. I know.

Owen exits.

MARCUS
You did that on purpose.

BILL
You started it.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

THOMAS STRICKLAND (50s,M) enters the conference room. Eight investors (M-F, 30-70) are all sitting around a large table.

Thomas stands in front of a large white screen.

THOMAS
Pennsylvania, 1859, a discovery was made that changed the US economy and that discovery pioneered one of the greatest industries in America.

He clicks a small wireless mouse.

The screen behind him lights up. It shows a digital photo of oil rigs.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Since the early nineteenth century the United States has been the leading producer of crude oil by barrels per day in the world, but that could change at any moment.

He clicks the mouse again, pulling up digital photos of oil rigs in Russia and Saudi Arabia

THOMAS (CONT'D)
The last successful oil boom for this great nation occurred in North Dakota from 2006-2015 but has since tapered off.

He clicks the mouse again showing the Oil rigs in North Dakota.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
I am standing here before you today to tell you that we have the opportunity to put this town on the map and in the history books.

Thomas pulls a small vial of oil out of his pocket and places it on the table.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

With the assistance of geophysicists to confirm my suspicions, I have irrefutable proof that this land could be the next Pennsylvania or North Dakota.

He clicks the mouse again showing six large farms with bordered property lines. One in the middle and one on the far left are bordered in red.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Having already started the process with multiple farms, Within the next month I will have these remaining property acquired. Your generous investments could set us up as the largest producers of oil, petroleum and gas in the United States.

The Investors all look around at each other.

INVESTOR #1 (50s,F) raises her hand.

Thomas points at her.

INVESTOR #1

Those two bordered in red, how do you know they will sell?

THOMAS

Everyone has a price.

INVESTOR #2 (70,M) speaks up.

INVESTOR #2

What is your plan if they do not?

THOMAS

I will find a way to encourage them.

INT. TINA'S DINER - MIDDAY

Owen is covered in dirt and ferociously eating a burger.

Marcus is picking at his fries.

Bill sips his coffee and looking out the window.

DEBBIE (40s,F) steps up and lays the ticket on the table.

DEBBIE

Jeez, Bill. That boy acts like he's never seen food before.

BILL

He missed breakfast this morning.

Debbie refills his coffee.

DEBBIE

Is there anything else I can get you?

BILL

I think we are good, unless he decides he wants a third one.

Owen side eyes his father.

Marcus chuckles.

Owen elbows Marcus making him laugh harder.

DEBBIE

Would you be willing to donate a couple dollars for the Coopers? We are taking up a collection to help them out.

BILL

Of course. Bills keep coming while the crop keeps growing.

Bill pulls out his billfold.

DEBBIE

You haven't heard yet.

BILL

What?

Debbie leans in closer.

DEBBIE

Their field caught on fire last night. The whole crop was wiped out.

BILL

What? How? Are Alan and Laura okay?

DEBBIE

Yeah, they are fine but it looks like they will have to sell now that the crop is gone. It's this damn weather.

MARCUS

We really do need a good rain.

Bill hands Debbie a wad of cash.

DEBBIE

Bill...

BILL

Give it to them. We'll manage.

The door of the diner opens. Debbie walks off.

MARCUS

That sucks.

BILL

I know. Owen, choke that down.
Let's go.

Bill downs the last of his coffee and gets up.

INT. TRUCK - EARLY AFTERNOON

They are driving down the highway. Fields are on both sides.

Bill is driving. Marcus is in the passenger seat. Owen is cramped in between them.

They pass by a realty sign.

It reads: Mercy Realty, Tom Strickland, Broker. SOLD

Marcus looks over his shoulder as they pass it.

MARCUS

When did the Scotts put their place up for sale?

BILL

Been a couple weeks now.

MARCUS

Damn, it seems like everyone is leaving.

BILL
That's their business.

Owen's phone dings. He looks at the message.

OWEN
Dad, think I could borrow the truck
this evening? Freddy wants to go
shoot some pool.

BILL
When we get home, help Marcus move
the cows to the east pasture and
you can go.

EXT. CHAMBERS HOUSE - SAME

The truck stops.

Owen rushes into the house.

Marcus walks around and opens the tailgate and pulls a bail
of hay toward him.

MARCUS
First the Thompsons, then the
Smiths, now the Scotts and the
Coopers. This is crazy.

BILL
That's life, son. People move on.
It's not like it used to be that
for sure.

Bill grabs a square hay bale and walks it toward the barn.

Owen comes out of the house with a box tucked under his arm.

MARCUS
What is that?

Owen holds it up.

OWEN
It's my drone. I watched a youtube
video of people using them to move
cattle. Thought I'd give it a try.

Bill returns and grabs another hay bale.

MARCUS
Don't get mad at me if it doesn't
work and you miss date night.

EXT. FIELD - EVENING

Marcus and Owen approach the heard. Owen turns on the handheld device.

The drone rises into the air.

Marcus rides ahead to the left side.

Owen rides toward the right side.

The drone flies down low to the back of the heard.

The cattle start moving.

MARCUS
I'll be damned.

EXT. POOL HALL - NIGHT

The truck pulls into the parking lot. There are a people smoking outside. A few motorcycles are lined up in front of the building. A semi truck with parked off to the side with the running lights on.

Owen climbs out and heads for the door. He nods sheepishly to one of the smokers as he opens the door and heads inside...

INT. POOL HALL - NIGHT

FREDDY GREENE (17-20,M) shoots and eight ball into a corner pocket.

MAN #1 (20,M) gets frustrated.

MAN #1
Damn it.

Freddy holds out his hand.

Man #1 smacks a couple bills in his hand.

FREDDY
Pleasure doing business with you.

Freddy folds the bills and tucks them in shirt pocket.

Owen walks up and grabs his shoulder.

OWEN
Started without me I see.

FREDDY

About time you got here. Bets have been slim without you here to back me up.

OWEN

I'm not betting on you again, Freddy.

FREDDY

Come on, bro. That was one bad night.

OWEN

That bad night cost me a hundred bucks. I'll take my chances with my own table tonight.

FREDDY

That's cold, man. Want to play a game until the crowd rolls in?

Owen grabs a pool cue.

OWEN

I break.

Freddy starts to rack the pool balls.

Owen chalks the tip of his pool cue and leans down to break.

Dakota and Davis enter.

JULIE (20s,F) gets off a bar stool, runs up and kisses Dakota on the cheek. Davis walks over and wraps his arms around ELIZA (20s,F).

OWEN (CONT'D)

Great.

FREDDY

Why do those jerks have to come in here?

OWEN

Where else are they going to flaunt daddy's money?

FREDDY

You make a good point.

OWEN

Wait..

Freddy winks at Owen and turns to the bar.

FREDDY
Hey, pretty boys, how about a game?

DAKOTA
We don't deal in bottle caps and
animal skins, so fuck off.

FREDDY
I'd be afraid to lose daddy's money
too.

DAVIS
The fuck did you just say?

Freddy steps towards them.

FREDDY
I said I'd be afraid to lose
daddy's money too.

DAVIS
You know what, yokel, you're on.

DAKOTA
One hundred a ball.

FREDDY
You're on.

Owen spins Freddy around.

OWEN
What the hell, man?

FREDDY
We got this.

Freddy gives Owen a wink.

Dakota grabs a pool cue

Julie steps up and gives Dakota a deep kiss.

JULIE
Kick his ass, D.

Dakota leans down and breaks.

Owen sits on a bar stool.

Freddy is using his off hand as he and Dakota play.

Freddy loses.

Dakota lights up a cigarette.

DAVIS
Pay up, bitch.

FREDDY
You got to give me chance to win it
back.

Dakota steps up and blows the smoke in Freddy's face.

DAKOTA
We don't have to do shit.

OWEN
Not even for two-hundred a ball?

Dakota and Davis look at each other.

Dakota puts his cigarette out in the ashtray near Owen.

DAVIS
If you want to lose your child
support, lets go.

Freddy lines up and breaks.

Halfway through the game...

OWEN
Freddy, I thought you were right
handed?

FREDDY
Damn, you're right. I'd lose my
head if it wasn't attached.

Freddy sinks three balls in a row and leans in for another
shot.

DAKOTA
Fucking cheats.

Dakota smashes his pool stick over Freddy's back, knocking
him to the ground. Dakota jumps on top of Freddy.

Owen gets up to grab Dakota.

Davis sucker punches Owen.

EXT. POOL HALL

Owen and Freddy are tossed out the door.

DAVIS

Don't let us see you fuckers in here again.

The door slams shut.

Freddy rolls over and laughs.

OWEN

I knew this would happen eventually.

FREDDY

Got to take a few hits to play the game.

Freddy helps Owen to his feet.

EXT. CHAMBERS HOUSE - NIGHT

Freddy and Owen hobble out of the truck and start up the porch.

Marcus is sitting on the porch swing with his arm around CANDACE (late 20s,F). He takes a sip of whiskey from his glass.

MARCUS

How'd you boys make out?

OWEN

We did fine.

Freddy winces as he takes a step.

Marcus stands up and blocks the screen door. Owen looks away.

Marcus grabs his face and turns it towards him, exposing the black eye.

MARCUS

Sit down.

Owen and Freddy sit on the porch steps. Marcus enters the house.

Marcus comes out with a bag of peas and a frozen steak. He hands the peas to Freddy and the steak to Owen.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Who did this?

OWEN
Dakota and Davis.

MARCUS
What are you going to do about
this?

FREDDY
They blind sided us.

MARCUS
Don't bullshit me. I know you boys
hustle. I got friends there too you
know.

Freddy and Owen look at each other.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
You got your asses handed to you so
what do you plan to do about it?

Owen shrugs.

OWEN
I don't know.

Marcus walks over to Kara and gives her a kiss.

MARCUS
I'll be back, don't go anywhere.

CANDACE
Don't worry about that.

Marcus turns to the boys.

MARCUS
Get in the truck.

EXT. NICE HOUSE - NIGHT

The truck pulls up to the house. Marcus shifts in park.

OWEN
Let's just go home, Marcus.

MARCUS
Stay in the truck.

INT. STRICKLAND STUDY - NIGHT

Thomas is sitting at his desk. He is working on his laptop. Papers and files litter the desk. Off to the side is a model of Eden Resorts.

There is a knock at the door.

Strickland checks his watch and gets out of his chair.

