

SUNDOWN

Written by

Nikki Wheeler

And

Alex Moreno

FADE IN:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The setting sun is blocked by an enormous billboard: WELCOME TO BEAUMONT. NO WRONG EXITS. NO BAD NEIGHBORHOODS.

In the distance, a black 1970 Chevy Chevelle SS sits on the side of the road.

The sound of a loud, piercing SIREN can be heard.

MARTIN WALKER(25), black, lean, and lanky picks lug nuts out of a hub cap and tightens them with a tire iron.

JONAS MITCHELL (25), black, but light-skinned, he can pass, leans against the car. He covers his ears.

JONAS

Where the hell are we?

Flashing red and blue lights in the distance get his attention.

Jonas pushes off the car. He taps Martin with nervous energy.

Tires roll to a stop in a swirl of dust.

MARTIN

Shit!

The car door opens. Sheriff PERCY GRICE (50), a hard nosed disciplinarian, adjusts his gun belt, and strides forward.

GRICE

You boys hear the siren?

JONAS

Boys? Who you call'n Boys?

Grice spits a wad of chew inches from Jonas.

GRICE

You a big ol' sum-bitch, ain't ya?
Look like that boy plays ball for
Georgia. Then again... hard to tell
y'all apart.

Martin steps up.

MARTIN

We mean no trouble, sir. We're
finish'n up--be on our way.

Grice and Jonas stand toe to toe.

GRICE
That'd be real smart.

Siren stops--

GRICE
Y'all don't want to be on the wrong
side of the county line after
sundown.

Grice turns and walks back to his car.

Martin drops to his knees and screws on lug nuts - fast.

JONAS
What are you do'n? *Sir*.

MARTIN
You heard him. We gotta go. NOW!

JONAS
No we don't! We can take as long
as we want to change a mother
fuck'n tire.

MARTIN
Stop run'n y'er damn mouth and
help me get finished.

Jonas squats down and hands Martin lug nuts.

INT./EXT. CAR - SAME

Martin and Jonas get in the car. Martin turns the key. The car chokes and sputters.

Jonas sits back in the seat, arms crossed.

Martin tries the ignition again. The car chokes and sputters.

JONAS
Give it a minute.

Martin looks in the rearview mirror. He sees a speck.

MARTIN
We don't have a minute.

JONAS
Try again. This time keep your big
ass foot off the gas.

Martin turns the key. The car sputters, chokes and rumbles to life.

Martin smiles. He looks in the rearview and pulls on the road.

The speck is comes up fast.

WOOOONNNNNKKKKKK!!!!

A PICKUP TRUCK tricked out with a grill box, lurches behind them blaring its horn.

JONAS

What the FUCK is that?

Martin swerves pressing the accelerator to the floor.

The truck tailgates them.

JONAS

What are they do'n? Pull over. Let um pass.

MARTIN

We stop. We're dead.

The truck speeds up beside them. The three MEN in truck stare at Jonas and Martin. They laugh.

Jonas opens the glove box. He pulls out a gun.

MARTIN

Put that away.

The truck lurches forward. It smashes into Martin's car.

Martin and Jonas jerk forward.

The car shimmies and shakes.

Martin swerves trying to regain control.

Jonas hits his head on the windshield. He drops the gun.

MARTIN

You okay man?

JONAS

Fuck No! My head's bleed'n.

WOOOONNNNNKKKKKK!!!!

The truck horn blares.

WHAM!

The truck hits the back of the car again.

The car lurches onto the dirt shoulder. The tires catch. The car launches over the culvert and into the field.

Martin slams on the breaks.

Jonas pulls out his cell phone and dials 9-1-1.

9-1-1 OPERATOR (V.O.)
9-1-1 what's your emergency?

JONAS
We've been run off the road!

9-1-1 OPERATOR (V.O.)
What is your location.

JONAS
I DON'T KNOW!

MARTIN
COUNTY ROAD 10! COUNTY ROAD 10!

