LEAVING L.A.

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting

By

Sean Williams

August 2015
The graduate project of Sean Williams is approved:

_________________________________________                                       ______________
Prof. Alexis Krasilovsky                                                                                         Date

_________________________________________                                        ______________
Prof. Jared Rappaport                                                                                           Date

_________________________________________                                        ______________
Prof. Scott Sturgeon, Chair                                                                                   Date

California State University, Northridge
Table of Contents

Signature Page ii

Abstract iv

Leaving L.A. 1
Abstract

Leaving L.A.

By

Sean Williams

Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting

Leaving L.A. delves into the constantly unpredictable world of law enforcement in South Los Angeles. Following James Towers, the commanding officer of a Special Investigation Section unit responsible for surveillance of high risk and hostile targets; his world is ravaged when his daughter is abducted by gang members and sexually assaulted, sending a message to James. In the aftermath of recovering his daughter, his wife files for divorce and moves away, separating James from his children. While trying to reconcile, James' job becomes even more time-consuming as he investigates the murders of other police families which will lead him to those responsible for the attack on his daughter, but pull him away from his family in their time of great need. As he investigates, James runs into a series of dead ends, and is subsequently called in by Internal Affairs to help them prove that his unit murdered the two kidnappers and freed his daughter. Spending even less time with his family now, James finds more clues that leads him to
believe IA's claim. When James witnesses his second-in-command commit murder in the presence of a high-ranking gang member, he pulls the plug on his unit. With the statement of the gang member, James charges his entire unit, disbanding SIS. Although he has closed the case, there is no rectifying what was done to his family.
Leaving L.A.

Fade In.

EXT. SANTA MONICA BEACH: OCTOBER 31, 2007 - DAY


Racing on the sand are James Towers (56/Father), and James Towers (17/Son). Hand-fighting going on. Father, losing, tries to pull Son back.

Pier approaching, both struggling. Son finally breaks away. Father lunges to trip Son, fails. Tagging the first beam, Son slows down, turns, and sees Father down.

Approaching, both catch breath, Father laughs too. Son extends his hand...

FATHER
(pulling himself up)
Best two out of three?!

SON
(breathing hard)
You don't have another one in you.

FATHER
Okay, but you're going to tell me?

SON
No! You lost and you cheated. Bet's a bet.

Beat. Father rushes Son, tackling him. They wrestle, and Father picks Son up. Taking him to the water, Father throws Son into the frigid waters.

Son jumps up and chases Father, having a huge head-start.

PIER RAILING
Seated high above the water, Father and Son watch the vessels in the distance. Son now wears a jacket.

FATHER
... I wish I had a plan. A grocery clerk, saving for college. Didn't think I'd be drafted... I want you to do better, to be better than me.

SON
I'm your son, Dad... Not your dreams.

Beat. Father hugs and kisses Son's head.

FATHER
I know.

Sunlight finally breaks through the clouds.

FATHER
(checks Son)
You dry? We gotta go... Mom asks, it's sweat. It's not lying.

Father dismounts railing, starts heading off. Son removes a GLASS BOTTLE with a PAPER from his sweatshirt.

Beat. Son throws it as far as he can, sees the ocean swallow it. Leaving the rail, he finds Father staring at him.

FATHER
How're you gonna litter right in front of the police?

SON
... It wasn't trash.

Son catches up to Father, and they walk together. Beat.

FATHER
You should be a writer... or a life
guard at a nude beach.
  (Son reacts)
  Somebody's got to do it... That's
  why you need a plan, Stan.

INT. THE TOWERS FAMILY HOME (KITCHEN)

CHAOS in the narrow space. Father fixes meatball sandwiches,
JUSTINE TOWERS (56/Mother), makes pumpkin-face cookies, both
try to work around each other. Breakfast is on the stove.

    FATHER
    Behind you, babe.

Father reaches for microwave, but Justine opens the oven,
removing a tray and loading one.

    JUSTINE
    (backing butt up)
    Am I in your way?

Father grabs his wife's hips, hurries with the microwave.

    FATHER
    Oh my damn... I have to stay
    focused. I have to go.

    JUSTINE
    (standing up)
    Are you sure? The stove's not the
    only thing warm in here.

LEONA TOWERS (26/Daughter), bolts in.

    LEONA
    (disgusted)
    This is why I'm looking for my own
    place now.

    JUSTINE
    Please take the other three with
    you.

Leona reaches around them and grabs a piece of hot bacon
from the scorching skillet. Hot potato.

    LEONA
    Are those going...
    JUSTINE
    ... to be done by tonight, yes!
    Stop asking!

    LEONA
    Stop getting distracted!

    FATHER
    Stop yelling, please!

Leona pops it in her mouth. Jumping up and down in pain, stomping her feet, Leona clinches her fist.

    JUSTINE
    Sit down and eat, Lenny! You're going to make a mess!

    LEONA
    (mouth open/breathing fire)
    Can't... Multi-tasking... Leaving.
    Love you.

Microwave beeps. Father just barely hands the wrapped sandwich to Leona. She now juggles that.

AMORETTE TOWERS (22/Daughter), rushes in brushing her teeth.

    AMORETTE
    (muffled)
    Lenny, can I ride with you?!

    JUSTINE
    Do that in the bathroom!

    FATHER
    Please stop yelling!
LEONA
You're not even ready! I have to go!

AMORETTE
Just give me a second! Don't make me drive!

LEONA
Aimee, I can't drive you around forever. What are you going to do when I'm old, cold, and dead?

AMORETTE
Join you.

LEONA
No, you're not. Not then, and not now. Suck it up. You're a big girl now.

AMORETTE
I don't want to be a big girl though!

Leona rushes past Amorette, who grunts at her.

JUSTINE
Bathroom, now!

AMORETTE
(annoyed)
Yes, mom.

Behind her, Son and FRANCIS TOWERS (16/Daughter) appear, wearing school appropriate Tarzan and Jane costumes.

Amorette turns and spits toothpaste! Francis dodges. Amorette runs, laughing hysterically/dripping toothpaste.

JUSTINE
Aimee Rose, you are cleaning that up before you leave!
FATHER
Please stop... Wait.
(beat)
What in the world?

Parents finally realize what their children have on.
Francis' joy contrasts Son's anguish. Justine tries to...

SON
(Monotone)
Mom... Don't try to make sense of something that doesn't make sense.

FRANCIS
(Hand to Son's face)
Rude!

Beat.

SON
Don't do that. It's just weird coming from white girls.

FRANCIS
(sarcastic)
Oh, right. Because you're black.
(hugging Son tight)
Cutest thing ever, right mom?!

JUSTINE
(turned to Father)
I'm dreaming all of this. You don't see our children dressed like jungle fever, correct?

FATHER
I don't know those two.

Father kisses Justine, hands both kids sandwiches. Exits.

INT. FAIRFAX HIGH SCHOOL (GYMNASIUM)
James and Francis are in a long line of other elaborately
dressed STUDENTS. Francis scouts competition, James texts.

    FRANCIS
    (holding fist for pound)
    We're going to win, it's not even
    close.

James leaves her hanging.

    FRANCIS
    Booty call?

James scowls, then attempts to push her in the head. Fracis
quickly grabs his hand.

    FRANCIS
    You are out of your damn mind. Mess
    my hair up before this picture and
    I'm kicking your ass, trash! This
    shit took three hours!

Beat.

    JAMES
    (examining)
    Not worth it.

Francis slaps James in the back of the head. He ignores.

    FRANCIS
    Tell Car I said hi.

    JAMES
    I won't be at your game tonight.

    FRANCIS
    Tell your bitch to stop giving it
    up all the time.

    JAMES
    It's her birthday party.
FRANCIS
So, she's definitely giving it up.

JAMES
Ah! Shut up, Frankie! So damn annoying!

Francis busts up, laughing.

SIX GUYS, long-tail white T's, baggy blue jeans, come walking by and stop when they see James and Francis.

TRE'WAYNE ROTHFORD (17), and his boys fall out laughing. James locks in on Tre'Wayne.

TRE'WAYNE
Check this bitch nigga out here!
Looking like the muthafuckin' monkey he is!


FRANCIS
James, I think he likes when you wear this. He went completely out of his way to play hard to get.

TRE'WAYNE
And he needs his white woman to do all of the talking!
(singing/group joins/dancing)
Ebony and Ivory, Live in perfect harmony, Side by side, on my piano keyboard, oh lord, why do we?!

Others in line turn to see them, and start laughing at James (staring through Tre'Wayne) and Francis.

FRANCIS
That's really cute. Y'all are like the broke ass Village People. Just with a bunch of flamin' wannabes
goons.

TRE'WAYNE
Damn, Frankie. Why it gotta be like that? When you gon’ let a nig get that shit? Why you playin' hard to get?!

FRANCIS
I'd rather fuck my brother than give you some pussy.

TRE'WAYNE
How 'bout you let us both hit?!
I'll get it from the back, and he can eat the front!

James bolts. Francis tries to stop him, can't grip his arm.

Fist right to Tre'Wayne's jaw, locks choke-hold. Others pull James off, jumping him. James fights back, staying on his feet for a while, but then falls.

Francis screams hysterically. SECURITY rushes in.

EXT. OASIS CHURCH (PARKING LOT) - NIGHT

Moon bouncers, rock-climbing walls, basketball courts, large projection screens, video games, etc.

TEENAGERS in costumes all around, boys playing, girls socializing. A church band plays on the main stage.

Amorette, dressed as a dead Laker girl, storms out of the church.

Leona, looking like Johnny Depp as Jack Sparrow, comes out crying from laughter along with FOUR GIRLS.

She takes a knee.

LEONA
Sister... Wait!
AMORETTE
Don't talk to me!

Leona rolls on the ground, grabbing her side.

GIRL #1
Lenny... Lenny listen! "God has not
given you a spirit of fear." "Not
true! Not true! He sure as hell
gave me one!"

LEONA
How do you knock over Jesus?! He
was supposed to be leading up out
of there, and your youth leader
shoves him out the way!

Leona pounds her fist on the ground. Standing up...

LEONA
(walking off)
I'm going to try and get her to do
it again... She ruined my make up!

INT. FAIRFAX HIGH SCHOOL (GYMNASIUM)

Justine is in the crowded stands face painted as a lion.

Francis, the shortest player on the TEAM, is the hitter at
the net. Strong serve to Francis' teammate. She gets her
face out of the way, letting the ball die.

FRANCIS
What the hell?!

TEAMMATE
If you think you could have done
better, you should have gone after
it then!

FRANCIS
You didn't do a damn thing! Are you
playing volleyball or looking pretty?! Oh wait... Dumbass question! You're definitely playing!

The girl walks off the court, being substituted. Team huddles. Francis is the most animated.

Behind Justine, Principal ERNEST TILLARD (45), ascends the bleachers, taking the seat next to her. She ignores.

    ERNEST
    Daughter has quite the mouth on her.

    JUSTINE
    (clapping)
    Let's go, Lions! Come on, Frankie!

    ERNEST
    How's your son doing?

Justine takes a swig of water.

    ERNEST
    Mrs. Towers, you know we don't tolerate fighting. He started it.

    JUSTINE
    (exploding)
    It was one on... You know what. Let me enjoy the game.

    ERNEST
    Please do. And make it clear to your son, next time he's out.

Beat.

    JUSTINE
    Game point, Frankie! Lions don't lose!
Huddle breaks. Ernest leaves.

FRANCIS
Talk! Everybody talk!

Francis focuses, gets in stance. No one else does.

Ball is served. A teammate saves but the ball veers out of bounds. Everyone gives up, ball still in air.

Francis bolts, and knocks the ball back over the net, but slams and bounces off the brick wall.

Justine jumps to her feet, races down the steps. Francis, grimacing/dazed, keeps focus on the game, trying to return.

Opposing team spikes the ball and wins the game. They celebrate while Francis' team walks to the bench.

EXT. LOS ANGELES RIVER BASIN

300+: CIVILIAN FEMALEs, VARIOUS CLUB MEMBERS present. LOWRIDERS with hydraulics, HARLEYS, CROTCH ROCKETS, and MUSCLE CARS populate the dry section of the basin.

CARMAN CHRISTIANSEN-BASIL (20/Girlfriend), in the middle of it all eggs the song on with funny hand gestures. Her Dad, TURNER CHRISTIANSEN (49/6’5”) is the most animated.

James (face bruised), lost in the crowd, watches the multitude around him, with a slight smile.

CROWD
... Happy Birthday, Dear Carman X,
Happy Birthday to you!

Engines ROAR, tires SCREAM, rubber burns. Smoke clouds grow thick and tall. In Da Club booms over the speakers.

Pounding sound in the distance. HELICOPTER overhead shines spotlight on party. Middle fingers and "BOO's" go up.

TURNER
(to Carman)
Don't trip. Two hour warning.
That's why you get permits.

Turner hugs Carman, lifting her like a baby. Kissing her, he sets her down, puts arm around her. Carman searches around.

PIERRE DEWITT (53), with a bottle of beer in hand, gestures for the crowd to quiet down.

    TURNER
    (shouting)
    Ah shit, y'all! Here we go! Listen the fuck up, 'fore he starts trippin'!

    PIERRE
    Yeah, goddammit! I got something to say!

Beat. Silence.

    TURNER
    For y'all that don't know, this is my Sergeant and Carman's Uncle PeePee.

    PIERRE
    And the only muhfucka that can call me that is that young lady right fuckin' there!
    (to Turner)
    This is actually her father's turn to say something, but with your permission, I'd like to have the honor.

    TURNER
    S'all you.

Pierre takes a drink. Carman looks over her shoulder again. James continues to survey everyone around him.
PIERRE
Everybody better listen, 'cause I'm
only gonna say this shit once...
(beat)
... And that's all I have to say
'bout that.

Turner spits out what he's drinking, Carman shakes her head, and others crack up.

PIERRE
Hold on, hold on! I ain't done,
dammit!
(crowd regains composure)
Now, if I was 30 years younger and
a hundred pounds lighter, I'd be
all over you. You're a beautiful
young woman, and I love you like
you my own daughter.

Turner attempts to comment, Carman punches his stomach.

PIERRE
I'm so proud of you, this family is
proud of you. Every last one of us,
we're family... You ain't got to be
blood to be family. Some of us
ain't got that kind. Me being a
foster, going to Vietnam, being
taken prisoner and shit, having
muthafuckas throw bags of shit on
you when ya' ass gets back; I
didn't have no damn family until I
got wit' y'all. Saved my fuckin'
life.

CARMAN
I love you, Uncle PeePee.

PIERRE
I love you too. I know I'm
rambling. I'm liquored up, give me
a goddamn break.
Another round of laughter. James does not.

PIERRE
Makin' a long story long, if you
got a drink, raise it up.
(beat/glasses up)
Happy Birthday, and many more...
than hunchback whore.

Pierre knocks the bottle back.

Confused, others wait, and then realize the cue to drink.
Turner puts down his bottle and shakes his head.

TURNER
Let's get back to partyin'! Cut
that music up!

Carman runs and gives Pierre a hug, then combs through the
crowd. James checks his phone, no calls, then puts it back.

He looks up just in time to catch Carman, running at full
speed. Big kiss. GENERATION X CLUB MEMBER sees.

CLUB MEMBER #1
That shit's illegal!

All Carman has for her is a middle finger, still kissing.

CARMAN
You have somewhere else to be?

JAMES
Home. But Frankie'll call me before
they get there.

CARMAN
You'll make it?

JAMES
(sarcastically)
On my bike?

CARMAN
Which my father gave you. Which you have no license for.

JAMES
Stop worrying.

Carman gently touches the bruised areas.

JAMES
(grabbing her hand)
Stop worrying.

Crank That (Soulja Boy) explodes over the speakers. Carman's eyes grow wide. She tugs on him, he resists.

JAMES
Car, I don't dance!

CARMAN
You do horizontally, don't you?!
(beat)
Let's go!

INT. F-150

Riding passenger, James holds the phone to his ear, monitoring the surroundings. Hand on sidearm.

Driving, CALLUM STURGILL (41), rides the brakes with children running in the streets, wearing costumes.

JUSTINE (V.O.)
... No, she's being a little stinker butt 'cause they lost. But, we're leaving now. They said she has a concussion. Other than that, she's...
(conversation in background)
Okay, Stinker Butt says, "Hi, Julio. I heart you".
JAMES
(continuously surveying)
Well, I said the same.

Countless locals/Crips line the sidewalks, alcoholic drinks, cigarettes, phones, etc. in hand. Dogs bark hysterically.

CALLUM
(radio transmission)
Boys, they know the British are coming. We got a lot of vehicles on the street, monitor activity. Watch children as decoys.

Old school R&B rattles through the speakers of parked cars. Bicyclist rides on their side, looks in window.

James unholsters, places gun against door panel.

JUSTINE (V.O.)
You owe me.

JAMES
I know, I'm so sorry she's being the problem child.

Callum contains his laughter. Eyes downrange on Crips.

JAMES
The Golden Girls home?

JUSTINE (V.O.)
They should at least be on their way. James isn't picking up.

Passing a cross-street, headlights appear behind and follow.

JAMES
Oh lord... Call again. It's going to be a late one for me, so when they get in, just lock up.
JUSTINE (V.O.)
Be extra cautious. It's October Fool's Day. Hell's gift to law enforcement.
Callum pulls over, the car passes slowly. Both look at the occupants. Can't see. Beat.

JAMES

JUSTINE (V.O.)
Lima Yankee Tango.

Hang up. A lot of eyes on them. James goes to exit.

