

Stolen Lives

an original screenplay by

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FADE IN.

INT. CLEVELAND MAVERICKS GYMNASIUM - DAY

A basketball court. Two college teams, the Bucks and the Mavericks, wage battle on the hardwoods. The ball is passed. Caught by LUCAS FARR (21). He deftly weaves through opposing defense. Shoots. Scores.

A team mate, DEVON ANDREWS (19) waves his hands, open. Lucas sees Devon, but ignores him, fakes a pass and drives to the net instead. Jumps. Shoots. Scores.

He lands with a wince, working out a limp. Turns and readies himself for the incoming offensive. Devon rushes past him, setting up defense.

DEVON
Share the love, Farr.

Lucas ignores the comment.

ON TELEVISION: The score shows the Mavs up by two, timer ticking down to single digits.

SPORTSCASTER
...the Bucks are going to have to
pull a rabbit out of the hat to win
this one...

INT. RON GARRISON'S HOUSE - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS: A newspaper sports section. College basketball stats. Odds. Calculations scrawled in pencil. A circle around the money line for the Mavericks.

RON GARRISON (45) dressed in an unbuttoned sheriff's uniform, paces behind a couch. He is transfixed on the television, puffing a cigarette.

RON
...for once...Jesus Christ...just
once...

ON TELEVISION: Lucas lunges for the ball and steals it. He races down the court, seconds counting down.

SPORTSCASTER
...and it's Mich Tech with a steal!

Ron stops pacing. Glares at the television in disbelief.

INT. CLEVELAND MAVERICKS GYMNASIUM - DAY

Lucas jump shoots. A DEFENDER collides with him mid-air. The image snaps to slow-motion as Lucas lands off balance, leg twisting unnaturally. We PUSH inside of...

LUCAS' KNEE

A HUM. Blood PUMPING. In slow-motion the knee cap dislocates and moves out of place. DEEPER inside the knee the anterior cruciate ligament stretches. A slight tear. Blood seeps into the cavity as we pull out to...

LUCAS

The image returns to normal speed, Lucas slamming to the court in agony.

The three pointer sinks the net.

A BUZZER BLOWS.

INT. RON GARRISON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ron glares at the television in disbelief.

ON TELEVISION: Lucas hobbles to his feet and grins, basking in the glory of his win. He is ushered off the court.

SPORTSCASTER

Unbelievable! Bucks win! Michigan
Tech wins!

Ron erupts, smacking a lamp across the room.

INT. A&P - DAY

We pull out of a small television broadcasting Lucas' win. A CUSTOMER watches the black and white, but the A&P STORE MANAGER is focused on something else.

WYATT FARR (17) black hoodie covering his head, pockets a handful of condom boxes. He sees the manager's stare and makes a bee line for the exit.

His friend ANNIE WEISS (17), emo wannabe, smacks at some chewing gum watching the television through her goth mascara lined eyes.

ANNIE

Check it out man. Your bro'got
skanked.

WYATT

So what.

Wyatt tugs at Annie, flashing the condoms in his pocket.

A&P STORE MANAGER

Hey!

Wyatt and Annie dart out the door. The Store Manager dials the phone.

EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

Cheers emit from an apartment. Through the window a small gathering of college students celebrate the Buck's win in front of a television.

DWIGHT MCBANE (39), dressed in a deputy's uniform, walks past the apartment, throwing a lonely look to the revelers inside. He unlocks his apartment door, enters, and shuts the door behind him.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

A paunch, receding hair line, Dwight lies on the floor struggling with a set of crunches. Heavy breathing and moans accompany each awkward movement.

DWIGHT

...8...9...10...

LATER

Dwight does chin ups on a home chin up bar, the kind that extends between a door frame. The chin ups are awkward, the bar positioned at the wrong height, requiring Dwight to duck his head. He struggles to pull up, teeth clenched, arms quivering...

The Bar Gives.

Dwight falls o.c. on to the floor.

DWIGHT (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Damn it.

INT. DINER/BREAK ROOM - DAY

LAURIE FARR (42) celebrates before a small black and white television broadcasting the post-game. Images of Lucas being ushered off court, smiling. A couple of bus boys and MARLENE (34) watch over her shoulder. Laurie beams, hugging the bus boys.

LAURIE

He did it!

DELMER (40), the diner manager, steps into the doorway.

DELMER

Come on, boys and girls. Break it up. We've got a full house out there.

Laurie pulls away from the TV, smiling at Delmer.

LAURIE

You're one hell of a buzz kill, Delmer. But you know, what? That's fine, because it won't be long before my boy's in the NBA and I'm outta here.

DELMER

Yeah? Well, right now you're on the clock. My clock.

Delmer hands Laurie an apron. Laurie shoots Delmer an irritated glance, then turns back to the television. She smiles and ties on the apron, going about her business.

MAIN TITLE - STOLEN LIVES

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM - DAY

SCRIMMAGE: BLUES vs. REDS. A basketball is passed. Lucas (REDS) catches it and dribbles down court barking out plays. His every move is shadowed by:

DEVON (BLUES). He plays a tight defense.

Lucas drives the lane. Stops, letting Devon slide by. He jumps for the shot. Devon sneaks a grab at Lucas' jersey, pulling him off balance. Lucas falls to the floor, eyes fixed on the ball as it...

SWISHES. All net.

Lucas flinches, walking off stiffness in his knee. He stares Devon down and brushes past him, bumping shoulders. A warning to back off.

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM - MOMENTS LATER

Devon dribbles up court with mechanical deliberation. He stops at the top of the key, eyes glued to Lucas. An unspoken challenge is accepted.

Devon pops, driving the hoop. Lucas backpedals, playing tight. Devon spins, changing direction. Lucas mirrors, but the pressure is too great for his knee. He crumples to the court like a wet paper bag. Devon jukes a remaining DEFENDER and makes the shot.

WHISTLE BLOWS. The TRAINER rushes the court. COACH follows.

Devon glares without remorse, the last man standing. Lucas stays down, writhing in pain.

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS: Lucas lies on an examination table. An X-ray machine is swung over his leg with a HUM. Three leg X-rays are hung on a light chart, each accompanied by the photographic click of the machine. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

EXAMINATION ROOM

DR. TAYLOR (53), a short squat man with graying hair, gently probes Lucas' knee. Surgical scars wind across it. The doctor gently rotates the knee cap to see if it slips. Lucas flinches.

DR. TAYLOR

That hurt?

LUCAS

Little.

Deadpan, Taylor takes Lucas by the ankle and raises his leg, bending it at the knee. He repeats the flexing motion. Lucas clenches his teeth.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

How bad is it?

Taylor sets the leg back on the examination table. Marks his chart.

DR. TAYLOR

Agitated. Enflamed. Not promising signs for your recovery, Lucas. In all honesty, I'm not sure the grafts are going to hold.

LUCAS

Well shit, doc. You better make them hold. These are the finals.

DR. TAYLOR

You play on it like this and you're only going to make it worse, Luc. I'm sorry, but sooner or later this thing is going to catch up with you.

LUCAS

I'm not sitting out. No way.

Lucas' jaw tightens. He hops off the table with a wince. Grabs his jacket and crutches.

Taylor watches him with sympathy. He takes Lucas by the arm.

DR. TAYLOR

I know what you've got riding on this. What your family has riding on it. But a person has to acknowledge their limits.

Lucas' confident veneer dissolves into something more fragile. Taylor closes the door to errant ears.

DR. TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Look. I know some investors. Guys who have helped out others like you. They pay very well to someone in your situation. Someone who can...monitor the score.

Lucas pulls away from Taylor.

LUCAS

What are you talking about?

DR. TAYLOR

Insurance, son. Insurance.

LUCAS

I'm a first round pick. I don't need insurance.

Lucas pushes past Taylor.

EXT. MERCY HOSPITAL - DAY

Lucas sits in a white El Camino with rusted wheel wells. He turns the ignition, a whining cycle that finally catches. A fan belt screams loudly.

Lucas stares into space, lost in thought. He suddenly bangs his fist on the steering wheel.

INT. WIXOM FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

After school stragglers wander the halls. Wyatt and Annie hold hands, slinking past the high school office.

PRINCIPAL WEIDERMAN (38) scrawny with a bad plaid shirt, speaks on the phone. He sees them pass and hangs up, giving chase.

HALLWAY

Wyatt opens a door and Annie steps inside. He checks that the coast is clear and steps in behind her.

(MORE)

HALLWAY (CONT'D)

Weiderman steps into the hallway,
not sure where Wyatt and Annie went.

PROP ROOM

A theater prop room filled with sets,
furniture, costumes. Annie smiles at
Wyatt and pulls him into a hanging
rack of lush costumes: medieval period
pieces.

The two are swallowed by the material and fabric, easing
back into the shadows. Annie starts to kiss Wyatt. He kisses
her back. She starts to undress.

A KNOCK on the door. Wyatt and Annie freeze. The sound of a
key. Wyatt stoops down for a view under the hanging garments.
Weiderman's feet step into the room. He steps up to the
wardrobe rack and pushes aside the clothes.

Annie covers herself. Wyatt glares.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR/STOCK ROOM - DAY

Ron doubles over as a fist lands in his stomach. JIMMY WILBORN
(38) and STACY MITCHELL (50) watch from the shadows as DEKE
SIMPSON (35) lands another punch.

RON

..uh...

And another...

RON (CONT'D)

...hhh...shit...

And another. Jimmy, balding and a fondness for old college
sweatshirts sits on a stool, the man in charge. He sips a
beer as 280 pound Deke makes Ron look like a limp zip lock
bag of soup. Stacy, a wannabe mafioso dressed in jogging
suit, nurses a scotch, engrossed in the show.

Ron leans against a table for support. Takes another fist to
the stomach. He MOANS through a trickle of drool.

Jimmy takes pride in his random use of 99 cent words.

JIMMY

It's your own fault, you sad sack of
shit. If you'd just stop with the
puerile bullshit, we wouldn't have
to bring out Torquemada here.

Deke concentrates, taking pride in his work. He lands another
solid blow to Ron's stomach. Ron doubles against the table.

STACY

You have no luck, patsy. None. Lady
luck shits on you daily.

RON

(gasping for air)
...keep it...body blows...

Deke 'keeps it to body blows' alright. Another gut buster.
Ron collapses to the table, gasping for air.

JIMMY

As resident humanitarian I'm asking
you, please, stop fucking gambling!
I'm sick of taking your money...and
even more sick of you not having
any.

Ron gasps for air. Deke, Stacy, and Jimmy exchange glances.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Ron.

Ron doesn't get up. Deke checks on him.

DEKE

Oops. Sorry, Jimmy.

Jimmy sets down his drink and checks on Ron himself.

JIMMY

I can't double the interest off a
dead man, Deke.

Ron catches his breath. He stands and wipes bloody drool and
sweat from his face. Finds his legs with a little help from
Deke. He looks like shit.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Get him a drink.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - MOMENTS LATER

A short glass of whiskey poured. Polished off in one gulp.
Ron sets the glass down and grimaces, hand probing the damage
to his ribs.

RON

What's my figure?

JIMMY

Stacy?

Stacy moves behind the bar and grabs a ledger from the
register. Figures. Arithmetic.

STACY

Hundred grand. 'bout that.

JIMMY

Do everybody a favor and don't bet for awhile, okay? Just pay it off.

RON

What about the juice?

JIMMY

I'm a businessman not a philanthropist. The juice is on.

RON

With a 20% vig I'm barely scraping at the principle. I'll be paying you back with my social security.

JIMMY

If you keep coming up short, I doubt you'll last that long.

RON

Come on, Jimmy. You've got to know someone. Have an inside. Give me a taste and I'll pay you back.

STACY

You're a fucking eight ball, patsy. You could have the winning numbers to the lotto and still end up losing.

Jimmy ignores Ron, watching the television.

RON

Just once, Jimmy. That's all I'm asking for. One score.

JIMMY

Why would I let you in on a scoop when you've got no money to front? It's like giving it away, Ron, and we've already established, I'm no Santa Claus.

Ron drains a dribble of whiskey from his glass.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Do yourself a favor. Stop at the bruises. Things get much uglier.

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY - DAY

A SEDAN speeds past a SHERIFF'S CRUISER hiding off the shoulder. The cruiser's lights flash to life as it speeds off in pursuit.

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Ron gets out of the sheriff's cruiser dressed in a sheriff's uniform. He holds a citation booklet in his hand, moving stiffly from his beating.

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Ron stands next to sedan addressing the driver.

RON

These tickets run one, maybe one hundred fifty dollars, and they play hell with your insurance.

(beat)

What do you have in your wallet?

INT. WIXOM FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Wyatt and Annie brood outside of the principal's office. Through the office window behind them, Weiderman berates Lucas.

Lucas nods, absorbing the brunt of Weiderman's assault. He follows Weiderman's gestures as he points at Wyatt.

EXT. WIXOM FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

Lucas and Wyatt cross the parking lot. Lucas hobbles on his crutches in the lead. Wyatt lags behind, struggling with a guitar case and backpack. Lucas notices Wyatt's struggle and takes the guitar case, placing it in the El Camino's bed.

LUCAS

How you going to pay it back?

WYATT

It's just a couple boxes of rubbers, man.

LUCAS

Which you stole.

(beat)

Don't you get it, Wyatt? That's not alright. It's a crime.

WYATT

No. The fucking crime is that I didn't get to use them.

LUCAS
Get in the car.

They get into the car.

INT. EL CAMINO - CONTINUOUS

Lucas tries to start the engine. It whines. He keeps trying as he speaks.

LUCAS
Mom's going to love this.

WYATT
There's no reason to tell mom.

LUCAS
You mean aside from the fact that she has to sign the suspension slip.

Wyatt flashes the slip. A forged signature.

WYATT
Not telling her isn't a lie, Lucas.
It's just not telling her.

Lucas burns at Wyatt.

LUCAS
You're a hard ass in there and now you're going to wuss out with mom?
No way. You eat what you dish out.

Wyatt looks away. Lucas tries the engine again. It catches, the familiar sound of the whining belt fills the air.

EXT. DINER - DAY

A Wixom County Sheriff cruiser pulls to a stop in front of the small twenty four hour diner. The cruiser's wheel hops the curb, then lands back where it belongs. DEPUTY Dwight McBane hops out of the car and hurries inside the restaurant.

INT. DINER/KITCHEN - DAY

Laurie grabs her purse and jacket from a locker. She looks at herself in a locker mirror, matting down errant hairs. She pulls back her cheeks, making hints of wrinkles disappear, then releases, frowning as they reappear. She sighs and shuts the locker.

Delmer notices Laurie on her way out.

DELMER

Whoa whoa whoa, Laurie. Where you goin'?

LAURIE

Six O'clock, Delmer. I'm off.

DELMER

The hell you are, honey. You still got two tables out there.

LAURIE

Marlene's takin' 'em for me.

DELMER

You can't just go about shuffling around tables whenever you want, Laurie.

LAURIE

The hell I can't.

INT. DINER/ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

The door chime announces Dwight's arrival. He crosses to the bar and grabs a laminated menu.

Two deputy sheriff officers, KENT BURNHAM (34) and NILES MITCHUM (28) sit in a nearby booth. Kent elbows Niles, nodding toward Dwight. Dwight gestures hello to the men with a smile.

Kent whispers something to Niles prompting him to laugh and leave. Dwight pores over the menu.

Laurie crosses from the back of the restaurant. She catches Dwight's eye.

MARLENE

See you tomorrow, Laur.

Laurie backs out the door, waving good bye to Marlene. Marlene steps up to Dwight as he watches Laurie leave the building.

MARLENE (CONT'D)

Alright there, dream lover. What'll you have?

Dwight blushes, caught ogling.

EXT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

Laurie moves down the walk and breaks off toward her car. We continue straight on toward Niles. He opens the door to Dwight's cruiser and puts it in neutral, rolling the car down the driveway with a mischievous grin.

INT. FARR HOME - NIGHT

Lucas studies at the kitchen table. Wyatt watches a war movie in the dark. Laurie enters holding two bags of groceries. She notices Wyatt in the shadows.

LAURIE
Little help here?

Lucas steps into the room, grabs a bag from Laurie. Wyatt makes no attempt to move. Lucas glares.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
(to Wyatt)
'Hi, Mom.'

No response. Explosions and artillery fire blast on the television.

Laurie frowns and moves past Lucas into the kitchen. Lucas gestures for Wyatt to speak with her. Wyatt burrows in defiantly. Lucas glares, then follows Laurie into the...

KITCHEN

Laurie sets the bag on the counter. Lucas hovers in the doorway. Laurie registers his crutches leaning against the table.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
What did you do?