EXT. NICE HOUSE - NIGHT

Thomas opens the door on Marcus mid knock.

THOMAS
Can I help you?

MARCUS
Evening, Mr. Strickland. My name is Marcus Chambers. Are Dakota and Davis here?

THOMAS
It is almost midnight. I'll let them know you asked for them in the morning.

Thomas goes to shut the door but Marcus stops it with his hand.

MARCUS
With all do respect, Mr. Strickland, I need to speak with them now. They have something that belongs to my brother.

THOMAS
That is between your brother and them.

MARCUS
You don't seem to understand. They jumped my brother and his friend and taken some money. I'm here to get it back.

THOMAS
I don't know who you think you are but if you can't tell, my boys don't need to steal any money.

MARCUS

I don't care about the fight, I think everyone can learn from taking a hit and I'm not looking for trouble, I just want our money back.

Thomas looks up the stairs.

THOMAS

Boys, get down here.

Dakota and Davis come to the door.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Mr. Chambers here is telling me that you took money from his brother. Is this true?

Dakota eyes Marcus.

DAKOTA

We took our money back from a couple of no good hustlers.

THOMAS

Your brother was trying to cheat my boys out of our money?

MARCUS

I'm not saying what they did wasn't wrong but that didn't warrant an as whooping.

THOMAS

Looks like my boys taught your brother a valuable lesson.

Marcus nods. He steps forward and puts his arm around Thomas.

MARCUS

Either you give me back that money or I'll teach all of you a valuable lesson.

Thomas grits his teeth.

THOMAS

Give him the money.

Dakota reaches in his pocket and hand it to Marcus.

Marcus shoves the money into his pocket.

MARCUS

Thank you. Have a good rest of your evening.

Marcus turns to leave.

THOMAS

Mr. Chambers?

Marcus looks back at him.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Do tell your father to get back to me on my offer.

Strickland closes the door.

INT. STRICKLAND STUDY - NIGHT

Thomas sits on the edge of his desk and looks across his desk at Dakota and Davis.

THOMAS

Are you two morons trying to ruin everything?

DAKOTA

They were trying to hustle us.

THOMAS

I don't care. The last thing we need is for those hillbillies to get stubborn because of your wounded pride.

DAVIS

We were going to lose so we handled it.

Thomas slaps Davis on the cheek.

THOMAS

Did that change your mind? Did that make you feel any different?

Davis grits his teeth and stares at Thomas

THOMAS (CONT'D)

No, It only hardened your resolve. Just like it did with them.

DAKOTA

We didn't think-

THOMAS

You have to think. You have to use more than just violence, just like with the Cooper Farm. Sure, I could of walked up and strong armed them into selling but by destroying their livelihood they turned to me for help.

Davis and Dakota look at each other. Thomas gets up and walks to his desk chair.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Think on that.

The boys exit.

Thomas takes a seat and stares at the door. He picks up his phone and holds it to his ear.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I need you to do me a favor.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Bill enters the kitchen and walks straight to the coffee pot. Marcus enters from the backdoor and removes a flannel.

BILL

You going to tell me about it or is it handled?

Marcus looks at him quizzically.

Bill chuckles.

BILL (CONT'D)

I saw you take the frozen peas and the steak outside last night unless thats some new foreplay I don't know about.

MARCUS

Owen's fine. He's just got a shiner from a tussle last night.

BILL

Freddy?

MARCUS

He's alright too. We handled it.

BILL
Finally got busted hustling?

Marcus chuckles.

MARCUS
You and I both know it was bound to happen eventually.

BILL
Happened to you and you learned your lesson.

MARCUS
Hard lesson learned the hard way.

Owen enters.

Bill sips his coffee.

OWEN
Don't start, please.

BILL
I'm not saying a thing.

Bill reaches in his pocket and pulls out a note. He hands it to Marcus.

BILL (CONT'D)
I need you two to run to the hardware store and pick up a few things.

Marcus looks over it and grabs his flannel.

MARCUS
Let's go, George Foreman.

OWEN
Funny.

Owen walks past Marcus and exits.

MARCUS
Dad?

Bill looks up from his coffee.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Don't ever say the word foreplay to me again.

Bill chuckles.

Marcus exits.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Marcus is crouched down looking at hardware. He's comparing two differing brands of parts. Owen is leaning on the handle of the cart and scrolling through his phone. He looks up.

KARA (late 20,F) and KAITLYN (early 20s,F) walk toward them.

MARCUS

Is it just me or do they keep making these by cheaper metals every year?

Owen shrugs as Marcus stands up and sees the girls walking towards them.

Kara and Marcus embrace and kiss.

Owen shyly grins at Kaitlyn.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

You girls must be awfully bored to be walking through this place.

KARA

Dad came here to get something. We needed lighter fluid anyways.

MARCUS

Lighter fluid?

KAITLYN

We are having a bonfire tonight.

KARA

You're coming tonight, right?

MARCUS

I don't know, yet. Dad has a list of things for us to do.

Kara leans in close to Marcus.

KARA

That would be a shame. I just bought a new skirt just for tonight.

KAITLYN

The party won't even start until nine.

(MORE)

KAITLYN (CONT'D)

Even y'all should be able to weasel out from under the foreman's' thumb by then.

MARCUS

I'll see what I can do. Who else is coming?

KARA

The typical crowd and maybe a few others. Nothing crazy.

KAITLYN

Chloe will be there.

OWEN

We'll be there.

Marcus looks at Owen.

MARCUS

Lover boy has spoken.

KARA

Great. See you tonight.

Kara kisses Marcus on the cheek. The girls walk away.

Marcus throws the two bags into the cart and starts swatting at the air above Owen's head.

OWEN

What are you doing?

MARCUS

Trying to get rid of all the hearts floating around your head.

OWEN

Shut up.

Owen punches Marcus on the arm.

Marcus laughs.

MARCUS

You're telling dad.

INT. OWEN'S ROOM - EVENING

Shirts on hangers are piled on the end of the bed. Owen is examining himself in the mirror and doesn't look pleased.

Marcus pushes open the door and leans on the door frame.

OWEN
Don't start.

MARCUS
I'm not saying anything.

OWEN
You're thinking it.

Marcus enters the room steps up behind Owen.

MARCUS
Dude, It's just a bonfire. You've been to plenty before.

Owen turns.

OWEN
You're going to be there this time, so I'll just be seen as Marcus's baby brother.

MARCUS
Which is true.

OWEN
Yeah, but Chloe will be there and I really want to make a good impression.

Marcus runs his hands wildly through Owen's hair. Owen shrugs out of it and quickly fixes it.

MARCUS
Girls don't want the strong silent type anymore. They like soft sensitive types, like you so you're good.

OWEN
Bite me.

MARCUS
Seriously though, just be yourself.

INT. BARN - EVENING

Marcus enters.

Bill tucks a hunting rifle into the holster attached to the saddle. He starts working on the saddle strap .

MARCUS
Going hunting tonight?

BILL
Figured I'd ride around the
property and see if I can find
where the coyotes keep coming from.

Bill checks his watch.

BILL (CONT'D)
I figured you'd be gone by now.

MARCUS
Cinderella is taking his sweet
time.

BILL
I remember a time when you were
that nervous.

Marcus sits on a hay bale.

MARCUS
Please. I was never that bad.

Bill chuckles.

BILL
Your mom had a different story.

They look just look at each other as the laughter fades.

MARCUS
I never thought about all the
things he missed out on with her
being gone.

BILL
She was a saint. How she put up
with all three of us, I'll never
know.

Marcus leans forward.

MARCUS
Did Thomas Strickland make you an
offer for the property?

Bill stops working.

BILL
Yes.

MARCUS
Why didn't you tell me?

BILL
I'm not selling. There was no point
in saying anything.

MARCUS
Everyone else has been.

BILL
That was their choice.

MARCUS
Was it a good offer?

BILL
It doesn't matter. I'm not selling
and that's the end of it.

Owen enters wearing a different shirt than the one he had on
in his room.

Marcus slaps his knees as he stands.

MARCUS
About time.

He turns to Owen and looks at him.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Is that a different shirt?

OWEN
I think it looks better.

Marcus shakes his head.

BILL
You boys be safe. Marcus, look
after your brother.

EXT. BONFIRE - NIGHT

Owen is standing next to Freddy holding a can of soda.

Freddy is drinking out of a red solo cup.

GUYS AND GIRLS (17-late 20s) are around the bonfire.

Kara and Marcus are sitting in the bed of the truck with a
couple friends around the tailgate.

CHLOE (19,F) is standing next to Kaitlyn playing a game of corn hole. She looks over at Owen and smiles.

Freddy sees Owen give a shy smile back. He elbows Owen

FREDDY
Go talk to her.

OWEN
She's busy.

FREDDY
Dude, don't be a bitch.

OWEN
I'm waiting for my moment.

Freddy chugs the rest of his cup and starts to walk toward the game.

OWEN (CONT'D)
Dude.

Freddy turns and points at Owen.

FREDDY
Your wing man's got you.

Freddy walks up to Chloe and takes the remaining bean bags.

Chloe walks over to Owen.

CHLOE
Freddy said you needed to speak
with me?

Owen shifts uncomfortably.

OWEN
Are you having a good time?

CHLOE
I sure am. Kaitlyn managed to get a
good fire going this time.

OWEN
You'd think we were going to burn a
witch at the stake or something.

Chloe smiles and looks back at the game.

Owen hates what he just said.

Chloe looks back at him.

CHLOE
Not a beer drinker?

OWEN
I just figured I'd let Marcus enjoy himself.

CHLOE
That's sweet. You want to go make a S'more?

OWEN
Sure.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Bill is riding along side a fence. He slows as he notices a section of barbed wire is down. He hops off the horse and investigates.

The barbed wire post has been knocked over.

He hears rustling behind him. He turns towards a section of thick trees and sees something moving.

Bill gets back on the horse and pulls the rifle. He aims and through the scope notices foliage rustling.

Bill rides into the tree line. He strolls through slowly. A shadowy figure darts out from behind a tree.

The horse get scared and rears up on it's back legs.

Bill struggles to stay on and starts to fall off. He grips for the reigns and the squeezes the rifle.

EXT. BONFIRE - SAME TIME

A gun shot sounds.

A group of boys cheer as a beer can explodes.

KAITLYN
Hey!