CALLUM
LT, there's at least seven with outstanding warrants for violent offenses. We need to carry heavy.

JAMES
(sarcastically)
A bigger bag?

Callum's not amused, reaches in the rear seat area.

JAMES
(grabbing his arm)
Way to a man's heart is through his stomach, right? Soft... Let's not be rude.

Callum frees himself, jumps out, slams the door.

EXT. IMPERIAL COURTS HOUSING PROJECTS

Blue country. James exits, heads for bed of truck. Meets Callum there. He reaches in, locals perk up.

Callum keeps eyes open. Removing a large clear plastic bag of CANDY, James starts down the sidewalk. Callum trails.

Mad dash! Children and teenagers surround James, hands out.
James, the Halloween Santa Claus, meets the demand/watching hands. Callum eyes the locals, still spying on the two.

Still moving forward, James drags the crowd with him to the main building. Beat. Dismay arrives, candy's gone.

Some hi-fives exchanged, and James pats some on the head. Immediate area clears, James and Callum regroup.

JAMES
Ready, brother?

Callum nods "hell yeah".

EXT. COURTYARD

Crips wait for them, spread around first and second floor.

Shots fired, distant. As they enter the middle, they close in around them. Callum gets antsy, scanning.

Right side, second floor, an apartment door opens.

JAMES
(shouting)
Nobody asked for the grand entrance.

OTIS FAIRBANKS (63), walking with a cane, makes his way down, at a snail's pace. Pushing on his ELECTROLARYNX...

OTIS
Nigga, I'm from the old school!

JAMES
I was there, remember. I know.

Finally on the first floor, the crowd separates to allow Otis through. Shaking hands with James...

OTIS
How'd you lose all that weight
already, old man?

JAMES
That new diet called teenage son. I need some of that melanin though. Black don't crack. I'm getting old, Big O.

OTIS
No, then you'll have another set of problems... Cops.

The two laugh. Callum and the other Crips are on edge.

OTIS
What's your business here?

JAMES
Looking for Flats. He around?

OTIS
... No, haven't seen him in a while.

CALLUM
Son's here.

OTIS
Damn shame. Another nigga ain't taking care of his responsibilities.

CALLUM
I hope everyone here is clean. I'd hate to start running names.

Beat. Otis looks Callum up and down.

OTIS
Why this muhfucka always come here tight in his ass? Like he run shit? This ain't the station, you can't hide behind your badge in the pit,
peckerwood.

CALLUM
(pulling cuffs)
You're going to be the first name
in the computer.

Those around move in. James grabs Callum's arm.

OTIS
If any of y'all are stupid enough
to bite on his shit, I'm taking you
to jail my damn self.

Crips calm down. James lets go.

OTIS
You better let bitch ass John Wayne
know he ain't the only gun in the
west now.

JAMES
How's Suge doing?

Beat.

OTIS
... She wants to go, man. She has
to smoke every day for the pain,
now she's back in the hospital.

JAMES
You want me to go see her?

OTIS
No, she wouldn't want you to. Not
like this.

Beat.

JAMES
I appreciate you standing down,
letting us take care of that. She
wouldn't want to hear that you're back in. Would mess her all up.

Otis acknowledges.

JAMES
So let me ask you again. Where's Flats?

OTIS
I told you.

JAMES
Only way you stay out is if you're more valuable here. I need this one.

OTIS
I know he got caught up with those Mexicans and he went to y'all. Ain't got shit to do with us. Wherever he is now, he knows that now. I ain't see or heard from him.

JAMES
You mind if we look around his place?

OTIS
21.

JAMES
(pats shoulder)
You guys good tonight? I see you're set up.

OTIS
Ain't nobody gonna fuck with us. Just leash your bitch.

James heads towards the stairs. Callum stares at Otis as he walks by. Catching up to James...

CALLUM
(under breath)
You let these plotting
motherfuckers disrespect you every
time.

JAMES
They don't have to respect me...
But we have to respect them.

EXT. LOS ANGELES RIVER BASIN

Generation X Halloween/Birthday party still going strong.
Sitting high on the incline is Carman, in between James'
legs. Perfect view of downtown.

JAMES
Will you marry me?

CARMAN
(sarcastically)
Did you ask my father first?

JAMES
I can. I should have already done
that.

Beat. Carman's face changes, she turns around.

CARMAN
Wait. You're serious?
   (James acknowledges "yes")
You're serious!

JAMES
I don't have a ring or money for
one. I'll figure something out
though.

CARMAN
We can't, J.

JAMES
Of course not now. When I turn 18.
Beat.

CARMAN
You are crazy.

JAMES
I want to have a family with you.

CARMAN
... Really?

JAMES
Do you love me?

Carman is unable to respond. James' phone rings. He ignores, focused on Carman.

JAMES
Oh shit!

CARMAN
What?

James finally retrieves the phone quickly. The screen reads, "Home". James is stuck.

CARMAN
Is that Frankie?

JAMES
... She forgot.

Spotlight from overhead again. Sirens in the distance. Red and blue lights rushing in from up the river.

CARMAN
(checking watch)
What are they doing?!?

All in attendance freeze, momentarily. Beat.

JAMES
I can't let them...
CARMAN
Yeah! Go!

James kisses Carman and books, sprinting/skidding down the incline. He races for the flock of parked motorcycles, jumping on a 2005 Kawasaki ZX10R.

Helmet on, and he screams out of there.

Looking back, the chopper pulls off and pursues him along with three MARKED UNITS. Spotlight tracks him.

MARKED UNIT #1
(loud speaker)
Reduce your speed immediately!
Safely pull over to the right!

Throttle back, gear up. James begins pulling away. The units are the first to drop back.

Helicopter hangs with him, but James keeps climbing the speedo. He exits the circle of light, and the chopper pulls off as well.

James keeps the hammer down, losing them.

Seeing the irrigation tunnel, he slows and enters, heading towards the street. Slams brakes seeing red and blue lights at the street exit.

Turning the bike around, James guns it back around.

FLASH! Blinding light. The helicopter shines the spotlight in the tunnel. James shields his eyes, lays the bike down, rolling on the ground.

Units from both ends rush in. James spreads out.

EXT. COURTYARD

Approaching 21...

JAMES
You smell smoke?

Callum feels the window-pane.

CALLUM
No fucking way.

Callum starts working on the security door, James looks back and sees BLUE casually leaving the area.

Prying the security door open, both work to kick in the door. Callum aims to shoot the lock off, but James stops him. James picks it.

INT. APARTMENT

They enter into a CLOUD of SMOKE. Flashlights and weapons. Clearing, James goes right, Callum let.

Forcing the bedroom door open, James finds nothing.

INT. BATHROOM

Entering, LUKE WELBEN (19), hangs naked from the VENT, beaten bloody.

James steps up on the counter, grabs Luke under his arms, and starts on the rope with a knife.

Callum rushes in, immediately helps. James severs the rope and they ease Luke onto the ground.

James listens for breathing, shakes his head "no".

CALLUM
Gas was running, and they soaked the living room.

JAMES
We have to do CPR.

CALLUM
Your turn. You owe me.

CALLUM
(Grabbing James)
LT, it's too much smoke. You barely have air to give him.

JAMES
I can't take him outside.


Callum drags him to the toilet, which has WASTE in it. It splashes, hitting Callum's hand. He cringes.

James heads for the sink, rinsing his mouth out. Callum laughs hysterically.

CALLUM
Shit's hot, ain't it.

EXT. COURTYARD

With a POLICE ESCORT, a STRETCHER with a WHITE SHEET over a BODY is wheeled out.


OTIS
Only in America.

JAMES
Sorry to ruin the holiday.

OTIS
We've seen worse. Guess he knew if he didn't, we would.
JAMES
Yeah... We're going to take his son. Social will handle him. You guys need to be careful. That smoke is going to spread through the vents.

OTIS
I'll call you, let you know how Suge is.

JAMES
You need anything, let me know.

The two shake hands. Callum and Luke's son get in the F-150, James in the CORONER'S VAN.

INT. VAN

The doors close behind James. As soon as they pull off, James removes the sheet.

JAMES
There's your act of good faith. Your son is safe, I'll have Social get in touch with your sister, no one will know he's up north. Now, I need the name.

LUKE
(crying)
I don't want to go to jail, man! Brown's going to find out and kill me!

JAMES
Flats, you can do twelve or twenty-five.

LUKE
You should have just left me there, motherfucker! I was already dead!
Beat. James turns to the DRIVER.

    JAMES
    Hey, head back.

    DRIVER
    You got it, LT.

The Van stops in the middle of the street and does a U-Turn.

    LUKE
    What the hell are you doing?

    CALLUM (O.S.)
    (radio transmission)
    What's going on?

    JAMES
    (radio transmission)
    Guy's not actually dead. We're going to take him back.

    CALLUM (O.S.)
    (radio transmission)
    Makes sense.

    LUKE
    Stop! You can't do this!

    JAMES
    (radio transmission)
    Is the ambulance still there?

    CALLUM (O.S.)
    (radio transmission)
    Checking.

    JAMES
    Let me tell you something before we get there. I was your age when I was drafted. Southeast Asia. Vietnam... Life will be unfair. But
if you give up, you'll never know what it was all for. Don't take all of this hell for nothing.

Beat.

DRIVER
We're here, LT. Ambulance hasn't left.

Beat.

LUKE
... I don't have shit to look forward to.

James is still. He then stands, and opens the back door.

INT. THE TOWERS FAMILY HOME (LIVING ROOM)

Justine walks the officers to the door. Afterward, she steams. James is unable to move. Leona and Amorette watch from the hallway.


His eyes grow red.

INT. F-150

Downtown L.A. Parked with a view of the PARAISO HOTEL, James peers through BINOCULARS. REPORTERS crowd the front steps.

ICE AGENTS escort FIVE PEOPLE out of the hotel.

JAMES
... Humberto Juan Reyes... Isabella Guillermos... Looks like Herlinda Ramos... Victor Valdez... And Luz Parada...
CALLUM
Five for five. Here he comes.

In HANDCUFFS is JESUS DE LA GARZA (68).

As he leaves, Chief of Police RICHARD BARKER (65), appears, congratulating the agents on scene and slowly but surely making his way to the press.

CALLUM
Is Rico wearing make up?

JAMES
They got it from here. We have to get something to stick before he posts bail.

CALLUM
It's still a win, LT. Come celebrate with us one time. We're not looking at any vacation anytime soon.

JAMES
You can. I'm going home. I've got an early morning too, so have one for me.

CALLUM
Tell those five blessed mistakes I said hi.

JAMES
Don't expect me to save you from Justine.

The truck pulls away from the curb.

INT. JACK’S N JOE RESTAURANT: NOVEMBER 1, 2007 - DAY

At a table in the corner, James is by himself, with a cup of COFFEE and NEWSPAPER. Headline: "Five Star Resort For Some, Human-Trafficking Hub For Others". 
A hand suddenly knocks the paper out of his hands.

    UNKNOWN
    Did I get you?

James does not react, and slowly looks up to see DARLA REDDING, 42 years old.

    DARLA
    Damn! You must have seen me sneak in.

    JAMES
    I have angels encamped around and about me... And yes, you're not the hardest person to notice.

James stands and gives her a huge hug. She squeezes James as hard as she can, and afterward, they take a seat.

    JAMES
    You hungry? I ordered that veggie-omelette thing all you celebrities like to eat.

    DARLA
    Oh yes, honey. Slim is always in. Those cameras are unforgiving. Plus, I can't have you looking at other women.

    JAMES
    (noticing her sunglasses) Justine appreciates that... Is it too bright for you?

James sips his coffee. Darla remains silent.

    JAMES
    What's his name?

    DARLA
So you can send Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John after him?

JAMES
So I can alert the proper authorities.

DARLA
Hal O. Ween. He does this every year.

JAMES
Not if you left him.

DARLA
Well when you marry me, I'll do everything you want me to.

JAMES
Most people come to a church to get married.

Darla rolls her eyes. A WAITER approaches and sets a PLATE of food before Darla. She immediately grabs her fork.

JAMES
Thank you?

DARLA
... Thank you.

As Darla begins eating...

JAMES
Justine keeps asking me when, Sweets. The whole family wants to see you.

Darla does not respond.

JAMES
And you know Aimee's birthday is coming up. Not this Friday, not
next Friday, but the one after that. She'll be twenty-three.

DARLA
No way? That's the baby?

JAMES
The one in the middle.

DARLA
Oh yeah... I was a middle child. Don't let her end up like me. Make sure to pay special attention to her. We need it.

JAMES
I will. I promise.

DARLA
What are you doing for her?

JAMES
Laker game.

DARLA
Holy shit!
   (people turn/James glares)
Sorry... Can I come? I've never been.

JAMES
All sold out, Sweets. But, that Thursday, after church, we're going to the observatory.

DARLA
You would make a great car salesmen.

James continues to stare at her. Beat.

DARLA
I'll think about it... We're done
talking about me. What's going on?
What are you up to, besides the
usual?

James stutters.

DARLA
You sound like a car that needs a
new battery.

JAMES
Ouch... My job wants to recognize
me for doing "excellent work",
which is what I'm supposed to be
doing.

DARLA
Hey, that's a good thing. We all
need to hear that we're doing a
good job from time to time... Trust
me. I hear it a lot. It feels good.

JAMES
(shaking his head)
Good to know. I'm not going though.
It's not my kind of thing... And
it's in D.C.

DARLA
Oh yes you are... If you want me at
that church, you better go. That's
the deal.

As James laughs...

DARLA
I'm not playing. I'll ask Justine.

Quieting down, off James' contemplation/hesitation...

INT. THE TOWERS FAMILY HOME (BEDROOM): NOVEMBER 6, 2007 -
DAY
Father packs toiletries into plastic bags, throwing them into the travel bag. Resistance on his face.

Justine's voice nears.

JUSTINE
(on the phone)
... Yes, I will make sure pictures for you. He will probably have a stink face on, but he will look very handsome... Oh, okay... Well, on that note, I will let you go then... Okay, love you too.

FATHER
All set?

JUSTINE
He says he doesn't want to go.

FATHER
... I don't want to go.

JUSTINE
He's in the garage.

EXT. GARAGE

Entering, Father sees Son's legs extending from under the shell of a 1970 Pontiac Trans Am. A wrench turns.

When Father draws near, the wrench stops. Beat.

FATHER
Wow, she's really coming along. Even if I knew what to do, I couldn't help you.

SON
... She's being stubborn.

FATHER
What's wrong?
SON
(sighing)
So much is missing... I'm not going
to be able to find all stock parts.

FATHER
Just 'cause it's not a Firebird
motor or tranny doesn't mean it's
not a Firebird... And by the way
that thing used to run, that may be
a good thing.

Beat.

FATHER
She'll be here when we get back.
(Son tries)
It's not an option... Whatever
you're going through, it's not an
excuse. And if you need someone to
talk to, you find someone in this
house.

Beat. Son exits from under the vehicle, starts inside.

FATHER
Hey...

Son comes back.

FATHER
(hugs Son)
Love you, son.

Beat.

SON
... Yeah. Love you.

INT. HOTEL BANQUET ROOM: NOVEMBER 7, 2007 - NIGHT

Suits/ties/formal dresses. Low-lit event room with tables
spread out moderately.
Father and Son sit together towards the rear of the room.

Son aims at a camera phone under his arm, and snaps a picture. Father jumps out of trance to see Son sending it.

Both (irritated/out of place) begin laughing without making noise. Son rests his head in hands.

On stage is Barker.

RICHARD
... As I'm sure the fellow recipients can attest, it takes dedicated individuals to carry out the policies we're being recognized for. And I would like to recognize and call up an outstanding 28 year member of the Los Angeles Police Department, Lieutenant II James Towers.

Applause. Son pats Father on the back.

SON
Go, Dad. Go.
(under breath)
Hurry!

Father rolls his eyes, unknown to the rest of the crowd.

Up on stage, Richard shakes his hand, and steps back. Beat.

Just before Father takes the podium, Richard puts his arm around him, and...

RICHARD
Just in case you all were wondering, that handsome young man sitting next to him is his adopted son, James... Yeah, confusing.

Richard takes a step back. Father turns, stares at Richard.
Beat. Father can see Son's discomfort. Some in audience turn, staring at James. Small pockets of whispers.

FATHER
Thank you... for that kind introduction, Chief Barker. I'm very humbled.
(seeing Son)
Can I have everyone's attention up here, please? My son is shy like his father.

Some awkward looks. Beat.

FATHER
I have a friend, beautiful woman...
She said we need to hear that we're doing a good job. It's healthy. And I can say that our department is doing a good job... I want to say that we're doing a great job though.

Behind him, Richard beams through James, keeps his facial expression composed. Crowd holds for the rest.

FATHER
Racial-profiling, police brutality... the fact that we have at-risk communities is unacceptable. We need to do a better job of protecting and serving those areas. I'm not a soap-box guy, but I'm honest. And I'll accept this praise when it is deserved. Thank you.
(exits stage)

MOMENTS LATER

Father and Son are hostage to a crowd of eager interviewers.

WOMAN #1
(shaking Son's hand)
... Very nice to meet you again,
James Jr.

MAN #1
(hand on Father's shoulder)
... Community facilities,
after-school programs, and people
dedicated to uplifting those areas.

SON
It's James, ma'am... Just James.

FATHER
Those are all valid ideas that need
practical application. But, I
really need to go. I promised my
son we were leaving.

Both finish their conversations and break free.

RICHARD
(as they near the exit)
Towers!

Father turns around, same annoyed expression as Son. Father
approaches Barker.