LUCAS
I'm fine.

LAURIE
Then what are those?

LUCAS
I just need to take it easy for a day or two. That's all.

LAURIE
Jesus, Lucas. This isn't the time to be getting injured.

LUCAS
Mom. There's something else.

FAMILY ROOM
Wyatt aims the remote, turns down the volume.

KITCHEN
LAURIE Spill it.

FAMILY ROOM

Wyatt listens intently.

LUCAS (O.S.)

Wyatt got into some trouble.

He leaves the room.

KITCHEN

Laurie sighs, calmly digging into the grocery bag. She produces a pack of cigarettes.

LAURIE

What did he do?

LUCAS

You quit.

LAURIE

I quit, I start. What did he do?

LUCAS

He shop lifted, then tried to have sex in some costume room at school.

Laurie suddenly looks lost. Concerned. Just as suddenly she lets out a chuckle.

LAURIE

That's not so bad. I mean that's not so bad, Lucas. Jesus, I thought you were going to say he beat somebody up, or...or, shot somebody.

LUCAS

He's suspended, mom.

Laurie lights her cigarette. Exhales, almost a sigh.

LAURIE

It's not the first time.

LUCAS

You need to talk to him.

LAURIE

The boy's had a tougher go of it than you, Lucas. Cut him some slack.

LUCAS

Mom.

Lucas stares. Laurie resigns, exasperated.

LAURIE
 Just one day without a circus.
 (beat)
 Wyatt!

Laurie crosses to the living room and flips on a light. No Wyatt.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
 Wyatt?

Lucas and Laurie exchange worried looks.

EXT. WIXOM FALLS - NIGHT

Wyatt pedals down main street on his beat up silver BMX dirt bike. The bike is much too small for him, his knees nearly touching the handlebars when he settles into the seat.

He speeds past the diner.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Dwight leaves a tip and exits.

EXT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

Dwight walks down the sidewalk. Suddenly stops. His cruiser is gone. He panics, running to the curb where the cruiser should be. He grabs his shoulder-mounted walkie talkie.

DWIGHT
 This is officer McBane. I've got a -
 a ten seven - stolen vehicle...

Dwight spins around in the street, frantic. He suddenly catches sight of Niles and Kent laughing hysterically from their cruiser parked down the street.

DISPATCH
 Ten four. What's your two-twenty?

Dwight slowly figures it out. His car has been moved around the side of the diner. He glares at Niles and Kent.

DISPATCH (CONT'D)
 McBane, what's your two-twenty?

DWIGHT
 Disregard. Disregard.

EXT. WEISS HOME - NIGHT

A well to do middle-class family home. Expensive landscaping, prominent lighting fixtures, and the traditional mid-Western garage mounted basketball hoop.

Wyatt coasts through the side yard on his bike, riding around the back of the home. Knocks on the patio door. The door slides open and he steps inside.

EXT. WEISS HOME - NIGHT

A glass of Vodka poured. Cigarette lit. Vodka swallowed.

Wyatt paces, pouring another shot of vodka. Annie sits on a folding lawn chair. Distant; locked in her own thoughts. The SEX PISTOLS rattle and hum from a small cassette player.

WYATT

He thinks he's perfect. Well, I'm not. Okay? They never ask me. I never get to explain how things happen.

Wyatt swallows another shot of vodka. The alcohol lends him confidence. He echoes Johnny Rotten's lyrics:

WYATT (CONT'D)

I know what's what. The things I want. I know how to get them. Fuck them if it's not their way - not right for them. It's fucking right for me.

Annie connects. The phrase seems to mimic what she's thinking.

ANNIE

Fuck them.

Wyatt watches Annie for a beat. Her eyes meet his.

SWISH PAN TO:

INT. WEISS HOME/ANNIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The PHONE RINGS in the b.g. Wyatt and Annie fuck in the reflection of a mirror hanging on a closet door. A heap of flesh, sheet, and pillow. On a nearby shelf is a picture of Annie's parents. The definitive conservative and upstanding citizens. We hear the click and whir of an answering machine.

MRS. WEISS

(on machine)

Annie. Where are you? If we find out that you've gone out...

Wyatt's eyes open, glimpsing the Weiss family portrait. Pleasure drains from his face as he catches himself in the mirror. He loses rhythm.

MRS. WEISS (CONT'D)

We're going to be home from the Nelson's in about thirty minutes. You had better be there.

Annie's eyes open. She grabs Wyatt desperately.

ANNIE

Don't stop.

Wyatt doubles his efforts. Annie closes her eyes in concentration.

INT. COUNTY SHERIFF'S STATION/RON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Dwight stands across from Ron's desk, all riled up. Ron fumbles through paperwork, only affording Dwight half of his attention.

DWIGHT

I'm sick and tired of these practical jokes, Ron. I want to be able to come into work without feeling like this is kindergarten or something.

RON

You're taking this way too personally, Dwight.

DWIGHT

What if something would have happened and I needed the car then, right that minute?

Ron stops fumbling at glares at Dwight.

RON

You want me to write them up? Fine, sunshine. Then I'll have to write you up for leaving your car unlocked.

Dwight shrinks back.

RON (CONT'D)

Listen, McBane, this is a man's world. There isn't any room for hurt feelings and crying over a little hazing. I've got more important shit to deal with.

Dwight shuffles with embarrassment.

INT. SHERIFF'S POLICE CRUISER/MOVING - NIGHT

Dwight drives. Somber and despondent, he's not the happiest of campers. The radio on his shoulder CHIRPS to life.

DISPATCH

Assault and robbery at Piedmont
Pharmacy. One four twenty North
Holland. Caucasian male, late teens,
suspect is unarmed.

DWIGHT

Ten-four. Car thirteen responding.

Dwight flips on the lights and siren.

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The cruiser accelerates down the road, lights flashing.

INT. SHERIFF'S POLICE CRUISER/MOVING - MOMENTS LATER

THROUGH WINDSHIELD: the cruiser pulls into the pharmacy parking lot. LARRY STEINER (36), the store PHARMACIST, dashes out toward Dwight. His shirt is stained with blood from a broken nose. Larry leans down by the passenger side window and points around the side of the building.

LARRY

That way! He's on a bike!

Dwight steps on the accelerator.

EXT. PIEDMONT PHARMACY - CONTINUOUS

The cruiser speeds through the parking lot, screeching around the corner of the building.

INT. SHERIFF'S POLICE CRUISER/MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Dwight squints, focusing on the horizon.

DWIGHT'S POV: A RIDER on a bicycle glances over his shoulder at the distant end of the parking lot. Dwight white knuckles the wheel as the cruiser barrels toward the parking lot perimeter.

EXT. PIEDMONT PHARMACY - CONTINUOUS

The cruiser speeds off the lot onto a gravel service road. The rider suddenly cuts off the road and pedals toward an adjacent woods, cutting into a trail.

The cruiser veers off the gravel road, skidding to a halt a few yards from the woods.

Dwight jumps out and sprints, fumbling to secure a night stick on his belt.

Huffing and puffing, Dwight leaps a muddy ravine. His night stick flies from his belt, smacking into the mud. He stumbles, looking back, but continues running, dashing straight into...

THE WOODS

Dwight makes his own path, branches and brush smacking him in the face. He runs a parallel course with the bike, several yards ahead and to the right of him.

The bike's gears grind. Pedals pushed in a blur of motion.

Dwight holds up his hands to block the branches, squinting to see ahead of him. He dashes toward the rider, the winding trail turning toward Dwight.

DWIGHT
(out of breath)
Stop! Hey!

DWIGHT'S POV: Branches smack into view, obscuring details of the rider on the bike. The rider realizes that he is riding straight toward Dwight and stops. He tries to turn the bike around, but can't. He ditches it and sprints off into the woods.

Dwight can barely breathe. He struggles to keep up. He suddenly trips on something and smacks to the ground.

The rider disappears into the woods.

Dwight lifts his face, half covered in mud, and looks toward his feet to see: a silver BMX dirt bike. Thunder crackles on the horizon.

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Rain wets the winding two lane blacktop. The rider emerges from the woods along side the road. It's Wyatt. He nervously checks over his shoulder as a sheriff's cruiser crests a nearby hill, lights flashing.

A spot light from the car beams Wyatt. He looks up and down the highway for an escape. But there is nowhere to run. He surrenders to his knees.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. SHERIFF'S POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

We watch through the rain dappled windshield as the cruiser pulls into the pharmacy parking lot.

Officer Mitchum crouches beside the muddy dirt bike. Two sheriff's cruisers, reds and blues flashing sit outside the store.

EXT. PIEDMONT PHARMACY - CONTINUOUS

Ron steps out of the cruiser and approaches the store. His movements are stiff and restrained by his bruised ribs.

Ron watches as, through the store window, Dwight speaks with the Store Manager and Larry, the store pharmacist. Dwight's uniform is wet with rain and mud. Larry holds a bloody towel to his broken nose.

Mitchum sees Ron approaching. Steps up to greet him.

RON

What have you got?

Mitchum nods at his cruiser.

MITCHUM

Wyatt Farr. Pharmacist says he caught him pulling a five finger discount on some pharmaceuticals. Didn't have anything on him. He must have dumped it somewhere between here and D-19. Kid was fingered earlier in the week for stealing condoms from the A&P.

Wyatt stares from behind the rain dappled window in the back seat of Mitchum's cruiser.

RON

Get him processed. We'll search the woods in the morning.

Mitchum nods. Ron turns to the store window.

Dwight concentrates on the other side of the window, jotting scrupulous notes. Larry continues with his explanation.

LARRY

He was in the back by the counter...

INT. PIEDMONT PHARMACY/FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Larry stands behind the pharmacy counter, filling a prescription. He watches Wyatt's every move.

LARRY (V.O.)

Anybody else, I would've never suspected anything...

INT. PIEDMONT PHARMACY/FLASHBACK - MOMENTS LATER

Larry moves to a shelf, replacing a bottle of pills. He steps back into the aisle to see: an open drawer beneath the counter. He hurries over to find the drawer empty.

Larry looks up at a surveillance mirror. Wyatt's warped reflection hurries down the aisle and out of the pharmacy.

Larry dashes after Wyatt.

INT. PIEDMONT PHARMACY/FLASHBACK - MOMENTS LATER

Through the store window Wyatt walks toward his bike outside. Larry hurries out after him, yelling.

Larry tries to grab Wyatt. Wyatt pushes him. Larry wrestles Wyatt back against a wall. Wyatt lands a wild right to Larry's nose.

The Store Manager frantically dials 911.

INT. PIEDMONT PHARMACY/PRESENT - NIGHT

CLOSE ON OPEN PHARMACY DRAWER: A FORENSICS OFFICER paints dust onto the drawer, revealing finger prints.

Ron and the Store Manager stand at the pharmacy counter. Ron studies Larry.

STORE MANAGER

Larry said he noticed some of our inventory was missing a few weeks back. So we've been on our toes waiting for something like this to happen. But hell. It still surprises you when it does.

Larry senses Ron's gaze. He fidgets nervously. Ron nods.

RON

Yep. It's surprising what some people will do.

INT. FARR HOME - NIGHT

A RINGING PHONE. Laurie hurries across the room and lifts the receiver.

LAURIE

Hello?

Laurie shoots a stunned look at Lucas. All is not well.

INT. COUNTY SHERIFF'S STATION - NIGHT

Wyatt is finger printed. Index. Middle. Ring. His mug shot is taken.

Bail money is counted out on the counter. Laurie, disheartened by the circumstances, counts out the bills, each bill another nail in her coffin.

Lucas watches as Wyatt is ushered from a holding cell by a regretful Dwight. Wyatt avoids Lucas' biting glare.

Dwight removes Wyatt's handcuffs and the boy hurries toward the exit, wringing his wrists.

RON'S OFFICE

Ron watches out his window under the cover of a darkened office and venetian blinds.

Outside his window the Farr family moves toward Laurie's station wagon, somber and disconnected.

Ron's eyes wander to the Wixom Falls Herald sport's section. Lucas is pictured under the bi-line. Michigan Tech: Going Farr, or a Farr Chance? A sinister grin creeps across Ron's face.

INT. STATION WAGON - NIGHT

Laurie drives, too frustrated to even discuss the situation. Lucas stares out the window. Wyatt broods in the back seat. After a silence:

WYATT

...every stolen bicycle or broken windshield. All my fault...

LAURIE

It'll be alright, Wyatt.

Lucas snorts in disbelief. Laurie scowls at him. He turns away, glaring out the window. Laurie looks at Wyatt in the rear view with sympathy.

The sound of a distorted electric guitar crescendoes.

INT. FARR HOME/WYATT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Guitar strings quiver, frantically beaten on. The blasting distortion fades as we hear the sound of the strings without the amplifier.

Wyatt bangs away at his guitar. Stereo headphones plugged into an amp.

The simple plucks and twangs of the bare strings make his violent movements seem ridiculous.

FAMILY ROOM

Laurie sits on the floor dressed in a bathrobe. She hugs her knees to her chest, the blue hue of the television coldly illuminating her.

ON TELEVISION: a younger Wyatt sits at the end of a kitchen table. He smiles sheepishly for the camera. Lucas, a teenager, hurries up behind him, trying to fix a pointy birthday hat on his head. Wyatt squirms. Lucas laughs. A video version of Laurie laughs o.s.

LAURIE

(on video)

Oh, come on, honey. It looks cute.

ON TELEVISION: Wyatt rolls his eyes and stops squirming as Lucas finally secures the hat on his head. He pulls one on himself, smiling broadly.

Lucas steps into the room, sipping a bottle of beer. Laurie smiles at the video.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

What was this, his eleventh?

LUCAS

I don't remember.

ON TELEVISION: Lucas hands Wyatt a large package - the undeniable shape of a guitar. Wyatt's eyes widen when he sees it. He tears into the musical note paper.

Lucas takes a swig of beer.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Twelfth.

WYATT

(on video)

Holy crap! Holy crap! This is so cool!

ON TELEVISION: The video tape suddenly stops, replaced by the news.

Laurie tosses the remote onto the coffee table. She looks over at Lucas. He stares somberly at the television as if the image hadn't changed. He yawns.

LAURIE

Doctor's say you have to sleep four hours to make up for every hour you miss.

LUCAS

I'm not tired.

Laurie repositions herself for a better look at Lucas.

LAURIE

How's the leg?

LUCAS

Better. Little weak, but...it's going to be fine, mom.

LAURIE

This isn't the time to be getting injured, baby. Your so close to finishing school. So close to the draft.

LUCAS

I know.

LAURIE

You've gotta work ten times as hard as the next guy if you want to be...

LUCAS

...ten times as good. I got it, mom.

Laurie smiles. She's trained Lucas well. She stands and crosses to him, kissing him on the forehead. She studies his eyes for a moment, then pats his cheek.

LAURIE

Don't stay up too late.

Lucas watches Laurie leave, then sits down on the couch. He points the remote.

ON TELEVISION: Wyatt laughs and ogles his guitar. He reaches across the guitar in his lap and hugs Lucas.

Lucas takes a hard swig of beer.

EXT. WIXOM FALLS - EARLY MORNING

The sky hints blue with coming dawn. Streets vacant. Windows dark with sleep. The world couldn't be a more tranquil place.

But somewhere in the darkness, the echo of a bouncing ball. Sneakers squeaking on dewy asphalt. A restless soul.

EXT. WIXOM FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - EARLY MORNING

Lucas, drenched in sweat, assaults the net. Despite the darkness of the pre-dawn hours he lands shot after shot, sharing a magical bond with the net. His movements are those of a trained master. Fluid and beautiful.

Headlights sweep Lucas' face. A sheriff's cruiser pulls into the parking lot. He stops dribbling, catching his breath.

The cruiser parks, high beams illuminating the court. Ron steps out, saunters to the chain link perimeter. He grabs ahold of the fence, studying Lucas. Lucas dribbles, ignoring Ron's presence.

RON

Surprised to see you out here, Farr,
after that nasty fall you took.

LUCAS

I'm a quick healer.

Lucas shoots and sinks another basket. He limps a little as he retrieves the ball.

RON

Looks to me like you're still a little
gimpy there, friend.

Lucas shoots. Sinks it.

RON (CONT'D)

How the hell can you even see
anything?

LUCAS

(indignant)
X-ray vision.

Lucas dribbles.

RON

Yeah, guys patrolling out here nights
say they see you sinking shots without
so much as a match. Then again,
members of your family seem capable
of all sorts of things under the
cover of night. Don't they?

Lucas shoots and misses. He rebounds the ball and sinks a lay up.

LUCAS

You want to watch me play, Sheriff?
Watch the TV.