JONAS
County Road 10. County Road 10.

9-1-1 OPERATOR (V.O.)
An officer is in the area.

The truck charges into the field. It stops behind the car. The driver's side door opens. JOHNNY (25), rough, steps out.

Martin puts his hands on the steering wheel.

MARTIN
Don't make any sudden movements.

JONAS
Fuck that. Put the car in gear-
let's go- DO IT!

Johnny survey's the truck's damage.

Martin lowers his hand to the keyring. He turns the ignition. The car chokes and sputters.

Johnny walks to Martin's window. He motions for Martin to roll down the window.

Martin reluctantly cranks the window down.

For a moment, SILENCE.

Then-

JOHNNY

Good eve'n.

Johnny's hand rests on top of the car. He drums his fingers.

JOHNNY

It's a crime to leave the scene of
an accident.

JONAS

Only crime is what you did to us.

Johnny bangs his hand on the roof of the car.

JOHNNY

Ray!

The passenger side door of the truck opens. RAY (25), stocky
and ROBERT EARL (25), tall with dead eyes get out.

In the distance, flashing lights, a police siren.

The three Men look in the direction of the siren.

Jonas grabs the gun from the floor.

The police car stops next to the truck. Grice gets out,
adjusting his gun belt and walks to the car.

GRICE

I warned y'all-

The red flashing lights of the police car dissolve to:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

A red ON AIR sign flickers to life. In front of it, a picked-
out Afro dominates the frame. The glow of a laptop screen
reflects in a pair of determined brown eyes.

ZU (V.O.)

Black Americans make up just
thirteen percent of the U.S.
population. So why do we account
for twenty-seven percent of those
killed by police?

ZU TAYLOR (22), adjusts her headphones- mindful not to
disturb her hair. She leans forward into the mic.

ZU

Welcome to Unequal Force, a new series on Woke Waves, where we dig into the lives behind the numbers, the systems that uphold them, and the communities fighting to break the cycle.

Zu pushes a computer button, background music swells.

ZU

Justice can't begin until the truth is heard. I'm Zu Taylor, Let's talk about it.

INT. KICKBOXING GYM - DAY

HARTLEY TAYLOR (40), bi-racial, spars with a LARGE MAN.

The MAN delivers a sharp jab and a swift uppercut.

Hartley hits the mat, HARD.

The INSTRUCTOR rushes in. He pushes the Man back. The Man bangs his gloves together and bounces in his corner.

The Instructor pulls Hartley up.

She steps back in her corner. The bell rings. She charges forward: JAB, JAB, a swift leg swing takes the MAN down hard.

Hartley bangs her gloves together and bounces over the Man.

HARTLEY

You good?

EXT. STREET - DAY

Hartley adjusts headphones, hits PLAY on her phone and takes off running. Audio kicks in- what she's listening to.

ZU (V.O.)

We know why. The system was designed to break us. And we keep playing like we can win.

Hartley turns a corner.

ZU (V.O.)

What about the people who could change things? The ones with power.

EXT. PARK - SAME

Hartley runs through the park. She passes PROTESTERS.

ZU (V.O.)

Look, before y'all come for me- I'm
not saying Black celebs don't care.
It's just some of them treat
activism like a side hustle.

Hartley runs through "THE GATE OF THE EXONERATED."

ZU (V.O.)

Take, my aunt- you know her- when's
the last time she spoke up about
something that mattered?

EXT. STREET - SAME

Hartley exits the park and stops outside a store window.

ZU (V.O.)

So, what's the deal? Is the price
of a seat at the table silence?

Through the window, Hartley watches a CLERK set up a display.

The Clerk recognizes Hartley. She holds up a her book and
smiles.

EXT. BROWNSTONE - DAY

MOVERS load furniture into a truck.

Hartley slides past them and walks up the stairs.

At the top, AMANDA (35), eight months pregnant, juggles an
iPad and a phone call.