RICHARD
Nice speech. To make sure we're
making improvements, your case load
just increased.

Walking up is May of Los Angeles CHAD HOPKINS (44).

CHAD
It's not often that I'm caught off
guard by the people I meet.

Both Father and Barker turn.

CHAD
(sensing something's off)
Did I interrupt something?

Beat.

RICHARD
Mr. Mayor, James Towers. Towers, Mayor Hopkins.

They shake.

CHAD
(to Barker)
May I have a minute?

Beat. Barker gives him the floor, stares at James as he turns and leaves, walking past Son. Son watches Father.

FATHER
I'm about to leave, myself.

CHAD
I know, it won't take long.

FATHER
It?

CHAD
... That was quite the message you delivered.

FATHER
(rushed)
So I see.

CHAD
Our city needs individuals with that level of tenacity in power.

Father, silent, reading Hopkins. Mayor realizes, smirks.

CHAD
Barker will be retiring in 2009...
I want to work with the next Chief
of Police on the very issues you are passionate about.

FATHER
You should bring that up with our Search and Screen Committee.

CHAD
I will, endorsing you.

Beat.

FATHER
I'm not a talking head, public figure sort of guy, Mr. Mayor.

CHAD
Exactly... I pride myself on being an eerily fine judge of character. My background is in psychology, occupational health... I believe you see your son every time you respond to our lower-income areas, that you subconsciously are trying to save him in those you come into contact with. If that's not the make-up of a leader, I am at a loss for what is exactly.

FATHER
Do me a favor, Mr. Mayor.
(beat)
Don't ever read me again. Have a good night.

Father breaks away.

INT. THE TOWERS FAMILY HOME (KITCHEN): NOVEMBER 16, 2007 - DAY

Lenny, Son, and Frankie are side by side. Hands behind their back. Justine quickly puts little BOXES in their hand.
Father and Amorette head for the kitchen.

AMORETTE (O.S.)
(bumping into furniture)
Dad!

FATHER (O.S.)
Slow down, ditz.

Entering the kitchen, Father removes the blindfold.

FATHER
Alright, my newly 23 year old daughter, your brother and sisters all have a gift for you. You have to choose from one of them. Choose carefully, because the two you don't choose will be so heartbroken, they won't want to give you their gifts.

AMORETTE
Mom doesn't have a gift for me?

FATHER
No, she doesn't love you anymore.

AMORETTE
Oh wow. Okay.

FRANCIS
So dramatic, Julio.

FATHER
Don't interrupt, problem child.

FRANCIS
Was I just suspended?

JUSTINE
Shut up, Frankie.

FRANCIS
Just sayin'.

Beat.

FATHER
Time to choose who you think loves you most... Hurry though, I have to leave right after.

Amorette searches through the blank faces. Hesitation.

FATHER
5, 4, 3...

LEONA
Thank you. Let's go.

Justine stands behind James, staring at Amorette.

FATHER
2... Jus!

AMORETTE
(smiling sarcastically)
James, my best brother ever!

She hugs Son, laying it on. Justine avoids eye contact.

AMORETTE
What did you get me for my birthday, handsome young man?

Son hands her the box. She shakes it, something rattles.

LEONA
Just open it!

AMORETTE
Excuse me, this is my birthday!

FATHER
I told you the others would be mad.
Amorette removes the top, SCREAMS loud as humanly possible.

    AMORETTE
    (turning to Father)
    You got me Laker tickets!

Amorette jumps on Father, who stumbles back, catching her.

    JUSTINE
    Sweetheart, please don't kill your
    father. You won't be able to see
    Kobe if you're at a funeral.

    AMORETTE
    Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Francis opens her box.

    FRANCIS
    Apparently, I don't love her at
    all. It's a box of staples.

    LEONA
    I got her a pump needle.

    JUSTINE
    Still has something to do with the
    Lakers.

    FATHER
    (setting Amorette down)
    Okay, we all need to be back here
    by 6.

    AMORETTE
    Yes! Don't be late!

    FATHER
    If you're not here, you'll see
    pictures when we get back.

    LEONA
    Hallelujah, I'm leaving.
James hurries and says goodbye to everyone, while...

AMORETTE
Lenny, can I ride with you today?
I'll be so distracted if I drive.

LEONA
If I hear one more excuse as to why
you can't drive on a certain day...

AMORETTE
Today's legit though.

LEONA
Check my rhyme skills. Roses are
red, violets are blue, if I can
drive, so can you.

FRANCIS
(in Amorette's face/ghetto)
Oh no, she didn't!

Leona leaves. Amorette brushes past Francis. Son rolls eyes.

FATHER
Everyone out, now.

EXT. FAIRFAX HIGH SCHOOL (BASEBALL FIELD)

James, alone, power walks towards the gate. On the other
side of the fence, Carman waits in front of her truck.

INT. STUDIO CITY TATTOO AND BODY PIERCING

Tensed up in the chair, James breathes slowly, looking at
Carman (left ring finger bandaged), who holds his free hand.

The female TATTOO ARTIST, focusing on James' left ring
finger, sits up and examines her work.

TATTOO ARTIST
(wiping away blood)
I now pronounce you man and wife.

Slight smiles from the couple. James looks at his finger, then shows Carman the tattooed ring with "C".

Tattoo Artist applies bandage.

**TATTOO ARTIST**
Off to the honeymoon?

**JAMES**
I actually want one more... The patch on my shoulder.

**TATTOO ARTIST**
Yeah? Alright, give me a sec.

Tattoo Artist finishes, and steps away.

**CARMAN**
Babe, you're not a member.

**JAMES**
Not yet. When I turn 18 though.

**CARMAN**
Club officers take that personally. I'm not even branded yet. You have to earn that after you spect.

**JAMES**
I just want to be apart of that family.

Beat.

**CARMAN**
And what about your family?

Beat. Tattoo Artist returns.

**TATTOO ARTIST**
We all set?
INT. PONTIAC GTO

With Callum sitting behind the empty front passenger seat, James drives, scanning surrounding areas. Callum texts.
Time check: 17:45:00

He keeps driving around the Boyle Heights neighborhood. Callum throws phone in door pocket.

JAMES
Call him again. We're going to start attracting eyes.

CALLUM
Straight to voicemail.

Beat.

JAMES
He's setting us up.

Blondie's Call Me blares from James' cell. He ignores. Suspects watch from their front yards.

CALLUM
You gotta go, then go. Just became a long night for me anyway.

JAMES
Yeah, I see you back there... What's her name?

CALLUM
Needy, crazy, and lazy. Don't worry, they don't know each other.

JAMES
Good. I hate responding to domestics.
(tapping the steering wheel)

JAMES
To answer your first question,
no... He's expecting two. Can't bug him out.

CALLUM
Good. This is your fault anyway.

Beat. Stop sign. Locals look through the windows.

CALLUM
So, besides sticking us all with overtime, how'd D.C. go?

JAMES
Interesting... They made a run at me for Chief.

CALLUM
Yeah? Take it, old man. That's where all that "Can't we all just get along" bullshit belongs.

James looks at Callum through the rearview mirror.

CALLUM
Streets are changin'. That's what I'm sayin'. These young muthafuckas are savage, don't give a shit.

JAMES
I'm right where I need to be.

CALLUM
How long you gon' stay out here, old man. You're barely passin' the physical abilities test.

JAMES
I still got it. I'm not dead yet.

CALLUM
We're just waiting for Justine to pull the life support.
James cracks up. Call Me! James ignores again.

CALLUM
Why are you avoiding Justine?
JAMES
What, you have me under surveillance too?

CALLUM
It's always the people closest to you that you can't trust.

JAMES
(phone rings)
It's not Justine.

James shows Callum the phone.

JAMES
She was supposed to come to church last night. Just calling to give me her excuse.

CALLUM
So you could say that she's sweating like a hooker that should have been in church... Wheeler, 2.

James pulls to the curb. ANDREW WHEELER (28) approaches. Phones silenced. Callum opens the front passenger door.

Wheeler closes the door behind him, James pulls off.

JAMES
I hope you don't mind my cousin Randy sitting behind you. You don't exactly inspire trust. I'm Curtis...
(extends hand)

ANDREW
Goodwin. Ex-Marine... I was running your plate for extracurricular...
activity.

JAMES
Retired Marine.

CALLUM
You just couldn't get in the car and ask? We got other places to be.

ANDREW
I'm here now. Whatcha' need?

JAMES
Looking for protection. We're up in Leona Valley, unincorporated area, lots of open space.

CALLUM
You got a problem out there, you better handle it yourself. Sheriffs ain't coming, not that we'd call them anyway.

ANDREW
You looking for government issue?

JAMES
Sounds good. I'm familiar with AR-15s. You got scopes?

ANDREW
I can get scopes.

CALLUM
What about weapons of the exploding nature?

ANDREW
Anything you need.

A PATROL UNIT turns and follows.

JAMES
You sure you aren't wearing a wire?
ANDREW
(looking in sideview)
Just keep going. They smell fear.
Beat. All are cautious.

CALLUM
What can you get for 15K?

ANDREW
Off the top of my head... How about
10 ARs, and five cases of hand
grenades?

Sirens on. James pulls over to the right. Beat.

JAMES
Nothing's on you, right?

ANDREW
I'm clean.

Two OFFICERS exit, shine flashlights in vehicle. James looks
at Callum through the rearview.

JAMES
What's going on, officer?

OFFICER #1
We got a call about a suspicious
vehicle in the area. Any reason you
keep driving around?

JAMES
This is my nephew, Andrew. He lives
out here and we're trying to move
in the area. So we were just
looking at available places.

OFFICER #1
It's 6 o'clock.

JAMES
We just got off of work not too long ago.

OFFICER #1
License and registration please.

James ruffles around carefully, handing Officer the items.

OFFICER #1
Dispatch, warrant check for California driver's license India, 2,0,4,9,7,3,1.

Beat. DISPATCH answers.

DISPATCH (V.O.)
(radio transmission)
License comes back to a Curtis Goodwin. No outstanding warrants at this time.

OFFICER #1
10-4.
(to James)
You all mind not driving through here slow at this hour. This isn't the best hour for home browsing.

JAMES
I apologize, sir. We'll be getting out of here.

Officer hands the items back. James pulls away.

MOMENTS LATER

Wheeler closes the door and heads back inside. James pulls away. Callum gets on the radio while James checks his phone.

CALLUM
Romeo 8, thank you for that assist. We're all good.
OFFICER #1 (V.O.)
(radio transmission)
Don't mention it. I'm a natural actor. 10-4.
James puts the phone to his ear. 18:25:00 Beat.

JAMES
Hey Jus... I'm heading home now...
Wait. Have you tried calling her...
Justine, I need you to speak cleanly, I can't... Okay, I'm coming home now!

CALLUM
What was that?

James hangs up.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA (LECTURE HALL) - NIGHT

At the podium is ALVIN TOWNSEND (45). STUDENTS are near the front, spread out.

ALVIN
... Think of a child's brain similar to our universe.
Ever-expanding, various unknown objects and anomalies... And as their teacher, you are the astronomer making sense of the mysterious knowledge which is already present within them.

The door on the side of the stage snaps open. James rushes in, scanning every individual on his way to Townsend.

ALVIN
Excuse me, sir. Can I...

Back turned to the students, James pulls his badge.

INT. HALLWAY
James stares through the lecturer. Rapid fire interview.

LECTURER
That was around 3:15, my appointment with her, sir.

JAMES
Did you notice which way she was heading, did she say where she was going?

LECTURER
I don't recall.

JAMES
How was she when she left? Did anything seem different to you? Anything that you can remember?

LECTURER
She seemed fine, excited that it's her birthday, but... I have a class to teach.

Beat. James grunts.

JAMES
Take this number down in case anything changes.

LECTURER
(patting himself down)
I don't have anything to write it down with.

JAMES
(stern)
Then remember it!

INT. CHEVROLET TAHOE

Aggressive driving. James patrols the area surrounding USC.
Monitors people and passing cars.

Call Me! James dismisses Sweets' call, dialing Amorette's number. Immediate voice mail. Dials again. Sergeant RANDALL HERTZ (39) answers.

JAMES
It's me again.

RANDALL (V.O.)
That number still isn't transmitting. What about an APB?

JAMES
There's no justification for it now.

RANDALL (V.O.)
Who's looking?

JAMES
Just let me know if that phone turns on.

RANDALL (V.O.)
Will do. Good luck.


He catches BELLA PITA restaurant just as he passes it, turns around, and parks.

INT. BELLA PITA MEDITERRANEAN

James is greeted by the HOSTESS.

HOSTESS
Welcome to...

Badge out. James scans the faces in the restaurant.

JAMES
Have you served anyone by the name of Aimee Towers, or Amorette?

HOSTESS
Oh Aimee? Like brownish hair, not that tall...

JAMES
Yes, ma'am. She comes in here often.

HOSTESS
She does. I haven't seen her today though. She's usually here on Tuesdays and Thursdays around...

JAMES
... 3:45.

HOSTESS
Yeah... What's this about?

JAMES
Can you take down this number, just in case you see or hear from her?

HOSTESS
... Sure.

EXT. PARKING LOT


DARLA
James!

Sigh of relief... sort of.

JAMES
(stern)
Not now, Sweets.
DARLA
I've been calling you all day, asshole!

JAMES
(opening car door)
Don't worry about church, Sweets. I'll tell you about it later.

DARLA
(pushing door closed)
Answer your phone stupid shit, I was calling about your daughter.

James freezes. Beat.

DARLA
Yes, muthafucka. Around 4 o'clock, she was at the gas station. I saw her from across the street and was heading over to say happy birthday. When I got there, she was gone. She didn't fill up or nothin'. The pump still had her money on it.

JAMES
... Take me there now. Get in.

Beat.

DARLA
... I can't. I'm working tonight. It's the one on Figueroa... I'm sorry.

James beams. His phone RINGS, James checks.

INT. SOUTHWEST COMMUNITY POLICE STATION

On a small monitor are multiple angles from the Chevron surveillance feed.

Amorette exits her Yellow VW Beattle, heads into the
mini-mart. A GRAY-HOODED SUSPECT approaches the vehicle, opens the trunk, gets in unnoticed.

James' eyes turn red. Amorette emerges and is met by another HOODED FIGURE. Words exchange, she walks with the individual to the driver-side, looks around.

The suspect shoves her into the car, gets in, and speeds off. James looks away, blinking away tears.

Sweets is then seen walking around the pumps. Detective NICK FARRIS pauses the video.

    NICK
    I'll put out a description of the car.

    JAMES
    (trembling)
    Six hours later... License plate is 5, Hotel, Papa, Quebec, 9, 1, 1.

    Beat.

    NICK
    Is there anyone who would want to hurt you or your family?

    JAMES
    Obviously at least two.

    NICK
    ... The sooner we...

    JAMES
    Brims, 20's, 40's, Harpy's... Start with the surrounding area and then fan out. Anyone with warrants.

    NICK
    Any in particular have it out for you?
JAMES
... All of them.

INT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS (BARKER'S OFFICE)
James, across the desk from Barker, signs paperwork.

RICHARD
You know this is just an official precaution for prosecution. Off the record, you call me if you need anything.

James finishes, slides the paperwork back. Pulling his sidearm, James unloads the magazine and chamber, placing the weapon on the desk.

RICHARD
Thank you.

JAMES
(hollow)
Can I go?

Barker surveys James. Beat.

He stands, comes around the desk.

RICHARD
The same care you gave my grandson's case, I'm going to give to your daughter's. I promise.

Barker extends his hand. James cannot shake it. Beat.

RICHARD
... Go ahead.

EXT. THE TOWERS FAMILY HOME (PORCH)

Approaching the door, James attempts to unlock it, but cannot. It all catches up with him. He breaks down.

The locks are undone, the door flies open. Justine is there,
with Leona, Son, and Francis behind her, staring in worry.

JUSTINE
(frantic)
What happened? Is she in the car?

The kids all inch up, looking behind their father.

FATHER
(regaining composure)
... I need everyone in the kitchen.

JUSTINE
Where is she?!

INT. KITCHEN

Justine runs to the trash can, pulls her hair back, hurls. Son rushes over to help her.

Francis cries on Father's chest; Leona, head down uses the chair at the table to stand.

Beat. She grabs the glass table setting, smashes it.

LEONA
She wanted to ride with me...

All stop and stare in her direction.

LEONA
... I'm sorry.

FATHER
Lenny, stop!

Leona, mute, goes for the broom. James blocks her.

LEONA
(calm)
... Dad, I need to clean this up.

Justine tries to hold her. Leona rips away.
LEONA
Get off me! Let me clean this up!

JUSTINE
... Lenny, do what your father said.

LEONA
(welling up)
I can't leave it like this!

Justine drags her in fighting, Father assists. Lenny breaks.

LEONA
I could have taken her!

Son and Francis surround her as well.

EXT. THE TOWERS FAMILY HOME: NOVEMBER 17, 2007 - DAY

Six black Harleys and a Hummer are parked at the curb.

CHARLES TOWERS JR. (55/Brother), walks up, hugs Justine tight. Silent tears fall.

He looks over her shoulder to see the kids. He waves, gestures to his CLUB BROTHERS, who take the kids' bags.

Charles, taking Justine's belonging, escorts all four to the Hummer, helping them in, and loading the back.

Father emerges from the home, locking the door. On the way to the Hummer, he hugs Charles.

At the front passenger window...

FATHER
She'll be home soon... We all will.
(to children)
Do what your Uncle and Aunt tell you to. Don't give him a hard time.
Father kisses Justine's cheek.