She charges towards the group of guys.

Kara pulls her kiss away from Marcus.

KARA
They bring out the guns every time.

MARCUS
I'll take care of it.

Marcus scoots out the bed of the truck and walks towards them.

BOY #1
Come on, Kaitlyn. We aren't harming anyone.

KAITLYN
I don't care. You've been drinking.

BOY #2
We're fine. Don't be such a party pooper.

Marcus approaches.

MARCUS
Go put that back in the your truck.

BOY #1
Look out. The party police is here.

MARCUS
Don't be a dick. Just go put the gun away.

Boy #2 steps up to Marcus.

BOY #2
Or what?

Marcus stares at him a moment.

MARCUS
I'll put it in the truck for you.

BOY #1
Come on, man. We can go shoot shit at my house.

Boy #1 walks toward Boy #2 and pulls on his shoulder.

Boy #2 starts to back away and spits at Marcus's feet.

The two boys get in their truck and start it up.

The truck starts to back away but slams on the brakes as another truck speeds in and brakes hard.

ROB HURLEY (60s,M) rolls down the window. He is wearing a Vietnam Vet baseball cap.

ROB
Marcus. Where's Owen?

MARCUS
Rob? Why? What's going on?

ROB
Your dad has been in an accident.
He's being taken to the hospital.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

The sliding doors open as Marcus and Owen run inside. They rush up to the RECEPTIONIST (30s,F).

MARCUS
I need to speak to Dr. Vanessa Jordan, right now.

RECEPTIONIST
Can I ask who is asking for her?

MARCUS
Her brothers.

DR.VANESSA JORDAN (30,F) enters from a set of wooden double doors.

OWEN
Vanessa.

Marcus peels away from the Receptionist and rushes toward her.

MARCUS
Where is he? I want to see him.

Vanessa puts her hand up to stop him.

Marcus pushes past her.

Vanessa grabs his wrist.

VANESSA
Dad is in emergency surgery right now.

Marcus looks down at her hand on his wrist and pulls it away.

MARCUS
What the hell happened?

VANESSA

He suffered a head injury. What was he doing tonight?

MARCUS

Why the hell do you care?

VANESSA

I care so I can tell surgeon if that is ok with you.

OWEN

He went riding looking for coyotes.

VANESSA

What did he take?

MARCUS

He took the fucking horse. Don't you know that already?

VANESSA

No we don't, Marcus. When the ambulance got to him, there wasn't anything around but his rifle.

OWEN

The horse was gone?

VANESSA

Yes, which means it probably got spooked by something.

Rob enters.

ROB

How's he doing?

OWEN

He's in surgery right now.

MARCUS

Who found him?

ROB

I did. He called shortly after you left and asked me to go hunting.

MARCUS

So where the hell were you?

Marcus steps closer to Rob. Vanessa steps in between them.

ROB

I told him I was going to meet him out there after I finished dinner with Carol.

VANESSA

It was an accident, Marcus.

MARCUS

Bullshit. He knows every inch of that property and everything on it.

VANESSA

It's dark. The horse got scared of something.

MARCUS

You just have all the answers don't you, Doctor.

VANESSA

I've got to go inform the surgeon.

MARCUS

Yeah, why don't you do that. Just walk away from us like you always do.

VANESSA

We don't have time for this, Marcus.

OWEN

Let's go get some air.

MARCUS

No. I'm not leaving.

OWEN

Marcus, please.

Marcus looks down at Owen and at the doors. Marcus nods.

Owen and Marcus head toward the door.

ROB

I'm going to head to the house and see if I get find the horse. If anything happens give me a call.

VANESSA

Of course. Look out for them Rob.

Vanessa rushes back inside.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Rob is riding around the property on horseback. He approaches the rock with blood on it where he found Bill.

Rob hops off the horse and pulls out a flashlight. He picks up the rifle lying in the grass and scans the area. He walks around a couple trees.

The flashlight lands on a cigarette butt. He picks it up and examines it. He puts it in his pocket.

Rob gets back on the horse.

Rob finds Bill's horse by the creek. He slowly approaches and calms the horse.

Rob leads it back to his horse and starts riding away.

His phone rings.

Rob digs in pocket and fishes out his phone.

ROB

Hey.

Rob drops his head.

ROB (CONT'D)

Okay. I'll be there as soon as I can. Thanks for the call.

Rob puts his phone away and looks up at the night sky.

ROB (CONT'D)

God, help those boys.

He rides off faster than before.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The field is overlooking a lush pasture.

Marcus scoops up a pile of dirt, shifts it over. He dumps the pile of dirt into a newer hole.

At the head of the hole is a make shift cross.

Owen is sitting on a wooden bench facing a grave stone.

It reads: CATHRINE CHAMBERS 1967-2005. Loving Mother and Wife.

Marcus stabs the shovel into the ground. He rubs the sweat from his forehead. He looks over at Owen, grabs the shovel and tosses it in the back of the truck. He walks over and takes a seat by Owen.

Owen shifts away to hide that he is crying.

Marcus looks at his mothers grave stone and looks out at the field.

OWEN
Vanessa should be here.

MARCUS
Should be.

OWEN
You called her right?

MARCUS
I left a voicemail.

OWEN
Then why didn't she come?

MARCUS
You know why, Owen. Stop being so surprised by her.

Owen nods.

Marcus stands.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Come on. There is still stuff to do.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Marcus is driving the truck.

OWEN
It feels wrong not giving him a proper funeral.

Marcus doesn't respond.

OWEN (CONT'D)
I mean our family and friends should've been able to say goodbye.

MARCUS

What friends and family? Everybody fucking left.

OWEN

I mean it just feels wrong putting him out there without a service and-

MARCUS

Are you actually this stupid?

OWEN

What does that mean?

MARCUS

Look around you, Owen. There's nobody left. All our friends sold out.

Owen looks away and out the window.

OWEN

Maybe we should do the same.

Marcus pulls the truck over on the side of the road.

MARCUS

What the fuck did you just say?

OWEN

I mean why not sell it? Go somewhere, start over, away from all this.

MARCUS

We've given up blood, sweat, and tears for that land. Our entire family is buried on that land. Does none of that mean anything to you?

OWEN

I never asked for any of this.

Marcus clenches his fists.

MARCUS

You've never even stepped one foot out of this town, you don't know a damn thing and you just want to sell? You're wanting to run away just like Vanessa.

OWEN

I'm not running from anything. You said it. There's nothing left here.

MARCUS

People play the cards they're dealt everyday. Nobody asks for shit like this. We just have to play the hand we are dealt.

Marcus stares out the window.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Dad didn't want to sell and I'll be damned if I'm going against that wish. If you want to leave too, be my guest.

Owen sinks into his seat and doesn't respond.

Marcus shift into drive and pulls back out onto the road.

INT. TINA'S DINER - DAY

Marcus and Owen walk to a table and take a seat.

Debbie approaches.

DEBBIE

How you boys holding up?

MARCUS

Day to day.

She gives them a weak grin.

DEBBIE

What'll it be?

OWEN

Country breakfast, extra hash browns and an orange juice.

MARCUS

I'll just take a coffee, black.

DEBBIE

Are you sure that's all you want?

MARCUS

Yeah, I'm not hungry.

Debbie puts the notepad in her apron and touches Marcus's arm.

DEBBIE
This one is on me.

MARCUS
Debbie, you don't have to do that.

DEBBIE
I want too. Lord knows it won't be the same without your dad around. You boys still got to eat so two country breakfasts coming right up.

Marcus puts his hand on hers.

MARCUS
Thanks, Debbie.

Debbie walks away and Owen slumps.

OWEN
I shouldn't have ordered the big one.

MARCUS
What did Dad used to say?

OWEN
You have to work to eat.

MARCUS
You worked so here we are.

Owen smirks but it quickly fades.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
She probably owes us one anyways. I know we alone probably paid for her hip replacement with how much we come here.

Owen smiles and nods.

SHERIFF BRYCE STRICKLAND (32,M) approaches.

BRYCE
Marcus.

MARCUS
Bryce.

BRYCE

I just want to say I know we've had our differences but you're dad was a good man. I'm sorry about your loss.

Marcus takes a sip of his coffee.

BRYCE (CONT'D)

If there is anything I can do-

MARCUS

We'll be fine, wouldn't want you to go out of your way.

Bryce nods and gives Owen a grin. He walks away.

EXT. DINER - DAY

Marcus and Owen walk toward the truck.

OWEN

What was that about?

MARCUS

Nothing.

OWEN

He was just trying to be polite.

MARCUS

He's full of shit. Saving face as he always does.

OWEN

I just think you could have been a little more polite.

MARCUS

How I handle people is my business. I don't need a damn thing from him. He's his fathers fucking puppet. Always has been.

Owen drops it and they get in the truck.

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Owen hops out of the truck and goes inside. Marcus is sitting in the truck and rubs his face.

Rob pulls up beside him and rolls down the passenger window.

MARCUS
What's going on, Rob.

ROB
Just checking on you boys.

MARCUS
We're doing alright. Didn't really realize how much dad did until now.

ROB
That man could never sit still.

MARCUS
I'm noticing that.

ROB
Carol wanted me to invite you boys over for dinner tonight if you're free.

MARCUS
We appreciate it but-

ROB
I actually need some help but I figured Carol's cooking would entice you.

Marcus smiles.

MARCUS
What do you need help with?

ROB
I found a section of fence down and I just need a couple hands.

MARCUS
Yeah, we'll head over here in a little bit. Need us to bring anything?

ROB
Nah. I got everything.

MARCUS
Sounds good.

ROB
I really appreciate it. I better get home and tell Carol to cook for four.

Rob starts to leave.

INT. GENERAL STORE - SAME TIME

Owen grabs a couple cans of beans and tosses them into the cart. He strolls through the aisle. He grabs a box of macaroni from the shelf and is reading the box. He bumps into another cart.

OWEN

Sorry.

VANESSA

It's okay little brother.

Owen looks at her and tries to go around her.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Owen. Wait.

Owen starts going a little faster.

Vanessa runs up and cuts him off.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Whats the matter with you?

OWEN

Get out of the way.

VANESSA

What has gotten into you? You're starting to act like Marcus.

OWEN

Well now I understand why.

VANESSA

What are you talking about?

Owen pushes the cart into her.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Owen, talk to me.