AMANDA

Finally. You're late. What happened
to your face?

HARTLEY

It's nothing. Is Zu here?

AMANDA

She's getting your car- your face,
it's something, you're on camera in
an hour.

Amanda follows Hartley into the house.

INT. BROWNSTONE - DAY

Hartley moves through packing boxes. On a credenza, photos of her in a black chef's jacket with heads of state and celebrities hint at her storied career.

Amanda scrolls on the iPad.

AMANDA

For the interview, when you talk about the book and the new L.A. restaurant, plug your Women Feeding Women appearance.

HARTLEY

I thought it was sold out?

AMANDA

VIP Experience packages- we still have plenty of general admission.

Hartley flips through a pile of mail she gives a side eye.

AMANDA

Oh, then, you'll show Kelly how to make the perfect egg. It's a set up for a bit she's working on. Just go with it.

HARTLEY

Fine, as long as we keep the interview light and fluffy like the eggs.

AMANDA

Well- they agreed to the off-limits topics, but Zu's podcast is trending, subs are up, it's a demo Kelly would like to tap into.

Hartley shakes her head and walks to the door.

AMANDA

Okay, fine. No podcast. After the show, a call with the investors.

HARTLEY

Can't that wait until I'm in L.A.?

AMANDA

They're anxious- they bought Hart and Craft and now, with the divorce-

HARTLEY
Nobody has ever regretted investing
in Hartley Taylor.

AMANDA
What do you want me to do?

HARTLEY
See that the rest of this gets
packed. I'm not coming back.

Hartley walks out of the room.

AMANDA
About the investors?

HARTLEY (O.S.)
I'll see them in L.A.- ready in
twenty.

EXT. CHELSEA TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

Hartley exits the studio, her stride purposeful. Amanda
trails behind, juggling her iPad.

HARTLEY
Did she really need to bring up
Hart & Craft? Restaurants close.

AMANDA
Not successful ones.

A silver Range Rover screeches to a stop in front of them.
The license plate and emblems are encrusted with rhinestones.

INT./EXT. RANGE ROVER - SAME

The tinted passenger window rolls down to reveal Zu, head
bopping to the beat, a mischievous grin on her face.

ZU
You ready?

She cranks the music up.

Hartley storms forward.

HARTLEY
Turn it down!

Zu obliges with a dramatic eye roll.

HARTLEY
What did you do to Sergey's car?

ZU
Relax, this is all you now.

HARTLEY
Clearly you know nothing about me.

Hartley leans in.

HARTLEY
I listened to your new episode,
"When's the last time she spoke up
about something that mattered?"
Really? Hurtful.

Zu opens the car door.

EXT. RANGE ROVER - SAME

Zu hops out, she shrugs.

ZU
Tell me I'm wrong.

Hartley pushes the car door closed.

ZU
You can't... 'cause I'm not.

Amanda waddles over.

AMANDA
Okay, barring issues, you'll make
L.A. in five days.

HARTLEY
Good. Zu's USC interview is
Tuesday. We'll have plenty of time.

Hartley takes the keys from Zu and waves to Amanda.

HARTLEY
I'll check in from the road.

EXT. STREETS OF BEAUMONT - DAY

Grice smiles as he drives down a treelined street. The ultimate American neighborhood: storybook houses with well manicured lawns. American flags flutter in the breeze.

INT. MAYOR'S HOUSE - DAY

MAYOR JACKSON PHILLIPS (65), a dandy, tastefully dressed, stands in an opulent office. He faces a portrait.

Grice enters.

GRICE

General Forsyth Beaumont. He founded this community in 1880, on the belief not in self, but sacrifice to protect others.

A POLICE SCANNER CRACKLES in the corner.

GRICE

Ain't the mayor got better things to tend to than pokin' around in police matters?

MAYOR JACKSON

After that stunt you pulled. What you did to those boys-

GRICE

Good, community policing.