    FATHER
    (whispering)
    Call Ana, let her know what's going on. Tell her she is welcome to stay in Acton too.

Justine nods "yes" without looking at Father. He heads for the Tahoe. Charles stops him.

    FATHER
    I'm good.

    CHARLES
    Need any of my guys?

    FATHER
    (nods "no")
    Love you. Thank you.

    CHARLES
    (hugs Father)
    Get our girl.

Father gets in the Tahoe, Charles mounts his motorcycle, dons his gear. The bikes and Hummer fire up, head out first, followed by Father.

EXT. JOHNNY'S LIQUOR STORE

Exposition Park area.

Exiting, DEWIGHT LOVE (20), red from head to toe, bolts out with the STORE CLERK pulling on his shirt tail.

Pulling a knife, DeWight slashes at the clerk, stabbing his forearm. He takes off, sees a truck, door's unlocked, and hops in, peeling off.

EXT. EXPOSITION PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

Police cars, sirens on, fly down the residential street.
Posted up in a group, GERALD BARCLAY (40), waits until 5-0 passes to pull PRODUCT from his pockets, passes it out.

FOOT SOLDIERS head out. Phone RINGS. GERALD What?

DEWIGHT (V.O.)
OG, I'm on my way to you, my nig! I hit Johnny's and ripped this Chevy on the curb! One time's looking for me now, OG!

GERALD
Damn! Alright, you better make sure you don't bring anyone to my muthafuckin' house, nigga!

Phone hangs up.

Gerald walks into the street, starts clapping his hands. Foot soldiers retreat inside. Street goes quiet.

Beat. Tahoe comes into view. Pulls up to Gerald's. He opens the gate to the backyard.

Truck enters, waves him over.

GERALD
I'm calling my homie now. Break this shit down, get it out of here.

DEWIGHT
GB, you hear 'bout some bitch gettin' scooped the other night?

GERALD
'Fuck are you talkin' 'bout. Get out the fuckin' car.

DEWIGHT
You didn't hear nothin'?

Gerald rips the door open, grabs DeWight's neck, and sees
the muzzle of a .45.

GERALD
(to DeWight)
Dumb fuckin' bitch made nigga!

JAMES
Keep your hands visible, Gerald.
Don't do anything sudden.

James checks his surroundings. Beat.

GERALD
Old man... How are you?

JAMES
Not good.

GERALD
Whatever this muhfucka did, he did
on his own. Ain't got shit to do...

JAMES
Save it. Got a couple of questions,
simple ones, that I need answers
to.

Beat. Gerald nods.

JAMES
... Kidnapping in your area. I'm
not saying Brims did it. What do
you know about it?

GERALD
Not shit. My niggas was locked
down. This the first I'm hearing of
this.

JAMES
Anyone looking to get in the ransom
business?
GERALD
Not over here. Sounds like Mexico
City to me.

James monitors body language, eye movement...

JAMES
If I find out different, I'll be
back.

GERALD
I know. Who's missing? I'll look
into it.

JAMES
No, you won't... Nothing personal.
I'm keeping the boy. Insurance
policy until I get out of here.

GERALD
I hear you.

JAMES
Shut the door slowly, don't reach.

The door closes, the Tahoe reverses to the street, leaves.

INT. CHEVROLET TAHOE

Sitting in the strip mall parking lot across from the
Figueroa Chevron, James eyes his watch.

15:53:15.

Taps the steering wheel, eyes the street.

15:53:30.

Shifts into drive. Moments later, James pulls into the same
stall as Aimee the night before.

EXT. CHEVRON
Exiting the truck, he eyes his watch while heading inside.

INT. FOOD MART

James lingers around, in and out of aisles, watching the action around him, searching, still checking his watch.

EXT. CHEVRON

James walks to the truck, opens the door, and opens the center console.

Beat.

INT. CHEVROLET TAHOE

Forcing himself in, James speeds off.

Heading east on Gage, James searches through neighborhoods, train stations, parks, freeway overpasses, nothing.

He heads back to the USC area, sits back in strip mall parking lot. Scans.

HOMELESS MAN on the median, holding a sign. James watches.

INT. UNCLE CHARLIE'S HOME - NIGHT

Awake in the middle of the night, the television glosses over James.

Shuts off. Uncle Charlie, standing behind the couch, sets the remote down, helps his nephew off the ground.

EXT. BACKYARD

Watching the horses in the stable...

    CHARLES
    ... Shotgun to the face...
    (snaps fingers)
    Gone. As close as you are to me.
JAMES
Yeah?

CHARLES
Worst than anything I experienced in combat. That was my father, your grandfather.

Beat.

CHARLES
I can tell you firsthand, there's life after these kind of things. You'll cry, curse, and cry some more. But then, that sting that you feel so strong right now, it will leave.

JAMES
I don't think I can cry anymore.

CHARLES
You will. Doesn't mean you're weak. Makes you stronger.

JAMES
... I was planning on leaving the week before. Like after I graduated. Just feeling like I didn't belong, you know. Now look.

Beat.

CHARLES
(pointing to skin)
Don't let this fool you. You're a Towers. You got the same big heart and big mouth. Just 'cause you came from somewhere else, don't mean you ain't where you're supposed to be.

INT. CHEVROLET TAHOE
HOURS LATER

Homeless man stands, gathers, and enters the cross walk. James follows all the way to a homeless camp. James parks at a distance, checks gun, and exits.

EXT. HOMELESS CAMP

Empty lot, tents with tattered tarps covering, small fires within containers.

James illuminates his path, moves forward slowly. Tent on left contains two having sex, used needles leading that way.

Homeless Man emerges, freezes.

JAMES
Hey buddy, just need to talk to you for a second.

Gone like the wind! James chases.

Others peek out of the tents. Obstructions in the way, tires, shopping carts, torn chairs, couches, broken paint buckets.

Homeless Man jumps a chain link. James vaults and stops. Lets go of the fence.

Light up. Traverses tall grass and finds an ABANDONED, TORCHED CAR.

Shell of an early 2000's VW BUG. Close examination finds remnant yellow paint.

Plates gone, windows out. James forces the trunk open, burned out. Opens the hood.

Secondary VIN. James takes picture with cell.

Cabin area: seats missing, glove compartment ripped, center console gone.
Brushes soot from gauges. Custom Laker faces. James takes more pictures of car and area before...

JAMES
(voice altered)
I'd like to make a report.
Anonymous tip.

INT. METRO DETENTION CENTER (CONTROL ROOM): NOVEMBER 18, 2007 - DAY

Monitors line the wall, different activity areas on display.

James, suit, tie, dark sunglasses, and briefcase, observes body language intently. Barker is next to him.

Over different angles, GUARDS escort De La Garza.

RICHARD
... They're stuck in traffic.

JAMES
I'll owe you.

RICHARD
It's your kid. No one's keeping count.


INTERVIEW ROOM


JESUS
What do they have?

JAMES
We're still reviewing their evidence but the big one is alleged human trafficking. Couple of unlawful imprisonments. Also connection to an open abduction
investigation.

JESUS
What connection?

JAMES
Not sure. What do you know about it? Don't worry, meetings with council can't be recorded.

JESUS
Nothing. Whatever connection they have is falsified.

JAMES
You're sure? They're going to leverage everything against you... It's an officer's daughter. It will go a long way to give them something that helps find her.


JESUS
I didn't get your name?

JAMES
Just a member of your defense team.

JESUS
Your name?


JAMES
It would be in your best interest to have a seat, sir.

Beat. He complies with James.

JAMES
All I am is a private investigator.
I have no legal authority to charge
you with any crime. My only interest is in recovering a missing person.

JESUS
Do you usually exceed the parameters of your occupation?

JAMES
What do you know about the abduction?

JESUS
For a private investigator, you are very invested.

JAMES
... You have an answer for me?

Not a word.

JAMES
Mr. De La Garza, I apologize for misleading you. You will never see me again, or outside of four walls. I appreciate your time and honesty.

James pounds on the door once. Opens, James exits.

INT. UNCLE CHARLIE'S HOME (BATHROOM) - NIGHT

Against the counter, James holds a cell phone to her ear.

JAMES
(crying)
... My... I can't even talk right now.

CARMAN (V.O.)
Breathe, James... You're going to...

Carman loses it, now sobbing over the phone. Beat. James
tries to calm himself.

JAMES
My mom... she hasn't eaten anything, her hair's falling out...
my sisters, they both missed their periods...

James, shutting up, feels it coming up. Phone falls. He tries to fight, but rushes to the toilet. Throws up.

CARMAN (V.O.)
(distant)
... Did you hear me? James?

JAMES
(picking up phone)
Yeah? I'm sorry.

CARMAN (V.O.)
It was three positives.

Beat. The lock snaps, and the door opens. Charles enters, eyes wide on James.

CHARLES
Who are you talking to?!

Snatching the phone away, examining the number...

CHARLES
(over phone)
Who is this?!
(to James)
What did your father tell you?!

James jumps up and tries to take the phone back. Charles forces him back.

JAMES
Give it back! I need to talk...

CHARLES
Who was it?! Either you tell me, or I have it traced!

JAMES
Don't!

Justine and AUNT STELLA (54) rush in.

STELLA
What's going on, Charles?!

JUSTINE
(to James)
Why are you yelling?!

CHARLES
He was in here on the phone with God-knows-who running his mouth off. They could have this location, anything.

JUSTINE
James, what is wrong with you?!

JAMES
Nothing!

JUSTINE
You're putting all of us in danger!

JAMES
(stern)
You better shut up.

CHARLES
Who the fuck are you talkin' to?!

JAMES
Her! Not you!

CHARLES
You have lost your mind!
(beat/snaps phone)
Here! Have your phone!


STELLA
Charles!

JUSTINE
Stop it!

Stella tries to pull Charles off James. Not working. Leona and Francis run in, shot with terror.

FRANCIS
What are you doing to him?!

It interrupts Charles just enough. He looks back to see Justine, Leona and Francis.

Justine runs out. Francis follows to help her. Beat.

Charles stands and exits without a word. Stella stays with him. Leona steps in, and James sits up against the tub.

Gradually, she takes a seat near her brother. Beat. James lays his head on her shoulder. She holds him... He sobs.

EXT. PARKING STRUCTURE ROOF: NOVEMBER 19, 2007 - DAY

Sunrise. Leaning against the truck, James listens to the message on his phone.

JUSTINE (V.O.)
... Now, you need to do something!
I can't take this anymore!

An unmarked unit pulls up.

JUSTINE (V.O.)
(stern)
Call me back when you get this.
Closing the phone, James approaches Barker and SID Captain WARREN LASTING (48).

JAMES
Where're we at, War?

Beat.

WARREN
We need to use the AMBER system.

JAMES
It'll only push them underground...
Something's not adding up.

RICHARD
Evidence is all pointing...

JAMES
(stern)
She's alive.

Stare-down. Beat.

WARREN
We need resources. Whoever took her obviously has something we don't, and they are organized. Three million people aiding this investigation sounds like a winner to me. Holiday weekend, people traveling. We need to get her face out there.

JAMES
The pressure that puts on their movement is going to kill her.

RICHARD
Why would they now? Who would want to take her? Hurt you?
JAMES
C'mon.

RICHARD
My point. She's either dead or well on her way. Our window's probably only open for three more days... if that.

WARREN
We're not going to get another chance at this.

Beat.

JAMES
... Let's try.

INT. UNCLE CHARLIE'S HOME (KITCHEN): NOVEMBER 22, 2007 - NIGHT

Thanksgiving dinner. Charles, Stella, Justine, Leona, James, and Francis, hands joined.

CHARLES
... And thank You for Aimee's safe return. Let Your will be done. We know nothing is bigger than You, and You have a purpose for this...

James eyes Charles.

CHARLES
... In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

All say amen, except James. Each take their seats, James helps his mother.

All start to prepare their plates. Justine, Leona, James and Frankie hardly eat though.

Awkwardly quiet. Beat.
FRANCIS
... Uncle Charlie, do you know what I want to be when I grow up?

LEONA
(rolling eyes)
Oh God.

JUSTINE
People are eating, Frankie.

CHARLES
(looking around)
What?

Francis smiles and laughs.

FRANCIS
A boner.

Stella drops her fork and props her head on her upright arm.

FRANCIS
It's a...

CHARLES
... I know Frankie. Women's underwear. I'm smarter than I look.

FRANCIS
Dang!

Beat.

CHARLES
How much do you make for boning?

STELLA
Charles!

Leona rolls her eyes, trying not to laugh.

CHARLES
Stell, it's an honest question. Boning is a legitimate line of work. It's very hard work.

JUSTINE
Oh Lord. Here they go.

FRANCIS
Uncle Charlie, it's not about the money when you love doing it.

STELLA
Justine, hearing her talk like this doesn't concern you?

JUSTINE
You know, it used to. But after she turned 7, I just got used to it.

Stella busts up, followed by Justine, a little.

CHARLES
Do you go to school for boning, or do you just have to teach yourself?

Leona almost spits her drink. Francis hi-fives Charles. Charles smiles as he takes a bite of his food.

Beat. James stands from the table, exiting the kitchen.

Silence settles again.

CHARLES
(to Frankie)
Can you check on him?

Francis nods and exits. Charles observes Leona.

CHARLES
You doin' okay, Lenny?

LEONA
... Can we not... That's the first
time we've laughed... I'm fine, Uncle Charlie. Thank you for asking. How are you?

Beat.

CHARLES
I don't know how to feel. On the one hand, I'm hysterical, and on the other, I'm beyond grateful that nothing happened to the rest of you.

Leona begins welling up. Francis runs back in.

FRANCIS
(frantic)
He's gone.

Charles, confused, stands and heads out of the kitchen.

INT. FOYER

Charles, about to head up the stairs, pauses. Looks at the garage door. Heads there instead.

Undoes the locks, opens the door, finds one car space empty.

INT. LOS ANGELES MAYOR'S OFFICE BUILDING

James and Chad, in a meeting...

CHAD
I do not expect an answer from you now, of course. This is just a formal offer... I understand the position you are in and I'm very sorry.

James remains silent.

CHAD
As backward as this may sound, this
only cements my decision. Los Angeles will need a disciplined leader that, even in situations similar to and worse than this, does not bend the rules with their emotions.

Beat.

JAMES
I told you not to read me... I'm not the face of the city you want to make...
(phone rings)
Hello?

RICHARD (V.O.)
You heard about your son and daughter?

INT. KING DREW MEDICAL CENTER (EMERGENCY ROOM)

Frantic Thanksgiving night. Tier one traumas all over.

James bolts in, passing PATIENTS on gurneys and wheelchairs. Male NURSE and SECURITY GUARD intercept James.

SECURITY GUARD
Sir, can we help you?!

JAMES
(stern)
Are you Sheriff's Department?

SECURITY GUARD
I'm not.

JAMES
Then, no.

The guard tries to impede James' progress and gets shoved out the way. Nurse tries to assist, but DEPUTIES show up.
DEPUTY #1
Hey, leave him alone! He's alright.

James heads off, escorted by the deputies.
Down the hallway, James finds another group of Sheriffs in front of BAY 8, curtained off.

The deputies part ways, allowing James through.

Amorette (bruised/stitched/tubed up), rests unconscious in the bed. Monitors BEEP. Approaching cautiously, James reaches for her hand.

An emergency room DOCTOR appears.

    DOCTOR
    Sir, step away. What are you doing?

    JAMES
    (badge out)
    I'm her father.

    DOCTOR
    ... Okay, but sir, you need to leave her be. She's due to go back into surgery in a little bit. Someone will be here shortly to inform you of her condition.

Beat. Against his will, James exits. Doctor closes the curtain behind him.

    JAMES
    (to Deputies)
    What happened?!

    DEPUTY #1
    ... Got a DD to Jordan Downs. As we're dealing with that, gun fight breaks out nearby. She comes running out, no clothes, escapes in an car, and five suspects get away. We're still looking.
DEPUTY #2
I'm sorry, LT.

James looks his way. Beat.

DEPUTY #2
I didn't know who she was. Her car was all over the road, she almost crashed and struck a couple pedestrians... I PIT'd her, and she plowed into a street light. I'm sorry.

JAMES
(hand on shoulder)
Relax.

Phone rings. James checks the number, walks away, picks up.

INT. SANTA CLARITA SHERIFF STATION (PHONE BOOTH)

James, at the pay-phone...

JAMES
I know they've called my parents already... I wanted to hear your voice, check on you too.

CARMAN (V.O.)
What's going on with you?

Beat.

JAMES
How are you feeling?

CARMAN (V.O.)
Don't do that to me.

JAMES
(cutting her off)
I don't have an answer for you. Can
we talk about it later?

Silence.

JAMES
How far along are you?

CARMAN (V.O.)
... I don't have an answer for you anymore.

Beat.

JAMES
What does that mean?
(no response)
Car... say something!

Crying on the other end.

JAMES
I wanted to have a family with you!

EXT. DAVID STARR JORDAN HIGH SCHOOL (FOOTBALL FIELD)

James, and a crowd of SPECIAL INVESTIGATORS, and CORONERS wait for deputies to cut down bundled up/blood-stained tarps hanging from the goal post.

Some gag and choke.

Opening up the tarps, the investigators photograph the contents; severed body parts. Faces are blown off, shotgun.

Coroners begin placing parts on gurneys, sorting it out.

CORONER #1
Hey John, let me see your left forearm. The one I have isn't matching up.

Barker finds James.
RICHARD
Anonymous tip?

JAMES
It's being traced now.

RICHARD
Back to Edward Scissor Hands?
   (beat)
How's your daughter?