RON

Thought you might like a word on
your brother's case.

Lucas drops the ball to his hip. Waits for Ron. Ron lights a
cigarette. He's slow. Irritatingly slow. Lucas tries to look
like he doesn't care, but he breaks before Ron does.

LUCAS

Yeah? Well?

Ron throws the match aside. Glares at Lucas through a haze
of smoke.

RON

Not good news. The finger prints
confirm the pharmacist's story. Your
brother stole the drugs.

Lucas' jaw tightens. He suddenly chucks the ball across the
court in a fit of rage. The ball slams into the chain link
with a crash.

Ron saunters onto the court, confident as hell. That was the
reaction he was hoping for. He takes a long drag.

RON (CONT'D)

You know, Farr. I can fix this.

LUCAS

You can whip me up a new brother?

RON

I can give him a fresh start.

Lucas cuts at Ron.

RON (CONT'D)

Let's say that I could perform some
magic, get your brother off. What
would you do to see that happen?

LUCAS

What are you, Harry Houdini?

Ron smiles.

RON

Call me the master fucking magician,
but I could do it. The real question
is, what would you do to see that
happen? You think you might be willing
to...I don't know...perform some
magic of your own? Fix tomorrow
night's spread?

Ron smiles broadly. Lucas tries to read him.

Ron's smile fades into something sinister.

RON (CONT'D)
 Tomorrow's game you are a cinch to
 beat Indiana.

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM - FLASH FORWARD

Lucas misses basket after basket. The buzzer sounds. The
 score reads Bucks 83 to Indians 77.

RON (V.O.)
 So it's simple. You win the game by
 less than seven points...

Lucas looks distraught.

SWISH PAN TO:

INT. COUNTY SHERIFF'S STATION - FLASH FORWARD

ON EVIDENCE DRAWER: Finger prints are removed from the drawer
 and replaced by another set of prints.

RON (V.O.)
 ...the prints in evidence will be
 magically replaced. Your brother
 will be cleared.

The drawer is closed.

INT. WIXOM FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - PRESENT

Ron hitches up his belt.

RON
 You don't keep the spread within
 seven and there's no question about
 it.

SWISH PAN TO:

INT. JACKSON PENITENTIARY - FLASH FORWARD

Prison bars are closed in front of Wyatt's face. He backs
 away from the bars, swallowed by the darkness of the cell.

RON (V.O.)
 Your brother will be sporting his
 very own pair of orange coveralls.

SWISH PAN TO:

EXT. WIXOM FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - PRESENT

Lucas sizes Ron up.

LUCAS
You're wearing a badge. You're the
sheriff.

Ron smiles.

RON
Sheriff's gotta eat.

LUCAS
It would take a lot more than getting
Wyatt off to fix the conference
tournament, Sheriff. Assuring me a
number one draft pick with the Knicks
might be a start.

Ron tightens. He tosses his cigarette aside.

RON
I'm giving you an opportunity here,
smart ass. The opportunity to turn
your brother's piece of shit life
around with minimal effort on your
part. Think about it super star:
seven fucking points. That's nothing.
Not when your the team's go to man.
(beat)
You've got until tonight to decide.
Be smart.

Ron gets into his cruiser. The high beams fade as the cruiser
drives off, leaving Lucas alone and angry in the dark.

INT. FARR HOME - DAY

The television blares the morning news. Laurie hovers over a
skillet, groggy and dressed in her bath robe. Sizzling bacon
and a ventilation fan add to the commotion.

Lucas steps through the front door, distant and distraught.
Laurie steps from the kitchen. Smiles.

LAURIE
How's the leg?

LUCAS
Fine.

LAURIE
Good. Scrambled eggs?

Lucas nods through his daze. YOU'RE KILLING ME by Pavement rattles from Wyatt's bedroom.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
Wyatt! Breakfast is ready!

Lucas tenses. He looks toward Wyatt's bedroom. No response.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
Wyatt!

Lucas makes a fist. The music rumbles without interruption.

LUCAS
(sotto)
God damn it.

Lucas makes a bee line for Wyatt's room.

LAURIE
Lucas?

Lucas throws open the door. Wyatt keeps playing his guitar, back to the door with the music thrashing.

LUCAS
WYATT!

Wyatt rolls his eyes.

WYATT
I don't want any, alright?

Lucas seethes. Wyatt turns his back, banging on the guitar. Lucas lunges, spinning Wyatt around. He pulls the guitar away. Raises it as if to smash it. Wyatt stumbles back onto the floor.

Laurie rushes into the room.

LAURIE
Lucas!

Distortion and feedback whine. Lucas tosses the guitar on the bed. Laurie reaches out for him, but he avoids her touch, hurrying out of the room.

Wyatt is stunned and afraid. Laurie looks at him, unsure of what to do. Feedback whines.

EXT. FARR HOME - CONTINUOUS

Lucas marches across the lawn. The screen door slams. Laurie hurries after him.

LAURIE
What the hell is going on?

Laurie stops her pursuit.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
What The Hell Is Going On!

Lucas stops. Turns.

LUCAS
His smart ass attitude.

LAURIE
What has gotten into you?

LUCAS
I'm sick of you catering to his bull
shit!

LAURIE
The kid has it rough enough without
you beating on him.

LUCAS
Maybe he needs a little beating!

LAURIE
I'm his mother. I know what's best
for him.

LUCAS
Yeah, you're doing one hell of a
job.

Lucas leaves. Laurie stands defeated.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Gnarled branches. Pools of mud and rock. Crows CAW through the mist as Dwight slogs along a muddy trail, tracing Wyatt's escape route for any sign of the discarded drugs.

Dwight comes to the end of the trail. Stands. Mitchum calls out from deep in the woods.

MITCHUM
Nothing!

Officer Burnham calls out from the opposite direction.

BURNHAM
Nothing here!

Dwight looks stumped.

DWIGHT

(sotto)
Nothing.

INT. FARR HOME/WYATT'S BEDROOM - DAY

A cassette player thunders and rattles with Jesus and Mary Chain, Something I Can't Have. Wyatt stops playing along, something catching his eye.

Out the window the family station wagon backs out of the drive. Laurie sits behind the wheel.

ON CASSETTE PLAYER.

The stop button is pressed. Silence.

BACK TO SCENE

Wyatt turns to see Lucas standing in his doorway.

LUCAS

Put your guitar down. We need to talk.

WYATT

I'm practicing.

Lucas unplugs the amplifier. Wyatt simmers.

WYATT (CONT'D)

Save it, man. I get enough lectures at school.

LUCAS

I'm sorry I grabbed you. That wasn't cool.

Wyatt turns his attention to the guitar. Idly picks at a peeling sticker. Tension eases.

WYATT

Just don't fuck with my axe, man.

LUCAS

It's still holding up to your beatings.

WYATT

It's not some piece of shit.

Wyatt locks eyes with Lucas. There is a tenderness that we haven't seen before.

WYATT (CONT'D)

Lucas...I try, man...I do...but fucked up things happen...I fuck up...

LUCAS

You've got to work harder. You don't have any excuse.

WYATT

Can't you see? All the shit that's gone down since dad got pinched. It's like I'm fucking pegged to follow in his footsteps.

LUCAS

You're your own person, Wy. Come on. You've got to get with the program here.

WYATT

No, Lucas. You don't understand. People look at you they see this big basketball star who beat the odds. People look at me and all they see is another statistic.

Lucas nods.

WYATT (CONT'D)

I don't have basketball. I don't have brains. I've just got a dad who went to jail.

LUCAS

You've got me and mom, Wy. And your axe. You've got your axe.

Wyatt musters a smile, running his hand along the neck of the guitar.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

It's going to be alright, Wyatt.

Lucas does his best to smile back. He watches Wyatt for a long moment, smile fading. He turns on Wyatt's amplifier and leaves, feedback filling the air.

Wyatt silences the strings.

INT. DINER - DAY

Dwight enters the diner. He surveys the restaurant looking for Laurie then crosses to the cashier.

DWIGHT
Is Laurie Farr here?

CASHIER
Out back. Smoke break.

EXT. DINER - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie sits on a parking block smoking a cigarette. She despondently props her head in her hand. Dwight steps around the corner of the building. Laurie flinches, hiding her cigarette.

DWIGHT
Hey there.

LAURIE
(uncertain)
Hello.

An uncomfortable silence. Dwight shifts from foot to foot, struggling for words. Laurie is set on edge by the badge.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
Can I help you?

DWIGHT
Maybe you uh - you don't remember me. I'm Dwight? Deputy Dwight McBane? I uh - I'm here alot and I thought maybe you'd uh - well...

Laurie eyes Dwight sideways. He nervously hitches his belt.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
I just came to say I'm sorry. For everything. Your son and all. And if you or anyone in your family needs help or to talk. Well, I'd be happy...

Laurie is caught of guard. Dwight suddenly feels very stupid.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
I come in here alot and sorta feel like I know you. So I uh...anyways...I'm sorry.

Dwight turns and walks away.

EXT. DINER - MOMENTS LATER

Dwight hastens to his cruiser. Laurie suddenly rounds the corner hurrying after Dwight.

LAURIE

Deputy.

Dwight stops and turns to Laurie.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Dwight smiles.

INT. FARR HOME/LUCAS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Feedback and distortion rattle through the home. Lucas fumbles through a messy drawer full of papers and trinkets. He pulls out an old crinkled photograph.

ON PHOTO

Laurie and her ex-husband, RANDALL, pose for the camera, looking like their lives are over. Laurie holds an infant in her arms.

BACK TO SCENE

Lucas examines the picture with resentment. Something in the cluttered drawer draws his attention. He pulls another crinkled and faded photo from the mess.

ON PHOTO

Lucas at fifteen plays the fatherhood role holding onto Wyatt's silver BMX as he successfully rides it for the first time.

Lucas humbles himself, a decision being made.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - NIGHT

Ron bursts through the door all smiles.

RON

Who wants to be a millionaire?

Jimmy frowns.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR/STOCK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ron sits on a stool beneath a hanging lamp as if under interrogation. Jimmy and Stacy stand in the shadows.

JIMMY

And you think the kid will do it?
He'll fix it for his brother?

RON
I know he will.

STACY
I don't know, Jimmy. A double dime
on top of what he already owes us.

JIMMY
And your luck, Ron. What about that?

STACY
Your miserable fucking luck.

RON
Luck doesn't enter into the equation.
It's guaranteed Bucks minus seven.

STACY
What did he do, sign a fucking
contract?

Ron grimaces.

JIMMY
Say we spot you the money. Then what?
Who are you going to place the bet
with?

RON
I thought you could place it for me.

STACY
What are we, Ron Garrison's personal
betting service? We're fucking loan
sharks, asshole, not beards for your
sucker bets.

RON
These guys think I'm a credit risk.

STACY
No shit.

RON
At least back me. Vouch for the bet.

JIMMY
What's our R.O.I, Ron?

STACY
Yeah. What the hell do we get out of
this brilliant idea?

RON
 Payment in full on the hundred
 thousand...plus 60 percent of profits.

JIMMY
 percent.

RON
 Cut me some fucking slack here, Jimmy.
 Seventy five.

JIMMY
 And if you lose, what's your
 collateral?

RON
 My house. My car...

Ron digs deep.

RON (CONT'D)
 ...seized drugs. Firearms. Whatever
 I can pull from county evidence.

Jimmy ruminates. Stacy realizes Jimmy is considering and
 shakes his head.

STACY
 You're not considering this bullshit?
 I'm telling you, Jimmy, he's a number
 fucking thirteen. You're never going
 to see that money.

JIMMY
 Get me a beer, Stacy.

Stacy frowns. He sets down his drink and leaves the room.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
 You have a bookie in mind? Someone
 who won't spot the fix?

RON
 Some fresh meat new to the racket.
 Still in diapers they're such rookies.

JIMMY
 I'm listening...

Ron smiles.

INT. FARR HOME - NIGHT

The television displays an interview between Lucas and a
 sports reporter.

The din of a post game court hums in the background.

INTERVIEWER

Twenty-six points tonight, and still people are saying that you're not one hundred percent recovered. That Lucas Farr is no longer a sure shot for the NBA. How does that make you feel?

The words hit Lucas hard. He does his best to shrug it off.

LUCAS

How can I feel? I'm still the top scorer game to game. It's frustrating.

The image FREEZE FRAMES and moves to the top right corner of the screen, revealing to announcers for Sports Now!

ANNOUNCER #1

When you look at the statistics for this type of injury you understand the implications of this dire prediction.

ANNOUNCER #2

He's a good kid. Here's hoping Lucas Farr can reap the rewards of his hard earned ranking.

The image jumps through channels to a cat and mouse cartoon.

Lucas flips the channel, glaring at the television. Laurie sits in a recliner, somberly sipping a beer.

INT. FARR HOME/WYATT'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wyatt peeks out of his bedroom door. Gently eases the door shut. He crosses his room in the darkness, bunching together a mound of pillows under the covers of his bed. A talented attempt to make it appear as if someone is sleeping there. He nods at his work and eases open the bedroom window. Climbs out.

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Wyatt coasts down the highway. He closes his eyes and raises his chin to the wind, revelling in its touch.

EXT. WIXOM FALLS - MOMENTS LATER

The bike leaps a curb with a jerk and turns down Annie's residential street.

EXT. WEISS HOME - NIGHT

Wyatt glides around the back of the home. He knocks on the sliding glass door. The curtain parts to reveal MRS. WEISS. She shrinks away from Wyatt with distaste.

EXT. WEISS HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Wyatt sits in a lawn chair. He kneads a dunsel cap in his hands. Mrs. Weiss speaks with Annie in the kitchen. They speak loudly, their conversation audible through the sliding glass door. Wyatt listens intently.

MRS. WEISS

I don't appreciate him just riding into our backyard and banging on the glass like that.

ANNIE

We're going out for a ride.

MRS. WEISS

The hell you are. I told you before. I don't want you seeing that boy. He's trouble.

ANNIE

You don't even know him.

MRS. WEISS

Andrea Rose Weiss. You are not leaving this house.

Annie opens the sliding door, pulling on her jacket. Mrs. Weiss gives chase. Wyatt stands.

MRS. WEISS (CONT'D)

Your father is not going to like this, Andrea. I don't like this.

Wyatt takes Annie by the elbow, guiding her to her bike.

WYATT

Come on.

Mrs. Weiss takes a step forward. Wyatt glares, mounting his bike. The couple ride off.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - NIGHT

Ron and Jimmy sit across from one another. Stacy stands in the shadows, nursing his trademark scotch.

RON

They are this group of professional types that live out in Grosse Pointe. Bunch of guys that made some super shitty investments in the early 90's.

INT. MARK GRAY DENTISTRY - DAY

MARK GRAY (56) shakes hands with a SALESMAN. We move over to a table revealing brochures for WANG COMPUTERS.

RON (V.O.)

Bad technology investments.

INT. CAPTAIN CHICKEN/KITCHEN - DAY

A cockroach smashed by a shoe. JOEY CONNER (52) wields his wing tip like a hammer, frantically smashing all the bugs in sight. He smashes, and smashes, and smashes.

RON (V.O.)

Restaurant chains that didn't quite make it.

EXT. HIGHWAY 8 MOTEL - DAY

BOB ADAMS (58) watches from the parking lot as a police officer nails an escrow notice to the entrance of the rundown motel.

RON (V.O.)

And motels left vacant by closed highways. A bunch of guys that were planning an early retirement but only ended up deeper in debt.

INT. FLAMINGO CASINO - NIGHT

A FEMALE PICKPOCKET lifts a wallet from a WOMAN'S purse. The picking botched, the WOMAN screams.

RON (V.O.)

So about six months back, I came across this guy I used to know who moved to Vegas. Big dumb guy named Ralph Connor. He used to work security at the Flamingo. We went to the academy together.

RALPH CONNOR (35) overweight and sloppy working, stuffed into a security uniform. Ralph's eyes widen as he sees the botched pick. He dashes after the female pickpocket.

RON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 This guy made some big mistakes.
 Wasn't quick enough on his toes.

The Female Pickpocket runs into a women's rest room. Ralph hesitates at the entrance. He paces back and forth, not sure what to do. Radios for help. A group of women leave the rest room, but Ralph can't stop them.

INT. FLAMINGO CASINO/MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Ralph's MANAGER yells at him and points to the door.

RON (V.O.)
 They persuaded him that he wasn't
 cut out for Casino security, so he
 moved back home to Flint.

INT. CAPTAIN CHICKEN/OFFICE - DAY

Ralph speaks to Mark, Joey, and Bob. The men listen intently.