OWEN

There's no point. You know what's funny is that I never really understood why he hated you for leaving. I just assumed you did what you needed to do but today of all days, just shows me you never cared about us.

VANESSA
What about today?

OWEN
Don't act all innocent now. You
know damn well what today was.

VANESSA
I do not.

OWEN
It was dad's funeral. Marcus called
you and left a voicemail.

VANESSA
Is that what he told you? Is he
outside right now?

Vanessa pushes off the cart and storms through the store.

Owen follows closely behind.

They exit too...

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Marcus has his head back and his eyes closed.

Vanessa storms up to the truck and slings open the door.

VANESSA
You self centered son of a bitch.
You didn't even bother to tell me
when you were burying him.

Marcus gets out of the truck.

MARCUS
Not like you were there much
anyways. I figured you were too
busy with your fancy ass life to be
bothered.

VANESSA
How I live my life does not give
you the god damn right to keep that
away from me, Marcus. Then you went
and lied to Owen about it too.

SHOPPERS start slowing down to watch.

MARCUS

You might want to lower your voice,
Doctor, before word gets around
town you were creating a scenes.
Wouldn't want to tarnish your
perfect little reputation.

Vanessa steps closer to him and leans in.

VANESSA

Go fuck yourself, asshole.

She walks away.

Marcus looks at Owen.

MARCUS

Get in the truck.

OWEN

Why did you lie to me?

MARCUS

Get in the fucking truck.

They get in the truck and drive away.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Marcus is driving. They pass their house.

OWEN

Where are we going?

MARCUS

Rob needs help with a fence.

OWEN

You should have told her.

MARCUS

She abandoned this family a long
time ago. I don't need to tell her
shit.

OWEN

She didn't abandon us. She just did
her own thing.

MARCUS

She fucking left, Owen. You don't
know a fucking thing.

OWEN

Then tell me. Tell me what she did.

MARCUS

She left. I told you that.

OWEN

Why did she leave?

MARCUS

How the fuck should I know? Maybe we weren't fancy enough. Maybe she couldn't handle real work. Maybe she just didn't care. Whatever the reason, she left. Just leave it alone.

OWEN

No. Not until you tell me the truth.

MARCUS

That is the truth.

Owen smacks the dashboard.

OWEN

Tell me the fucking truth, Marcus. Why did she leave?

Marcus slams on the brakes and slowly looks over at Owen in awe.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Stop treating me like a child. You preach against her leaving. You beg me to stay. Well, what was so bad about it that you can't see past it and let her attend dad's funeral. No matter what happened. He was her dad too.

MARCUS

You want the truth, talk to her.

EXT. ROB'S HOUSE - DAY

Marcus knocks on the door.

CAROL (60s,F) answers.

CAROL

Boys. Come on in. Rob is finishing up with something. He'll be just a few minutes.

The boys enter...

INT. ROB'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Rob is sitting on the couch with a stack of papers in his hand.

Thomas stands up from across Rob.

THOMAS

Actually Mrs. Hurley, we just finished.

Thomas turns and sees Marcus and Owen.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Marcus Chambers. I'm so sorry to hear about your father.

Marcus just looks at him.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Mr. Hurley, please review my proposal and get back to me. I'll keep in touch.

Carol opens the door.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Marcus, I know this is the last thing on your mind in a time like this but Have you given any more thought to my offer?

MARCUS

Not for sell.

Thomas nods to him and turns to Carol.

THOMAS

Mrs. Hurley, that tea was absolutely fantastic. Thank you again. I look forward from hearing from you.

Thomas exits.

Carol closes the door.

Rob is reading the papers.

MARCUS

That asshole is trying to get you to sell too?

Rob grunts.

CAROL

Robert, we have guests.

Rob stops and tosses the papers on the coffee table. He stands.

ROB

Sorry, yeah, he gave us an offer on the property.

MARCUS

Are you going to sell?

ROB

Hell, no. This is our home and I'm too damn old to be moving.

CAROL

He means, we will talk about it.

ROB

Talk about what? I'm not selling.

Carol gives him a look. She looks back at the boys with a smile.

CAROL

You boys best go get the work done. Dinner won't take me too long.

ROB

I've got everything out there. I'll give you a ride on the Gator.

EXT. ROB'S FENCE LINE - DAY

Owen is using a post hole digger.

Marcus is unrolling a spool of barbwire.

Rob is stapling wire to a new post.

MARCUS

Rob, I need to ask you about something?

ROB

Shoot.

MARCUS

I've been thinking-

ROB

Don't hurt yourself.

Owen laughs.

MARCUS

What are the odds that after Strickland asks me about the offer that dad has his accident?

Rob hits the stapler and looks up at him.

ROB

What do you mean?

MARCUS

I mean It's just odd timing to me. Dad told me he turned Strickland down and then he has his accident.

ROB

I think you're digging. I mean is Strickland a greaseball? Yes, but do I think he some criminal mastermind like that? No.

MARCUS

We're the only one's left out here, Rob. That can't be a coincidence.

OWEN

Seems to me that he is just taking a chance at opportunity. Everyone else left, why not try to get the rest?

ROB

I'd have to agree with the kid, over what your suggesting.

MARCUS

Maybe your right. Just something seems off.

ROB

Well that post over there is crooked.

Marcus looks over.

Owen looks at them and then steps back and examines the post.

A Black Mercedes pulls up and stops opposite the fence. JACOB JORDAN (30s,M) steps out dressed professionally and walks to the side of the road.

JACOB
Marcus, could I have a word?

Owen and Rob look at each other.

Marcus unravels a little more of the barbed wire.

MARCUS
I'm a little busy, Jacob.

JACOB
I need to speak with you right now.

MARCUS
Hop on over here, give us a hand.

Jacob looks at the mud.

JACOB
I'm due in court in half an hour.

MARCUS
Wouldn't want anyone thinking you work hard, huh?

JACOB
Cut out the macho bullshit, alright. Vanessa called me crying about what you did.

MARCUS
What's your point?

JACOB
She has been trying to make amends and this is what she gets? Not being able to go to her father's funeral? Not getting closure?

Marcus lays down the spool of barbed wire. He walks to the fence and removes his gloves.

MARCUS

I almost respect you for going out of your way to speak with me face but she got that closure when she watched our house fade away in her rearview mirror.

JACOB

This isn't about your petty grudge. I won't stand for you making her cry and taking that away from her.

MARCUS

Hop this fence and show me just how much you care about it.

JACOB

I can see now why she left.

Marcus stalks towards the fence and drops his gloves.

Jacob steps back.

Rob intervenes and stops Marcus.

ROB

Jacob, I think it's time you leave.

Jacob gets back in the car and drives away.

Marcus goes back and picks up his gloves as he watches the car drive away.

INT. STRICKLAND STUDY - EVENING

Thomas is standing by the model of Eden Resorts, sipping scotch from a rocks glass. He leans in close to the model and moves a small tree to a different location.

His phone starts to ring.

THOMAS

This is Thomas Strickland with Mercy Realty and Development. How may I help you?

He listens.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Yes, Mr. Ryker. What can I do for you today?

Thomas rushes over and sets his glass down on the table.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I understand your position very well, Mr. Ryker but I can assure you that this is a solid investment with unlimited returns.

He picks up a sheet of paper.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

As I told you in the meeting, this process will take just a little time and -

He listens.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I understand you're looking for an investment right now but the returns alone within the next --

Thomas throws down the paper and rubs his forehead. He turns and looks at a board with all the property lines.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

What if I could guarantee I'll have all the property within the week. Can you give me until Friday?

He leans on the desk and listens.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Yes, sir. Friday. I'll talk to you then. Thank you Mr.--

Thomas drops the phone on his desk. He grips the desk and slings papers all over the floor in anger. He walks closer to the board and looks at it.

Dakota and Davis poke their heads into the study.

DAKOTA

We're going to the pool hall if you need us.

They disappear.

THOMAS

Wait.

They poke their heads back in.

Thomas turns to them.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

There is something I need you to do first.

INT. ROB'S DINING ROOM - SAME TIME

Marcus and Owen are sitting at the dining room table.

Rob enters carrying a bottle of whiskey, and three glasses.

ROB

You got to try this.

Rob sets down the glasses and pours some of the whiskey in each. He hands them out.

ROB (CONT'D)

To your dad.

MARCUS AND OWEN

To dad.

They drink.

Marcus looks at the glass interested.

Owen chokes his down and sets his glass away from him.

MARCUS

That's good stuff, Rob.

ROB

Weller's Full Proof. It's a little pricey but It well worth it.

MARCUS

I bet it is but I'll stick to Buffalo Trace. Its the best bang for your buck.

ROB

I don't know. This stuff will drown demons thats for sure.

OWEN

I believe it.

Rob laughs.

ROB

Thank you for helping me with the fence boys. I really appreciate it. Your dad raised you right.

Carol enters and sets the food out in front of them. She takes a seat.

Rob holds out his hands. Everyone takes each others hands and bow their heads.

ROB (CONT'D)

Dear Lord, thank you for the day you have given us. Thank you for the food presented before us. Thank you for wonderful friends and neighbors we can lean on in times of need. Without such friends, Lord, everyone one of your children would struggle to find their way through this world. You have received one of the finest men we were truly blessed to ever have known. Take care of him. Watch over his boys. Bless them, Lord, as they experience without his guidance. May this food be nourishment to our bodies and my we live another day to share in your glory. In Jesus name I do pray, Amen.

EVERYONE

Amen.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Marcus is driving.

Owen is sitting in the passenger seat.

OWEN

Rob cracks me up. I'm pretty sure he knows nothing more than farming, whiskey and jokes.

MARCUS

I ever tell you about the time I thought I was going to go blind working with him?

OWEN

No. What happened?

MARCUS

I was about eleven or twelve. It was mid July I believe.

(MORE)

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Dad sent me over to help Rob out with something, I don't remember what it was but the tractor stopped working. Rob was swearing up a storm as he went to fix it. He got down on the ground to get up underneath it. Now, that was one of the hottest summers I can remember. It was so hot that Rob decided to wear shorts. When he wiggled his way under the tractor, the shorts bunched up and wouldn't you know it his balls just plopped out there for God and everybody.

OWEN

Oh, God. That's terrible.

MARCUS

I didn't know what to do or what to say. I just stood there staring at them. The sight of them burned into my memory.