JAMES
Sedated. Hospital's going to stabilize her, and then we're transferring her.

RICHARD
You think they're still after her?

JAMES
I'm not going to find out.

INT. RONALD REAGAN UCLA MEDICAL CENTER (RECOVERY ROOM):
DECEMBER 1, 2007 - NIGHT

Amorette abruptly comes to. Her eyes read the surroundings, sees all the equipment connected to her, handcuffs, finds ROOMATE on her left, and a NURSE at her right, bedside.

Her breathing picks up.

NURSE #1
Aimee... Aimee.

It gets her attention.

NURSE #1
You're at UCLA medical, okay. You may feel a little pain, that's because you've had surgery.

AMORETTE
(frantic)
It's 3:55, 3:55.

NURSE #1
Aimee, I need you to calm down. You need to breathe. You'll hurt yourself.

AMORETTE
He lied. He needed change. He said he needed change. He lied.

NURSE #1
Aimee, do you want water? Are you thirsty?

She closes her eyes tight, nodding "no". The roommate looks over in worry.

AMORETTE

NURSE #1
Aimee, your family is here. Would you like to see them now? Is that okay?

Amorette shakes her head "yes".

INT. WAITING ROOM

Sitting together are Charles, Stella, Leona, Son, and Francis. Son and Francis hold hands, Leona's head is down.

Near the nurse's station, Father and Justine are with investigators. Nurse #1 comes down the hallway.

NURSE #1
Mr. and Mrs. Towers, she's up.

All three children jump to their feet, hurry over, and Justine immediately takes off. Father barely gets her arm.

FATHER
(to Justine)  
Calm down. You'll scare her.

JUSTINE  
(ripping away)  
I'm her mother!

Father grabs her again.

LEONA  
(stern)  
Mom, just listen to him. Dad, let go of her. We're wasting time.

Both look to her, and calm down.

FATHER  
(to Investigator)  
Let my family go in first. That'll put her at ease a little.

INVESTIGATOR  
You got it.

Beat.

NURSE #1  
... Follow me.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM

Amorette keeps her focus on her roommate, but switches to the door immediately when it opens.

Nurse holds door open. Father is first, followed by Justine who rushes to bedside, hugs her daughter. Justine goes first, and Amorette's tears follow shortly.

Father sits opposite, rubs both Justine's and Amorette's shoulder, gives his daughter a kiss.

Leona takes it all in, looking at all of the apparatus her sister is hooked to. Beat. Eyes red, she runs out.
Father and Justine see. He gestures for Justine to stay and leaves. Justine steps back, waving Son and Francis over.

Both approach cautiously, splitting, and taking Amorette's shackled hands. They remain still.

JUSTINE
Give your sister a hug, guys.

Beat. Gradually, they both lean down and embrace Amorette. She stares at the ceiling, tears start down near her ears. Amorette clinches her fists.

Monitors beep rapidly.

JUSTINE
Sweetheart?

Amorette pushes the summons button repeatedly. Son and Francis ease back, seeing her tears. Both look to Justine.

SON
Mom, what's wrong?

FRANCIS
She's alright, isn't she?

Son and Francis step back, becoming hysterical. Amorette starts sobbing. Francis runs to the other side, holding onto her brother.

JUSTINE
(standing near Amorette)
Aimee, what's wrong?

Justine takes her hand. The LEAD NURSE enters.

LEAD NURSE
Okay, I need everyone to clear the room please.

JUSTINE
Wait, what's going on?!

LEAD NURSE
Ma'am, lower your voice and step outside.

JUSTINE
This is my daughter. Why is she...

FEMALE SECURITY GUARD enters.

GUARD #1
(pulling Justine gently)
Miss, let her do her job. She'll take care of your daughter.

Son and Francis exit. Justine resists slightly, but leaves.

INT. WOMEN'S BATHROOM

Father enters. Stella is seated next to the end stall. She gets up. Father takes her place.

Partially visible, Leona sits on the other side. Beat.

FATHER
You can't take her place, Lenny... Neither can I.

LEONA
(sniffling)
It should be the two of us in that room.

FATHER
(stern/choking up)
No one... No one should be in there. This is already hell.

Tears begin to slide down Father's face. Beat. Leona reaches under the stall door, takes Father's hand.

INT. PATIENT CARE COORDINATION OFFICE
James and Justine are with a SOCIAL WORKER, at her desk.

SOCIAL WORKER
... She's going to need a lot of support from her family, rehabilitation, and therapy.

FATHER
Whatever she needs, just make sure she gets it. I'll pay for it all.

SOCIAL WORKER
It's not as simple as throwing money at it, Mr. Towers.

FATHER
... I'm aware.

Beat.

SOCIAL WORKER
I'm still collecting and assessing her information, but my early recommendation is Aimee will need selective living arrangements.

FATHER
I'm not sure I follow.

JUSTINE
Me either.

SOCIAL WORKER
... Aimee is suffering from a significant case of PTSD, and having severe psychological reactions to the presence of men, no matter who they are. In my observations, it's even worse with Black males.

FATHER
Is this a joke?!

JUSTINE
What are you saying?

SOCIAL WORKER
This is not meant to upset you...
Two years ago, we had a similar case, and the patient's recovery
was aiding by an environment free of... reminders.

Father folds his arms, staring down the social worker.

SOCIAL WORKER
Now, obviously this option is completely elective. My job ends at making certain the patient has adequate support after their release... But, putting myself in your shoes, I would consider creating living arrangements for her, preferably with her family, just without men in the household. Until she's ready.

FATHER
Then, how is that a living arrangement, with her family present?!

Office phone RINGS.

SOCIAL WORKER
PCC, this is Analise... Okay, I'm heading down.
(hangs up)
I'll have to go into further detail later. We have an incoming trauma that I have to report to. I'm sorry to leave you like this. Please allow me the opportunity to answer all of your questions before we
move forward.

Social Worker leaves.

James and Justine stand separately in silence. Long awkward beat. James' phone rings. He checks the text.

   JAMES
Jesus... Call me if anything comes up.

   JUSTINE
You don't see what you've done... After all of this, you're going back.

   JAMES
I have a job to do.

   JUSTINE
Your job has our daughter chained to a hospital bed, after being kidnapped, and God knows what else!

   JAMES
I'll be back. Call me if anything changes.

   JUSTINE
I'm not going through this again.

   JAMES
This won't ever happen again. I can promise you that... It's over. We have our daughter back.

   JUSTINE
... What they didn't take.

Off Justine's unaccepting look, James leaves.

EXT. VIEW PARK-WINDSOR HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT
LASD black and white's line the street. James, unmarked unit, exits the car. Callum and the rest of SIS duck under police tape, and approach.

Big hug between James and Callum. Beat.

JAMES
Good to see you boys.

Handshakes, pats on the back/shoulder, fist bumps.

CALLUM
You back, LT?

JAMES
We have work to do.

CALLUM
How's our girl?

JAMES
... Let's get to work.

INT. VICTIM'S HOME

The whole place is turned over. Furniture ripped up, broken, shot up. Bullet holes shred the entire structure.

SID is present, marking evidence, taking pictures.

CALLUM
Coroner's on the way.

JAMES
I've heard that more than I would like to in the last couple of days.

James and Callum examine bullet work. It's dense. Handgun rounds and shotgun work.

MALE ADULT DEAD BODY, shot to hell, down in the living room, draped over coffee table.
Near him, a blood trail smears all the way to the door. Warren documents.

WARREN
Looks like gangs, smells like gangs, but something doesn't feel like it... That's a lot of blood, and not Hill's. Someone else died in here, and knowing that we were coming like lightning, the attackers still took the time to drag their buddy out.

JAMES
Blood's still enough for an ID though.

CALLUM
If they're in the system.

Beat. James nods to go upstairs. Line of bullet holes tears up the staircase.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM

FEMALE ADULT DEAD BODY shields two MALE ADOLESCENT DEAD BODIES, lying in the bathtub. Blood everywhere.

RICHARD
Be thankful your daughter's alive. Hell, your family.

James and Callum turn to see the Chief behind.

RICHARD
How is she?

JAMES
Breathing and as well as to be expected.

RICHARD
Rape kit hit a match?
JAMES
DNA under finger nails did.

Beat.

RICHARD
(to Callum)
You bring him up?

He nods no. James looks around. Everyone's there.

CALLUM
While you were on leave, we picked up on a new threat emerging. Youth movement in a couple of gangs coming together. Brown and Black are taking aim at Blue.

JAMES
Where'd you get that from?

Beat.

CALLUM
CI. It's legit. Now they feel like they got a reason to fight. Coming after us, specifically.

RICHARD
(to James)
Your daughter's case is related.

JAMES
Alright, we'll run 'em down.

CALLUM
Not that simple... They're keeping it on the low. Higher ups don't know shit.

JAMES
They will in a minute. If it's
related, we'll press them with the DNA, go from there.

RICHARD
Let them fill you in.

Beat.

CALLUM
They're using unaffiliateds to carry these attacks out. Wannabes can't be tied to the gang.

JAMES
They also don't know what they're doing.

CALLUM
Good point.

RICHARD
Hey, while you motherfuckers are patting each other on the back, I got a dead cop family on my hands! So now, you all listen to me.

(door shuts)
I don't give a shit who hits the floor dead, just as long as it isn't someone with, married, or related to a badge. In a gang or not, we're throwing them all in jail. Am I understood?

SIS
Yes, sir.

RICHARD
I'll leave you to it.

Barker exits.

CALLUM
That kind of bullet pattern is
automatic.

JAMES
Glock 18s most likely. Cheap, compact, accessible.

CALLUM
I know where to find an arms dealer.

INT. PATIENT CARE COORDINATION OFFICE: DECEMBER 16, 2007 - DAY

James and Justine are in the office alone. Both are quiet.

Social Worker enters.

SOCIAL WORKER
Hello again, I just need signatures, and then she will be discharged to you.

JAMES
Thank God.

James signs first, multiple pages, then Justine.

SOCIAL WORKER
I cannot say this enough, I'm very sorry about your daughter's condition. No family should experience this. I'm glad that you're taking the recommended steps to start the healing process. Just be patient with her.

James wears a "something's off" look. He looks at the paperwork, sees the discharge address.

JAMES
Ma'am, I see a mistake. That's not our address.
JUSTINE
Yes, it is.

James switches between Justine and the Social Worker, looking for answers.

JUSTINE
Everything is fine.

Justine hands the paperwork off.

SOCIAL WORKER
(timid)
... I'll start processing this.


JAMES
You and I must have a different idea of fine. I know Charles didn't sell his house to you, so say something.

Going into her purse, Justine hands him a packet of papers. James accepts, cautiously, and examines.

Divorce papers. James is frozen.

JUSTINE
(welling up)
I told you. This won't happen again.

JAMES
Again? Really? We promised we wouldn't put them through another divorce.

JUSTINE
It all goes away when you resign.

James can only stare at his wife.
JUSTINE
(voice breaking)
The girls and I are staying in
Acton until we buy another house.
I've already made an offer. Charles
agreed to stay at the clubhouse
until we're out.

JAMES
And what about James?

JUSTINE
He's staying with you.

JAMES
And that's okay with you, as a
mother. You would do that to your
son. It'll tear him apart.

Beat.

JUSTINE
It's what Aimee needs right now.

James steps away from her. Beat.

JAMES
You can be the one to tell him,
Mom.

INT. THE TOWERS FAMILY HOME

In Justine's arms, Son steps back and turns, his eyes red.

Francis latches on to Son. Justine's tears come.

FRANCIS
(hysterical)
How can you do this?! No you're
not!

JUSTINE
It's for your sister's well being,
Frankie.

**FRANCIS**
She needs us! All of us! As a family! Dad, stop her!

Father says nothing. Son is silent too.

**FRANCIS**
Dad!

Beat. Father looks at his wife, then to his daughter.

**FATHER**
... Listen to your mother, Frankie.

Francis processes, then screams.

**FRANCIS**
I thought you loved him!

**FATHER**
(stern)
Francis, stop.

**FRANCIS**
You lied!

**FATHER**
Francis!

**FRANCIS**
I hate you!

Justine exits the room in tears.

**FRANCIS**
I'm not going with her! I'm staying home! My home! If you want to leave, do it yourself!

Father pulls his hysterically daughter in, attempting to calm her down. Son leaves.
EXT. GARAGE

Father enters the garage, hears Son fighting back tears, finds him on the far side of the Trans Am shell, sitting on the ground, back against the door.

Father joins him, puts his arm around Son, brings him in.

Beat.

FATHER
I'm going to fix this, son. I promise you.

Father wipes his eyes. Beat.

FATHER
(tapping on car)
I can't tell you how long it will take to repair it all, you won't like all of the parts I have to use, but when all is said and done... I'm going to make all of this work better than it did before. It won't look like this forever.

Son keeps wiping his eyes.

FATHER
You may hate this part, but what I need you to do right now... is go back inside, and give your mother a hug.

Beat.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Justine, balled up, cries into a pillow. A knock on the door. She turns over just as the door opens.
Son is first in, with Father behind him. Justine sits up. Son approaches and embraces his mother. Beat.

INT. INTERNAL AFFAIRS GROUP OFFICE: DECEMBER 25, 2007 - DAY

James enters to find THREE PLAINCLOTHES waiting for him.

PLAINCLOTHES #1
( extending hand)
James, Mike Lynch, Internal Affairs. Thank you for coming down. We're sorry about your family.

JAMES
Appreciate it. I'd like to get back to them, being a holiday and all.

PLAINCLOTHES #1
Understood. You answer our questions, fully and honestly, we'll get you on our way.

Beat.

PLAINCLOTHES #1
We know of your visit to Jesus De La Garza. Did you receive any information that led to the recovery of your daughter?

JAMES
Do I need union representation present?

PLAINCLOTHES #1
Contrary to popular belief, we do understand that law enforcement is not a black and white job, especially when it hits home... Although we know about it, we can't prove it, for reasons you know about.
At no point, during the time when my daughter was abducted, did I receive or act on any information that led to her recovery.

PLAINCLOTHES #1
Do you have any notion of what led to the murder of those suspected to have kidnapped your daughter?

JAMES
No, I do not.

PLAINCLOTHES #1
Would you agree that the manner in which they were murdered is consistent with a crime of passion?

JAMES
Yes.

PLAINCLOTHES #1
Do you have any idea of who would take your daughter's abduction so personal as to cause that level of mutilation?

JAMES
No. But the nature of this inquiry tells me that you already do.

Beat.

PLAINCLOTHES #1
This is true... We're able to account for the whereabouts of your wife, children, brother, and other relatives.

JAMES
They had nothing to do with this.

PLAINCLOTHES #1
We know. We followed up on everyone who has had professional contact with you in the police department, and everyone checks out.

JAMES
Except?

PLAINCLOTHES #1
While you were on administrative leave, we tried to contact several men in your unit, but were unsuccessful.

JAMES
We're not always near our phones. Our line of work requires that we stay off the radar as much as possible.

PLAINCLOTHES #1
Would you say that your men have a connection to you that exceeds normal professionalism?

Beat.

JAMES
I understand this is all for the record, but to ask if police officers, who work together in some of the most hostile environments possible, have a relationship that is deeper than professional is a waste of my time. Please get to your point.

PLAINCLOTHES #1
We have reason to believe that your unit is responsible for the
recovery of your daughter and the murder of the two thought to be responsible.

JAMES
Thank you for speeding that up.

PLAINCLOTHES #1
We're not done... We're here to ask for your assistance in our investigation.

James stands up.

JAMES
Have a nice day. I have my own cases I need to focus on.

PLAINCLOTHES #1
If you want to hold on to your badge, you'll listen to what we have to say.

Beat.

PLAINCLOTHES #1
The LAPD is moving towards transparency, and obviously SIS does not fit in that picture. That process gets expedited without your cooperation. Everyone gets handed a nice marked unit and T.O. assignment.

JAMES
... What?

PLAINCLOTHES #1
We're not going to be able to insert an undercover. Your guys will sniff him out before he shows up. That's why we need you.
JAMES
It's hard to trust someone when you need them.

PLAINCLOTHES #1
We know your track record. But, you're right. If we can't trust you, we'll pull back, and let the department split all of you up.

JAMES
I hope you guys are okay with coming up empty. My guys aren't responsible.

PLAINCLOTHES #1
Then, you'll have no problem verifying that.

James remains. Stare-off.

INT. MEETING ROOM: JANUARY 4, 2008 - DAY

Downtown L.A. View of the other buildings.

Justine, seated at the table, empty gaze. Her LAWYER reviews documents, checks watch repeatedly.

LAWYER
You want to call him again?

JUSTINE
Do you think this is on purpose?

LAWYER
Not sure. But I have another appointment immediately following this.

SECRETARY opens the door, in walks James, tactical dress. Lawyer looks up, distracted by his appearance.

JUSTINE
Nice attire for a mediation.

JAMES
I won't be staying.

Justine's irritation surfaces.

LAWYER
Might I ask what your reason for
the delayed cancellation is?

JAMES
... I'm a police officer.

LAWYER
(sighing)
Well, I understand...

JAMES
You can explain it to my lawyers.
They will be getting in contact
with you to reschedule. All ensuing
mediation appointments, where I am
to be present, will have to be
adjusted. I'm sorry for any
inconvenience this cause and I
appreciate your patience.

JUSTINE
(standing up)
Why are you doing this?!

JAMES
... If this is what you want, it
will be final this time.

Beat. James exits.

