

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

LEAVING L.A.

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

By

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Abstract

Leaving L.A.

By

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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

Dark. Quiet. Still. Peaceful. Waves crash. Seagulls caw.

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
(turning 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. Francis 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!

More laughter. Francis blocks James from charging. Beat.

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' wannabe

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

Will do. Gotta go. Lima Yankee.

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 left.

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.

Beat. James starts with chest pumps, then mouth to mouth.
Repeats. Nothing. Repeats. Nothing.

CALLUM
(Grabbing James)

LT, it's too much smoke. You barely
have air to give him.

JAMES
I can't take him outside.

Repeats. Nothing. Repeats.

Luke HEAVES into James' mouth. James jumps back, spitting,
choking. Luke gasps for air, still throwing up.

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.

James and Callum follow, holding Luke's son's hand. Locals
watch without reaction. James finds Otis in the crowd.

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.

Justine sniffles, back still turned. James approaches.
Justine leaves the room, shutting the bedroom door. Beat.
Leona and Amorette come and hug their brother.

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
Guillermo... 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 salesman.

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
clearly, 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.

James tries Amorette again. Nothing. Sweets calls. James does not answer.

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

James dials Amorette again, walking to the Tahoe. Voice
mail. Someone rapidly approaches. James reaches.

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

Brimms, 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.

Beat. James shakes his hand. Heads out.

INTERVIEW ROOM

De La Garza sits. Beat. Moments later, James enters.

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.

De La Garza studies him. Beat.

JESUS

I didn't get your name?

JAMES

Just a member of your defense team.

JESUS

Your name?

Stand off. Beat. De La Garza stands, pounds on the door repeatedly. No answer.

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!

James strikes Charles across the face. Charles recovers.
James swings again.
Charles goes savage. They tumble onto the ground. Loud thud.

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

It's 3:55. It's 3:55.

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 aided 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.

Social Worker exits. Still quiet. Beat.

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.

Beat.

JAMES

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.'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

Raining. Few cars out. Junkyard in industrial area.

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?

Wrestling noises. Beat. Callum looks to James.

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?

Beat. Staring contest. James walks away.

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.

Jeep parked. Door opens. Carman exits, unknown to James.

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 marrying 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.

James taps Callum, pointing at the phone. Callum waves him off. James scans. Beat.

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 Barryl?

JAMES

Who?

UNKNOWN

Barryl?!

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?

UNKNOWN

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.

Beat. James snaps pictures. James pauses. Beat.

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.

Right turn on Towne. James dodges oncoming and ongoing traffic. More bullets. James skids onto 9th. 100+ mph, heading for LA Live area.

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%.

WARREN

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.

(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?

Beat. Justine slow nods. James answers.

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

LT...

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 takes James' hand. Kisses it. Beat.

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

down.

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.

Exhales. Footsteps. He turns halfway. Safety off.

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?

Beat. Flash-bang. Bright light, loud noise. They stumble.

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.