OWEN

Why did you keep looking?

MARCUS

It was like looking at something so horrific you can't look away. I couldn't believe what I was looking at.

OWEN

What did he say?

MARCUS

Nothing. I never told him. I didn't want to see and then talk about his ball sack.

Owen shivers.

OWEN

That's disgusting.

They laugh.

Marcus looks straight at the road.

MARCUS

Oh, shit.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The truck rounds a curve and the headlights land on a cow in the road. The truck swerves to miss the cow. It over corrects the other way, hits the ditch runs over a couple of fence posts before it stops.

Marcus jumps out of the truck and runs to the rear looking at the road.

Owen gets out.

MARCUS
You alright?

OWEN
Yeah I'm fine. How'd she get out?

Marcus runs his hands through his hair and exhales.

MARCUS
I don't know.

Cows mooing in distress are heard.

He runs up to the front of the truck, he grabs a flashlight out of the glovebox and looks at the field.

Owen walks toward the cow.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Get the rifle out the back.

Owen turns.

OWEN
What for?

Marcus doesn't respond.

Owen walks up and stands next to Marcus.

Multiple cows in the field are laying on their sides.

MARCUS
Get the rifle.

OWEN
What are you going to do?

MARCUS
The humane thing to do.

Marcus walks into the field.

Owen rushes to the truck. He pulls a Henry rifle from the back seat. He starts digging around the back for ammunition but cannot find it.

Owen goes to the glove box, and still can't find ammo. He rushes into the field.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Marcus walks up to a cow lying on the ground. It is breathing heavily and struggling to get up. The leg is busted up and bleeding.

Marcus squats down and pets the injured cow. He stands as Owen runs up to him.

OWEN

I couldn't find any ammo.

Marcus grabs the rifle from his hand, points it and shoots the cow.

MARCUS

There is always ammo in the gun.

OWEN

That's the plan? Shoot them all? We can't afford that.

MARCUS

Sometimes this is what needs to be done.

OWEN

We can't just -

MARCUS

I'm going to need you to step up and help me tonight, Owen.

Owen nods.

They walk a little further into the field. Owen stops and notices a burning cigarette in the grass.

OWEN

Marcus, look.

Marcus walks over and looks at it.

MARCUS

Fucking kids.

OWEN

What do you mean?

MARCUS

Plenty of kids around here get drunk and decide cow tipping is the perfect pass time.

Another cow is mooing in distress.

Marcus walks up to a calf in the same condition. He raises the rifle.

OWEN

I'll do it.

Marcus lowers the rifle and hands it to Owen.

Owen raises the gun. He is shaking. He stands there trying to bring himself to do it.

Marcus walks up and puts a hand on his shoulder.

Owen stiffens and grips the rifle tighter. He lowers the rifle.

Marcus takes the rifle from Owen.

MARCUS

There's a reason it's called a mercy killing.

Marcus pulls the trigger.

INT. KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

Marcus and Owen enter. They are covered in blood and mud.

Owen sits down at the kitchen table.

Marcus pulls two beers from the fridge, pops the top and hands one to Owen.

Owen takes a long drink and sets the bottle on the table. He looks at his blood stained hand.

MARCUS

Death is never pretty. There is no way to sugar coat it.

OWEN

It just doesn't seem fair.

MARCUS

It's not fair but you have to remember they can't get up. They can't get food or walk to water. If we don't help them then it means a slow agonizing death.

Owen takes a drink.

OWEN

We could've called the vet.

MARCUS

There comes a point where even medicine can't cure them. They suffer and false hope is more crippling than giving them the peace they deserve.

OWEN

It just doesn't feel right.

MARCUS

Sometimes the right thing isn't always the easy thing.

Sirens sound in the distance. Red flashing lights pass the windows.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

What the hell?

Marcus and Owen go outside the front door. They see orange in the dark horizon.

OWEN

That looks like it's coming from Rob's place.

MARCUS

Get in the truck.

EXT. ROB'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

The truck rounds the corner.

Fire trucks are parked in front of a burning barn.

Marcus and Owen jump out and run up.

FIREFIGHTER #1 (40s,M) stops them.

FIREFIGHTER
You can't go any further.

MARCUS
What the hell happened?

FIREFIGHTER
Give us time to find out.

ROB
Boys?

Rob is holding Carol in his arms.

Carol is crying.

Marcus and Owen run over to them.

MARCUS
Thank God ya'll are alright. What happened?

ROB
I don't know. I looked out the window and the whole barn was in flames.

OWEN
What about the horses?

Carol buries her face into Rob's chest.

Rob looks at Marcus.

ROB
I don't want to say this but you might have been right.

MARCUS
About what?

ROB
Earlier today I called Thomas Strickland and told him I wasn't selling and now this. That can't be a coincidence.

Marcus balls his fists and walks to his truck.

OWEN
Marcus?

Marcus pulls open the driver side door and jumps in.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Marcus, where are you going?

MARCUS

I'm going to find out what the fuck is going on and I pray I'm not right.

OWEN

I'm going with you.

MARCUS

No. You're staying here with them.

Marcus tries to pull the door closed.

Owen stops it.

OWEN

This is my fight too.

Marcus looks at the fire and shakes his head.

MARCUS

You don't need to get your hands dirty.

Marcus slams the door shut. He reverses out of the driveway quickly leaving Owen standing in dust.

INT. THOMAS'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Thomas enters and walks to the coffee pot and pours a cup of coffee.

The hammer on a gun clicks back.

Thomas turns.

Marcus is sitting at the dining room table with muddy boots propped up on the table. He is pointing a Colt 1911 at Thomas.

MARCUS

Take a seat.

Thomas takes a sip of his coffee and sits opposite of Marcus.

THOMAS

Breaking and entering is a little cliché don't you think?

MARCUS
Tell me about the Oil.

THOMAS
I know what you're thinking.

MARCUS
I'm thinking you're a god damn thief.

THOMAS
I can assure you I'm not.

MARCUS
No. That would be too straight forward. Instead you're a fucking greedy coward forcing people from their homes and trying to look like a fucking hero.

Thomas smiles.

THOMAS
That's a farfetched theory.

MARCUS
I'm going to ask you one time and God be damned if you lie to me. Did you or did you not hurt my herd and burn Rob's barn?

THOMAS
I don't know what you are talking about.

Marcus gets up from his chair and grabs Thomas by the lapel. He pistol whips him across the face.

MARCUS
I told you not to fucking lie to me.

THOMAS
I'm not going to admit to something I didn't do.

MARCUS
You're too smart to get your own hands dirty. I know that but here is your only fucking warning. If you so much as breath in the direction of mine or Rob's farm I won't just kill you, I'll hunt down everyone you love.

THOMAS
Your threats don't scare me, kid.

MARCUS
No?

Marcus cocks back the hammer of his gun and pushes the barrel straight to Thomas's head.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Then how about I fucking show you.

Marcus pulls the trigger. The gun just clicks.

Marcus hits Thomas again with the gun.

Thomas falls out of the chair.

Marcus reaches down and lifts Thomas by the tie, staring into his eyes.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Stay the fuck away from my family
or the gun won't be empty next
time.

Marcus shoves Thomas back down. He turns to leave.

Thomas wipes blood from his mouth.

THOMAS
You have no idea who you're fucking
with.

Marcus stops.

MARCUS
Neither do you.

Marcus leaves.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MIDDAY

Marcus enters.

Owen and Freddy are sitting on the couch playing a video game. Owen stands up as he enters. Owen follows Marcus into...

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Marcus pulls the Colt and lays it on the table before pulling a beer from the fridge.

Owen looks at the gun and then to Marcus.

OWEN
What did you do?

MARCUS
What needed to be done.

OWEN
You didn't...you know?

MARCUS
No, although God knows I wanted too.

OWEN
What did he say?

MARCUS
He denied everything of course.

OWEN
What if he didn't actually do anything, though?

Marcus takes a drink. He looks at the beer bottle.

MARCUS
I'm going out.

OWEN
Marcus.

Marcus exits.

INT. STRICKLAND STUDY - EVENING

Thomas is sitting at his desk holding a whiskey on the rocks to his cheek.

Bryce shifts forward in his chair.

BRYCE
I can't do that.

THOMAS
You can and you will.

BRYCE
Foraging documents, destroying
evidence is one thing but
this...this is too far.

THOMAS
Too far? I lose everything if this
doesn't go through. You've no idea
how far I'll go.

BRYCE
I'm sorry about that but-

Thomas throws the glass across the room.

THOMAS
But nothing. You will do this or I
will expose you. I'll have your ass
behind those bars by this time
tomorrow.

Bryce stands.

BRYCE
Everything I did was for you.

Thomas stands and leans on the desk.

THOMAS
I made you and you best believe I
can ruin you just the same.

BRYCE
You wouldn't.

THOMAS
You know I will.

Bryce drops his head and turns to exit.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
No witnesses.

BRYCE
I got it.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Owen and Freddy are playing a video game. Freddy loses.

FREDDY
You alright?

OWEN

I'm fine.

FREDDY

Don't bullshit a bullshitter.
What's up?

OWEN

Everything is all messed up man.
First dad, then the cows, now the
fire. Everything is going to hell
in a hand basket.

FREDDY

I'm sorry, man. Everything will get
better.

OWEN

I'm not so sure. Marcus is on edge.
He thinks Thomas Strickland is
behind all of this.

FREDDY

That guy couldn't find the ass end
of a horse.

OWEN

That's what I think but Marcus is
so sure it's him. I told him just
to sell and get out like everyone
else in this God forsaken town.

FREDDY

He's not going to do that. This is
all he knows. This is all you know
too. What would you even do?

Owen shrugs.

OWEN

Maybe I'll go to college like
Vanessa.

FREDDY

I'm sure he'll love that idea.

OWEN

It's my life, not his. If he can't
accept that then that's his
problem.

Freddy fiddles with the controller.

FREDDY
Have you talked to Vanessa about
it?

OWEN
No. Why?

FREDDY
I think maybe you should. I mean,
you want out. She got out. She'd be
the one to tell you how to do it.

OWEN
What about you? What do you want to
do?

Freddy chuckles.

FREDDY
I want to shoot some pool.

OWEN
Seriously though.

FREDDY
I am serious.

Freddy jumps to his feet.

FREDDY (CONT'D)
Come on. Let's get your mind off of
everything for a bit.