INT. HOME: JANUARY 6, 2008 - NIGHT

Wheeler, in the single level home, flips through the TV
channels, while on the phone.

WHEELER
... I'ma leave it in a junkyard.
Blue Maxima from the early 90's.
Pop that trunk, leave the paper in there, and in two hours, your stuff'll be back in there... You like that? Fa' sho', dog. Alright.

He hangs up.

Back to the television, he surfs again. He checks his watch. Look of annoyance.

BLACK. No power. BAM. Front door and back door burst open.

CALLUM (O.S.)
Police officers, search warrant!

Wheeler jumps to his feet, turns the sofa over, blocking the hallway. He runs into the bedroom, opens the window, and...

EXT. BACKYARD

... jumps down. Running for the fence, he jumps it in a single bound, landing on the neighbor's trash cans.

Standing up, he is met by James' shotgun.

WHEELER
Good ole' Curt... I was just about to ask where you and your cousin were.

JAMES
We did you one better. Usually, it's ask, and you shall receive.

INT. TOWNHOUSE

Wheeler, handcuffed to the front door, gets patted down. Officers, everywhere, masked up, search top to bottom.

James sits on the stairs with Wheeler in silence.
Callum comes around the corner.

    CALLUM
    (holding submachine gun)
    LT.
    JAMES
    That's illegal.

    CALLUM
    Lots more as well. We got the number he was just called too.

    JAMES
    (to Wheeler)
    Delivery?

Wheeler remains silent.

    JAMES
    Closed mouths don't get fed, Andrew. I don't have to give you the sales pitch. It's obvious that you won't learn, so let's just keep doing the dance.

    WHEELER
    What do you want to know?

    JAMES
    How familiar are you with Glock 18s?

    WHEELER
    I know how to spell it. I'm a great speller.

    JAMES
    You're also a great seller. Anybody buying large orders of G-L-O-C-K-S?

    WHEELER
    Funny.
JAMES
Not supposed to be. Don't let me find any records.

WHEELER
A couple of white girls actually picked some up, but I'm guessing you're not tracking down sorority sisters.

CALLUM
We arrest them to.

JAMES
And stick them in gen-pop with the rest of the Greeks.

WHEELER
You're on a roll.

JAMES
I love what I do.

WHEELER
Couple of aspiring lawbreakers are walking around with a significant amount of cash. Very uncommon.

CALLUM
Aspiring and looking for a way in.

Callum's phone rings. He checks the number, sighs hard.

WHEELER
And willing to do whatever they're told. Including killing cops.

CALLUM
(answering/walking off)
What?!

JAMES
You know a lot for a supplier.
WHEELER
I have an inquisitive personality.

JAMES
How old?

WHEELER
Sixteen, seventeen. These kids are so eager, it's comical. You would think they were signing up for the military or something.

JAMES
You know about some hit list?
Something of that nature.

WHEELER
No. It seems pretty random. Just find, shoot, and kill.

JAMES
How many have you sold?

WHEELER
Oh, I couldn't tell you.

JAMES
Remember the bargain.

WHEELER
No, I'm being honest. There are so many out on the street, I have no way of even giving an estimate.

JAMES
Mostly to our P.O.I's?

WHEELER
(nods yes)
I hope you weren't intending to stop this before it was a problem.
James stands, helps Wheeler up, and escorts him out.

JAMES
You let us worry about our job.

EXT. LPD AUTO PARTS


INT. UNMARKED UNIT

Hidden in a pile of cars across the street, James and Callum survey the scene. Blue Maxima in sight.

Callum has binoculars, James a video recorder.

CALLUM
... You don't have to respond. Just want to say, I heard about Justine's play. Sorry... Anything you need, you don't even have to ask.

JAMES
Thanks.

CALLUM
How's baby girl doing?

JAMES
It's early.

Beat.

CALLUM
I know those weren't the only two involved.

JAMES
Me too.

CALLUM
You tell me what you want to do.
James does not respond. Callum's phone rings. He ignores.

JAMES
Man, she's sweatin' you.

CALLUM
Tell me about it. She's trying to surprise me and shit... Better have what I asked for though.

JAMES
Seeing her again tonight?

Callum nods "yes".

JAMES
Never thought I'd see the day.

CALLUM
Yeah, shut the fuck up.

James laughs. Beat.

CALLUM
For what they did, I'd put every last one in a bag. Show these children who the real gangsters are.

James and Callum stare at one another. Action forward.

Someone approaches the Maxima. Perk up.

CALLUM
He came eastbound.

JAMES
We'll tail him. Just get the exchange.

Suspect pops the trunk open, loads two backpacks in. Shuts it. Callum continuously adjusts the focus, taking numerous pictures. James videos the transaction.
He pulls a phone. Beat. In the unmarked, Wheeler's phone buzzes. Text message: "Car's full". Callum responds: "Done".

CALLUM
Moving.

James hands off the video camera. Slow crawl.

CALLUM
Glass, glass. Don't get caught.

JAMES
I see it.

James powers around and onto the main road.

CALLUM
(radio transmission)
Suspect has entered a white crown vic. License plate: 4, Kansas, Sister, Echo, 6, 2, 8. Heading eastbound on Alpha towards Bateman.

A portable navigation device traces the path of the vehicle with a beacon.

JAMES
Good tracker.

INT. THE TOWERS FAMILY HOME (LIVING ROOM)

Father walks in, blocked by an alarming amount of moving boxes. He pushes through, checks inside some of the boxes.

Son emerges (eyes barely open, struggling to balance) from Leona and Amorette's room, stack of two boxes in his arms.

Father takes the top one off, scares Son.

FATHER
What is this?
(checks watch)
It's 3am. And your first day back.
SON
Mom called and asked to start packing their stuff... Just wanted to be helpful.

Beat.

FATHER
Go to sleep, James... I'll finish the rest of it.

Son tries to acknowledge, then heads for his room slowly.

INT. TAHOE: JANUARY 7, 2008 - DAY

Son is asleep in the passenger seat. Father guides the truck into Fairfax High School. The curb wakes Son.

Wide-eyed, he looks around, realizes where he is. Father stops, Son grabs his bag, and exits.

FATHER
Remember what I said, Son... It's all going to work out. Just hang in there with me.

SON
... Okay, Dad.

Son shuts the door. Father watches him walk off.

INT. MEDIATION ROOM

Justine and her lawyers shake hands with James' LEGAL TEAM, who is not present. Justine takes a seat, burying her face in her hands.

James enters. All eyes on him.

Justine and her team leave the room, no one acknowledges James. Looking to his team...
JAMES
What happened?

LEGAL TEAM #1
... Justine has temporary custody
of the girls until a final
resolution is met.

JAMES
That quickly?

LEGAL TEAM #1
Thought it was in the best interest
of Aimee not to procrastinate.
There was no budging him.

James looks like the wind is knocked out of him.

INT. CLASSROOM

James, book in hand, head all the way back, mouth open, is
fast asleep. Class reads a story along with an audio tape.

Other students see James, try to contain laughter.

Tre'Wayne, seated in front of James, takes pictures with
cameraphone. Students behind pose.

Mr. FOSTER SELF (38) spots the commotion, stands. The other
students settle, James is still knocked out.

Mr. Self approaches, takes the book from James. He comes to,
searches the room. Sees Tre'Wayne staring back, smirking.

MOMENTS LATER

The last of the students talking to Mr. Self clear out.
James waits in front of the teacher's desk.

MR. SELF
(handing James a slip)
Sign here. Show up right after
school every day for the rest of
this week.

    JAMES
    ... I can't do that, sir. I have to be home.

    MR. SELF
    (stern)
    It is not an option, James.

    JAMES
    Neither is my family.

Beat. James heads for the door.

    MR. SELF
    This gets worse without your signature. Do not walk out.

James freezes. Beat. He turns around.

INT. UNMARKED UNIT - NIGHT

Set up down the street from the BUY HOUSE, Callum and James maintain position, holding up the cul-de-sac. Street's quiet. Parked cars around. Some residents are outside.

    CALLUM
    (radio transmission)
    Radio silence at this time, radio silence.

James turns up the feed.

    CALLUM
    Fuck that judge, LT. I've never heard of something like that.

    JAMES
    It's what's best for Aimee.

    CALLUM
    They're giving her a crutch. She
needs to be surrounded by family, all of you.

Callum's phone goes off, he does not turn that way. James observes. Beat.

Callum points out a late model Toyota Corolla slowly passing the street, but not turning in.

JAMES
... Even the right thing can be the wrong thing at the wrong time.

CALLUM
So, what's the right thing right now?

JAMES
... Justine and the girls head to Topanga. My brother and his boys are helping them move. I sell the home before property value drops. Move into an apartment with James, and wait out Aimee's recovery.

CALLUM
That sounds like procrastination to me.

UNDERCOVER #1 is on the phone.

UNDERCOVER #1 (V.O.)
Yeah, you good homie. I got scanners all in my crib. You clear... Alright.

JAMES
You got something to do after this? Getting engaged, perhaps?

CALLUM
Yeah, I got an engagement for her ass.
JAMES
You gonna let me meet her sometime?

CALLUM
She's not that cool yet.

Cars slows by again.

CALLUM
You need any help, don't be a dumbass, alright. I got you.

JAMES
I'll be good. Got a couple of offers for executive protection that'll help out... This is just how it is right now. It'll get better.

The two bump fists.

Car turns in, parks in front of Buy House.

CALLUM
Holy shit.

JAMES
(radio transmission)
V-Lo, LT. Be advised. Two unexpected occupants. Two unexpected. Three total.

Callum readies his weapon. Both survey carefully.

When occupants enter, UC #2 plants a tracker on the Corolla, pops the door open, searches, and then retreats.

UC #1's conversation comes over the radio...

Callum's on the phone.

SUSPECT #1 (V.O.)
What's good?

Beat.

UNDERCOVER #1 (V.O.)
Fuck is this?! Hands the fuck up!
Now! Now!

SUSPECT #2 (V.O.)
Fuck is your problem, bro?


JAMES
(radio transmission)
Maintain discipline. Standby.

UNDERCOVER #1 (V.O.)
You move, I will fuckin' shoot you.

SUSPECT #3 (V.O.)
We ain't got shit, bitch! We tryna buy shit!

UNDERCOVER #1 (V.O.)
Fuckers come in switchin' the goddamn terms. You assholes don't know the difference between one and three.

SUSPECT #1 (V.O.)
Dude, I needed the fuckin' help!
They cool!

Beat.

UNDERCOVER #1 (V.O.)
My bad, y'all. Gotta be like that sometimes. Niggas tryna rob you, police tryna kill you... Y'all should know better.

No response.
UNDERCOVER #1 (V.O.)
My niggas, how old are y'all?

SUSPECT #1 (V.O.)
7K.

UNDERCOVER #1 (V.O.)
You can't be a day out of high school. Don't go blowin' your fuckin' classmates away with this shit, man.

CALLUM
Plate is 6, Oscar, Lima, Foxtrot, 3, 5, 7.

SUSPECT #1 (V.O.)
We makin' a deal or what?

UNDERCOVER #1 (V.O.)
Hell yeah. Do what you wanna do, just make sure you don't get me caught up in the shit you pullin'.

Movement. Beat.

CALLUM
Car's comes back registered to a Tre'Wayne Rothford. Fuck kind of name is that?

SUSPECT #2 (V.O.)
These them?

UNDERCOVER #1 (V.O.)
Yeah, nigga, you don't know?

SUSPECT #2 (V.O.)
Yeah... It's 'cause I'm used to bigger shit.

UNDERCOVER #1 (V.O.)
I see.

SUSPECT #1 (V.O.)
They ain't loaded.

UNDERCOVER #1 (V.O.)
Good eye. That would be in the other bag.

SUSPECT #2 (V.O.)
Cop killers, right?

UNDERCOVER #1 (V.O.)
When you check it, you'll know.

SUSPECT #2 (V.O.)
Stop fuckin' with me.

UNDERCOVER #1 (V.O.)
Yeah, motherfucker! You know what, take your shit and skip, bitch. You fuckin' up my high.

Zippers rip. Footsteps.

James sees the suspect moving for the car, getting in and driving off.

CALLUM
Tre'Wayne Rothford. No priors, no overnights, no gang affiliations.

JAMES
Wheeler was right. Keeps us off their trail.

CALLUM
Not for long. Alliances are hard to maintain. We keep mowing 'em down, black and brown'll turn on each other. They still want to be top dog. That's how we tear 'em down.

JAMES
There's another way. We're not letting them wipe each other out.

CALLUM
You ain't goddamn Jesus Christ or somebody. You ain't even JC. Your name is J fuckin' T... We ain't here to save anybody. We're law enforcement, street sweepers. All you can be is the police officer God made JT to be.

Beat. Over the radio...

UNDERCOVER #1 (V.O.)
Hey, LT. Got news for you.

JAMES
Go ahead.

UNDERCOVER #1 (V.O.)
Got a peek at old boy's phone. Saw a name on text. Lucius Barryl. He's Devonshire division. I came in the academy with him.

JAMES
Good work in there. We'll take care of it.

Off air.

CALLUM
Get the brooms out.

Beat. James guides the car away.

EXT. FAIRFAX HIGH SCHOOL (PLAYGROUND): JANUARY 25, 2008 - DAY

Sitting on a table, facing the basketball courts, James holds his phone to his ear.
FRANCIS (V.O.)
...Just a bunch of stuck up white people here.

JAMES
You should make friends really quick then.

FRANCIS (V.O.)
I hate Calabasas High and I hate you.

James smiles faintly. Beat.

JAMES
Heard the house was nice.

FRANCIS (V.O.)
Beautifully empty... I always wanted my own room, but I never thought it would take this.

JAMES
... How's she doing?

No response. Beat.

FRANCIS (V.O.)
What are we gonna do?

JAMES
... Nothing.

FRANCIS (V.O.)
Mom's moping around, Lenny's trying to be a mother, and Aimee's just quiet all the time.

JAMES
Aimee's going to get better... She needs time. Just stay out of Mom's way, I stay out of Dad's.
FRANCIS (V.O.)
This is her fault... Bitch.

JAMES
(stern)
Shut the fuck up, Frank.

Phone gone. James turns around.

TRE'WAYNE
Frankie! When you gon' fuck the homeboy?!

Up on his feet, James squares off. Outnumbered. Tre'Wayne's in the back of the group.

TRE'WAYNE
Why you leave me here by myself?! I miss starin' at that ass of yours... Hello?!

Tre'Wayne looks at the screen. Beat.

TRE'WAYNE
No, the fuck she didn't... Tell your sister the next time you see her, she's a fuckin' rude ass bitch!

JAMES
Give the fuckin' phone back!

TRE'WAYNE
What you gon' do?! Get your ass beat again?


INT. FAIRFAX HIGH SCHOOL (PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE)

Tre'Wayne hands the phone to Principal Ernest Tillard.

ERNEST
Thank you for being honest.

TRE'WAYNE
I apologize, sir. What I did was wrong, and I need to leave him alone.

ERNEST
Go ahead, Tre'. No harm, no foul.

TRE'WAYNE
Yes, sir.

Tre'Wayne turns for the exit, but stops at James first, trying to shake his hand. James refuses.

ERNEST
Tre', it's okay. Just leave him be.
Thank you for the gesture.

Tre' exits. James approaches Mr. Tillard for his phone.

ERNEST
I appreciate you coming to me, instead of turning to violence, but you could have shook his hand. That was the mature thing to do.

James remains silent.

ERNEST
Tre' is not your enemy, James. Understand him first before you judge him.

Beat.

ERNEST
This doesn't leave this room. I'm only saying this to end the ridiculous feud you have with him... Tre's been in foster care since he was five. He witnessed his
father murder his mother, then
commit suicide. His siblings were
split up between relatives, but no
one took him... That's who you
can't stand. I know, it's not an
excuse, I'm just saying... Don't
jump to conclusions.

Beat.

JAMES
May I have my phone now?

EXT. FAIRFAX HIGH SCHOOL (FRONT PARKING LOT)

James checks the phone, which will not turn on. He just
shakes his head, puts it in his pocket.


CARMAN
James!

Head up. He's frozen. Carman runs and embraces him,
squeezing tight. James is just there.

She puts her forehead against his.

CARMAN
Why didn't you call me? Can we just
go somewhere and talk?

No response. Beat. Carman makes eye contact with James.

CARMAN
What's wrong?

JAMES
... I want to talk to you. I wish I
could... But, I have to do my part.
I can't mess up.

James disconnects himself. Carman's in shock.
JAMES
Just not now... Later, I can.

He heads off, leaving Carman standing still.

INT. INTERNAL AFFAIRS GROUP OFFICE: JANUARY 27, 2008 - NIGHT

James, the three plainclothes, all in another meeting.

    JAMES
    (stern)
    ... I've been trying to get in
    front of our officers getting blown
    away. Now, forgive me if I haven't
    had time to investigate a couple of
    unsubstantiated allegations.

Beat.

    PLAINCLOTHES #1
    We're aware of the ordeal your
    family...

    JAMES
    Don't! I mean it... Don't.

Beat.

    JAMES
    At this point, do what you need to.
    You want to take my unit down, find
    a good reason, and do it
    yourself... Let's just all do our
    own jobs. Everything works better
    that way.

James exits.

EXT. UNIVERSAL CITY WALK: FEBRUARY 10, 2008 - NIGHT

Francis, arm in arm with Son, walks paces ahead of Father,
Leona, and Francis' BOYFRIEND, looking out of place.
FRANCIS
(to Son/pointing)
Ah! Come on!
(to the rest)
We'll be right back! Just wait here!