RON (V.O.)
 So Ralph's brother Joey tells him
 about their predicament and Ralph,
 hot off the heels of his Vegas
 experiences, pitches this idea.

RON (V.O. CONT') (CONT'D)
 Run books and reclaim their
 retirement.

Joey, Mark, and Bob take a liking to the idea.

RON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 So they start their own operation
 based on Ralph's 'extensive' knowledge
 of the business.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - NIGHT

Ron smiles.

RON
 We want to pull the wool over
 somebody's eyes, this is the crew.
 They're light weights.

Jimmy leans back, sipping his beer.

JIMMY
 Okay. You're on.

Stacy glowers in the shadows.

EXT. WIXOM FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - EARLY MORNING

Another peaceful morning. Streets vacant. Windows dark with sleep. A tranquil place, but there is something missing.

No dribbling. No squeaky shoes. No Lucas Farr.

INT. FARR HOME/LUCAS' BEDROOM - MORNING

Through a cracked door we see Laurie hurrying through the hallway preparing for work. She passes Lucas' door, then does a double take inside. Lucas lies sleepless, facing the ceiling.

LAURIE

Why aren't you practicing?

LUCAS

Didn't sleep well.

Lucas gets up, walking the stiffness out of his knee. Laurie looks at the scar winding its way across his knee cap like a snake. She toughens.

LAURIE

You should be working on your three pointer, baby. It's been weak last couple of games.

Lucas opens a drawer, laying out his uniform.

LUCAS

I've hit more three pointers in the last three games than half the players in the conference have hit all season.

Lucas winces at he stoops to open another drawer. Laurie steps toward him, as if to catch him.

LAURIE

We're not talking about other players, Luc. We're talking about you. If you want to be number one, you have to play like you're number one.

Lucas turns and smiles at Laurie.

LUCAS

Yeah, well I'm number twenty four.

Lucas grabs his clothes and shuffles out of the room. Laurie smiles.

LAURIE

Alright wise guy.

EXT. WIXOM FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Wyatt pedals into the school lot. Locks his back to a rack.
Sees Annie dropped off.

INT. WIXOM FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

Wyatt navigates the herd of students milling around the halls
in pre-class chaos. He hurries up to Annie as she tries her
combination.

WYATT

Hey.

ANNIE

Hey. Aren't you suspended?

WYATT

Yeah, but I wanted to see you.

Annie is somber. Wyatt looks concerned. He moves his hand
along her back.

WYATT (CONT'D)

You okay?

Annie flinches at Wyatt's touch.

WYATT (CONT'D)

What's the matter?

Annie surveys the hall, then untucks her shirt revealing the
hint of a bruise. She drops the shirt quickly, surveying the
hall to see if anyone saw. Wyatt is stunned.

ANNIE

You're a bad influence.

WYATT

I'll kill them. I swear to God. They
touch you again and I'll kill them.

ANNIE

Don't, Wyatt. Please. Things are
screwed up enough.

WYATT

You should tell someone. Go to the
police.

ANNIE

I don't want to talk about it.

Annie grabs her books for class and closes her locker. She cants her head against the locker, innocence seeping through her tough exterior.

Wyatt touches her face gently, then her arm.

WYATT

Do you want me to stop seeing you?

Annie searches Wyatt's eyes.

ANNIE

How does that song go?

Annie takes his hand and pulls him into an embrace. She whispers into his ear.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Wild horses...

Wyatt embraces Annie tightly, completing the verse.

WYATT

Couldn't drag me away.

Annie and Wyatt embrace one another at the hall clears, students hurrying to class. The image slows to slow motion. The school bell rings cueing the Rolling Stones, Wild Horses. The music builds and continues over...

INT. FARR HOME/KITCHEN - DAY

Lucas pulls himself from the table and an empty bowl of cereal. He looks at his knee.

INT. FARR HOME/BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lucas showers. He leans against the wall, letting the water pelt his back.

INT. EL CAMINO - MOMENTS LATER

The car door opens. A gym bag of basketball paraphernalia set on the passenger's seat. Lucas gets in. Stares at the steering wheel, mustering the will to carry on.

LUCAS

One game...

Lucas turns the ignition. The car whines, chokes, stalls. He tries it again. Nothing. He slumps back in his seat.

INT. DINER - DAY

Laurie moves along the counter, filling mugs of coffee. She works the patrons for a good tip, all smiles. Dwight sits at the end of the counter, watching her. She steps up.

She gestures with the coffee pot.

LAURIE

Want some?

Dwight nods. Laurie pours a cup.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

Listen. I really appreciate the gesture, the other day. It was very thoughtful.

DWIGHT

I meant it.

Dwight takes a sip.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

You uh - you still don't recognize me. Do you?

LAURIE

Decaf coffee. Most times you order a patty melt.

Dwight smiles, flattered that she remembers his order.

DWIGHT

No. I mean. Not here. We uh - we went to school together some time ago.

LAURIE

Wixom high?

Dwight shakes his head no.

DWIGHT

County Day.

LAURIE

Elementary school?

DWIGHT

Yeah.

Laurie smiles.

LAURIE
That was a life time ago.

DWIGHT
Yeah. We had lunch room together.

INT. COUNTY DAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL/LUNCH ROOM/FLASHBACK

Laurie (12) smiles and laughs with her friends.

DWIGHT (V.O.)
You sat at the end of my table.

Twelve year old Laurie turns to the camera and addresses it directly. Her friends continue speaking around her not noticing.

LAURIE
Oh my God! You were the kid that was
always making everyone laugh.

We SWISH PAN and move in on a BOY (9) as he tosses baloney across the table. FREEZE FRAME.

DWIGHT (V.O.)
No. That was Donny Nelson. I sat
across from him.

The image THAWS, following the baloney as it lands on twelve year old Dwight's head. Everyone laughs at him.

MARLENE (O.S.)
Laurie!

INT. DINER/PRESENT - DAY

Laurie looks across the restaurant. Marlene holds up the phone.

MARLENE
It's your son.

LAURIE
I'll be right back. Don't go anywhere.

She pats Dwight on the hand as she leaves. Dwight looks at his hand where Laurie touched him.

INT. DINER/RESTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dwight searches his eyes in the mirror.

DWIGHT
You can do this. You can do this.

Dwight turns to reveal his profile. He sucks in his belly, eyeing himself up and down. His eyes narrow.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
Get out there and ask her.

Dwight claps his hands together, psyching himself up.

INT. DINER - MOMENTS LATER

Dwight crosses back to his seat. He is pumped up and ready to go. His eyes widen when he hears...

LAURIE
That's bullshit, Delmer! Bullshit!

Laurie argues with Delmer in the kitchen.

DELMER
You took off early yesterday.

LAURIE
My kid was in jail, Delmer.

Dwight's resolve fades.

Laurie stands defiant. Delmer feigns calm.

DELMER
I need you here. Trixie is leaving early and Diane's not on until five.

LAURIE
It's only going to take me an hour, Delmer. Marlene can cover for an hour.

DELMER
You want to keep your job or don't you? Your decision.

Laurie comes out of the kitchen to find Dwight gone. She steps up to his place at the counter and finds a note. It reads: Thanks. That was a good cup of coffee and nice conversation.

Something clicks.

INT. SHERIFF'S POLICE CRUISER - DAY

Dwight starts his engine. Looks over his shoulder, backing out. His self-esteem implodes.

There is a KNOCK at the window. Dwight jumps, startled. He turns to see Laurie.

He smiles and fumbles to find the electric switch for the window.

LAURIE
Thanks for the note.

Dwight smiles.

DWIGHT
Sure.

LAURIE
Listen. I know this is kind of a
crazy request, but -

DWIGHT
You name it.

LAURIE
Do you think you could drive my son
to Tech this afternoon? His car broke
down and I can't get out of here.

Dwight is taken off guard, but eager to please.

DWIGHT
Uh - sure. Yeah. No problem.

LAURIE
You sure? I know it's kinda weird.

DWIGHT
No. Really.
(beat)
Like the shield says, to serve and
protect.

Laurie smiles. Writes her address down and hands it to Dwight.

LAURIE
This is where we live.
(meaning it)
I owe you.

Laurie smiles and touches Dwight on the arm. Dwight smiles back. Laurie hurries back into the diner. Dwight's smile fades. He looks at the address then looks over the back seat, backing out.

DWIGHT
(sotto)
You're a sucker, Dwight. A sucker.

EXT. FARR HOME - DAY

Lucas stands in the driveway, absently dribbling a basketball. He looks worse for the wear.

He idly shoots the ball. It bounces off the garage mounted rim. SIRENS approach o.s. Lucas recovers the ball and spins to the sound.

A sheriff's police cruiser speeds down the street, screeching to a halt as it passes the Farr home. Lucas looks perplexed.

The cruiser speeds in reverse and stops in front of the house. Dwight jumps out.

DWIGHT

Lucas? You Lucas?

Lucas looks confused.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

Your mom asked me to drive you. She's gotta work.

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY - DAY

The cruiser passes a slow moving sedan in a streak of light and sound. Sirens wailing. Reds and blues flashing.

INT. SHERIFF'S POLICE CRUISER/MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Dwight white knuckles the wheel, eyes focused on the road. Lucas grabs the 'Jesus' handle as Dwight swerves back into the lane.

LUCAS

I think we're going to make it.

Dwight smiles sheepishly, turns off the lights and sirens.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

So you know mom from the diner?

Dwight nods.

DWIGHT

Go in there most every day. She's a - a good woman, your mother. Kind.

LUCAS

She tries.

An uncomfortable silence. Then...

LUCAS (CONT'D)

You watch sports much?

DWIGHT

Not really. Just big games like the world series and the super bowl. I'm not much of a sports fan. Guess I never understood the interest in it - no offense.

LUCAS

Tonight's a pretty big game for us. First game of the conference tournament. You know what that is?

DWIGHT

Kinda like the world series play offs?

LUCAS

Kinda. Lot's of people watching. Lot's of people staking alot on its outcome.

Dwight nods unintelligibly.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

What would happen if someone like you bet on a game?

DWIGHT

I'd never make a good bet. I really don't know the first thing about sports.

LUCAS

No but - supposing you did place a bet, what would happen to you? I mean, you know betting is illegal outside of Vegas, right?

DWIGHT

Oh. Yeah, well sure. I'm subject just like anybody else. Just because your a cop doesn't mean the rules don't apply. We pull our pants on just like everybody else. One leg at a time.

LUCAS

So what about your boss?

DWIGHT

The sheriff? Oh. He's a tough one.

(MORE)

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

I imagine he'd see to it we lost our badge if he found out we abused our privileges.

Lucas nods half-heartedly.

EXT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM - DAY

The cruiser slows to a stop outside the gymnasium. Lucas gets out and grabs his gym bag from the back seat.

INT/EXT. SHERIFF'S POLICE CRUISER - DAY

Lucas leans down beside the open passenger door.

LUCAS

Thanks.

DWIGHT

No problem.

Lucas moves to close the door, then hesitates.

LUCAS

She loves Chinese.

DWIGHT

What?

LUCAS

My mother. She really likes Chinese food.

Lucas smiles. Slams the door, walking toward the gymnasium. Dwight starts the engine, a gleam of hope in his eye. He smiles.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - NIGHT

ON TELEVISION: A Sports Now! graphic sweeps the screen with fanfare. A sportscaster addresses the camera, standing in the middle of the Michigan Tech Stadium. In the b.g. officials prepare for the night's game.

SPORTSCASTER

Tonight! Davey versus Goliath as mighty mouse Lucas Farr takes on seven foot one giant McCulley West. All indications point to a Farr chance of a Kansas City win, but Farr is just back from a brief

SPORTSCASTER (CONT') (CONT'D)
 stint on the injured list. Stay tuned
 for all of the pre-game action.

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Lucas opens the locker. Bare chested, he examines the jersey hanging inside. His face is gray and ghostly under the flickering flourescents.

INT. COUNTY SHERIFF'S STATION/RON'S OFFICE/FLASHBACK - DAY

Under the same flickering fluorescent light, Ron glares across his desk at Lucas.

RON
 It's simple. You do this and your
 brother gets off. You don't and he
 goes to jail.

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Lucas pulls on his jersey. Stares at his reflection in the locker mirror, psyching up for the game.

LUCAS
 (sotto)
 One game.

We hear a BUZZER. The sounds of a crowd getting louder. Heavy breathing.

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/FIRST HALF - NIGHT

SPORTS BROADCAST AND FILM INTERSPERSED: Lucas assaults the net with the skill and accuracy of a world class NBA all-star. Fakes. Rebounds. Blocked shots. Three pointers. Every effort is one hundred and ten percent.

He rushes the net.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - NIGHT

ON TELEVISION: A Kansas GUARD drives past Lucas. Shoots. Scores.

Ron cheers, spilling some of his beer. Jimmy smiles. Stacy glowers. Ron shrinks away from Stacy's gaze. Another BUZZER sounds.

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/FIRST HALF - NIGHT

ON TELEVISION: The scoreboard reads Bucks 26, Indians 22.

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/FIRST HALF - NIGHT

SPORTS BROADCAST AND FILM INTERSPERSED: Lucas drives to the right. Pulls up from the three point line. Shoots. Scores.

CLOSE ON LUCAS: photo bulbs flash. The glory of the moment fading.

FLASH CUT TO:

INT. FARR HOME/FLASHBACK - NIGHT

CHEERS and CHANTS fills the sound track.

ON TELEVISION: Wyatt's birthday video. Wyatt smiles and embraces Lucas. The image pauses in jittery VHS. Photo bulb flashes illuminate the TV.

FLASH CUT TO:

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/FIRST HALF - NIGHT

Lucas dribbles down court, a new found seriousness tightening his face. He drives the net. Spins. Shoots. Another basket sunk. The crowd cheers.

Lucas wipes sweat from his forehead and looks to the scoreboard with anxiety.

Bucks 50, Indians 38.

Lucas frowns.

SWISH PAN TO:

INT. JACKSON PENITENTIARY/FLASH FORWARD - NIGHT

Prison bars slam shut over Wyatt's face. He steps back and is swallowed by darkness. There is a photo bulb flash.

SERIES OF STILL SHOTS

Each separated by a photo bulb flash. Wyatt, head shaved, crying in a corner of his cell.

Wyatt getting beat up in the prison yard.

Wyatt lifting weights, angry and distant.

Wyatt stepping out of jail, lean and mean.

Wyatt pointing a gun at a convenient store clerk.

FLASH CUT TO:

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/PRESENT - NIGHT

Lucas dribbles absently. Devon gestures for the ball, wide open. The BUZZER sounds.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - NIGHT

ON TELEVISION: The score prominently displayed as the image cuts to commercial. Bucks 50, Indians 38. Jimmy cuts at Ron.

JIMMY

Your boy better narrow that spread.

Ron's eyes remain fixed on the television.

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/LOCKER ROOM/HALF TIME - NIGHT

The team huddles around the Coach as he gives them direction. Lucas looks distant and far removed.

COACH

Alright. Let's keep it rolling.

The team hurries toward the exit. Lucas hangs back, stepping up to his locker. He towels the sweat from his forehead, then catches his reflection in his locker mirror.

He stares into the reflection of his eyes. A decision made. He slams the locker shut.

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/SECOND HALF - NIGHT

Lucas slowly dribbles down court. He telegraphs his pass. The DEFENDER catches it and drives down court, scoring.

SERIES OF SHOTS: Lucas misses a shot. Bad passes. Stolen balls. He limps on his leg feigning pain.

Devon grabs the ball from Lucas, driving the net. He scores.

Lucas anxiously looks to the scoreboard.

The scoreboard looms. Bucks 78, Indians 68.

Lucas looks sick.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - NIGHT

ON TELEVISION: The score displayed.

Ron looks uncertain, but bold to the last. He turns to Stacy's hard stare. Downs a shot of tequila. Swallows hard. Fearful eyes turn back to the TV.

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/SECOND HALF - NIGHT

Lucas dribbles down court, faking a slight limp. He looks for an opening. Devon breaks free.

DEVON

Farr!

Lucas checks the clock. Seconds tick by.

The scoreboard looms. Bucks 78, Indians 70.

RON (V.O.)

...it's simple. You win the game by
less than seven points...

Lucas checks the clock again. Less than a minute.

Lucas fakes a pass to Devon and drives into the key. Goes for the jump shot. The image snaps to slow motion as he collides with two defenders mid-air. A blatant foul.

FREEZE FRAME: photo bulbs flash.

The image returns to normal motion. Lucas collapses to the ground. The ball is recovered by an Indian. The whistle blows.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - NIGHT

Ron jumps out of his seat, scared shitless.