Freddy heads out the door.

Owen sits there for a moment and follows.

EXT. POOL HALL - SAME TIME

Marcus and Kara exit. They walk toward the truck.

Marcus turns and wraps Kara in his arms. They kiss.

They get in the truck and leave.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Marcus is driving. Kara scoots over and starts kissing his
neck.

KARA

How about we get started before we get there?

MARCUS

Seriously?

Kara lowers her head toward his lap.

EXT. BACKROAD - NIGHT

The truck comes around a curve and swerves.

A Police car pops out from the wood line and turns on the sirens.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

The lights flash in the rearview mirrors.

MARCUS

Fuck.

Kara lifts her head and looks at the flashing lights. She sits up straight, pulls down the visor and fixes her hair in the mirror.

Marcus fixes himself and pulls the truck over.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

I knew we'd get busted one of these days.

Kara giggles.

Bryce approaches and taps on the driver side window.

Marcus rolls down the window.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Bryce.

Bryce looks in.

BRYCE

License, registration and proof of insurance.

MARCUS

Bryce, look -

BRYCE
Don't make this more complicated
Marcus.

Marcus produces the documents.

MARCUS
Here you go...Sheriff.

BRYCE
I'll be right back.

Bryce walks away.

MARCUS
What a dick.

KARA
Just do what he wants so we can
finish what we started.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

Bryce gets in the car. He pulls out his cell phone.

THOMAS (O.S.)
Is it done?

BRYCE
No. He's got Kara Welles with him.

THOMAS (O.S.)
So?

BRYCE
So, she's not a part of this.

THOMAS (O.S.)
No witnesses. Get it done.

The phone clicks dead.

Bryce reaches over in the glove box and pulls out a small
silver revolver. He looks at it and at the truck.

BRYCE
Fuck.

EXT. BACKROAD - NIGHT

Bryce gets out of the car and slowly approaches the truck. He hands the documents through the window. He raises the revolver.

Marcus dives for Kara .

Kara screams.

Bryce fires three times. He gets back in the cruiser, turns off the lights and drives away.

INT. FREDDY'S CAR - NIGHT

Freddy is driving down the road.

Owen is in the passenger seat.

OWEN

Do you really want to spend the rest of your life here?

FREDDY

Dude, It doesn't matter.

OWEN

Sure it does. I mean-

FREDDY

Owen, drop it, dude.

OWEN

Alright. Sorry.

FREDDY

Dad lost his job at the factory.

OWEN

What? When?

FREDDY

A couple weeks back. We are barely scrapping by. Mom's started cleaning houses for a little extra cash. That's why I haven't been around much. I been helping when I can.

OWEN

I'm sorry, man. I had no idea. Why didn't you tell me.

FREDDY

We all have our burdens to bare.
You've been going through shit too,
no point in telling you about mine.

They take a curve. The headlights land on Marcus's truck.

OWEN

What the hell?

FREDDY

Knowing those two, they couldn't
wait to get home.

OWEN

Shut up dude.

FREDDY

Watch this.

Freddy slows the car down and pulls up next to the window. He honks the horn.

Nothing happens.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

Maybe they went into the woods?

OWEN

They wouldn't park on the side of
the road for that.

EXT. BACKROAD - SAME

Freddy and Owen get out of the car.

Freddy peers in the window as Owen comes around the front of the car.

FREDDY

Call 911.

OWEN

What?

Freddy yanks the door. It's locked. Freddy reaches in and unlocks it. He opens the door.

Marcus's bloody arm drops down.

FREDDY

Call 911. Now.

OWEN

Marcus.

Owen runs up.

Freddy pushes him back.

FREDDY

You don't need to see this. Call
the fucking number.

Owen digs for his phone and puts hit to ear.

EXT. DAM - NIGHT

Bryce walks across the platform and stares out over the
rushing water. He pulls the revolver from his back and holds
it in his hands. He opens the chambers.He dumps the shells and remaining rounds into his hand. One
by one he drops them over the edge.

He holds the revolver over the edge and looks at it.

Bryce rips off his badge and throws it.

He tucks the revolver back into his pants and walks towards
the cruiser.

INT. STRICKLAND STUDY - NIGHT

Thomas is pacing back and forth.

Bryce enters.

THOMAS

Is it done?

Bryce pulls the revolver from the small of his back.

BRYCE

It's done.

THOMAS

Why the hell do you still have
that?

BRYCE

It's done and so am I.

THOMAS

You're not done until I say you're done. Get rid of that fucking thing.

BRYCE

No. I say when I'm done.

THOMAS

Listen to me-

Bryce points the revolver at Thomas.

Thomas takes a step back.

BRYCE

No. You listen to me. Everything Dakota, Davis and I have done has been for you. We have blood on our hands because of you.

THOMAS

Son-

BRYCE

Don't fucking call me that. You don't get to stand there pretending your absolved from all of this bullshit.

THOMAS

You did what was necessary.

BRYCE

None of this was necessary. This was fucking greed. This was your warped fantasy and you dragged us all into it with you.

THOMAS

I was going to lose everything. Don't you see that?

BRYCE

See. You don't give a shit about what happens to anybody other than yourself.

THOMAS

I care about this family.

BRYCE

Bullshit. Dakota and Davis have become fucking tyrants because of you. I've spent my entire career corrupt because of you. You don't care about this family. You use this family for your own twisted benefit.

THOMAS

Remember who you are talking too.

BRYCE

I don't know who you are but you're definitely not my father.

Bryce walks up and slaps the revolver into Thomas's hand, grip first.

BRYCE (CONT'D)

Clean up your own fucking messes from now on.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Vanessa knocks on the door.

Owen looks up and gives a weak smile as he straightens.

Vanessa enters. She sets a bag on the floor.

Marcus is laying unconscious in the bed.

OWEN

Hey, Vanessa.

VANESSA

How are you holding up?

They hug.

OWEN

I'm ok, Anything new?

VANESSA

No. We pulled two thirty-eight slugs out of him. He was lucky.

OWEN

Tough just like dad.

He looks over at Vanessa.

VANESSA

I just wish Kara was as lucky.

OWEN

Sounds like a revolver if they were thirty-eights.

VANESSA

Yeah, that's what I thought too.

OWEN

Can I ask you something?

VANESSA

Of course.

OWEN

I want the truth.

Vanessa takes a seat.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Why did you leave?

Vanessa looks over at Marcus and starts fidgeting with her hands.

VANESSA

The truth.

OWEN

Please. I need to know what happened.

VANESSA

I left because of them.

OWEN

Dad and Marcus? Why?

VANESSA

Mom was hit by a hit and run driver just before my senior year. She had slipped into a coma so I spent every moment I wasn't in class sitting with her in the hospital.

OWEN

I don't remember much of that.

VANESSA

You were only five or six then.

OWEN

What happened?

VANESSA

One day I was sitting there reading to her. She loved old Nora Roberts books. Dad and Marcus came in with the Doctor and the doctor explained that it was the machines keeping her alive.

Vanessa begins to tear up.

Owen takes her hand.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

I begged and I pleaded for him to wait. I was doing everything the Doctors told me to do. I read. I talked to her. I prayed over her but he wasn't having it anymore.

OWEN

Wait for what?

VANESSA

He took her off life support, Owen.

Owen drops his head.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

After that it was like Dad didn't see me anymore. He never knew what to do with a girl. That was always mom's job. I felt like a ghost in that house with him.

OWEN

What about Marcus?

Vanessa takes Marcus's hand and smirks.

VANESSA

He changed. He wasn't the happy go lucky boy anymore. He was angry with the world. He hated everyone and everything. I mean, I was angry too but his temper...It was just too much most days.

Vanessa brushes the top of Marcus's hand with her thumb.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

I couldn't stand being in that house anymore. I was either being ignored or yelled at. It became my own personal hell.

OWEN

Did you ever tell Marcus why you left?

VANESSA

Of course I told him until I was blue in the face but he just wouldn't listen, like the stubborn ass he is.

Owen smirks but it quickly fades.

OWEN

Then why does he think you abandoned us?

Vanessa wipes away the tears.

VANESSA

I didn't tell them I applied for college. It was too hard to talk to them. I waited until they left for a livestock auction, packed my stuff and left.

INTERCOM

Paging Dr. Jordan to the Nurses station. Dr. Jordan to the Nurses station.

Vanessa stands.

VANESSA

I know that it wasn't the bravest choice but I really thought it was the right one.

Owen smiles and looks at Marcus.

OWEN

Sometimes the right choice isn't the easiest.

Vanessa turns to exit and pauses.

VANESSA

I'll check on you in a few.

EXT. ROB'S BURNT BARN - DAY

Rob is walking around the burnt remnants of the barn. He kicks over a couple pieces of wood.

He bends down and picks up a charred tool and tosses it off into the pile.

A FIRE MARSHALL (50s,M) walks up to him.

FIRE MARSHALL

According to the initial report, it seems an accelerant was used to start the fire.

ROB

It's a barn, accelerants are all over the place.

Rob tosses another charred tool as he stands and dusts off his hands on his pants.

FIRE MARSHALL

Here is the full report for the insurance company. If you have any questions feel free to reach out to the number there at the bottom.

ROB

Thanks.

The Fire Marshall hands him the sheet of paper, shakes his hand and leaves.

Rob glances over the document and tucks it in his back pocket.

He looks at the ground and walks to a nearby tree. He looks around and finds a cigarette butt laying in the grass.

Rob bends down and picks it up.

ROB (CONT'D)

Son of a bitch.

He hurries back to the house.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Vanessa is sitting at a round table outside of the cafeteria eating lunch.

Bryce approaches.

BRYCE

Vanessa?

Vanessa looks up.

VANESSA

Bryce, how you been?

BRYCE

I've been better.

Bryce takes a seat beside Vanessa.

VANESSA

Same here.

BRYCE

How's Marcus doing?

VANESSA

He's stable for now. If you would like to see him, he is in room 214.

BRYCE

I don't think that's best.

VANESSA

I know you two don't really get along but one of you needs to take the first step in putting the past behind you.

BRYCE

You know him better than that.

Vanessa laughs.

VANESSA

He knows how to hold a grudge.

BRYCE

He sure does. Can I ask you to do me a favor?

VANESSA

What do you need?

Bryce produces an envelope.

BRYCE

Could you give this to him when he wakes up?