FATHER
Frankie, don't you want to take...

FRANCIS
It'll be quick! Don't worry!

FATHER
Alright, we're going to give our name. Keep your phones on...

FRANCIS
We will!

The two run into Abercrombie and Fitch. Father, Leona and Boyfriend awkwardly head to the restaurant...

INT. FITTING ROOM

Son and Francis sit silently on the bench together. Sounds of others trying on clothes in the stalls nearby.

SON
So... This is what perverts feel like.

FRANCIS
I'm going to have some fun. It's my birthday. Lenny is driving up a fuckin' wall.

SON
Typical white girl problem.

Francis punches James in the chest.
Shirts and pants are tossed over the wall to hang. Francis' phone buzzes. Text Message: We're sitting down. Come on.

    FRANCIS
    Get up.

    SON
    Where are...

    FRANCIS
    Just get up!

INT. CAMACHO'S CANTINA (DINING ROOM)

A WAITRESS approaches the table.

    WAITRESS
    We ready to order?

    FATHER
    We're still waiting. I'm sorry, ma'am.

    WAITRESS
    More chips?

    BOYFRIEND
    (quick response)
    Yes, ma'am.

Waitress takes off.

    LEONA
    I'm texting them again.

    FATHER
    (acknowledging)
    So... Leon...

    BOYFRIEND
    It's Lon, sir.

    FATHER
Sorry... Lon, how did you meet Frankie? I mean, I know it was at school, but... What am I trying to say?

LEONA
What do they have in common?

FATHER
(staring at Lenny)
How did they get together?

BOYFRIEND
... I don't really know.

FATHER
You don't?

BOYFRIEND
... She just started holding my hand like two weeks ago, and began calling me her boyfriend... She told me that I was coming with her today.

LEONA
(under breath)
Oh Lord!

Father can only stare at the poor young man.

Waitress approaches.

WAITRESS
Chips.

EXT. STUDIO TOUR

Seated in the back row of the tram car...

FRANCIS
He's the only black guy at the school.
SON
(staring at her)
... There's something wrong with you.

FRANCIS
But you love me, and you're stuck with me.

Beat.

SON
You're just with him to bring him around Aimee.

Francis stops cold, looks at Son.

SON
I know you better than anyone...
That's fucked up for him, Frankie.

Francis rests her head on his shoulder, eyes well up.

FRANCIS
That's why... I have no one to talk to.

SON
You can always call.

FRANCIS
It's not the same.

James wraps his arm around Francis.

FRANCIS
If I don't end up marryng you, my husband is going to be very jealous because I'm still going to go to you for everything.

SON
You say that at 17... And what makes you think I'm just going to
be around every time you call.

Francis, nothing said, just stares at Son. He stares back. They wait each other out. Beat. James breaks first. They both laugh.

**FRANCIS**
I love you.

**SON**
(kissing top of head)
Love you too. A whole hell of a lot.

**INT. CAMACHO'S CANTINA (DINING ROOM)**

Son and Francis are finally at the table.

**LEONA**
... Two hours! And we don't know where you two are, what happened to you! We're worried sick! How do you not realize this?!

Beat. Neither Son or Francis can respond. Leona pounds her fist into the table. Takes off.

Awkwardness at the table. Boyfriend looks around to the others, everyone has their head down.

Father gets up from the table.

Beat.

**BOYFRIEND**
Should I leave?

Son and Francis look up. Francis takes Boyfriend's hand.

**INT. BATHROOM**

Father, leaning against the closed stall door. Women, staring, clear out.
FATHER
... Sometime in the future,
Lenny... We need to find a better
place to talk.

Behind the door, she starts laughing slowly, then picks up.

FATHER
On your own, you have to forgive
your them... They're hurting too.

LEONA
But they didn't even...

FATHER
I know. And they might not
understand for a while. Or maybe
they already do. It's the first
birthday since Aimee's, and they do
this... But this family has to
stick together as much as possible.
We're all we have.

Beat.

LEONA
... Dad, I have to thank you... For
coming into my mom's and my life.
We really need you.

FATHER
You don't...

LEONA
I do.

Father wipes at his eyes.

FATHER
... Well, I really need you two as
well.
Leona undoes the lock.

INT. HUMMER H2: MARCH 23, 2008 - NIGHT

James, driving, Callum, riding passenger, travel around the Huntington Park area.

Callum eyes the surroundings, James is on the phone.

   JAMES
   Making the right onto Miles Ave.

   UNDERCOVER #1 (V.O.)
   You're passing me right now, LT.

   UNDERCOVER #2 (V.O.)
   We got you to the park and middle school.

   JAMES
   Copy that.

Near Miles Park, Callum's phone goes off. Ignored.


   UNDERCOVER #2 (V.O.)
   LT, got you passing me... now.

   JAMES
   Where're we at with the tracker?

   UNDERCOVER #1 (V.O.)
   Car registered to Tre'Wayne still immobile at Imperial Courts.

   JAMES
   Another thirty minutes and then we're giving Barryl his truck back.

   UNDERCOVER #2 (V.O.)
   Lima, Charlie.
Callum's phone goes off again.

CALLUM
(pounding the door panel)
Shit! Leave me alone@

James looks to Callum, still focused on the surroundings.

Beat.

James looks at the phone screen, seeing the number. He searches around, lifting the center console, then in the door pocket.

CALLUM
(no eye contact)
Need something?

JAMES
I'm good. You good?

CALLUM
I'm very tired, brother. Girl's running me around again.

JAMES
What does she do at this time of night?

CALLUM
Nothing.

James, putting the phone between his shoulder and ear, drags his finger along the driver side window.

Buzz. Another call. James quickly answers.

JAMES
Hey, Jus.

AMORETTE (V.O.)
Hey, Dad... Happy Easter.
Beat.

JAMES
Happy Easter... Hey...
(loss for words/checks watch)
It's late, Aimee.

Callum looks over.

AMORETTE (V.O.)
I couldn't sleep... I still see
their faces on like the walls
sometimes, and...

JAMES
(exhaling)
... Sweetheart, where's your
mother?

AMORETTE (V.O.)
... I'm really trying my hardest to
get better, Dad.

JAMES
... Okay.

James turns right onto Gage.

AMORETTE (V.O.)
I'm going to therapy, I'm taking
the medication... I'm trying, Dad.

JAMES
I know, sweetheart. Are you...

AMORETTE (V.O.)
They have me on five different
types of pills... I don't want to
be a drug addict.

JAMES
Aimee... you won't. Just you saying
that is...

AMORETTE (V.O.)
Can you tell James that I'm sorry?

JAMES
You're not at fault... for anything.

Beat.

AMORETTE (V.O.)
... I just need a little more time, Dad... Please don't get divorced because of me.

(James tries to speak)
I'm going to let you go. I know you're busy, Dad. I love you.

She hangs up. James puts the phone down. Beat.

CALLUM
I didn't want to interrupt, but we got three cars trailing us.

JAMES
What?!

CALLUM
I know you didn't see them... I wouldn't either.

Car behind, other two on left and right, dropped back.

Red light at slate. James tries to change lanes. No space allowed. He gets on the phone.

JAMES
Assistance requested at Gage and Slate. Three dark colored sedans, late model Honda Civics.

CALLUM
Here they come, get ready.

James slows to a stop. Cross traffic zooms by. Cars pull up on either side. Both James and Callum get their weapons.

JAMES
This goes south, I'm gassin' it.

Left side Civic rolls down the window. Signals for James to do the same. Gun to the door panel.

JAMES
Can I help you?

UNKNOWN
Your name Barry?!

JAMES
Who?

UNKNOWN
Barry?!!

JAMES
I'm calling the police. Leave us alone.

UNKNOWN
Man, fuck you! Ain't nobody doing nothing to you!

Green light. Cars move forward. Hondas on the side speed off, so does the one behind them. Beat.

CALLUM
Goddamn... Hey, at least we stopped him from gettin' blown away.

JAMES
That we did... We'll see where those plates lead us.

Fist bump.
JAMES
Where do you want me to drop you?

CALLUM
Don't trip, I gotta handle something. I'll ride back with V.

JAMES
Yeah?

CALLUM
Don't ask.

JAMES
I've learned.

Callum starts laughing.

EXT. HUNTINGTON PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT STATION

Gather his stuff, James exits the truck, parked in the holding lot. He exhales on the window, uses a flashlight.

There is a phone number. James types it in his phone.

INT. FLORENCE STATION METRO TERMINAL

On a payphone, James dials the phone number. Beat.

UNKNOWN
(Male voice)
Hello?

JAMES
(caught off guard)
Hey.

UNKNOWN
Dude, where the fuck are you?!

JAMES
... I got caught up. Lot's a shit tonight. Where are you again?
UNKOWN
Skid, fool! 6th and Towne! Hurry up!
INT. DODGE RAM

Patrolling the area, James checks the surroundings, alleys, homeless camps, parking lots, etc.

Corner of 6th, action between the two buildings. James pulls the truck to the side of the street, distanced.

Brandishes a camera with telephoto lens, night vision filter. Zoom in. Two talk by the trunk of a car.


Taking his phone, James dials. The figure in the frame reaches in his pocket for a phone, answers.

CALLUM (V.O.)
LT?

JAMES
Hey brother, just checkin' on you. Know you've been having problems with your girl.

The two drag someone out of the trunk. James covers up the phone, takes more pictures.

CALLUM (V.O.)
I'm good. Just a rough patch. The job doesn't help. Only so much I can do with a demanding job and demanding woman.

JAMES
I hear you... I may not be the best person for relationship advice anymore, but if you need to talk, I'm here for you.
CALLUM (V.O.)
I know this... Hey, can I call you back? Talkin' to her right now.

JAMES
You got it, man.

They hang up. Figures across the street pop open an abandoned car's trunk, load the live cargo. Beat.

Callum sticks a long-muzzled gun in. The slide jerks back.

Trunk closes. Two head off in a Ford Mustang together.

James dials again.

JAMES
Hi, I'd like to report some suspicious activity on East 6th street and Towne Ave. Couple of guys were messing around with one of the cars in the parking lot...
Yeah.

James turns the truck on. Rearview mirror: Ford Mustang speeds towards him. James shifts into drive.

Bullets rip through the rear window. Engine roars, truck shoots forward. Ford Mustang rams the truck.


Mustang tries to PIT. James fends it off. Tall buildings and city lights drawing near.

Passing the Federal Reserve, the Ford Mustang turns away.

James slows down, turning into an underground parking lot.

EXT. FAIRFAX HIGH SCHOOL (PLAYGROUND): APRIL 1, 2008 - DAY
James, sitting by himself, busy with math homework, notices when Tre'Wayne approaches. James tenses up.

Tre'Wayne sits down next to him, with a disgusted look.

James tries to ignore. Tre'Wayne pinches his nose.

JAMES
What?

Tre'Wayne starts to gag, acts like he's about to heave.

JAMES
What?!

Tre'Wayne chokes.

JAMES
What is wrong with you?

Beat.

TRE'WAYNE
Take a shower, nigga.

From around the corner, Tre'Wayne's guys dump a trash can on top of James, and then a large cooler of water.

TRE'WAYNE
April Fool's, bitch!

They run off as fast as they can.

INT. SID TECHNICAL LABORATORY PHOTOGRAPHY UNIT

James and Warren at a computer together.

WARREN
And the winner is...

Facial recognition reaches 100%.
De'Anthony Brown. 35, known affiliation to Grape street, long list of priors...

JAMES
Yeah, I know them.

WARREN
You guys are running surveillance on this guy.

Beat.

JAMES
Apparently.

INT. MEDIATION ROOM: MAY 1, 2008 - DAY

James, Justine, her lawyers, and his legal team, in the middle of negotiations.

LEGAL TEAM #1
Mr. Towers is willing to compromise if Mrs. Towers can meet him in the middle.

LAWYER #1
What does the middle look like?

JAMES
... I will start the application process to become Chief of Police. It'll take awhile but it means less street time, predictable hours.

Lawyer documents. Brief non-verbal conference.

LAWYER #1
While we appreciate your attempt to meet our clients demands, we have to reject that offer. Mrs. Towers is adamant about Mr. Towers resigning from the department
completely. Should this go to trial, we will be presenting a strong case showing the danger that the occupation is subjecting the family to.

LEGAL TEAM #1
Will you be including the financial support that the department has provided, considering Mrs. Towers does not work outside of the home?

LAWYER #1
There are other options.

JAMES
(to Justine)
Like what? What do you want me to do?

James' legal team intervenes to keep him from speaking.

JUSTINE
Something else.

Her lawyers try to stop her.

LAWYER #1
Please excuse my client. Her emotions are getting the best of her. You can understand.

JAMES
This is what I am.
(to Legal team tries again)
No. Hold on.
(to Justine)
I am a police officer. Have been since you met me. My job pulls me into situations not even you know about.

JUSTINE
I know now!

Her lawyers continue to try and pull her back.

JAMES
You like to think you know. So now, at 56, with a family, what do you want me to do? Greet at Wal-Mart?

JUSTINE
The department is the reason why our family is suffering now! How can you ignore that?!

JAMES
I'm not, I know!

JUSTINE
So why are you staying on?!

No response. Beat.

LEGAL TEAM #1
That is not a matter that we are her to discuss. Mr. Towers' twenty-seven year career has provided for his family, and cannot be assumed as the cause for the attack on his daughter... Now, we have worked with you to do what is best for the family, allowing your client temporary custody of the children and the right to move, within reason, and now Mr. Towers expects the same level of cooperation on your part.

LAWYER #1
Your client is in now position to...

(James' phone rings)
... ask for my client to endanger her family.
James retrieves the phone, Justine scowls.

JUSTINE
This is exactly...

Justine's phone rings. Not sure what to do, she goes for hers. James checks the number. Justine sees her phone.

JAMES
(to Justine)
Fairfax?


INT. TAHOE

James and Justine drive in front of the school to find a multitude of marked units out front, lights on.

Evacuation.

James is forced by officers to pull over. He shows his badge through the windshield. They acknowledge and leave.

EXT. FAIRFAX HIGH SCHOOL

James and Justine jump out, marching towards the entrance.

Parents, students, staff, faculty, and police crowd the area in a panic. Unrest while trying to sort things out.

JUSTINE
(shouting aimlessly)
James! James!

Both frantically search the crowds to no avail.

James spots a group of TACTICAL OFFICERS speaking with the PRINCIPAL. He rushes over. They're locking and loading.

JAMES
(to Principal)
Where's my son?!

JUSTINE
Why isn't he out here?! Where is he?!

ERNEST
Mr. and Mrs. Towers...

JAMES
Tell us!

ERNEST
... He's still inside.

Justine tries to rush past. When she is stopped, she fights the hands off of her.

JUSTINE
Let me go! I'm getting my son!

TACTICAL OFFICER #1
Ma'am, we have to ask you to stay out here... LT, you understand?

JAMES
How many is it?

TACTICAL OFFICER #1
So far, I only know about your boy and another. Someone reported a weapon.

JUSTINE
Go get my son!

TACTICAL OFFICER #1
Ma'am, you need to stay calm.

JAMES
Give me fifteen minutes.

TACTICAL OFFICER #1
JAMES
I know, but let me go in there. If for no other reason just to confirm the threat for you guys.

TACTICAL OFFICER #1
And the report?

JAMES
Non-compliant.

Beat.

TACTICAL OFFICER #1
... Damn. It's your ass they kick, not mine.

INT. FAIRFAX HIGH SCHOOL

Slow, steady through the walkway. Gun ready, finger out of trigger-well. Alarm buzzer continuously rings.

James periodically checks six, looks inside class room windows and closets. Open door comes into view. Room 220.

Father checks, sees his son, but can't verify anyone else.

INT. ROOM 220

Son, holding a KNIFE to Tre'Wayne's neck, keeps him hostage. Tears stream from Son's red eyes.

Tre' remains uncomfortably still. Father still has his gun at the ready.

SON
Dad?

TRE'WAYNE
That's your Dad!
SON
(cold, shaky)
You better shut up.

FATHER
Kid, what's your name?

TRE'WAYNE
Tre'Wayne, sir.

Father pauses. Beat.

FATHER
Look at me, Tre'. Just try to stay calm and let me take care of this, alright?

SON
He's not leaving here alive, Dad.

FATHER
... If you were going to kill him, you would have already done it...
Now, I need you to toss the knife away from you slowly, let him go, and hold your hands up.

SON
You're going to shoot me?

Beat.

FATHER
I need you to follow my instructions.

SON
I can't do that, Dad. He's not going to stop. This is all he understands.

FATHER
Talk to me. Help me understand.
Son points with the knife to the teacher's desk.

Still facing Son, Father backs up. FOLDED PIECE of PAPER. Father, still monitoring Son, wrestles the paper open one-handed.

Picture is of one stick figure on top of another, labeled Tre'Wayne and Aimee. Other stick figures are in line, behind, labeled with other names of students.

James sets the paper down, swallows the anger.

FATHER
Let him go, James.

Son does not move.

FATHER
He drew a picture, James... A picture. To hurt you. But you pulled a knife. How's that going to turn out?

SON
... I'm going to jail.

FATHER
Prison. For twenty-five, maybe more. What is that going to do to your Mom, your sisters?

No response.

FATHER
Let him go, James. Let me walk you out of here. Your Mom is outside right now, freaking out... I can't go back without you. There are other officers with bigger guns waiting outside, and they're not going to care about a picture when they come in.
SON
I just want to go home, Dad... I miss home.

FATHER
I understand. I do too, son. But this takes us in the opposite direction.