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/SECOND HALF - NIGHT

Lucas writhes on the floor. The Buck's Coach and TRAINER rush the court. The Trainer kneels down beside Lucas.

TRAINER

You all right?

Lucas writhes, gripping his knee. His reaction is a bit over the top. An act. Something catches his eye.

Devon glares at Lucas, circling behind the trainer. The act fades. Lucas' jaw sets.

Lucas stands with the help of the trainer. He walks off a limp and steps up to the free throw line, gesturing for the ball.

SWISH PAN TO:

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - NIGHT

Ron on the edge of his seat. Tense. The roulette gambler as the ball drops.

SWISH PAN TO:

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/SECOND HALF - NIGHT

Sweats beads drip from Lucas' forehead. He bounces the ball, glancing up at the basket.

He shoots. Misses. Looks to the clock.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - NIGHT

ON TELEVISION: The timer frozen with only fifteen seconds left.

We edge in closer on Ron. His eyes narrow.

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/SECOND HALF - NIGHT

Lucas shoots again. Misses. The crowd reacts. The Indians scramble for the ball. Recover. Lucas looks to the clock. 10 seconds.

The Indian's GUARD drives down court. A fast break. Snap to slow motion. He jumps. A three point attempt. Devon tries to block. Lucas frozen in anxiety. Devon misses.

Normal motion: The ball drops through the net.

Bucks 78, Indians 73. Less than seven points.

Lucas hunches over, relieved.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - NIGHT

ON TELEVISION: The BUZZER sounds.

Ron exhales. Slumps to the table, exhausted.

JIMMY

Very close, Ron. Very close.

Ron jumps to his feet and screams.

RON

Finally! For once!

He points at Stacy.

RON (CONT'D)

Suck on that!

Stacy is not one for juvenile displays. He stands and crosses to the back office, leaving Ron to his revelry.

INT. MARK GRAY DENTISTRY - DAY

ON TELEVISION: Lucas limps to court side.

Bob, Joey, and Mark study the television with disappointment. A PHONE RINGS incessantly. Ralph answers it.

RALPH

Hello?

Ralph's jaw goes slack.

RALPH (CONT'D)

Hold on.

(covering mouthpiece)

Joey, you're going to want to hear this.

Joey, Mark, and Bob exchange looks.

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The trainer wraps a cold pack to Lucas' knee. Devon watches from the end of the aisle.

TRAINER

Keep it on for a couple of hours.
We'll check you out in the morning.

Lucas nods. The Trainer leaves. Devon steps up to Lucas.

DEVON

What gives, Farr?

LUCAS

What?

DEVON

I was wide open out there. You didn't even look in my direction. You're out there falling all over. Making bad shots. You could've cost us the game.

LUCAS

But I didn't.

Devon glares.

DEVON

Your glory days are over, man.
(MORE)

DEVON (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I am, but whatever you think you're trying to prove by playing one man army out there...it's not going to work.

Devon steps away. Lucas stands, leaning against the locker for support.

LUCAS

Nine times out of ten I'm going to dribble down court, fake the defense, and score. You know why? Because I'm the best on the court. Bad knee or not.

Devon shakes his head and leaves. Lucas slumps to a seat.

INT. WIXOM COUNTY MUNICIPAL COURT - MORNING

Lucas stares out of the second story window. He looks troubled.

Wyatt and Laurie sit at opposite ends of a nearby bench, like strangers on a bus. Each Farr wears their second-hand Sunday best.

INT. WIXOM COUNTY MUNICIPAL COURT/JUDGES OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON FINGERPRINTS. Compared side by side.

RON

We've got all three sets of prints. All of them belong to the pharmacist, Larry Steiner.

Ron sits across from JUDGE HOWARD BAILAN (54). Howard studies the fingerprints. He flips through Wyatt's police records with stern concentration.

RON (CONT'D)

Now. Rather than drag this thing out I'm proposing you persuade the prosecution to drop their case.

JUDGE BAILAN

You really believe this kid is innocent?

RON

There's no hard evidence that he stole any drugs. None of his fingerprints on the pharmacy drawer.

(MORE)

RON (CONT'D)

No drugs on his person or dumped in the vicinity. Nothing to support Mr. Steiner's accusations.

JUDGE BAILAN

What about Steiner's story?

RON

His testimony says he didn't actually see Farr take the drugs. He just found the drawer open and saw Wyatt hurrying out of the building. Fact is anybody could have reached over that counter and stole those drugs. Wyatt Farr just happens to be an easy target.

JUDGE BAILAN

You want me to persuade prosecution to throw this case out because there's flimsy proof that a...

(reading file)

...two time guest to our state's juvenile facilities did anything wrong?

RON

I want you to give this kid the benefit of the doubt.

JUDGE BAILAN

And who's going to make sure that he keeps his hands out of other people's pockets?

RON

Me. I take full responsibility. He slips even once, you'll be the first to know about it.

Bailan considers.

JUDGE BAILAN

I've seen this happen time and again, Ron. Kid comes in, we have no conclusive evidence, just flimsy testimony. But deep down in our gut we know what happened. That the kid committed the crime. Two months later he's hanging his head in front of a jury on the same charges. Thing is, we could have stopped him.

(MORE)

JUDGE BAILAN (CONT'D)
(gesturing with file)
I assume you've seen this record.
Car robbery. Vandalism. Drugs.

RON
The kid's father went to jail when
he was three. His mother is a waitress
barely making ends meet. And he's
grown up living in the shadow of his
super star brother. The kid's been
dealt a shitty deck, Howard. If I
can change his luck, well then, by
God it's my duty to do so.

Bailan closes the folder decisively.

JUDGE BAILAN
I'll talk to the prosecution. But I
expect weekly sessions...

INT. WIXOM COUNTY MUNICIPAL COURT/LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Ron sits across from Wyatt.

RON
...the nature of parole reviews. You
go straight for three months and we
can stop. But you show up here again
and you've got a one way ticket to
Jackson pen. You're not a minor
anymore, kid. No more slaps on the
wrist.

Wyatt nods.

RON (CONT'D)
Look kid. I for one believe you're
innocent. There's no evidence to
prove that you've done anything wrong.

Ron is not connecting.

RON (CONT'D)
Hey, come on. Look at you, man. You're
eighteen. Jesus Christ, kid our age
should be worried about getting laid
and partying like a rock star, not
whether or not he's going to jail.
Get out there and have some fun.
Enough with this serious crap.

Wyatt smiles, taken back by Ron's candor.

RON (CONT'D)

From now on, you have a problem, you get into trouble, you come see me about it. A kid needs somebody to watch out for them. Okay?

WYATT

Okay.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR/OFFICE - DAY

Jimmy wears reading glasses, punching away at a calculator as he etches figures on a piece of paper. Stacy hovers, reviewing a tape of the Buck's game.

ON TELEVISION: Lucas goes for his jump shot, then falls to the court, injured. The image rewinds.

Stacy frowns at the TV.

STACY

It was sloppy. I can pick out five times the kid checked the clock.

JIMMY

You're being paranoid, Stacy. The kid did fine. In fact he just earned me a trip to the Bahamas.

A KNOCK at the door. Deke pokes his head in. He looks on edge.

DEKE

Jimmy, there are some guys here to see you.

Jimmy and Stacy exchange worried looks. They cross to the...

BAR

Joey and Ralph sit at the bar, looking like someone has spit in their Wheaties. Jimmy plays the charm card.

JIMMY

What can I do for you gentlemen?

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY - DAY

A RED Z-28 streaks by. Classic rock and roll blares on the stereo.

INT. Z-28/MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Windows down, stereo blaring, Ron sings along to the Who, Won't Get Fooled Again. He smiles and smiles and smiles.

Ron reaches across the passenger's seat and grabs his .45. Leans forward, slipping the cold steel into the back of his waistband.

INT. MARK GRAY DENTISTRY/WAITING ROOM - DAY

Ron studies a gaudy oil painting in the lobby. Ralph approaches. Ron turns and gestures around the room.

RON

Maybe I can cut you guys back some of the profits and you can hire a new interior decorator.

Ralph isn't amused. Ron walks down the hallway like he owns the place to the...

EXAMINATION ROOM

Joey, Bob, and Mark stand around the room. Grim faces all. Ron grins ear to ear.

RON (CONT'D)

Afternoon ladies. I'm here to collect.

Stone cold stares. No movement. No words. Ron senses that something is wrong. Ralph pushes Ron into a wall. Frisks him, finding his .45. He tucks the piece into his own waistband.

Ron exchanges worried looks with the unhappy crew. Just as he opens his mouth to explain:

BAM! A fist lands in his stomach. Ron reels across the room. Crashes to the floor. Ralph approaches. Ron gasps for air, eyes tearing. He holds up his arms to protect himself from Ralph's advance.

It's a futile gesture. Ralph effortlessly picks Ron up and throws him against the wall. He holds Ron in place, unleashing a barrage of body blows.

Ron goes limp. Slides to the floor. Joey steps forward, leaning down beside Ron.

JOEY

What? You think you could just screw us? Get some low class piece of shit to vouch for you? Walk off with our money?

Joey kicks Ron in the gut.

JOEY (CONT'D)

You're messing with my kid's college tuition and Mark's fucking retirement! Who the fuck do you think you are?

Ron lunges for Ralph, pulling the .45 From his waistband. He pulls the trigger, grazing Ralph's love handle. Ralph falls to the ground whimpering. Blood gushes.

Ron wildly trains his gun on Joey. Everyone looks surprised. Doubled from his beating, Ron gestures to his gym bag on the other side of the room.

RON

(out of breath)

Give me my money.

The rookie bookies look at one another.

INT. Z-28 - DAY

We watch through the windshield as Ron stumbles out of the dentist office. Bloody-faced, he hobbles to the car with a gym bag full of cash. Gun brandished in the dusty day light.

Ron opens the car door. Throws the bag inside, then eases himself into the driver's seat. He leans his head back against the seat, catching his breath.

He explodes, beating his fist against the steering wheel.

RON

Fuck Fuck Fuck Fuck Fuck!

INT. MARK GRAY DENTISTRY/OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Joey watches from the second story window as Ron's Z-28 pulls away. Joey confronts Ralph as he cowers on the floor, Mark packing cotton into the wound.

JOEY

You've got a girl scout's knack for playing bouncer, you know that?

MARK

We're screwed.

BOB

Shut up Mark. Christ almighty. Keep it together.

JOEY

Alright. We're not getting screwed here.

(MORE)

JOEY (CONT'D)

Mark, God damn it, get on the phone and call our friends in New Jersey. These guys have got another thing coming if they think they're messing with my retirement.

Mark hurries across the room to the phone. Joey steps up beside Bob.

BOB

You're damn right.

INT. FARR HOME - DAY

ON TELEVISION: In edited game footage, Lucas assaults the basket. Limp as he dribbles. Falls to the court during the failed shot attempt. Limp off the court.

SPORTSCASTER (O.S.)

Lucas Farr's incredible swing from first quarter super star to fourth quarter liability has critics and coaches reconsidering his position in the NBA draft, and the Bucks' chances of winning the mid-Western conference.

Lucas reacts to the telecast. The undeniable truth.

FREEZE FRAME: Lucas limping off court. The image shrinks, moving to the side of the image revealing the sportscaster.

SPORTSCASTER (CONT'D)

Farr's performance in last night's game calls to question his full recovery and whether or not the twenty-one-year-old should

SPORTSCASTER (CONT') (CONT'D)

reconsider hanging his hopes on a career in the NBA. Coach Paul Dresser of the Indiana Thunder had this to say...

A microphone is held up to PAUL DRESSER (43).

PAUL

Bottom line is that it's a tough injury to recover from. You look at the guys who got drafted after these types of injuries, these guys were forced into retirement after less than two years in the game.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

Farr is a top performer when he is 100%. But anybody tells you that they're comfortable drafting a guy who's spent his senior year on and off the injured list is lying.

(beat)

The kid had a good future. It's a sad thing.

Off Lucas. Hopes shattered.

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/COACH'S OFFICE - DAY

Lucas sits across from the coach. He eyes Lucas' knee.

COACH

I'm starting Devon tonight, Luc. Benching you the first half. Then we'll see where we're at.

LUCAS

Come on, Coach. I'm the one who got us here.

COACH

You're all over the map, kid. We need someone we can depend on taking point.

LUCAS

You're going to shoot yourself in the foot if you bench me. This team can't do it without me.

The coach reads the determination in Lucas' face.

COACH

You're going to have more than the bench to worry about if you don't take care of that knee.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - DAY

Ron bursts into the bar. He swaggers across the floor, then slumps into a stool, attracting stares from the patrons. He winces, hands probing the damage to his body. He hunches over the counter, speaking through bloody teeth to Deke.

RON

Gimme a shot.

Jimmy emerges from his office. He notices the nervous glances from the patrons.

JIMMY

Why don't we talk in my office, Ron?

RON

I said to give me a God damn shot!

Jimmy nods his approval to Deke. Steps toward Ron, trying to shield the scene from the on lookers. Deke pours the shot. Ron throws it back, grimacing at the burn. Blood clouds the backwash.

Ron suddenly pulls out his .45, aiming at Jimmy's head. Jimmy flinches. A patron screams. Ron cocks.

RON (CONT'D)

You're under arrest!

Stacy draws on Ron.

STACY

Put it away, cock sucker!

JIMMY

(sotto)

Put the gun away.

Ron lowers his gun. Turns to the patrons.

RON

Just a little joke, ladies and gentlemen. Go back to eating your dog food.

Jimmy takes Ron by the arm and points to his office. The men cross to the back. Jimmy motions to Deke.

JIMMY

Deke, get our guests over here a free round. Sorry for the excitement, folks. Just a little tom foolery here.

Jimmy cross to...

OFFICE

Ron slumps to his seat. He grabs a bottle of whiskey from a shelf and downs a swig. He turns to Stacy and Jimmy, Stacy lands a hard right. Ron topples to the floor.

Jimmy tries to restrain Stacy. Stacy goes wild, kicking Ron. Ron squirms, doubled up on the floor.

Stacy catches his breath and takes a seat. Ron writhes on the floor, mucus and blood dripping from his mouth.

He winces through the pain, then daubs his lip with the back of his hand.

RON
You really fucked me here, Jimmy.

JIMMY
No, Ron. You fucked us! You picked a lousy actor for the job. As a

JIMMY (CONT') (CONT'D)
matter of fact, our friends are just as eager to beat the shit out of him.

RON
How'd they figure it out?

STACY
Fucking kid checked the clock a million times.

Ron makes a face. Lucas wasn't that bad.

JIMMY
So I don't know how, Okay? But they did! They found out! So we came clean.

Ron climbs into a chair.

RON
This is so fucking unprofessional.

Stacy moves as if to hit Ron. Jimmy stops him.

JIMMY
They were going to call in some neck breakers, Ron. That wouldn't have been good for either of us.

Jimmy notices the gym bag on the floor. He looks inside. Stacks of varied denominations fill the bag. Jimmy shrinks back.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
What the fuck is this? You took the money?

RON
I took what's rightfully mine.

JIMMY
You need to take it back.

RON
The hell I do.

JIMMY
Well, I don't want a God damn thing
to do with it.

Jimmy picks up the bag and throws it toward Ron. It lands at his feet. Ron doesn't get it.

RON
These guys are fucking light weights,
Jimmy.

JIMMY
The names they dropped aren't. I
don't know how your little amateurs
hooked up with these professionals,
but they're no joke.

STACY
You can find anything on the internet.

Ron considers this. There's a lot of money there.

RON
What about what I owe you?

JIMMY
Fuck what you owe me! You keep that
money I'll be the least of your
worries!

Ron studies Jimmy's worried face. He weighs his decision. He's a gambling man, so what's one last gamble? He hoists the bag onto his shoulder.

RON
I'll take my chances.

Ron brushes past Stacy, hobbling off.

STACY
What did I tell you? Number fucking
thirteen.

INT. WIXOM FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

Coffee machine. Donuts. A banner reads, Welcome Parents. Lucas and Laurie write their names on name badges.

Lucas and Laurie sit in a row of folding chairs lining the halls of the school. Fathers and mothers mingle with one another waiting for parent/teacher conferences.

Laurie wears her waitress uniform soliciting snooty looks from the better off couples.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Mister and misses Farr?

Lucas and Laurie stand. The assistant eyes Lucas strangely; so much younger than Laurie.

LUCAS
I'm her son.

INT. WIXOM FALLS HIGH SCHOOL/CLASSROOM - DAY

VICE PRINCIPAL ADAMS (45) sits across from Lucas and Laurie. They listen intently.

VICE PRINCIPAL
There has been concern fostered by other parents in the school. Especially after hearing the news that Wyatt had been a suspect in that assault and robbery. We just think that you might want to consider a more disciplined structure for him.