VANESSA

Of course but you could take it up to him. Owen is up there and-

BRYCE

I have to go and finish the investigation but this is me taking that first step.

Vanessa takes the envelope.

VANESSA

I'll make sure he gets it.

BRYCE

Thanks, Vanessa and I'm sorry for everything.

Bryce gets up and walks away.

EXT. BACKROAD - DAY

The police cruiser is cruising down a back road.

Bryce shifts in his seat.

He puts his gun to his head and pulls the trigger.

The cruiser crashes.

INT. BARN - DAY

Owen is mucking a horse stall.

Freddy is brushing a horse.

Rob's truck pulls up and Rob steps out.

ROB

What are you boy's doing here?

OWEN

Marcus woke up.

ROB

That's great. How's he doing?

FREDDY

Considering the first words out of his mouth were 'How's the farm doing' I'd say he's perfectly fine.

ROB

That sounds like him. Tough and stubborn just like his old man.

OWEN

I practically had to force him to stay in the hospital bed so I'll agree to that. What are you doing here?

ROB

I been keeping the animals fed while you've been at the hospital.

Owen steps out of the stall with a shovel full of wet hay and manure.

OWEN

Thanks for that.

Freddy chuckles.

ROB

I'm actually glad I saw you boys. I don't want to bother Marcus but there is something you need to see.

Freddy and Owen stop what they are doing and approach Rob.

OWEN

What is it?

Rob digs in his pocket and produces two cigarette butts. He holds up one.

ROB

I found this at the tree line by my barn this afternoon.

Rob holds up the second one.

ROB (CONT'D)

This one I found by a tree where you're father had his accident.

Owen steps forward to examine them.

OWEN

Those looks similar to the one I noticed in our field the night the cows went down. Marcus said it was just some dumb kids.

Freddy looks at the cigarettes a little closer.

FREDDY
Any chance those are Turkish
Royals?

OWEN
Why?

FREDDY
We know someone who smokes that
exact brand.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

Marcus is flipping through the television channels.

There is a knock on the door.

Vanessa enters.

Marcus keeps flipping.

VANESSA
How are you feeling?

MARCUS
Like I've been shot.

Vanessa looks at the television and steps closer.

VANESSA
Marcus, I-

MARCUS
I'm sorry.

Vanessa stops.

VANESSA
What?

MARCUS
I heard you talking to Owen and I'm
sorry. I should've been a better
brother to you.

Vanessa stands there stunned.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
I should've been there for you when
mom passed. I should've told you
about the funeral. I was just-

VANESSA
Angry at the world?

Marcus nods.

MARCUS
I was more angry with God than anything. He let her be taken from us.

VANESSA
I'm sorry too, for leaving like I did. I just didn't know how to face dad and especially you. I was so afraid of how you'd react. I couldn't talk to you anymore.

MARCUS
That's what happens when all the love in the world is sucked right out of you.

Vanessa approaches the bed and takes his hand.

Marcus looks at it and gives a weak smile.

VANESSA
We both handled it poorly.

MARCUS
Yeah, but you went off and did an amazing thing while I stayed home and wallowed in anger.

VANESSA
You did something too, you know.

MARCUS
What?

VANESSA
You kept Owen alive.

Marcus smirks.

MARCUS
Barely. I'm always getting him out of shit.

VANESSA
That come with older sibling territory. I would know.

INTERCOM

Code blue, room 201. Code blue,
room 201.

VANESSA

That's the third time this week.
I'll be right back.

She rushes to leave and stops.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Oh, this was dropped off for you.

Vanessa hands Marcus the envelope and exits.

Marcus opens the envelope and pulls out a letter.

He begins reading.

INT. FREDDY'S CAR - NIGHT

Freddy is driving.

Owen is in the passenger seat.

OWEN

You don't have to do this.

FREDDY

We may not be blood but you and
Marcus are more of a family to me
than my own.

OWEN

This is a large ask, bro.

FREDDY

You didn't ask. I told you I was up
for this. You sure the old man is
up for this?

OWEN

After everything? No doubt.

FREDDY

Him you don't doubt but me you do?
That's messed up.

OWEN

If this goes wrong, you're whole
life is behind bars. I just want to
be sure you know the stakes here.

FREDDY
Not a good wing man if I don't got
my boy's back.

Owen smiles.

OWEN
Thanks, bro.

FREDDY
You ready?

Owen grabs the bar above the door handle.

EXT. POOL HALL - NIGHT

Dakota and Davis are standing outside.

Dakota is smoking a cigarette.

Freddy's car pulls into the parking lot. It slams on the
brake and spins around spraying gravel and dirt on Dakota and
Davis.

A rock puts a crack in the windshield of their truck.

Owen leans out of the passenger side window.

OWEN
Didn't see you there.

Dakota tosses his cigarette down.

Dakota and Davis walk toward the car.

Davis points at the truck.

DAVIS
You're fucking paying for that.

Freddy sticks his hand out of his window and flips up his
middle finger.

Owen starts laughing and puts his head back into the car.

Freddy's car peels out of the parking lot.

DAKOTA
Get in the truck.

Dakota and Davis run to their truck and drive after Freddy
and Owen.

INT. FREDDY'S CAR - NIGHT

Freddy looks in the rearview mirror and sees the headlights of Dakota's truck.

FREDDY
No turning back now.

Owen puts his cellphone to his ear.

OWEN
On our way.

He clicks the phone off.

The headlights of the truck get closer.

FREDDY
Hold on.

The truck rear ends the car.

Freddy and Owen jerk from the impact.

Owen looks behind him.

OWEN
We've got to get some distance.

FREDDY
Come on, baby. Show daddy what you got.

Freddy steps harder on the gas.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

There's a knock on the door.

Vanessa enters.

VANESSA
Hey, I-

She stops.

The bed is empty.

Vanessa starts to leave and pulls out her phone. She pauses and steps up toward a balled up piece of paper on the floor. She picks it up and begins reading.

Vanessa sits down on the bed in surprise. She lowers the paper into her lap, and pulls out her cell phone.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Rob is sitting on horseback. His phone rings.

ROB
Hey, Vanessa. Everything-

He listens.

ROB (CONT'D)
What do you mean he's gone?

He listens.

ROB (CONT'D)
I'll run over to the house her in a moment.

Rob hangs up and starts to dial another number. He pauses and tucks his phone back into his pocket.

INT. FREDDY'S CAR - NIGHT

Owen looks spins around and watches the headlights of the truck get closer.

OWEN
They're gaining on us.

FREDDY
Almost there. Hang on, we are about to need for speed this shit.

Freddy yanks the E-brake and spins the wheel.

EXT. BACKROAD - NIGHT

Freddy's car makes the sharp turn.

Dakota's truck goes off the edge of the road, spewing dirt as it follows and gets back on the road creating distance between the two vehicle.

The two vehicles speed down the back road.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Rob notices headlights coming around a curve. The headlights flash.

Rob holds up a controller.

A small drone lift into the air beside him and flies toward a small heard of cows.

The cows rush toward a fence.

Freddy's car passes.

The drone pushes closer.

The cows shatter through the fence and into the road.

The truck comes around the curve.

The headlights of the truck land on a cow.

The truck doesn't have time to swerve as it smashes into the cow.

EXT. BACKROAD - NIGHT

Freddy's car slams on the brakes.

Freddy and Owen step out in time to see the truck smash into the cow, swerve, hit the ditch on the opposite end of the road and flip multiple times.

FREDDY

Holy shit.

Rob approaches on horseback. He tosses the drone to Owen.

ROB

Meet me at your house when you're done.

OWEN

Will do.

Rob rides off.

Freddy starts walking toward the destroyed truck.

The cow in the road start softly mooing in distress.

FREDDY

What are you doing? Let's go.

OWEN

You still keep that twenty- two in
the glove box?

FREDDY

Yeah, why?

Owen dips back in and produces the small revolver.

Freddy rushes toward the truck.

Owen walks up to the Cow.

The cow is breathing heavily.

Owen raises the pistol.

Freddy looks inside the truck and immediately looks away.

Freddy approaches Owen.

FREDDY (CONT'D)

No seatbelts.

Owen nods.

Owen raises the revolver to the cow. He looks at the big
brown eyes.

Owen pulls the trigger.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

The field is overlooking a lush pasture.

Marcus is standing in front of the grave markers of Bill and
Catherine.

MARCUS

You always told me to do the right
thing even if it wasn't easy. I've
lived by that my entire life but
now I don't even know what is right
anymore. Sure as hell nothing is
easy.

He looks up into the night sky.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

I just hope I don't disappoint you
or let Owen down but if so then
just know that I'm sorry and I did
the best I could.

Marcus kisses his finger tips and places them on the top of Bill's headstone. He looks at his mother's gravestone and smile weakly.

INT. STRICKLAND STUDY - NIGHT

Thomas is standing at a wall of pictures. The photos are all of his family and his boys growing up through the years. His eyes stop on one of Bryce in his high school football uniform.

Thomas looks down at his glass of scotch. He swirls it around and takes a big drink, draining the glass. He looks back at the photo and throws the glass across the room.

He turns and slings everything off of his desk. He slams his fists on the desk and looks at the photo one last time.

Thomas walks over and yanks the photo off the wall and smashes it to the floor. He looks up at the rest with tears in his eyes. He leans down and picks the shattered glass away from the photo.

Thomas grabs the photo and sits down at his desk chair.

The phone rings.

Thomas clears his throat and answers.

THOMAS
Thomas Strickland.

JC BROWN (O.S.)
Mr. Strickland. This is Deputy
Brown.

THOMAS
JC, I can't handle anymore
sympathetic calls about Bry- my son
this evening.

JC BROWN (O.S.)
Mr. Strickland, there has been an
accident and -

Thomas hangs up the phone. He jumps up from his chair and runs to the door. He opens it.

Vanessa is standing there with a .38 revolver in her hand.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Marcus enters.

Rob is sitting at the table with a glass of whiskey.

MARCUS
I figured she'd call you.

ROB
People tend to freak out when you
just walk out of a hospital.

Marcus walks past Rob.

Rob takes a drink as he hears a cabinet open and close.

Marcus walks back in carrying a shotgun.

Rob eyes him as he passes.

MARCUS
You can't talk me out of this.

ROB
I don't intend to.

MARCUS
Then why are you here?