SON
You can't get divorced, Dad... You guys are all I have.

Beat. Father composes himself before responding.

FATHER
I promise. I'm going to do all I can... It's time, James. You have to let him go now.

Beat. Slowly, Son removes the knife from Tre'Wayne's neck, tossing it to the other side of the class room.

The freed hostage remains still, hesitant of what to do next. Father gestures him over.

When Tre'Wayne gets to Father, he pats him down, then sits him down behind the desk.

FATHER
(to Son)
Listen to my instructions...

Son places his hands over his head, turns to face away from Father, drops to his knees, crosses his ankles, and puts his hands on the back of his head.

Father, tears beginning to fill his eyes, approaches slowly, holsters his gun, and cuffs Son.

After patting him down, James makes the call.

EXT. FAIRFAX HIGH SCHOOL
Tactical officers escort Tre'Wayne out, followed by Father and Son. Justine rushes in, embracing her son, checking to make sure he's okay.

JAMES
(crying)
... I'm sorry.

Justine cannot respond. Tactical officers approach. Father separates Justine from Son. Father hands him off, and they escort Son to a marked unit.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

James and Justine sit across the desk from the Principal.

JUSTINE
... And what are you going to do with the other boy?! You're just ignoring the part that he played!

PRINCIPAL
He drew a picture, Mrs. Towers.

JUSTINE
That's all?!

PRINCIPAL
I understand that the picture's content was extremely hurtful, and I will handle his consequences accordingly. But, the bottom line is that he drew a picture. It presented no clear and present danger to anyone. Your son was threatening to kill another student. And who knows if he would have just stopped there.

JUSTINE
My son was never going to hurt anyone! He was tired of being
bullied! What did you do about that?!

PRINCIPAL
Mrs. Towers, I'm not at liberty to discuss the matters of another student... For your son, I believe this is the best, and definitely the only means of moving forward. James does not need to be in public school with all that he is dealing with.

JAMES
Sir, I understand the position you are in completely. But my son is about to graduate. That doesn't factor into your decision.

PRINCIPAL
... I will look into independent study for James to complete the rest of his studies, but under no circumstance can he return to the classroom... Again, I'm sorry for the ordeal your family is going through.

No response. James and Justine exit.

INT. TAHOE

James and Justine drive in silence. James periodically looks over, monitoring his wife.

His phone rings. James lets it go. Justine does not react, still just looking forward.

The phone rings again. James contemplates, refuses.

Rings a third time.

JUSTINE
Check it. James waits, but then finally does.

JAMES
Hello...
(long beat)
... Yeah... Okay.

Before he can set the phone in the door pocket...

JUSTINE
You can go. Just drop me off.

James attempts to explain...

JUSTINE
It's okay. I know.

INT. APARTMENT

James walks in to find his guys there already. Barker is waiting as well, not happy.

Same type of hit. Two dead bodies, male and female. Furniture destroyed, bullet holes everywhere.

RICHARD
I'll let you go first. How was your day?

JAMES
We had information that they were planning to go after Barryl, but not enough to bring them in. We were tracking them, but obviously this was carried out by another group of individuals. It's a lot larger than we originally thought.

Barker stares through James. Beat.

RICHARD
You all have one week. If another
cop is shot by a Glock 18, every last one of you are training officers until you retire.

CALLUM
Turn your head the other way then.

RICHARD
I don't give a shit what you do.

Barker exits. Beat.

CALLUM
LT, that tracker's showing activity. Want to start there?

James is locked on the officer down and woman beside him. Beat. File out.

CALLUM
We're going to get 'em, LT.

JAMES
... One of the wannabe bangers we're tracking, he goes to school with my son.

CALLUM
We heard... You should have let him open that muthafucka's airway, do everyone a favor.

JAMES
We're dealing with something completely different. We just can't arrest this away.

CALLUM
What are you thinking?

JAMES
Still piecing it together. Right now, let's find our guns.
INT. APARTMENT

Father and Son in the living room. Father raises Son's sleeve, sees the tattoo (Large "X").

SON
... No, I'm not in a gang, Dad!

FATHER
You're tatted! Do you understand what that means?!

SON
They're not a gang, Dad!

FATHER
This is what gangs do!

Son rips away. Pulls sleeve down.

FATHER
What is going on with you?! I'm trying to understand, Son! I know it's not easy on you. I'm never here, you miss your mother and sisters. I know. But the rest of this... You're not the only one.

SON
I was trying, Dad! I just, I couldn't take it anymore!

FATHER
What happens if I can't take it?!! Son, my wife is divorcing me! My daughter was raped and beaten for a week, and I can't even be there for her!

Son starts crying.

FATHER
I need your help. I'm bending over backwards to keep you out of jail, and I'm just about to break. This is exactly what I was afraid of. You are better than this. I raised you to be better.

Son leaves the room.

Beat. Father holds himself up with the countertop.

INT. JEEP: MAY 5, 2008 - DAY

James and Carman at a remote location alongside PCH, facing the water.

CARMAN
... I don't know what else to say. I feel useless. Like... I want to be there for you. I just don't know what to do.

Beat.

JAMES
I thought if I stayed out of trouble, it would all work out... I just want to feel like I have a family again.


CARMAN
How can I help you?

JAMES
... Did you not want to have a family with me?

Carman cannot respond.

JAMES
Do you love me?
She nods "yes"

CARMAN
I'm sorry.

Carman kisses James. He wraps his arms around her, squeezing her tight. He leans over, she rests back in the seat.

While touching her, he lets the seatback recline. He climbs over the gearbox, lying on top of her.

Carman wraps her arms around him, pulling him closer.

James starts reaches for her clothes, undoing her shirt, kissing her neck and chest.

He kisses her harder, touching her legs, and now going for her shorts. She tries to stop kissing, James won't though.

She mumbles words, but nothing changes. James unzips her shorts. Carman pulls her face away.

CARMAN
Babe, what are you doing? No.

JAMES
... I just want to have a family with you.

Carman tries to move away from under him. James is still kissing her, now pulling down on her shorts.

CARMAN
Stop! I'm on my period!

Carman tries to work her arms underneath him to push him off. He pulls her shirt and bra strap down her shoulder.

CARMAN
James! Stop! Don't do this! Think about what you're doing right now!
James freezes. Beat. He looks at the frightened/angered look on her face, her shirt's almost off, shorts almost to her knees, panties showing.

INT. UNMARKED UNIT - NIGHT

James and Callum, quiet, tense, watch the residential street, focused on one car in particular.

Young Black male approaches a late model Ford Mustang.

CALLUM
(radio transmission)
Get ready, boys. He's about to go mobile.

Mustang pulls away from curb. At the cross street, the car waits. James turns the unit around, and pulls up behind him.

The car is still stationary. Beat. Mustang reverses into unmarked unit.

CALLUM
(radio transmission)
TC! TC!

Driver opens the door, fires back at the car. James and Callum take cover.

CALLUM
(radio transmission)
Shots fired, shots fired!

Mustang burns rubber. James checks the car, still functioning. He gets on it.

CALLUM
(radio transmission)
Suspect made a right, heading southbound! High rate of speed!

JAMES
We need a primary in case we break
CALLUM
(pointing)
2-5's up there.
(radio transmission)
2-5 take primary.

Suspect turns left onto freeway, heading northbound.

CALLUM
2-5, drop off of him a little.
Don't agitate him. Too many civilians nearby. Speeds unsafe for PIT.

As soon as they fall back, the Mustang takes off.

CALLUM
Don't lose him.

Mustang weaves through the traffic while the four unmarked units takes the shoulder.

Getting caught behind two cars, Mustang swipes left, cutting off a motorcyclist.

CALLUM
(radio transmission)
Motorcycle down. Hit and run.

JAMES
Alert CHP.

CALLUM
We have sirens coming up.

JAMES
Wave them off.

Mustang exits freeway.

CALLUM
(radio transmission)
Suspect returning to surface
streets. Careful of pedestrians.

CHP follows.

CALLUM
(radio transmission)
California Highway Patrol, abort
pursuit. Say again, abort pursuit.
Suspect is armed and dangerous.
Subject of an investigation with
LAPD. Abort.

They continue.

CALLUM
Can't find their fucking frequency.

Suspect heads into "The Jungle" (neighborhood highly
populated by gangs). CHP follows the units in.

Mustang heads down a dead end street.

JAMES
Suspect's gonna bail.

CALLUM
(radio transmission)
2-5, get ready. Box him in.

Hail storm of deafening lead opens up. Unknown, multiple
sources. Sound of AK rounds, automatic.

2-5 gets peppered. James and Callum exit and retreat to the
rear. Return fire. Rounds strike the asphalt and the cars.

James, Callum and the others try and identify the targets.
James sees rooftop movement, fires.

Something falls. 2-5 is still immobile. In the distance, The
CHP OFFICERS, take cover, looking injured.
CHP OFFICER #1
(radio transmission/distant)
... Requesting RA units, and air
support to my location now!

Return fire. James and Callum looks to each other, gesture
to push forward. They break into a sprint and slide into the
rear of 2-5.

JAMES
Boys, we're coming to get you out
of there!

James tries to stand up, but physically cannot.

CALLUM
LT, is it bad?!

JAMES
No! I'm okay! Just get them out!

Rounds returned, but they're still under fire.

DAYLIGHT.

Helicopter overhead shines the spotlight. Suspects are
illuminated. Support units arrive.

Shooting stops, running begins. Callum checks inside of 2-5.
James struggles to stand.

Ambulances wait at the end of the street. Callum comes and
helps James to his feet. He gestures that 2-5 is dead.

The back up officers rush in, setting up a defensive
perimeter. Once complete, they move into the apartment
buildings, pulling certain residents into the street.

Hysteria builds. The streets fill up with angry people.

Officers try to contain the growth, but they do not have the
numbers. They're being surrounded.
People begin resisting arrest. The fight breaks out. Residents begin jumping on officers. Shots ring out again from the officers' handguns.

Crowd scatters. More officers are jumped on. It turns into a full blown riot. People scream, yell, throws punches, kick.

Multiple people are down on the ground, injured, being attacked. Additional units arrive.

Callum helps James to a marked unit, putting him in the driver seat. Callum runs back in.

All law enforcement work to get their own, and get out.

The RA units take off, James follows.

INT. KAISER PERMANENTE MEDICAL CENTER (EMERGENCY ROOM)

James, still needing treatment, sits next to the two down officer's on the gurneys, covered up. Temporary bandage on his leg. Hollow.

Phone rings. Nurses walk by hearing the phone, staring at James. He answers.

    JAMES
    What?

    RICHARD (V.O.)
    I heard about the ambush. That has to wait... A house fire has just been reported... The address comes back to your wife.

James immediately pulls himself up, hobbling out of the hospital.

INT. MARKED UNIT

James speeds through the residential street. In the distance, fire trucks throw water on the burning structure.
James skids to a stop, kicks the door open.

EXT. THE TOWERS FAMILY HOME

Hobbling to the house, FIRE FIGHTERS and UNIFORMS stop him.

    JAMES
    (showing badge)
    This is my house!

They let him go, but block him.

    JAMES
    Where are they?!

    FIRE FIGHTER #1
    No one was inside. We do have
    someone in custody though.

    JAMES
    Where?

CUT TO:

James sees his son, sitting in the rear of the marked unit.

    UNIFORM #1
    ... We asked him about it. All he
    said was, "Now, my family has to
    live together again."

Beat. He walks away.

INT. WARNER MEDICAL CENTER

James holds Justine, standing outside the window into
Aimee's room. She's unconscious.

His phone rings. James closes his eyes. Beat.

Justine pulls away, walks off.

INT. APARTMENT
Back in The Jungle, James, SID (processing scene), and IA are present. Five Black Males, lined up, executed. Shotgun to the face again.

James observes the room, IA beside him. Guns used in the shootout are present. It's very clean, almost staged.

Beat.

PLAINCLOTHES #1
What do you want to do, James?

He ignores them.

INT. FAIRFAX HIGH SCHOOL (PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE): MAY 6, 2008 - DAY

James and Principal Tillard present, Tre'Wayne enters.

JAMES
Tre'Wayne, Officer James Towers. Obviously, you know who I am. I'm glad that we could meet under normal circumstances this time.

TRE'WAYNE
... What are you here for, man?

JAMES
To apologize. What happened to you was unnecessary.

TRE'WAYNE
I'm good.

JAMES
I'm glad to hear it. I know I can't erase what my son did. That's not my intent. I only want to extend any assistance I can be to you. I'm not saying you do, but if you need help in the coping process, I an
connect you to the resources you may need. Also, I've been talking to Principal Tillard, and I know some of the difficulties you are going through at home. If I can be of any help there as well...

(extends card)

... my cell is on the front, and I wrote my address on the back. It's there if you need it.

Beat. Tre'Wayne accepts the card, reading the information.

TRE'WAYNE
Thanks.

JAMES
You are very welcome. Glad to help.

Off them shaking hands.

INT. CHEVROLET TAHOE

James, on a burner (TEMPORARY CELL PHONE), texts: "Need to meet. My CO. He knows. Urgent."

EXT. LADERA PARK - NIGHT

DE'ANTHONY BROWN (35), sits at the benches, lights a joint.


JAMES
Don't move. Police officer.

Hands in the air. James rips the joint out of his mouth, forces him to the ground, secures cuffs.

Patting him down, James removes the contents of his pockets.

JAMES
Nice phone.
Glock 18 in the waist band. James sits him up, goes through his phone, find Callum's number. Shows it to De'Anthony.

JAMES
You want to tell me what I already know?

Off De'Anthony's contemplation.

INT. SHIPPING CARGO CONTAINER: MAY 8, 2008 - NIGHT

Entering, Callum and the rest of SIS find James waiting.

Beat.

JAMES
Step inside, boys. It only gets worse if you run.

CALLUM
... Run from what?

JAMES
Close the door.

Uncertainty still persists. Eventually, the door is closed.

CALLUM
What is this?

JAMES
You have two minutes.

Beat.

CALLUM
You gave us up?!?

JAMES
Brown did that all on his own.

CALLUM
Fuck you!
James does not react.

CALLUM
Fuck what you think. We put away more of these muthafuckas than you ever will. Sitting high on the mountain-top don't get it done in gutter.

JAMES
So, you put out hits. Tax the gangs by putting a target on someone else's back... And now we have two dead officers and their families. Not to mention mine.

CALLUM
You're looking at the only reason your daughter is still here.

JAMES
Stop while you're ahead.

Beat.

CALLUM
You're going to pick some dirty ass street scum gangsters over us?

Door opens up. SWAT OFFICERS enter.

JAMES
You were right, brother... We're not saviors... we're law enforcement.

Callum is shoved down, zip-ties secured. He stares at James the entire time. SIS is taken away. IA enters, approaching James. James ignores, and exits.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT
Door gets kicked in. Three SUSPECTS, faces covered. They search the entire apartment, find nothing.

SUSPECT #1
Where the fuck is he?


Bean bag rounds. Suspects fall to the ground. Knees to the back, Glock 18s kicked aside. Suspects detained.

Face masks off, pulled off the ground.

James stares into Tre'Wayne's face.

JAMES
Right here... Let's take a ride.

James escorts Tre'Wayne out.

INT. COURTYARD

James pounds on the door of apartment 11.

Blue is all the way around. Otis is at the top of the steps.

OTIS
She ain't there, what's up?

JAMES
Needed to notify her about her foster son. He's a suspect in the murder of two officers.

Beat.

OTIS
Ain't got nothing to do with us.

JAMES
It does. We're getting to the bottom of it... Seems some took it upon themselves to use street kids
to do their work. I'll be back.

Otis looks to some of the Crips by his side. James exits.

INT. APARTMENT: JULY 13, 2008 - DAY

Father, on the phone, walks through the hallway.

FATHER
... Hold on. I'll wake him up, Jus.

SON'S BEDROOM

Entering, James doesn't find his son. There is a sheet of paper on the bed.

FATHER
Babe, hold on.

Opening the sheet of paper:

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Towers,

I want to start off immediately by saying thank you for caring for me for the past eighteen years. You have no way to understand how much I appreciate you opening your home to me. I will never be able to repay you for all that you have done in my life to this point. It is because of you both that I have an idea of what having a family is like.

But, you are not my family. You are not my parents. I do not say that in a condescending manner. I could never do that to you. The truth is the truth whether or not we want it to be. I can no longer remain in your home. My presence is tearing your family apart. I love you too much to do such a thing.

It is with this intention that I leave you. I choose to go in this way to cause the least amount of anguish to you. If you had known, you would have stopped me, and then something even worse might happen to your family. I am not foolish. I know that everyone will be sad, and please forgive me. But, if there is a God, I have asked him to take the sting of that memory away. You all can be the family you were
supposed to be now.

Mr. Towers, thank you for not treating me as anything other than a son of yours. You have given me the strength to make this decision. I do love you. Mrs. Towers, thank you for protecting me from the words of others. You were the angel I could always talk to. I do love you too. Please tell your daughters that I love them as much as one person can. Leona is another angel. She would always talk with me about how she felt, not having the relationship others have with her biological father. Her words, like yours Mrs. Towers, were like the stars in the sky, giving me small hope in the darkness.

Please be very patient with Francis. I am afraid that she will take the longest time to recover from my departure. She will always be a good friend of mine. And Amorette, please let her know that I will continue to pray for her. I've never stopped. Please tell her as many times as she needs to hear it to believe this; I do not blame her. I will never blame her. I do love her.

I love all of you. But, your job is done. I am eighteen now. No longer do you have to care about me.

Sincerely,

James

FADE OUT.