EXT. WIXOM FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie marches across the parking lot. She fishes through her purse for a smoke. Lucas follows.

LAURIE
I had every mind to reach across the table and smack that man right on his big bald head.
(beat)
The poor kid is proven innocent and still they harass him.

Laurie puts a cigarette into her mouth and tries to light it.

LUCAS
Again with the smoking?

LAURIE
God damn, Lucas, I ate all the gum.

Laurie lights the smoke. Lucas flashes disappointment. Laurie unlocks the car.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
Bloomfield Hills.
(MORE)

LAURIE (CONT'D)

That's a place that Wyatt could get a fresh start. I'd be able to start back to school again and get out of this nowhere job.

LUCAS

(disbelief)
Bloomfield Hills.

LAURIE

Yeah. I saw this ad in the paper last week about some condos they're building. Beautiful places.

LUCAS

And where are you going to get the money for that?

LAURIE

Good things come to hard workers, Lucas. We've both been hard workers. We're due.

Lucas shakes his head in disbelief. He walks away from the car.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

What? Where are you going?

LUCAS

Look at me! It's time you stopped waiting for some damn miracle that's not going to happen!

Lucas walks off, trying his best not to limp. Laurie watches him, the reality of the situation sinking in. She slumps to a seat in the car, absently inhaling her cigarette.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Dwight steps into the diner. He's dressed in a sweater and slacks. A throw back to the eighties. He takes a seat at the counter.

Laurie sets a dinner down in front of a couple of RAUCOUS TWENTY-SOMETHINGS. Twenty-Something #1 holds up a dinner roll as Laurie walks away.

TWENTY-SOMETHING #1

Hey baby. You want to butter my muffin?

Twenty-something #2 laughs loudly. It's clear they are both a bit drunk.

Laurie scowls and moves to the counter, greeting Dwight.

LAURIE

Hey.

DWIGHT

Hi.

(beat)

You alright?

LAURIE

Just a couple of jokers. What do you want?

DWIGHT

Just some coffee.

Laurie hurries off to the coffee pot. Dwight notices a change in her and doesn't like it. He glares at the twenty-somethings. Twenty-something #1 catches his look and nudges his friend.

TWENTY-SOMETHING #1

Check out this fat fuck. Ever heard of Jenny Craig, dumbo?

Dwight's jaw tightens. Laurie pours his coffee.

LAURIE

Knock it off, fellas.

(to Dwight)

This is the shit I have to put up with.

TWENTY-SOMETHING #1

Knock it off. She sounds like your mom.

TWENTY-SOMETHING #2

Bet she fucks like your mom.

#1 hits #2 on the shoulder, laughing.

TWENTY-SOMETHING #1

That's not funny, ass hole. My mom's got bigger tits.

They laugh loudly.

LAURIE

Time to leave.

TWENTY-SOMETHING #1

Who's going to make us? Your skinny ass? Or your fat boyfriend there?

Dwight stands. The rest of the patrons watch and wait. Dwight marches across the floor to the men.

DWIGHT

All right now. Why don't we take this outside.

#1 squints at Dwight. Humor draining from his face.

TWENTY-SOMETHING #1

Sure, Wyatt Earp. Let's go.

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

Rain pelts the asphalt. Rain soaked, Dwight and Twenty-Something #1 square off, circling one another. Twenty-something #2 stands and watches from the side, grinning through the rain.

Laurie watches from cover of the back door. A small group of KITCHEN STAFF congregate behind her.

Dwight rushes and swings at his opponent. He misses horribly, losing balance and falling face first to the asphalt. #1 laughs loudly.

TWENTY-SOMETHING #1

You see this jerk?

Dwight stands, wiping blood from his scuffed cheek. He glances at Laurie, embarrassed. His eyes narrow. Fists clench. He rushes #1 headlong.

#1 side steps, landing a hard right to Dwight's nose. CRACK. Blood flows like water. Dwight's hand cups his nose. He staggers back, tripping over a parking block. Crashes to the asphalt.

#1 steps forward ready for more.

Delmer rushes from the back of the store wielding a baseball bat.

DELMER

Get out of here! Go!

The two men backpedal away from the diner, laughing as they go.

TWENTY-SOMETHING #1

Fucking pussy!

Delmer crosses to Dwight.

DELMER

You alright?

Dwight nods. His face and shirt mottled with blood. Delmer hurries into the diner, passing Laurie.

DELMER (CONT'D)

I'm calling the police.

Laurie hurries over to Dwight. She removes her apron and offers it to him. He presses it to his nose. He is devastated.

DWIGHT

Damn it. I'm sorry.

Laurie avoids his sad puppy dog stare.

LAURIE

Let's get out of this mess.

Laurie puts her arm around Dwight, helping him to his feet. The couple stagger into the diner.

EXT. WIXOM FALLS - NIGHT

Wyatt pedals through the rain, turning down Annie's street. We hear the sounds of heavy breathing and kissing.

INT. WEISS HOME/ANNIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Annie straddles Wyatt, groping and kissing him as he caresses her breasts beneath her Dead Kennedy's tee shirt. A state of gentle passion, the two move across one another with thoughtful touches.

Wyatt removes Annie's tee shirt and begins kissing her neck and shoulders.

Something in the mirror catches his eye. He jerks back, shocked.

In the reflection a series of rectangular bruises stripe Annie's back.

Wyatt is unable to move. Annie realizes what he is looking at and folds into his shoulder.

INT. WEISS HOME/ANNIE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Flame and joint meet in a puff of smoke.

Annie reclines on her bed, the joint pinched between her fingers. Wyatt stares at her. She inhales deeply, then leans forward and exhales out of the open window.

ANNIE

It's not like you think. They do it because they worry about me.

WYATT

You don't believe that, do you?

ANNIE

I don't want to talk about it.

WYATT

You have to go to the police. You have to tell them what's going on.

Annie glares at Wyatt.

ANNIE

I'm not going to the police. Every parent punishes their kid when they - when they screw up.

WYATT

Not like this they don't.

ANNIE

What do you know about it? Just because you get away with all kinds of shit. You think my parents want me to end up like that?

Wyatt saddens. Annie has hit a sore spot and realizes it. The guilt only makes her more angry.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Why don't you just worry about yourself?

Wyatt edges closer to Annie.

WYATT

I'm sorry. I just. I can see you that you're hurting, and I....I Wyatt reaches out and holds Annie's hand.

WYATT (CONT'D)

I feel closer to you, closer than anyone. I don't want to fuck this up, Ann.

Annie's eyes well up. She pulls her hand away and stares out the window, taking another deep drag from the joint. Wyatt pulls his hand back, not knowing what to do.

INT. RON GARRISON'S HOUSE/GARAGE - NIGHT

SERIES OF SHOTS: Ron stares at the money on a work bench. Opens a ladder. Grabs a handful of cash and climbs the ladder, stacking the money in the rafters above the garage. He turns out the lights, closing the door behind him.

INT. RON GARRISON'S HOUSE/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ron showers, singing along to Pink Floyd's Money. He scrubs at his hair with shampoo, thoroughly enjoying the promise of his new found wealth.

INT. RON GARRISON'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Ron swaggers through the house in a bath towel, toweling his hair. He walks through the dimly lit family room and into the kitchen. He opens a cabinet and grabs a coffee mug. He suddenly stops in his tracks.

The coffee maker is bubbling. A lamp brightens in the adjacent room. Startled, Ron turns to see KEVIN (36) and THAD (34). Each is dressed in casual country club attire.

Thad holds a large photo album in his lap. Kevin sizes up Ron, through wire rimmed glasses. On the coffee table rests a .45 And a mug of coffee.

Kevin stands, greeting Ron as if this were a business engagement.

KEVIN

Mr. Garrison. Allow me to introduce
Thad Sommers...

Kevin gesture to Thad.

THAD

And Kevin Hollstead.

Thad gestures to Kevin.

THAD (CONT'D)

We're here to discuss options on
your debt mitigation plan.

KEVIN

Seems that you owe ninety thousand
dollars to our client.

Ron is frozen with fear.

INT. DINER/BREAK ROOM - NIGHT

Dwight sits at the break room table, pressing Laurie's blood-stained apron to his face. Laurie crosses from the front, a towel full of ice in her hand. She shimmies into the booth beside Dwight.

LAURIE

Let me see.

Dwight lowers the apron. Blood coagulates above his lip. His nose is slightly twisted.

DWIGHT

Is it broken?

Laurie holds the towels and ice to his nose. She'd rather not give him the bad news.

LAURIE

It's a little swelled up. But I don't know. I'm not a doctor.

Dwight watches Laurie endearingly as she wipes some of the blood from his face with a napkin. Laurie's eyes meet his. They lock. Dwight slowly moves in toward Laurie. This is it!

They kiss. Laurie suddenly jerks back.

DWIGHT

I'm sorry.

LAURIE

No. It's alright.

DWIGHT

I shouldn't have done that.

Dwight looks into Laurie's eyes. She quickly looks away.

LAURIE

I'm just. A lot happens behind closed doors.

DWIGHT

I know. I know.

Laurie looks at Dwight, unsure of what to say.

INT. CHEVY CITATION - MOMENTS LATER

Dwight gets into the car and closes the door. He looks at his reflection in the rearview. Nose undeniably broken. Eye bruised. His receding hair line and double chin rounding out his face.

He's anything but an action hero. Eyes welling up, he resigns to the fact and starts the car.

INT. RON GARRISON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ron sits in a wooden chair. He wears only his bath towel, hair still wet from the shower. Thad and Kevin leisurely recline on the sofa. Thad thumbs through the photo album as Kevin sips coffee.

KEVIN

We operate off life insurance actuaries. Only the roles are reversed.

THAD

While an insurance company might give you different cash awards depending on the severity of the injury...

KEVIN

We offer you a choice of injury or dismemberment equal but not limited to the extent of your debt.

Thad hands Ron the glossy photo album. Kevin slurps his coffee. Ron hesitantly opens the album.

THAD

Page twenty five, clockwise from the upper left. We have the following...

CLOSE ON PHOTO: A human leg twisted at a sickly angle. The bone bulges the skin. The leg is held in position by a person O.S.

KEVIN (O.S.)

Photograph number 1. Forty thousand dollars. Shattered femur twisted a 45 degree angle from the pelvic bone.

Ron examines the photo with horror. Thad points at the next.

CLOSE ON PHOTO: A human hand held to a table for a photograph. The thumb missing and a pool of coagulated blood.

THAD

Photograph number 2. Sixty thousand dollars. One severed digit, opposable, from the owner's right hand. Need I add that the owner was right handed and not ambidextrous.

Ron searches Kevin and Thad's eyes for any sign of hope.

THAD (CONT'D)

Please Mr. Garrison. There is more.

KEVIN

Why don't you skip ahead a few pages?

Kevin gestures at the book with a flipping motion, nonchalantly sipping his coffee. Ron reluctantly turns the page. Gruesome page after page.

Kevin signals for him to stop flipping.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

That's good.

CLOSE ON PHOTO: A human foot, severed from it's owner's body and still encased in it's shoe.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

These are what we like to call our high risk alternatives. Anything upwards of one hundred thousand and you can expect to breath on a respirator or legally park in a handicapped space for the rest of your life.

Thad points to the next page.

THAD

Or we have the ultimate solution for those who owe upwards of half a million.

CLOSE ON PHOTO: A dead man buried in a hole. His body a grisly mess.

Ron looks up at Thad. He's never been so frightened.

THAD (CONT'D)

Professional quality workmanship, Mr. Garrison. Rest assured that it hurts much much worse than it looks.

KEVIN

We reserve the more excruciating pain for those who try to, ahem... 'fuck us over'.

THAD

For the sake of argument, 'fucking us over' could be defined as anything from reporting us to the authorities...

KEVIN

...to trying to somehow do us harm through the course of carrying out the aforementioned debt mitigation plan. I'm sure that you understand, you being an employee of the state of Michigan by no means excludes you from these rules.

RON

I have the money. Right now. I can give it back to you.

Kevin smiles at Thad. Thad smiles back, opening a brief case.

KEVIN

I'm sorry Mr. Garrison. That won't do.

Ron tries at a smile.

RON

Come on guys. Let's be reasonable.

KEVIN

There is no more being reasonable, Mr. Garrison.

THAD

There is only being rational. And rationally speaking you inflicted undue stress and financial burden...

KEVIN

Not to mention physical harm...

THAD

Good point. Physical harm on our clients to the tune of...

(reading)

Two hundred fifty thousand dollars.

RON

That's bullshit.

Kevin and Thad stiffen: don't question.

RON (CONT'D)

I only took ninety thousand.

THAD

Inclusive of interest on payment and our charges, of course. Everyone has to make a living.

KEVIN

That gives you roughly forty eight hours to come up with the money.

RON

That's impossible. There's no way.

THAD

You obviously have your connections.

KEVIN

We suggest that you use them.

Thad closes his briefcase. Kevin swallows the rest of his coffee. Both men stand in unison, Kevin collecting his gun from the coffee table.

THAD

Remember Mr. Garrison: it's no fun being a monopod.

Thad and Kevin leave. Ron doesn't move.

EXT. RON GARRISON'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

The sky turns a sleepy blue with coming dawn. Ron walks out to his cruiser, cautiously surveying the neighborhood as he gets in.

INT. FARR HOME/LAURIE'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Laurie sleeps heavily, her waitress uniform scattered across the floor like she walked in and fell into bed.

INT. FARR HOME/WYATT'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wyatt rolls over, eyes staring at the ceiling. Wide awake and sleepless.

We hear a basketball hit a backboard.

EXT. WIXOM FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

A basketball bounces on the rim and falls in.

Lucas recovers the ball and dribbles around the court. He hobbles slightly, his leg seemingly improved with a little rest. He takes aim from the far outside. Shoots. Sinks it.

A sheriff's cruiser pulls up to the court. Ron steps out. Lucas collects the ball and burns at Ron as he approaches.

RON

You fucked me over. Everyone knows it was fixed.

LUCAS

The fuck everyone knows.

Lucas turns and dribbles. Ron smacks the ball away from him. Lucas turns to him. Face to face.

RON

You cocky son of a bitch. You don't know what you're dealing with.

Lucas smirks in defiance.

LUCAS

Is the voting public aware of the Sheriff's extracurricular activities?

Ron pulls out his night stick. Smacks Lucas on the knee. Lucas crumbles to the court. Ron steps over Lucas, pushing the club into his throat.

RON

You want to play hard ball? Let's play hard ball.

Lucas' eyes tear with pain.

RON (CONT'D)

I will cripple you. I will fucking tear your shit family apart.

He presses the club with each syllable.

RON (CONT'D)

You Do Not Fuck With Me.

Ron puts the stick back in his belt. Lucas stays on the ground.

RON (CONT'D)

Tonight's game you will lose by more than three points. Or I will rain shit holy fucking hell on you and your family. You hear me, smart ass? You have no option.

Ron wipes sweat from his face. Surveys the area for any on-lookers and crosses to his car.

Lucas watches the cruiser drive off, gripping his knee.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Dwight is sprawled out on his couch, sound asleep. Nose taped. Eye swollen.

Sudden pounding on the door. Dwight's eyes open, blinking away the grogginess. He stumbles to his feet and staggers across the apartment, checking the peep hole in the door.

DWIGHT'S POV

Lucas waits, favoring his bad leg.

INT. APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Dwight stands at the refrigerator, stacking ice into a towel. Lucas sits on the couch, pain stabbing through his knee.

LUCAS

Did this with his stick. Threatened worse if I don't fix tonight's spread. It's fucked.

Dwight crosses to Lucas and hands him the home made ice pack. Lucas groans as he presses it to his knee. The knee is black and blue. Swelling.

Dwight tries to make sense through a haze of sleep.

DWIGHT

He's threatened you...

Lucas nods.

LUCAS

I need help. You've gotta. I don't know what. Arrest him. Bring him in.

DWIGHT

On what? What do you have?

Lucas shrinks back. Reluctantly confesses.

LUCAS

This isn't the first deal, Dwight. Ron had me fix another game. Two days ago. Conference semi-finals.
(beat)
He promised to get Wyatt off. Hide evidence. Fingerprints. Who knows what else.

DWIGHT

In return you fixed the game.

Lucas nods.

LUCAS

I'm out of plays, man.

Dwight lets it all sink in.

DWIGHT

I'm sorry, son. I'm real sorry for your mom and you. But you know anything that I do, there's a good chance your brother will end up in a cell.

Lucas looks away.