Mayor Jackson runs both hands through his hair.

MAYOR JACKSON

No Percy. You've lost sight of what's best for Beaumont. Now there's a witness.

GRICE

I'll find that boy.

MAYOR JACKSON

That's not the point. Your actions, what you did, was wrong.

GRICE

Wrong? You know what they're capable off- the risk they pose to the community.

MAYOR JACKSON

Your way of thinking, of policing no longer represents Beaumont.

GRICE

County ordinance-

MAYOR JACKSON

That law was written in 1880,
Percy. Today, that damn siren—and
your attitude—is structural racism.

GRICE

Structural what now? I call it
upholding the law.

Sheriff Grice picks up an election poster. He holds it up.

GRICE

Hell, if your daddy heard you say
that, he'd roll over in his grave,
sit up and vote Democrat just to
spite you.

MAYOR JACKSON

Watch y'erself. Now is not the time
to draw attention to this town.

GRICE

Prosperity and progress: Vote
Jackson Phillips, Governor. Looks
like you care more about yourself
than this town.

MAYOR JACKSON

I don't care what you think. You
have twenty-four hours.

The Mayor takes the poster from Grice and sets it down.

MAYOR JACKSON

Find the boy, clean up this mess.
Otherwise, we'll be looking for a
new sheriff.

GRICE

That'd be a mistake. Nobody
protects Beaumont like me.

MAYOR JACKSON

Maybe it's time you retire, lay
your burden down. We'll host a
ceremony—

GRICE

I'm not ready to retire.

MAYOR JACKSON

I'm not asking.

Grice takes his hat and storms out of the room.

INT. POLICE STATION, OFFICE - DAY

A dimly lit room, a large map of Beaumont County pinned to the wall behind the desk, faded and curled at the edges.

Sheriff Grice, stands his desk. His fingers trace the outline of a framed photo— him, age ten, next to Sheriff Percy Grice Sr., both dressed in Confederate officer uniforms. Grice smiles at the memory, and sets the photo down carefully.

The door swings open. Johnny saunters in, uniform half-buttoned, badge smudged, hair still damp from a hasty wash.

JOHNNY

We got a couple of leads.

GRICE

Get the dogs. He gets across this line—

Johnny eyes the map, it's divided into sections— forest, river, farmland. Grice traces a line with his finger.

JOHNNY

We ain't gone'n let that happen.

GRICE

He's got woods or water.

JOHNNY

Come on sheriff, they can't swim.
He's headin' here. Trains don't
stop but a man with balls can grab
hold hitch a ride.

Grice open a desk drawer. He pulls out a worn leather leash and a brass whistle. He studies Johnny.

GRICE

Let's catch runaway, and Johnny,
show that uniform some respect.

Johnny buttons his shirt, tuck it in neatly.

GRICE

When's the last time you shined
your shoes, polished your badge?
That uniform, you, are a symbol of
this community.

JOHNNY

Yes, sir. Won't happen again.

Grice and Johnny walk out of the station.

INT. RANGE ROVER - DAY

The hum of tires against asphalt fills the car. The highway stretches endlessly ahead. Hartley speeds comfortably, one hand on the wheel, the other swipes through a playlist.

Outside, a large cemetery comes into view, rows of headstones flashing past like ghosts in the periphery.

Hartley glances at Zu, her face is buried in her phone.

HARTLEY

We're not coming back to New York
anytime soon. We should've stopped
by your mom's grave.

Hartley exhales, gripping the wheel a little tighter.

HARTLEY

It's still so fresh. Even after
twelve years.

ZU

I'm forgetting her face.

HARTLEY

I don't see how. All you have to do
is look in the mirror. She's right
there, staring back at you.

Zu swallows hard, turning away, pretending to be engrossed in her phone. The silence between them thickens.

Hartley taps the screen, melancholic tune fills the car.

ZU

What is this?

HARTLEY

BENT. He's a British artist. I
dunno why he never got big.