Rob takes another drink.

ROB
Just want to make sure you fully
understand what you're about to do.

MARCUS
I know damn well what I'm about to
do.

Rob nods.

ROB
When I was sent over to Vietnam. I
was young, dumb, and full of cum. I
had plenty of fight in me back
then.

MARCUS
I don't have time for this.

Marcus starts to leave.

ROB
You've got time. Sit down.

Marcus stops. He sets the shotgun on the table but stands behind the chair.

MARCUS
I'm listening.

ROB
The Army taught me how to fight,
how to shoot, and how to survive
but they did not teach me how to
cope with taking a human life.

MARCUS
Rob, I-

ROB
Listen to me.

Marcus stiffens.

ROB (CONT'D)
I remember the first enemy I had in
my sights. I remember thirsting to
pull the trigger. Hell, I think I
even smiled but do you know what
happened when I did pull the
trigger?

MARCUS
What?

ROB
I watched the life leak out of that
man and I wet myself.

Marcus takes a seat.

ROB (CONT'D)
I lost count of how many I killed
back then but I can tell you this,
not a single day goes by that it
doesn't haunt me.

MARCUS
Why?

Rob takes another drink.

ROB

Because even though they told us we were doing the right thing for the right reasons it still felt wrong. I want you to be absolutely sure you are prepared to feel that way too for the rest of your life.

Marcus looks at Rob. He grabs the shotgun and stands.

MARCUS

I can live with that.

Marcus walks to the door and grabs the door knob.

Rob stands, kicking back his chair.

ROB

There is no coming back from this. Think about Owen and Vanessa.

The phone rings.

MARCUS

I am thinking about them.

The phone rings again.

Rob and Marcus stare at each other.

The phone rings a third time.

Marcus pulls his cell phone out. Jacob is calling. Marcus answers.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Jacob, I don't have time to deal with this right now. I'll -

Marcus looks up at Rob.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

I'll find her.

He listens.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

I said I'll find her.

Marcus hangs up.

ROB

What's wrong?

MARCUS

Vanessa left work early and now his thirty-eight is missing from his safe.

ROB

What does she know?

Marcus thinks for a moment and gets flustered remembering the letter.

MARCUS

She knows everything. I'll explain on the way. Let's go.

ROB

I'm driving.

Rob and Marcus rush out the door.

EXT. BACKROAD - NIGHT

Rob's truck rounds a curve and slows at the barrage of flashing lights. They slows down and roll down the window.

Firetrucks, Police cars, and Ambulances are on the road.

The truck stops as OFFICER #1 (40s,F) holds up her hand.

MARCUS

What the hell?

Marcus opens the car door and stands up. He spots Freddy and Owen standing by the fence line.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Owen.

Owen and Freddy turn to him. They look at each other.

Marcus looks at the wreckage of the truck as FIREFIGHTERS (20-40s,M) are using the jaws of life to pry open the doors.

Freddy and Owen approach.

OWEN

Marcus, what are you doing out here? Shouldn't you be at the hospital?

MARCUS

Discharged early. Tell me what the hell is going on.

Freddy and Owen look at each other. They look at Rob in the truck.

Marcus looks at Rob.

Freddy clears his throat.

FREDDY

Looks like there was a cow in the road. They were going too fast.

MARCUS

Why are you two out here talking to cops?

OWEN

We called it in when we found it.

Marcus eyes Owen. He turns his gaze to the fence, then to the dead cow and back at Owen.

Owen stares back.

MARCUS

You just came across the accident?

Freddy and Owen nod.

Marcus nods and gets back in the truck closing the door.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Go straight home when you're done. You understand me?

OWEN

Yes.

FREDDY

Absolutely.

The truck drives past Owen and Freddy as Officer #1 waves it through.

INT. STRICKLAND STUDY - NIGHT

Thomas backs into his office.

Vanessa enters pointing the .38 revolver at him. She reaches in her pocket and pulls out a crumpled letter.

VANESSA

Explain this.

She tosses it at Thomas.

Thomas fumbles to catch it. He unravels the crumpled paper and begins to read.

He walks around to the other side of the desk as he reads.

THOMAS

I don't-

VANESSA

Bullshit. It all makes sense.

Thomas sets the paper on his desk beside the picture of Bryce. He looks at the photo.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Look at me Goddammit.

Thomas looks at the desk drawer and looks up at her. He stands up straight.

THOMAS

My boy clearly had some issues. I'm sure you heard what happened?

VANESSA

I know damn well what happened. He dropped that off to Marcus just before he offed himself.

THOMAS

He was sick. He-

VANESSA

He was ate up with guilt because of you. He killed himself because of you.

THOMAS

I don't have time for this right now. Dakota and Davis need me.

Vanessa steps closer to Thomas.

VANESSA

I suggest you make time.

INT. ROB'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Rob is driving.

Marcus checks the shotgun one last time.

MARCUS

It's interesting to me that Owen and Freddy rolled up on an accident involving two boys we are having issues with.

Rob shrugs.

ROB

What can I say? Karma's a bitch.

Marcus eyes Rob and nods.

MARCUS

It appears so.

ROB

Care to explain how Vanessa knows about everything?

Marcus racks the slide of the shotgun.

MARCUS

I'll explain later. Take a right up ahead.

INT. STRICKLAND STUDY - NIGHT

Thomas sits down in his chair.

Vanessa steps closer.

VANESSA

Tell me the truth.

THOMAS

Vanessa.

VANESSA

I want to hear it from you. Did you have my father killed?

THOMAS

That was an accident.

Vanessa cocks back the hammer of the revolver.

Thomas flinches.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

It was an accident, I swear. He was only supposed to get hurt.

VANESSA

Did you order the burnings, the
cattle mutilations?

THOMAS

Yes, but you have to understand-

VANESSA

The hit on Marcus?

The front door opens.

Vanessa looks back at the door.

Thomas reaches in his desk drawer and pulls out the small
silver revolver.

Vanessa looks back at Thomas.

Thomas swats the .38 revolver from her hand and spins her
around, holding the small silver revolver to her head.

The .38 revolver lands on the floor sliding toward the
bookshelf.

Marcus and Rob enters.

THOMAS

Drop the fucking gun.

Marcus has the shotgun aimed at them.

MARCUS

Let her go.

THOMAS

Drop it, now.

Thomas cocks back the hammer on the small silver revolver.

ROB

Marcus, you'll hit them both with
that thing.

MARCUS

I know, but -

ROB

She'll take the most of it.

MARCUS

Fuck.

Marcus lowers the shotgun to the floor.

THOMAS

Get the contracts out of my
briefcase and you're going to sign
them.

Rob slowly walks over and opens the briefcase. He pulls out
the two contracts and hands one to Marcus.

Marcus and Thomas stare at each other.

Thomas pushes the barrel hard against Vanessa's head.

Rob and Marcus sign. They toss them on the floor.

MARCUS

Let her go, Thomas.

THOMAS

You fucked everything up. Because
of you I've lost everyone. I think
you need to know what that feels
like.

MARCUS

We signed the fucking things. You
got what you wanted.

THOMAS

I want my fucking family back.

Thomas points the gun at Marcus.

Rob steps in front of him.

Thomas pulls the trigger.

The gun clicks.

Vanessa elbows Thomas.

Thomas throws her to the ground.

Marcus pushes past Rob and stalks toward Thomas.

Thomas fires again and again. The gun clicks both time.

A gun shot rings out.

Thomas clutches his stomach and looks down at the wound.

Marcus turns and looks.

Vanessa is laying in the floor holding the .38 revolver. She stands to her feet and fires again hitting Thomas in the right of his chest.

Thomas stumbles back against his desk and slumps to the floor, releasing the small silver revolver.

Thomas is wheezing.

Rob runs over and gently takes the gun from Vanessa.

ROB

Vanessa.

Vanessa stares at Thomas.

ROB (CONT'D)

Vanessa, look at me.

Vanessa snaps her gaze to Rob.

Marcus walks over and kicks the small silver revolver away. He squats down next to Thomas.

MARCUS

I told you the gun wouldn't be empty next time.

Thomas dies.

Marcus stands and runs over to Vanessa. She collapses in his arms.

VANESSA

What have I done?

Vanessa starts sobbing.

Marcus looks at Rob.

MARCUS

You did the right thing.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Freddy, Owen, Vanessa, Marcus, Rob and Carol are sitting in wherever is available in the living room.

Jacob and Officer #1 enter the living room. They shake hands and Officer #1 exits.

Marcus takes Vanessa's hand.

Jacob approaches.

JACOB
They are declaring it self defense.

VANESSA
Thank, God.

Vanessa and Marcus hug.

JACOB
Why was he pressuring you to sell?

MARCUS
Apparently the land is ripe with oil and he wanted it.

JACOB
Why didn't you? With the offers I saw you could've retired and done whatever you wanted.

ROB
Retire from what? This is our home.

Jacob smiles.

JACOB
Come on, love. Let's get you home.

Vanessa stands and starts towards the door.

Marcus stands.

MARCUS
Hey, V.

VANESSA
Yeah?

MARCUS
I love you, sis.

Vanessa smiles.

VANESSA
I love you too. Call me later?

MARCUS
Absolutely.

Jacob and Vanessa exit.

FREDDY
I'm exhausted.

Freddy drops his head back.

OWEN
Me too. I feel like I could sleep
for a week.

Rob leans forward.

ROB
You boys wouldn't mind helping me
rebuild a barn would you?

CAROL
Robert. Let the boys get some rest.

MARCUS
We will be there.

Freddy and Owen groan.

ROB
Thank you. I'll meet you out there.

Marcus looks at the wall.

FREDDY
Come on. It's six in the morning.

MARCUS
You know what that means?

He looks at Owen.

OWEN
Breakfast.

MARCUS
Get cleaned up. I'll take you to
the diner. My treat.

Freddy and Owen groan again as they stand and start up the stairs.

FREDDY
This is bullshit.

OWEN
Got to work to eat.

Freddy and Owen exit upstairs.

MARCUS
There's hope for him yet.

Rob and Carol stand.

ROB
You're doing well by that boy. Your
dad would be proud.

MARCUS
Thank you, Rob, for everything.

Rob and Carol head toward the door.

CAROL
It's going to be a hot one today.

ROB
I think I might wear shorts.

Marcus's eyes go wide.

FADE OUT:

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