

EDITOR IN CHIEF

EPISODE ONE

"THE NARRATIVE FALLACY"

Written by

Nolan Thornton

EXT. CHARMING RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

Smushed, sludgy autumn leaves are just visible on the road in the dark on this crisp night. A 15 year old BMW sedan lays at the bottom of a steep driveway.

Another car slowly approaching and parking is audible.

The silhouette of a MAN'S HEAD suddenly becomes visible in the back seat of the BMW for a moment or two-

Then snaps back down and disappears from view, apparently unrelated to the other car.

INT. PARKED BMW - CONTINUOUS

Two teenagers are having sex in the back seat with most of their clothes still on, though it's difficult to distinguish much on sight alone in the dark.

CAZZIE  
(the girl, 17)  
-Yeah..more like that.

FRONT DOOR OPENS, CAR LIGHTS COME ON

-The teens both TURN, too stunned to think.

A MAN, 20s, holding a pair of wire strippers, looks back at them with twice the surprise and 10 times the terror that the teens are displaying...

then SHUTS the door and gets the hell out of there.

The teens jump up and turn to watch the would-be thief through the rear windshield as he scrambles into the passenger seat of a waiting pickup-

Which quickly makes a U-TURN and SCREECHES away.

Cazzie watches on, mind just starting to function again, seeming distinctly more bewildered than traumatized.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

EXT. OVERPASS - MORNING

The Hudson River is visible beyond a rundown fence that oddly makes the scene look like the Hamptons -- directly behind the on and off-ramps to 9A/ Route 9.

The easy yet soulful Americana tune, "Small Town Talk" by Bobby Charles plays.

A SIGN is mounted on the fence reading, "Bergamot Sailing School -- Learn how to sail today!"

A delivery truck moves down the off-ramp and into...

The village of Bergamot: the place where every couple from NYC dreams of settling down. Poor man's paradise, in between Scarsdale and Poughkeepsie in every way.

CAL (V.O.)

(60, male)

Two students from Bergamot High School were victims in an attempted car-jacking in the early hours of the morning in the lower village, per a statement released by the Bergamot Police Department.

EXT. MAPLE STREET - CONTINUOUS

The delivery truck drives past a large strip mall that features a CVS, a nail salon, the post office -- with a small armada of mail trucks parked in the lot, a pizzeria, and a Dunkin' Donuts.

CAL (V.O.)

The identities of the victims are being withheld by the police because the students are minors, and because there is a credible threat of a violent reprisal, as is frequently the case with gang activity -- such as that seen by MS-13 in Long Island. Bergamot PD has declined requests to comment on the threat of gang activity in the village.

EXT. FURTHER DOWN MAPLE STREET - CONTINUOUS

The truck makes a left.

A crossing guard stands on the sidewalk. The high school is visible on the right, an austere yet homey brick building built during FDR's time.

The delivery truck parks outside a deli.

There's a hair salon one store down, then a liquor store after that, a coffee shop across the street, a Chinese takeout restaurant further down, a pub, a mom & pop pharmacy, another deli, a barber shop (not a salon):

The "Upper Village" of Bergamot. It looks like it hasn't changed in over 100 years because it hasn't.

The delivery driver gets out and starts unloading cases of eggs and milk.

CAL (V.O.)

Victims describe the assailant as holding a tool of some kind, possibly a weapon. What some are calling an attempted car-jacking, others are calling an attempted murder. The Chronicle reached out to Mayor Latimer in regard to the heightened level of paranoia amidst fear of imminent violence, but he declined request to comment. With taxes rising to Hamptons levels in recent years, and nothing to show for it but crime and civic unrest, the question looms over us: Who is looking out for Bergamot?

ACROSS THE STREET:

EXT. PARKING LOT - MORNING

A door opens to a compact car, and CAL, 60, barely squeezes himself out without breaking stride.

CAL (V.O.)

By Cal M. Gilbert, Editor in Chief.

THREE KIDS, 10, see this display, sitting on their bikes in the parking lot, and LAUGH HARD.

Cal rolls his eyes and walks towards the shops. Cal doesn't even react as they talk:

KID 1

He's like a human Sasquatch.

KID 2

He's like a white hulk. But fat, not strong.

KID 3

The hulk is cool.

KID 2  
No, he's not...!

KID 1  
My dad says he's totally broke too.

Cal snaps around.

CAL  
Does your dad wanna say that to my  
face, kid?

KID 1  
He did, boomer, he's your  
accountant.

Cal looks at him a moment, not handling defeat well, then  
turns for the coffee shop. The kids LAUGH.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

A barista, KEITH, 21, hands Cal his coffee.

KEITH  
(friendly, but a little  
downcast)  
Here's your macchiato, Cal.

CAL  
Thanks.

Cal takes it and starts dumping in sugar. Feeling generous  
today:

CAL (CONT'D)  
How's the new album coming out?