ZU

Err, that track is why.

HARTLEY

What do you know about music? Thug
Son? Is that what you listen to?

ZU

Oh, wow. So you think I just listen
to trap and drill?

Zu taps the panel and swipes aggressively, landing on Hot Girl Coach—a high-energy female rap artist. The base BOOMS.

Hartley winces as the beat rattles the car. She adjusts the volume down a few notches.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

A SIGN reads: OHIO, MARBLEHEAD LIGHTHOUSE, 1/4 MILE.

Suddenly—

DING! DING! DING!

Hartley looks at the display. The gas tank is empty. The icon flashes. Right then, a truck whizzes past them at top speed.

Hartley swerves!

HARTLEY

What an ass. See if you can find a gas station.

ZU

Didn't we just get gas?

HARTLEY

Like four hours ago.

ZU

It looks like the WiFi is out.

Zu connects her phone to the car. A map appears on the panel.

ZU

Take the next exit. Beaumont. There should be an Aamco station?

HARTLEY

Aamco? I haven't seen one of those since-- I can't remember.

Hartley takes the exit. She stares through the windshield at a dilapidated store front surrounded by overgrown weeds.

HARTLEY

Is this place even operable?

EXT. AAMCO - CONTINUOUS

Hartley steers the car into the deserted gas station. Outside a fluorescent bulb flickers on and off. A long truck is parked to the side. Business seems slow.

INT. RANGE ROVER - CONTINUOUS

Hartley puts the car in park. She looks through her bag for her wallet. She hands Zu a twenty dollar bill.

HARTLEY

I'll pump. I hope this card thing works. You run in and grab snacks.

Zu takes the money.

ZU

Okay. Anything you want?

HARTLEY

Skittles?

ZU

Really? You and sugar. No.

HARTLEY

Fine. An apple. Some almonds.

Zu walks around the back of the car.

INT. AAMCO - CONTINUOUS

The store is way too brightly lit and grimy. A nasty fly strip dangles by the door.

The sound of the bell over the door gets JAN'S (17), attention. She looks up from a magazine at Zu.

Zu nods at her and walks down an aisle.

Jan casually slides her hand beneath the counter. She presses a button. Without a second thought for what she's done, she pops gum, rubs her pregnant belly, and goes back to her magazine.

BOB (50), portly, with a receding hairline and pockmarked face, appears from the back.

Zu wanders down the aisle. She stops in front of a magazine rack. An image of Hartley adorns a magazine cover. Zu picks the magazine up and flips through it.

Bob stands at the end of aisle.

BOB

You wanna read it? Buy it. This
ain't no li-berry.

Zu looks at Bob. She closes the magazine and stuffs it back in the rack. She wanders down another aisle.

Bob follows her. He pretends to organize inventory. He watches Zu pick up almonds and a bag of Skittles.

Zu grabs two apples, some crackers and some gum. She bobbles the apples and catches one before it hits the ground. She walks to the counter and sets items down.

Jan pops a bubble.

JAN

I like your hair. How'd you get it
so big?

Jan reaches to touch Zu's hair.

Zu pulls back out of Jan's reach. She slips her hands in her hoodie pocket.

Bob shadows Jan under the guise of restocking cigarettes, his gaze locked on Zu, who's growing increasingly uncomfortable. Her eyes catch a glimpse of an Aryan Brotherhood tattoo on Bob's forearm.

Jan scans items and slips them into a bag.

The bell over the door rings. Hartley bounces in. She walks up next to Zu.

HARTLEY

Got everything? I talked to Amanda.

JAN

That'll be ten even.

Jan pushes the bag toward Zu.

ZU

Almost.

Zu hands over the twenty.

The cash drawer dings open. Jan retrieves change and hands it to Zu.

Bob, unable to resist, intervenes.

BOB
What about the Skittles?

Zu's hand instinctively finds the Skittles in her hoodie pocket, her heart skips a beat at the realization.