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - DAY

Dr. Taylor examines a YOUNG BOY'S broken arm. A CONCERNED MOTHER watches from a corner.

DR. TAYLOR

Everything will be fine.

Taylor stops speaking, something catching his eye. Lucas leans against the wall in the hallway beyond. Knee black and swollen.

DR. TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Excuse me for a moment.

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL/EXAMINATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lucas lies on an examination table, head reclined against the wall. Taylor fumbles with a scalpel. Lucas grips the table in pain. Eyes tear.

LUCAS

The fucking bastard. You've got to pull me together again, doc.

DR. TAYLOR

He did some serious damage.

Lucas grabs Taylor by the arm.

LUCAS

I need assurance that I'm going to come out of this with something. You understand me?

Taylor nods.

DR. TAYLOR

I'll do what I can.

INT. COUNTY SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY

Dwight rushes into the station.

DWIGHT (V.O.)
 I'm calling for an officer McMurray?
 He lifted some prints in Wixom Falls.
 A uh...A pharmacy.

INT. COUNTY SHERIFF'S STATION/RECORDS ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A file drawer opens. Files pulled out.

Three prints are laid out. Evidence A. B. C.

INT. COUNTY SHERIFF'S STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Dwight sits behind his desk, speaking into the phone. The pharmacy case is laid out before him.

OFFICER MCMURRAY (O.S.)
 This is officer McMurray.

DWIGHT
 Dwight McBane here, down in the
 Livingston county office? I uh - I
 was hoping you could tell me how

DWIGHT (CONT') (CONT'D)
 many prints you lifted from the
 Piedmont Pharmacy last Tuesday.

OFFICER MCMURRAY (O.S.)
 How many does it say in the file?

DWIGHT
 Yeah. See - we had a little mix up
 in the files.

OFFICER MCMURRAY (O.S.)
 Oh right. McBane. The jackass what
 got dusted by a dirt bike.

Dwight flinches.

OFFICER MCMURRAY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 So now you're losing files.

Dwight restrains his frustration.

DWIGHT
 (hushed)
 Listen. I'm a little new at this,
 alright? So I'd appreciate your help
 here. I just uh..I just want to make
 sure we have all the prints accounted
 for.

Uncertain silence.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
Come on, man. Cut me a break here.

McMurray exhales loudly.

OFFICER MCMURRAY (O.S.)
There should be three. Three sent to
the lab.

Dwight flips through the latents counting three.

DWIGHT
Just three?

OFFICER MCMURRAY (O.S.)
That's it. Each one came back
belonging to one of the workers.
Larry Steiner.

Dwight sits back, unsure of his findings.

DWIGHT
(sotto)
They're all here.

EXT. FARR HOME - DAY

The station wagon screeches to a stop in the driveway. Lucas pulls himself out and hobbles toward the home. His knee is wrapped in bandages.

INT. FARR HOME - CONTINUOUS

Lucas bursts inside. Laurie sits in front of the television, sipping a cup of coffee. Lucas bee lines to Wyatt's room. He throws open the door to find the room empty.

LAURIE
Lucas?

LUCAS
Where's Wyatt?

LAURIE
He went to meet with Ron.

LUCAS
Damn it, mom! He was grounded!

LAURIE
Jesus Christ. He's with Ron, Lucas.
He's in good hands.

Lucas' eyes swim. He calculates his next move. Laurie notices his leg. Freshly injured.

He limps into his bedroom, Laurie following him. She tries the door. Locked.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

Lucas?
 (beat)
 Lucas!

INT. PIEDMONT PHARMACY/MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

The STORE MANAGER sits behind the desk. Dwight and Larry sit across from him. Dwight scribbles notes while Larry shifts uncomfortably.

DWIGHT

So no one else suspicious comes to mind?

LARRY

No one. Farr was the only person who really stood out.

DWIGHT

I just wish there was more evidence. Only finger prints we found were yours.

(beat)

I don't suppose you'd have any reason to steal those drugs. Would you, Larry?

Larry laughs uncomfortably.

LARRY

No. Of course not.

DWIGHT

So you wouldn't mind if I had a look around your place? Checked your car?

LARRY

Jesus Christ. You serious?

Dwight studies Larry's every move.

LARRY (CONT'D)

What is this?

STORE MANAGER

Larry.

LARRY

I've been a faithful employee for five years. I've worked hard.

(MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)

Earned my money. Now you want to
accuse me of stealing from you?

STORE MANAGER

No one's accusing you of anything.
It's just to clear this up.

LARRY

You're not searching anything without
a warrant.

Larry hurries out of the office. The store manager steps
after him.

STORE MANAGER

Larry. Be reasonable.

Dwight watches Larry leave. He turns to the store manager,
pieces of the puzzle coming together.

INT. RON GARRISON'S HOUSE - DAY

Shades drawn. A wisp of smoke rises as a match is struck.
Joint meets flame in a puff of smoke as Ron inhales deeply,
shrouded in shadow and nothing else.

Lip split. Eyes baggy with sleeplessness. Ron cherishes the
joint as if it was his last communion. Ron squints through
the smoke eyeing a bullet standing on the table.

RON

How much for a hollow point to the
head? How much you fuck?

Ron flicks over the bullet vengefully. A KNOCK at the door.
Ron grabs a gun from the kitchen table, throws on a robe,
swaggers toward the door.

More KNOCKING. Ron shimmies up to the window. Eyes narrowed.
Teeth clenched. He peeks through the blinds.

RON'S POV: Wyatt stands outside the screen door. Anxious.

EXT. RON GARRISON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The door opens revealing Ron. He smiles broadly, a sinister
gleam in his eye.

RON

(saccharine)
Hey there.

WYATT

I - you said if I needed anything. I can come back.

RON

No. z'okay. Cool. Just unwind. Unwinding from work.

Ron swings open the screen door for Wyatt to enter. Wyatt hesitantly enters. Ron closes the door behind him, surveying the street for any on lookers.

INT. RON GARRISON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ron stumbles across the room. Wyatt follows.

RON

Fuck. Partied a little too hard. Hard. Man. You want some?

Ron gestures at Wyatt with a glass of scotch. Wyatt looks unsure.

RON (CONT'D)

What are you going to do? Rattle tail on me?

Wyatt takes the glass. Hesitantly sips.

RON (CONT'D)

What? What do you want?

WYATT

My girlfriend. She's having trouble.

Ron slumps to a seat.

RON

That's the fucking trouble with you kids, man. You dunno how to strap on the latex.

WYATT

Latex?

RON

Condoms, man. You heard of condoms?

WYATT

Yeah. No. It's not. She's not pregnant or anything.

RON

Well what?

WYATT

Her parents. She has these. These bruises on her back. Fucking. I can't see her going through this, you know?

Just as Ron gets it: another KNOCK at the door. Fear sobers him up.

RON

Hold on.

Ron grips his gun. Shimmies up to the window and peeks through the blinds. Wyatt watches suspiciously.

RON'S POV: Larry waits anxiously at the door.

Ron smirks. Body slumping. He turns to Wyatt.

RON (CONT'D)

Don't move.

Ron opens the door cautiously, shielding Larry from Wyatt's view.

EXT. RON GARRISON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ron steps outside, closing the door behind him.

RON

What? What are you doing here?

LARRY

He knows. He knows everything.

Ron pushes Larry back, getting into his face.

RON

Who knows? Who knows what?

LARRY

McBane. Deputy McBane. He came around asking all of these questions. Asked to search my car. My house. You told me you would take care of this.

Ron looks up and down the street. He sees...

INT. CHEVY CITATION - CONTINUOUS

Dwight sees Ron look in his direction. He slumps down.

EXT. RON GARRISON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ron stares at Dwight's car. He cuts at Larry.

INT. RON GARRISON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Wyatt stands and approaches the door, recognizing Larry's voice. He opens the door.

Larry's eyes widen when he sees Wyatt inside. Wyatt doesn't move. Ron's eyes narrow at the sight of Dwight's car.

RON
(sotto)
Not gonna fuck me...

Ron suddenly rushes Wyatt, shoving him face first into the wall. Shocked and horrified, Wyatt flinches in pain as Ron chicken wings him.

WYATT
What are you doing!

Ron forces Wyatt through the home to the kitchen. He shoves Wyatt down next to the kitchen table and grabs a joint.

RON
You fucking stupid, Farr. Walking in here. This in your pocket.

Wyatt tries to pull away.

WYATT
That's not mine! What are you doing!

Ron suddenly pulls him to his feet, hitting him in the stomach. Wyatt collapses to his knees. Gasps for air. Larry watches wide eyed. Ron gestures to a pair of handcuffs on the counter.

RON
Give me! Give!

Wyatt gasps for air, tears coming to his eyes. Larry hands Ron the cuffs. Ron tightens the cuffs around Wyatt's wrists.

RON (CONT'D)
(sotto)
Fucking show him I mean business.

Ron knees Wyatt in the stomach. Wyatt wails. Ron breathes heavily over Wyatt's collapsed body. Larry watches, unsure of what is happening. Ron rushes Larry and grabs him by the jaw.

RON (CONT'D)
Go home. Keep your fucking shit mouth shut! Shut!

Larry shrinks back, nodding. He runs out of the home.

INT. CHEVY CITATION - CONTINUOUS

Dwight slumps down in the driver's seat.

DWIGHT'S POV: Larry hurries out across the lawn, jumps into his car, and screeches off.

Dwight begins to sit up then quickly shrinks down again.

DWIGHT'S POV: Ron, dressed sloppily in his uniform, ushers hand-cuffed Wyatt to his cruiser. Ron throws Wyatt in the back seat, tucks in his shirt, and hops into the car.

DWIGHT

Holy shit.

INT. COUNTY SHERIFF'S STATION/JAIL CELL - CONTINUOUS

Wyatt sits in the dark. Tears streak in his face. A cell door is closed in front of him.

SWISH PAN TO:

INT. COUNTY SHERIFF'S STATION/RON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Ron hurries into his office, slamming the door behind him. He reaches for the phone.

SWISH PAN TO:

INT. FARR HOME/LUCAS' BEDROOM - DAY

Lucas sits on his bed, speaking on the phone. Laurie yells from the other side of the door.

LAURIE (O.S.)

Lucas? What are you doing? Your supposed to be at the gym.

Laurie beats on the door.

RON (O.S.)

Got him resisting arrest. Funny. His face looks alot like your knee. He'll look alot worse if you don't do this.

LAURIE (O.S.)

Lucas!

LUCAS

Yeah. Okay.

INT. FARR HOME - CONTINUOUS

Laurie beats on the locked bedroom door. Lucas steps out. Her eyes glance at his knee. A stitched mess.

Lucas doesn't blink.

LUCAS
Wyatt's been arrested.

LAURIE
What?

LUCAS
I just got off the phone with the Sheriff. He's locked up.

Laurie snorts in disbelief.

LAURIE
I suppose somebody found their bike missing or house egged and Wyatt just fit the bill.

LUCAS
It's more serious than that.

LAURIE
No, Luc. It's just more bull shit finger pointing.

Lucas hits the wall.

LUCAS
God damn it, mom! This is not something that's just going to magically fix itself! Wyatt is in some serious shit! I'm supposed to play the game of my life and I can barely stand! You need to stop pretending and wake up!

Lucas hobbles out the door. He stops.

LUCAS (CONT'D)
Some bad things have happened, mom. Just. If you ever do anything

LUCAS (CONT') (CONT'D)
in your life, support me now. Whatever I do. Please, I need your support.

Laurie watches Lucas leave, speechless.

LAURIE

(sotto)

You always have my support.

EXT. FARR HOME - CONTINUOUS

Dwight's citation screeches to a halt. Dwight lays on the horn. Lucas hurries to Dwight's car.

DWIGHT

He's got Wyatt. Banged him up pretty good.

LUCAS

I know. He called here.

DWIGHT

I'm sorry.

LUCAS

You going to bring him in?

DWIGHT

I'm going to try.

LUCAS

Well...

DWIGHT

Well.

Dwight looks past Lucas. Lucas follows his line of sight to see Laurie watching from the window.

LUCAS

Maybe the good life is waiting. If we're strong enough to see this through.

DWIGHT

We'll see it through.

Dwight nods. Lucas nods back.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

Good luck.

Dwight speeds off.

INT. COUNTY SHERIFF'S STATION/RON'S OFFICE - DAY

Ron spins the chamber of his gun. The intercom BUZZES.

SECRETARY (O.S.)
 Sheriff. There are some men here to
 see you.

Ron presses the intercom.

RON
 Tell them I'll be right out.

Ron snaps the chamber of the gun shut.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - DAY

ON TELEVISION: A Sports Now! graphic sweeps the screen. A
 SPORTSCASTER addresses the camera, standing in the center of
 the Michigan Tech Stadium.

SPORTSCASTER
 And here we are back for more College
 ball action! Tonight's game: the
 Michigan Tech Bucks versus the
 Kentucky State

SPORTSCASTER (CONT') (CONT'D)
 Lightning for an automatic bid to
 the big dance. Each team bragging
 their own fleet footed phenoms.

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY - DAY

Dwight's citation speeds down the highway.

SPORTSCASTER (V.O.)
 On one hand the Bucks.

EXT. COUNTY SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY

The citation pulls into the parking lot.

SPORTSCASTER (V.O.)
 An incredible season for sophomore
 Devon Andrews and a heart felt
 comeback for senior Lucas Farr.

INT. CHEVY CITATION/MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Dwight watches through his windshield as Kevin and Thad usher
 Ron into the back seat of a BMW S-series.

SPORTSCASTER (V.O.)
 The question on everyone's mind:
 will Farr bounce back from last game's
 injury?

EXT. COUNTY SHERIFF'S STATION - CONTINUOUS

Dwight waits for the BMW to pull off before following.

INT. FARR HOME - DAY

Laurie watches the television with anticipation.

SPORTSCASTER (V.O.)

A whole lot of hopeful fans out there are depending on number twenty four, despite notions that he'll be permanently benched before the end of the season.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - DAY

ON TELEVISION: Lucas is interviewed.

SPORTSCASTER

An injury late in Thursday's game. Your NBA hopes fading. And now up

SPORTSCASTER (CONT') (CONT'D)

against the Lightning, a team undefeated in their last three conference tournaments. What is your feeling going into tonight's game?

Lucas stands outside the locker room, towel draped around his neck.

LUCAS

I'm confident. The odds could be a billion to one. But it doesn't matter. We're more than a statistic.

BACK TO SCENE

A mildly packed game night bar. Stacy and Jimmy sit at the bar sipping the flavor of the day. Deke bar tends. He sights something that sets him on edge. He taps Jimmy.

DEKE

Jimmy. Look.

Jimmy and Stacy turn to see Ron, Kevin, and Thad step into the bar. Jimmy looks like he has just seen the Grim Reaper. He turns and whispers to Stacy.

JIMMY

Get my gun.

Stacy nods and crosses to the office.

Kevin, Thad, and Ron sit at a table. Jimmy stands and crosses to them carrying a couple of drinks. He sets the drinks in front of Kevin and Thad with a nervous smile.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

On the house.

Kevin and Thad stare at Jimmy without saying a word. Jimmy shrinks back. Ron looks at him pleadingly.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

If you boys need anything. Anything at all, you just holler.

Kevin and Thad maintain silence. Stare right through Jimmy. Jimmy returns to the bar and sits. Stacy sits down next to him, passing a gun wrapped in a paper bag.

STACY

What the fuck are they doing here?

JIMMY

What the fuck do you think they're doing here? Our high risk investment just turned into a liability.

(beat)

Jesus Christ, that fucker. Fuck.

EXT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - CONTINUOUS

Dwight's citation sits across from a BMW S-series.

INT. CHEVY CITATION - CONTINUOUS

Dwight picks up his gun and checks the chamber. Plenty of bullets. He stares at his shaking hands.

He looks himself in the rearview. Taped nose. Bruised eye.

DWIGHT

You are going to do this. You are going to take care of this.

A BUZZER. The sounds of the game crowd getting louder. Heavy breathing.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy watches Thad and Kevin's reflection in the mirror behind the bar. Stacy shifts uncomfortably.

STACY

Jimmy, listen I - I've done something that. Well. It didn't quite work out the way I planned.

Jimmy burns at Stacy.

STACY (CONT'D)

Garrison's been in hock to us for two years now. He's been a lousy client. I thought it would be best to get him out of the way.

JIMMY

Explain yourself.

STACY

I called Mark and the gang. Told them the game was fixed.

Jimmy leans in close to Stacy.

JIMMY

What about the vig we would've made, Stacy?

STACY

Nothing compared to what Ron would've sucked out of us over the next couple of years. He's a bad investment. I wanted to nip it in the bud.