KEITH  
Not too bad, I guess.

CAL  
They don't want guys like us to  
make it.

Keith smirks, too young to know exactly what he means, but  
savvy enough to understand.

KEITH  
Good job this week, we're really  
moving papers.

CAL  
 (pointing with coffee  
 stirrer)  
 All I need is one little detail to  
 sink my teeth into...  
 Goes without saying that's all I  
 ever get.

Keith smiles, ready for this "conversation" to be over. Cal sprinkles cinnamon on his coffee, clearly nowhere to be.

CAL (CONT'D)  
 Every town needs a great local band  
 and a great local paper, right?

Keith nods, actually agreeing, steaming milk.

CAL (CONT'D)  
 Just wait if they ever give us a  
 shot, huh?

Keith pours a latte, having stopped listening out of necessity.

Two nice display cases for the New York Times and The Wall Street Journal are near the door...

As well as a wooden crate containing the Bergamot Chronicle that would be chic if the rusted finish on the nails wasn't so authentic.

On the front page of the Chronicle, next to the story about the attempted car-jacking is a large ad for a missing dog.

CUT TO:

INT. DELI ACROSS THE STREET - CONTINUOUS

An employee at the griddle puts together a bacon, egg, and cheese, squirts ketchup and hot-sauce on it, packages it up in foil and paper and hands it to the OWNER, 50.

The Owner puts it next to a cup of coffee and slides them to the front of the counter by the register-

OWNER  
 One Morning Edition...!

A customer walks up to pay.

On the BIG MENU on the wall, the "Morning Edition Combo" is listed as an egg sandwich, a small coffee- then a piece of tan painters tape that (partly) hides the words...

"And a copy of the Bergamot Chronicle"

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Cal approaches the door to the coffee shop, on his way out, and takes a sip of his coffee. His face changes as he tastes it.

-He stops in his tracks, furious. He looks back at Keith and rolls his eyes, instantly abandoning the warmth he had for him moments ago.

Cal walks over to a cushy chair by the window in a huff, and takes a seat, getting out his phone.

The man, 50, at a small table in front of him is having a tense, hushed conversation in what sounds like Russian. Cal rolls his eyes and turns away a little.

Cal hits record on a VoiceMemo.

CAL

(whisper-yelling)  
 Institutions in this town-  
 (stares at Keith)  
 -Like the coffee shop  
 unfortunately..are taking a major  
 nose-dive as of late. And it's a  
 matter of failing to provide an  
 essential service, plain and  
 simple. *Coffee-* Even a macchiato-  
 Is an essential service in a way...

Cal pauses, then shakes his head, powering through his own ridiculousness.

CAL (CONT'D)

The institution has a duty to the  
 customer, essentially -- that's not  
 up for debate -- and that duty has  
*clearly* been neglected -- without  
 even *mentioning* a *charming* lack of  
 rewards program and recent  
*inflation related* price bump.

Cal's face changes, having clearly just lost his train of thought... The phone continues to record.

Cal glances around, noticing the man on the phone again.

KEITH (O.S.)  
 (calling back to a another  
 employee)  
 Do we have any almond milk in the  
 back...?

Cal's back.

CAL  
 And what happens to a town left in  
 neglect? What happen to the *soul*  
 left in neglect? What happens to a  
 town of souls living in neglect? We  
 are trapped in *purgatory*, crying  
 out in vein for Saint Peter's  
 embrace.

Cal nods to himself, pleased it all came together.

Whisper yelling, in Russian:

RUSSIAN MAN  
*Dostatochno...!*

Cal looks at the Russian man.

RUSSIAN  
 Eto tvoya problema seychas.

Most in the shop uninterested or can't hear over the coffee  
 grinders and espresso machine.

Cal's phone is still recording.

The Russian Man gets up in a huff, momentarily parting his  
 jacket and revealing a .45 matte black pistol tucked into his  
 waist.

Cal is dumbfounded, Russian Man walk into the bathroom. He's  
 never seen anything like that in his life. Certainly never  
 anywhere near here.

Cal looks at his phone. Still recording. His eyes widen at  
 the possibilities...

He snaps out of it, ends the recording, then fusses, pulling  
 up an app called, "Voice Translate"...

Then goes to VoiceMemos, fusses and fusses around...

INSERT SCREEN:

"Processing..."



APP  
ENOUGH. IT'S YOUR PROBLEM NOW.

Cal freaks out, fumbling and narrowly catching his phone. He looks at the bathroom, then glances around to see if any other customers heard.

APP (CONT'D)  
I HAVE TO MEET THE GODDAMN COP.

Cal's face changes... not giving a flying fuck about the volume anymore. He looks down at the text translation on the phone:

"Cop"

Cal looks up from the phone to the bathroom, where the Russian will be emerging any second, as he comes out of his haze, equal parts terrified and eager at the opportunity of his dopey life.