BOB
Picked 'em up, but they ain't on the counter. You steal'n'?

HARTLEY
Is this how you treat customers?

BOB
I saw her with those Skittles. Where are they now?

HARTLEY
Are you calling my niece a thief?

BOB
Empty your pockets.

ZU
Fuck you.

Hartley snatches the bag from the counter and wraps her arm around Zu's shoulders.

HARTLEY
Let's go.

CHUNG-CHUNG- the sound of a shotgun.

Hartley and Zu freeze. They turn to see Bob with the shotgun aimed at them.

BOB
Shoplifters will be prosecuted. You picked the wrong county.

HARTLEY
Are you going to shoot us over a bag of candy?

BOB
I'll shoot you for breathin'.

Hartley reaches down and picks up two bags of candy.

HARTLEY
These are two for a dollar.

She takes the ten dollar bill from Zu and throws it at Bob.

HARTLEY
Keep the change.

Jan tries to catch the bill. It lands on her magazine.

JAN
Hey, it's you.

BOB
What the hell you babble'n about?

JAN
That's Hartley Taylor, she's a
celebrity chef.

While Bob looks over at Jan's magazine. Hartley pushes Zu out the door. The BELL rings. Hartley and Zu are gone.

Bob looks at the door. He lowers the shotgun.

INT. RANG ROVER - NIGHT

The doors lock. Hands trembling, Hartley starts the car. She jams her foot on the gas pedal. The car lurches forward and shimmies back on the road.

Zu reaches over, touches her gently on the shoulder.

ZU
Pull over.

Hartley shakes her head.

ZU
It's okay.

Hartley steers to the shoulder and stops, shutting her eyes.

HARTLEY
How are you not freaked out?

ZU
It's not the first time I've been
in that situation.

HARTLEY
What are you talking about?

ZU
The mall in Jersey. I bought some
hair ties. I put them in my pocket.
An off-duty cop pulled his gun-
accused me of stealing.

HARTLEY

Why am I just now hearing of this?

ZU

It was over in like a minute.

Zu reaches into her pocket. She pulls out the Skittles.

HARTLEY

AZUHA! SHIT! YOU STOLE THOSE?

Zu opens the bag open and pops a couple into her mouth.

ZU

Calm down. I was putting them on the counter when the girl reached out to touch my hair. When I leaned back, I put my hands in my pockets and, well.

HARTLEY

Do you realize what you just did? You played right into every stereotypes about black people.

ZU

Okay. Because white people don't steal?

HARTLEY

Miss the point much? You have to hold yourself to a higher standard.

ZU

Why? From the second that man had his eye on me he acted like I was going to steal something.

HARTLEY

So you decided to prove him right?

ZU

IT WAS AN ACCIDENT!

Hartley grips the steering wheel and pulls out on the road.

ZU

If you're so confident in Ol' Bob, turn the car around. We'll go back in there and I'll confess.

HARTLEY

There were--

ZU

Don't you even start in with that,
"There were bad people on both
sides," bullshit.

HARTLEY

You know what, YES! Bob was wrong
and so were you. How about we stop
giving them ammunition?

ZU

Them? I can give you a list of
people who gave "them" no reason
and are no longer alive.

HARTLEY

It goes both ways, doesn't it?

ZU

Easy for you to say. You've never
had to walk in my shoes. Or the
shoes of anyone who looks like me.

HARTLEY

Zu-

Suddenly-

WOOP. WOOP. Red lights flash.

Hartley looks in the rearview mirror.

A patrol car approaches fast.

HARTLEY

Get rid of the candy.

Zu gathers the Skittles and stuffs them into the glove box.

THROUGH THE SIDE MIRROR Hartley sees Sheriff Grice casually
exit the police car.

He walks to the car. He touches the back of the car and tries
to look in the windows. He reaches the driver's side window.

Hartley rolls the window down.