JIMMY

You realize that you signed our fucking death warrant.

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/FIRST HALF - NIGHT

SPORTS BROADCAST AND FILM INTERSPERSED: Lucas drives the basket. Shoots. The ball bounces off the rim. Devon rushes the basket, rebounding and finishing what Lucas started. Lucas winces, hand seeking newfound pain in his knee.

LATER

Lucas passes off to Devon. Devon shoots and sinks a three pointer. The fans go wild. Lucas hobbles to the bench as a time out is called.

INT. FARR HOME - NIGHT

Laurie watches the broadcast on the edge of her seat.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - NIGHT

Dwight stands outside his citation. The sun sets in bloody hues. He turns to the cheers inside the bar. Looks at his hands. Still shaking. He makes a fist, takes a deep breath, and marches toward the bar.

He checks the pistol under his waistband.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Ron's face goes flush as Dwight enters the bar.

RON
(sotto)
Shit.

Ron squirms, turning to Kevin.

RON (CONT'D)
You guys mind if I get a drink?

Kevin gestures to the drinks on the table.

KEVIN
There are two drinks right here.

RON
Yeah, but I prefer something else.
(beat)
Come on guys. This could be the last
drink that I can pick up without
assistance.

Ron tries a smile. Kevin and Thad exchange looks. Thad nods.
Kevin turns back to Ron.

KEVIN
Remember what we said happens if you
fuck with us.

Ron nods.

RON
I remember. I remember.

Ron stands and crosses to the bar, his faux smile fading
quickly.

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/FIRST HALF - NIGHT

The Bucks huddle up around the coach. The coach looks at
Farr's knee. The damage is camouflaged by a knee brace and
bandage.

COACH
Farr. You sure you're up to this?

LUCAS
Yeah coach. I'll be alright.

COACH

Okay then.

Lucas looks at Devon. Devon senses something is not right. The coach finishes his play instructions and the BUZZER rings. The teams take the court. Lucas brushes past Devon.

LUCAS

Time to step up, freshman.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - CONTINUOUS

Ron steps up to the bar, grabbing Dwight's arm.

RON

Don't fucking move, McBane. Don't fucking look at me. Just turn. Walk out that door and don't look back.

Dwight turns to Ron.

DWIGHT

I'm putting you under arrest.

RON

(heavy whisper)
God damn it, McBane.

Ron tightens his grip, turning Dwight back toward the bar. Dwight pulls away and glares at Ron.

DWIGHT

You're under arrest.

Ron checks on Kevin and Thad. They eye him suspiciously. Ron pushes Dwight back against a wall.

RON

(heavy whisper)
You listen to me you fat fucking piece of shit. You are walking into a mess here. You understand me?

Dwight grabs Ron by the collar. Patrons notice.

DWIGHT

I'm not backing down.

Ron wide eyes. He swats away Dwight's hands.

RON

I go with you and we're both dead the minute we step out the door.

Ron moves away from Dwight. Dwight goes to follow then sees Thad standing.

DWIGHT'S POV: slow motion, Thad's suit jacket moves as he rises, revealing a holstered gun.

Dwight stops in his tracks. Thad meets Ron half way.

THAD

Where is your drink?

Ron looks at his empty hands. Thad sits Ron down, does a slow burn at Dwight. Dwight nervously surveys the bar.

DWIGHT'S POV: Jimmy and Stacy look from Dwight to Ron and back again. Jimmy whispers something to Stacy and puts his hand inside the paper bag.

Dwight gathers that there is more than a sandwich in that bag. He takes a seat at the bar.

A BUZZER sounds. Dwight looks up at the television.

ON TELEVISION: Lucas bounces the ball at the top of the key. He passes to Devon, rushes inside. Devon fakes. Cuts inside. Shoots.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/FIRST HALF - CONTINUOUS

The ball swishes. All net.

QUICK SERIES OF SHOTS: Lucas sweat drenched and tired, drives the net. Again and again. Despite a worsening limp he plays with more determination and skill than ever...or maybe it's all just a precisely orchestrated act.

Lucas looks up at the score board.

LUCAS' POV SCOREBOARD: Bucks 46, Lightning 46.

Lucas doesn't seem happy with what he sees.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - CONTINUOUS

Ron looks from the television to Dwight. Dwight watches with concern. A BUZZER sounds.

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/LOCKER ROOM/HALF TIME - NIGHT

Devon stares at his reflection in a mirror. He turns on a faucet and splashes water on his face.

When he stands again, he sees Lucas behind him.

Lucas moves to the sink next to Devon and splashes his own face.

LUCAS

Twelve years, ten months, three days.
That's how long I've been playing
the game. I can shoot a three pointer
with my eyes closed, but I can barely
walk up the court.

Devon looks at Lucas' leg. Blood trickles from beneath the bandages.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

We both know that this is my last
game, Devon. That I have to walk
away, but I'm not about to walk away
a loser. And I'm not about to walk
away less than the best.

(beat)

This is the time for me to pass the
torch, man. Question is: are you
ready to take it?

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - CONTINUOUS

Kevin turns to Ron.

KEVIN

I would've expected a more definite
point spread, Mr. Garrison.

RON

(uncertain)

He's just playing it safe.

KEVIN

Let's hope so.

Ron feigns confidence, surveying the bar for the nearest exits.

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/SECOND HALF - NIGHT

QUICK SERIES OF SHOTS: Lucas drives down the court. Passes to Devon. Devon scores. Lucas snuffs a Lightning shot. Winces as he lands. Hobbles down court. Tries the three pointer and misses. But Devon rebounds and scores.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy works his hand inside the bag. There is a CLICK. Stacy looks over his shoulder, putting his hand inside his wind breaker. Dwight follows Stacy's line of sight to Thad and Kevin. Ron looks concerned over Devon's shot success.

Dwight surveys the bar of innocents. All oblivious as to what is about to happen.

ON TELEVISION: The score Bucks 60, Lightning 60. Lucas dribbles down court, the clock nearing the ten minute mark.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/SECOND HALF - CONTINUOUS

QUICK SERIES OF SHOTS: Lucas drives. This is it. All or nothing. In a series of amazing plays he passes to Devon who scores and scores again.

The Score: Bucks 79, Lightning 80. One minute on the clock.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - CONTINUOUS

ON TELEVISION: Lucas grins into the camera throwing up his index finger. 'Number one'. He hugs Devon, patting him on the head. Devon beams in the spot light.

Kevin and Thad exchange glances. Kevin gets up and crosses to Stacy and Jimmy. Thad grabs Ron by the arm.

THAD

Looks like Lady Luck just walked out the door.

RON

The game's not over.

THAD

You are fucking with me, Mr. Garrison, and you know how much I don't appreciate that.

Thad forces Ron to his feet. Kevin steps up beside Stacy and Jimmy.

KEVIN

Gentlemen. It seems we have some disappointing news. Your friend there has just lost our associates in excess of four hundred thousand

KEVIN(CONT') (CONT'D)

dollars. I think you'll both agree that that is a lot of money.

Stacy hand slowly moves into his jacket.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Now.

(MORE)

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Since you backed this character,
it's only fair that we default
responsibility on his payment to
you.

Stacy and Jimmy exchange looks. Dwight stands, realizing something is about to happen.

SWISH PAN TO:

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/SECOND HALF - NIGHT

SLOW MOTION: Lucas sweat drenched and tired, dribbles down court. He sets up outside the three point line. Jumps. The ball releases.

SNAP TO NORMAL MOTION: a Lightning defender fouls Lucas hard. Lucas slams to the court. Knee popping with a crunch.

SLOW MOTION: Lucas' eyes follow the ball, face fraught with pain.

INT. FARR HOME - CONTINUOUS

SLOW MOTION: Laurie watches on edge.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - CONTINUOUS

SLOW MOTION: Ron's eyes narrow, he watches Lucas fall with contempt.

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/SECOND HALF - CONTINUOUS

LUCAS' POV IN SLOW MOTION: the ball bounces on the rim. Then falls in.

NORMAL MOTION: Lucas' eyes close. A WHISTLE blows.

The coach and trainer empty the bench. Lucas writhes in pain. Blood seeps from his knee brace.

COACH

That's it Farr. You're out.

The trainer and a MEDIC put Lucas on a stretcher.

Lucas stares at Devon.

LUCAS' POV: Devon takes the ball, stepping up to the free throw line. He checks the score. Bucks 82, Lightning 80. Five seconds on the clock.

Devon bounces the ball. Raises his hands to shoot. The view is obscured as Lucas is carried into the locker room.

INT. WORM IN THE HOLE BAR - CONTINUOUS

Thad ushers Ron toward the door. Ron glares at Lucas' image on the TV.

RON
Rot in hell, you fuck.

Dwight stands, unsure of what to do.

Ron grabs Thad's arm and rushes him into a table. The two men flip head over heels. Thad turns the fall into a roll and recovers quickly. He chicken wings Ron, forcing his face against a wall.

Stacy draws his gun, aiming at Kevin. Kevin pulls his piece, grabbing Jimmy as a shield.

KEVIN
This is so God damn unprofessional.

A DEAD CALM: no one in the bar moves.

ON TELEVISION: Devon throws the free throw and scores. The announcers scream.

SLOW MOTION: Stacy flinches at the sound. Pulls his trigger. Jimmy's shoulder erupts in a haze of blood.

NORMAL MOTION: PATRONS scream and rush for the exits.

Kevin fires at Stacy. Stacy ducks, the bullet hitting an OBESE MAN sitting beside him. The high caliber bullet passes straight through shattering the mirror behind the bar.

Thad pulls all his force on Ron's arm. The shoulder pops. Thad throws Ron aside, leveling his gun on Stacy.

Dwight pushes through the current of fleeing bar patrons toward Ron. Kevin and Thad pull off one bullet each at Stacy, hitting their target. Stacy slumps to the ground.

Ron writhes in pain, his arm hanging limply.

Dwight grabs Ron and pulls him behind an overturned table.

Deke pulls a shotgun from behind the bar. He fires at Kevin. Kevin ducks in time, the bullets ripping through the wall. Thad shoots at Deke. A perfect shot through his forehead.

Kevin and Thad turn toward the overturned table.

Dwight sees Kevin and Thad in the shards of broken mirror littering the floor.

SLOW MOTION: Dwight springs up and fires wildly. A bullet rips through his shoulder. He keeps pulling the trigger.

DWIGHT's POV: Kevin and Thad jerk and dodge the bullets. They appear to duck to the floor for cover.

NORMAL MOTION: Dwight falls down behind the table. His hand shaking uncontrollably. Breathing heavy. He loads the chamber of his gun. Looks to Ron. Ron is wild eyed with fear.

Dwight springs back up, aiming where Kevin and Thad were. They lie on the ground stone dead.

Dwight stands aiming his gun amidst the wreck and detritus of the bar.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - NIGHT

ON TELEVISION: Static, then a sudden change of channel. In cinema-verite style, Dwight steps out of the Worm in the Hole bar.

NEWS ANCHOR

...off duty deputy Dwight McBane uncovered the illegal gambling operation during an attempt...

ON TELEVISION: The channel changes revealing a picture of Ron being gurneyed to an ambulance.

NEWS ANCHOR #2

...the small town sheriff, Ron Garrison. Charges of blackmail, extortion, and illegal gambling have been made against this one time protector of the peace...

ON TELEVISION: the channel changes revealing Dwight, mobbed by reporters as he makes his way up to the court house. He stares into the camera, unsure of himself, wearing a sling on his arm.

DWIGHT

I'm a very lucky man.

ON TELEVISION: The channel changes revealing a court room within the Wixom County Court House. The camera slowly zooms in on Ron. His face is black and bruised. His shoulder and arm in a cast. He stands with his ATTORNEY.

NEWS ANCHOR #3

...the jury deliberating for less than thirty minutes, found former sheriff Ron Garrison guilty on multiple counts of blackmail, extortion, and racketeering...

ON TELEVISION: The channel changes. The camera zooms in on Lucas. He stands with the aid of crutches, his right knee encased in a brace. Lucas anxiously awaits a jury's verdict. Dr. TAYLOR

NEWS ANCHOR #4

...and in related news, Lucas Farr, one time NBA hopeful brought up on charges of point shaving was found not guilty today by a Michigan court of law. Jurors in the case considered the evidence against Farr fabricated by convicted Sheriff, Ron Garrison.

Lucas exhales, relieved.

INT. FARR HOME - NIGHT

Lucas watches the NBA draft.

ON TELEVISION: several players are chosen. Among them is Devon. He smiles broadly as the paparazzi flashes away. Devon stands next to his mother, MRS. ANDREWS (45) as a reporter approaches.

SPORTSCASTER

Tell me Devon, how does it feel, right now this minute to have finally realized your dream of being drafted into the NBA?

DEVON

I don't know. You think about all the heart ache, all the sweat and blood to get here, and all the guys that tried just as hard as I did. You might get just one chance and you have to see it through.

Realizing acknowledgement, Lucas watches, a mixture of envy and depression.

INT. EL CAMINO - DAY

Winding patterns of rain stream down the windshield, obscuring Lucas in warped patterns. He somberly watches the world outside.

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL/FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Lucas lies on the examination table, knee freshly stitched. Taylor holds a phone to his ear.

DR. TAYLOR

The odds favor Kentucky to win by more than a three point spread.

You've got to lose by less than three.

LUCAS

Or win. Place the bet.

INT. MICHIGAN TECH GYMNASIUM/SECOND HALF/FLASHBACK

Devon steps up to the free throw line. He checks the score. Bucks 82, Lightning 80. Five seconds on the clock.

Devon shoots. Scores. Score Bucks 84, Lightning 80.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL PARKING LOT - DAY

A luxury sedan pulls up next to the El Camino. Taylor gets out of the car. He passes Lucas a gym bag. Gets into his car and drives away.

CLOSE ON EL CAMINO: We watch through the window as Lucas unzips the bag and peers inside.

Lucas pulls out a handful of cash. He exhales.

INT. BUS STATION - DAY

Wyatt and Annie sit next to one another on a bench. Wyatt holds Annie's hands. She sadly hangs her head.

WYATT

Your aunt's house is just a forty minute drive from here.

Annie doesn't react. Wyatt gently raises her chin. She looks into his eyes.

ANNIE

It won't be the same as being here.

Wyatt tries to read Annie's emotions. Announcements mark the arrival of three new buses. Wyatt and Annie react to the last town name. She picks up her luggage and stands. Wyatt stands with her. He gently holds her by the arm.

WYATT

Are you mad that I told them?

Annie stares into Wyatt's eyes. She holds her stare for a moment, then shakes her head no. She hugs him tightly.

ANNIE

Make sure you call me.

Wyatt tightens his grip.

INT. BLOOMFIELD HILLS HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Teens enter the building. The Farr Station wagon pulls to the curb.

INT. STATION WAGON - CONTINUOUS

Wyatt watches out the window, nerves building.

LUCAS

You've pulled off tougher shit than this, man.

Wyatt turns to Lucas. Lucas smiles.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Besides, this is a brand new start. You can be the person you want to be.

Wyatt smiles back. He hops out of the car and hurries toward the school. He spins around holding up crossed fingers. Lucas holds up crossed fingers in reply.

INT. APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Through the darkness a mountain of sheets and blankets undulate and jerk. A female voice MOANS as the bed springs squeak faster and faster. The woman lets out an orgasmic moan.

The blankets lie still. An arm slowly emerges and Laurie rolls out. She switches on the lamp.

LAURIE

Oh my God. That was just...incredible.

Dwight emerges from the blankets, a little surprised. He slumps back against the headboard and smiles sheepishly. Turns to Laurie.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

What?

DWIGHT

Want to go again?

LAURIE

Hell yes!

Laurie turns off the light. The couple dive at one another.

INT. FARR HOME - NIGHT

Lucas sits in the dark watching the television.

SPORTSCASTER (O.S.)

Tell me Devon, how does it feel,
right now this minute to have finally
realized your dream of being drafted
into the NBA?

DEVON (O.S.)

I don't know. You think about all
the heart ache, all the sweat and
blood to get here, and all the guys
that tried just as hard as I did.
You might get just one chance and
you have to see it through.

Lucas watches intently.

ON TELEVISION: The sportscaster turns the microphone to MRS.
ANDREWS.

SPORTSCASTER

What about you Mrs. Andrews? Was it
worth it?

Lucas doesn't blink.

ON TELEVISION: Mrs. Andrews cries, holding her son tightly.

MRS. ANDREWS

Oh yes. It was all so very very much
worth it.

Lucas watches briefly, considering the woman's words. He
smiles and points the remote at the TV. POP it turns off.

CUT TO BLACK.