Cal's brows wrinkle. He can't really do this... He closes his eyes.

CAL'S DAD  
(assuring tone)  
Don't break a perfect record of  
pointlessness, son. Close up shop  
in disgrace like you were destined  
to.

The imaginary words linger a half-moment.

Cal's face slowly changes again, first appearing almost defeated, if not insane, before you realize this is the face of resolve (on him).

**END OF ACT 1**

INT. CAL'S CAR/ PARKING LOT - MORNING

Cal tries to start his car-

CHIH-CHIH-CHIH-CHIH-CHIH-CHIH-CHIH-CHIH...**VROOM**

Cal grins.

INT. CAL'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Cal follows behind the Russian's car on the highway. He takes a breath, focusing on not being noticed, however you do that.

CAL'S DAD (O.S.)

If the end game is some kind of soldier's death, that's at least honorable I suppose.

CAL

Negativity breeds more negativity... Asshole.

CAL'S DAD (O.S.)

What's that, boy?

Cal exhales loudly, trying to ignore the doubt. His phone buzzes in the cupholder, and he takes his eye off the Russian's car.

He sees the name and his face immediately sinks. He looks up, almost completely forgetting what he's doing.

CAL

God. Damn it.

He closes his eyes, then slides to answer the call.

WOMAN (O.S.)

(on Cal's phone)

Hi Mr. Gilbert, did you have a chance to get your paperwork together?

Cal looks in the passenger seat and on the floor at his mounds of papers, his "files".

CAL

(trying to be jokey)

You know, as much as you can with these things...

He checks the Russian's car again, then starts rifling through the crumpled papers.

WOMAN (O.S.)

The issue keeps coming back that your loan was spent primarily on your business itself, not your payroll, despite the fact that, yes, your personal corporate entity, Caleb M. Gilbert LLC owns and operates the business in question...So..I'll still need your payroll information unfortunately.  
-If you still want to appeal.

Cal eyes dart between the road and squinting at fine print.

CAL

-I still want to appeal.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

A sign reading, "Hudson Country Club" is in a little median between the lanes in and out of the club. The Russian's car drives in.

INT. CAL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Cal frowns, still on the phone, no idea why they're here.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB/ PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

The building that looks like a huge mansion is actually a retreat for those who live in smaller mansions.

A large parking lot extends to where the golf course begins. Golf carts drive by.

WOMAN (O.S.)

(doesn't wanna say it)  
Uh... I'm sorry Mr. Gilbert, unfortunately everyone's still saying the same thing. Sixty percent of your loan would have had to have gone to payroll..that's the purpose of the program.

There's a tented off area for outdoor dining/ drinking extending from the country club mansion to the grass.

Cal's sighs, defeated, forgetting the Russian for a moment.

CAL (O.S.)  
 So all the celebrities you hear  
 about who made *millions* off COVID  
 relief when they didn't even *need*  
 it, that's all fine, but-

The Russian's car drives over and parks by the front,  
 followed by Cal's car, who misses a spot.

CAL (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
*Shit.*

WOMAN (O.S.)  
 Excuse me?

Cal turns into the next row of spots.

CAL  
 Never mind, I am so sorry, thank  
 you, bye.

Cal finds a spot and parks. Cal hurriedly exits, about 50  
 feet behind the Russian. The Russian looks over his shoulder  
 at Cal.

Cal acts on a hunch and throws on a big friendly smile for  
 the Russian. The Russian rolls his eyes and happily takes  
 them off the sweaty Cal.

The Russian enters the building, letting the door shut behind  
 him.

Cal tries to catch his breath as he approaches the building,  
 no longer able to hide his panic.

He makes his way up the significant amount of steps that  
 leads to the opulent entrance to this church of disposable  
 income.

He stops at the top of the steps, looking unsure. He looks  
 back at his car, not too late to turn back... He closes his  
 eyes a moment.

He SIGHS loudly, then throws his less than convincing game  
 face on and enters.

INT. FOYER - COUNTRY CLUB - CONTINUOUS

Cal immediately sees the HOSTESS, 20, behind the host stand,  
 then turns and sees the Russian disappearing down a hallway.

Cal looks at the Hostess, not thinking he'd get this far.  
 She's clearly a little thrown by him.

HOSTESS

Hi, are you a member or a guest?

Cal looks down the empty hallway where the Russian just was, then suddenly pulls out his phone and puts it to his ear-

CAL

Sorry-

The Hostess waves her hand-

HOSTESS

No- (problem).

Cal abruptly turns and paces away and closes his eyes tight.

CAL

(into the phone)

Yeah, yeah...

(nods)

I would say the same thing...

(nods)

Let's uh...touch base. -Soon.

He awkwardly lowers the phone and puts it in his pocket, turning back to the Hostess. He throws on an awkward smile.