INT./EXT. RANGE ROVER - SAME

Sheriff Grice shines his flashlight at Hartley. She shields
her eyes.

HARTLEY
Officer-

GRICE
Sheriff.

HARTLEY
How can I help you?

GRICE
Window tint this dark is illegal in
Beaumont county.

HARTLEY
We're just passing through.

GRICE
License and registration.

Hartley reaches for her bag.

GRICE
Hands where I can see 'em.

HARTLEY
Okay. How do you suggest I get my
license and registration?

GRICE
Take it slow.

HARTLEY
Zu would you grab the registration?

GRICE
Any weapons in the car?

Hartley hands Sheriff Grice her license and the registration.

HARTLEY
What's this about?

GRICE
It's after seven.

HARTLEY
What's your point?

GRICE
Stay put. I'll be right back.

Grice walks back to his squad car.

INT. RANGE ROVER - SAME

Hartley rolls up the window.

HARTLEY

Is it illegal to drive at night in-

Zu flips through her phone.

ZU

Beaumont. Did we exit off the highway and on to Route 10?

HARTLEY

I think so. To get the gas.

ZU

Well then, yes it is.

Zu turns the phone toward Hartley.

ZU

Beaumont, it's a sundown town.

HARTLEY

Come on, it's the twenty-first century. Sundown towns don't exist.

ZU

Ah, Pro Publica did an entire series on modern-day sundown towns. We're in one.

Sheriff Grice is back at the driver's window.

INT./EXT. RANGE ROVER - SAME

SHERIFF GRICE

Roll it down.

Hartley hesitates. Her hand hovers over the button-

THWACK!

Grice's body lurches forward against the door. His flashlight clatters to the pavement, beam spinning wildly.

A blur from the woods.

CRACK!

A forearm smashes through the darkness- Martin explodes from the tree line.

He grabs Grice by the collar, slams him against the hood.

Grice gasps— then screams.

Martin's face is mud-streaked. Eyes locked. Unblinking.
Predator calm.

Grice goes for his gun—

Too late.

A violent twist of the arm. A chokehold. A struggle of grunts
and breath.

Then— silence.

Grice goes slack.

Martin hauls the sheriff like a rag doll to the cruiser.
Throws open the back door. Shoves him inside. Slams it shut.

INT. RANGE ROVER - CONTINUOUS

Hartley is frozen, white-knuckled on the wheel.

Zu's mouth hangs open. Breath caught.

EXT. RANGE ROVER - SAME

Martin turns slowly toward them.

Blood on his shirt. Sheriff's radio still squawking somewhere
in the distance. He raises his hands— steady, open, human.

MARTIN

You need to go. Now. Before the
others come. Five miles. County
line. Don't stop for anything.

INT. RANGE ROVER - SAME

Hartley tightens her grip. She puts the car in gear and pulls
away. She hesitates, then— checks the rearview mirror. The
cruiser grows smaller.

EXT. ROAD, TREE LINE - SAME

Martin watches them go, his face half-lit by red and blue
flashing lights of the cruiser. He disappears into the woods.

INT. RANGE ROVER - MOVING - NIGHT

The only sound, the hum of tires on asphalt. Zu holds her phone up. Hits record.

ZU

Fam, it's 8:17 p.m. We're driving through Beaumont County. Route 10. If you've never heard of it— good. I hope you never have to.

A pause. A breath.

ZU

Tonight, we experienced something. A Sheriff with more power than sense. A man who may have saved us. Or doomed us. I don't know.

Zu's voice grows steadier. Focused.

ZU

If you're listening— if this is the last episode I ever upload— remember Beaumont County. Remember Route 10. Look it up. Ask questions. And don't stop until someone answers.

Hartley's silhouette, staring forward. A faint ping. Outside, shadows dance beyond the headlights.

ZU

Some towns live in the past. We refuse to stay silent. We see you. We're not backing down.

The recording ends with a soft chime.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The car vanishes into the black, headlights swallowed by the horizon.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END