CAL (CONT'D)

Hi...

She matches his awkward smile.

CAL (CONT'D)

I'm with the person who just came in-

He points down the hallway.

HOSTESS

Oh-

CAL

I'm his assistant.

(glances down the hall)

He likes me to give him some space.

(looks down)

He- Uh- He's a very important man.

The Hostess looks up at the very large, very sweaty man in front of her, not knowing what to think...then looks behind her, for her boss, and turns back.



RUSSIAN

Did you ever know how to do your job?

CHIEF ERIC

*My job...?*

Cal exits a side door, hunched over. He drops to the ground and army-crawls behind the bushes at the edge of the pool area.

CHIEF ERIC (CONT'D)

What the hell happened with those kids last night? I was on my last mile at six in the fucking morning when they called me in.

The Russian looks at the Chief with dead eyes.

RUSSIAN

It's being dealt with.

Chief Eric shoves over the briefcase.

CHIEF ERIC

This little shit's parents are losing their minds all because their kid was getting his little pecker wet and your goons walked in on him instead of them, I guess. -I don't give a fuck what you do to, just do it.

The Russian stares at the chief a moment, then opens the briefcase.

Cal squints and realizes what's inside... rubber-banded rolls of \$100s to the tippy top.

Cal can't believe his eyes, he's almost impressed. The Russian shuts the briefcase.

CHIEF ERIC (CONT'D)

If you were me how would you handle your fuck-up.

RUSSIAN

I would say I found the man responsible.

CHIEF ERIC

What if I can't find him? Because he might as well be in the fucking Kremlin?!

RUSSIAN

Then arrest someone else and say  
the same thing.

CHIEF ERIC

This is America.

Russian looks almost droll for a moment.

RUSSIAN

Then shoot him.

His words move through Cal, who's suddenly becoming very aware of the fragility of his situation.

A squirrel a foot away from Cal runs out of the hedge. Cal's eyes bulge.

Chief Eric and the Russian turn, with the Russian putting his hand on his gun, face displaying how little he'd be bothered by blowing someone's brains out.

The Russian's eyes seem to zero in on Cal.

Cal looks at the Russian, unable to blink, convinced he's staring death in the face as time slows down and the purest terror he's ever felt almost gives way to a sedating feeling of inevitability.

BEGIN LIFE FLASHING BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES SEQUENCE

"Happy Together" by the Turtles plays over the following.

EXT. BARD COLLEGE - FLASHBACK - DAY

THE TURTLES (O.S.)

I can't see me loving no-body but  
you... For all my life...

Cal, 22, accepts his diploma from the Dean, there's a Bard College seal on the podium and on a banner. The Dean glances down at Cal's white shirt peaking through his graduation robe-

Cal looks down at his shirt: There's a bright yellow mustard stain.

INT. CHURCH - FLASHBACK - DAY

Cal, 25, leans in and kisses his bride (for the moment). A photographer snaps a picture.

FREEZE FRAME:



Cal's wife looks beautiful. Cal has a both creepy and cheesy smile on, his eyes are halfway closed, and there's impressively a bright yellow mustard stain on his tuxedo.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Cal, 30, wearing scrubs, looks on in awe, his life changed forever. A baby CRIES.

BABY'S POV:

Goofy ass Cal comes into view, humbled and dumbfounded. A stream of pee hits Cal in the eyes-

Cal grimaces and pulls up his white t-shirt from under his scrubs to dry his eyes, revealing a bright yellow mustard stain.

END SEQUENCE

EXT. POOL - COUNTRY CLUB - MORNING

The Russian sees the squirrel and rolls his eyes.

RUSSIAN

Khazanov is gonna meet you next month instead.

CHIEF ERIC

I wouldn't have noticed.

Cal starts holding his breath without realizing it, watching them walk towards him to the steps out of the pool. There's a bright yellow mustard stain on his shirt.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Cal steps outside, the end in sight.

CUT TO:

EXT. POOL - COUNTRY CLUB

The Russian puts his hand on his gun, eyes cold as death.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Cal falls forward, partially catching himself on the railing, then slips again, and ROLLS more than tumbles down the staircase, building speed...

He bumps his head on a step and GRUNTS, closing his eyes tight, then goes-

DOWN a step to the parking lot, and comes to a stop in the middle of the spot where the valets would take your keys in season.

He holds his aching body, wincing.

A car door SHUTS nearby.

HOSTESS (O.S.)

(on the phone)

No I'm still at work, I just had to go outside to grab my Juul from the car.

Cal not so quickly scrambles up, bracing his arm against his knee to get his considerable body upright.

The Hostess walks out and Cal tries to walk away without saying anything, then-

CAL

Bye...

She smiles.

CAL (CONT'D)

(lingering)

Maybe don't mention it to my boss if you see him. I was just dropping something off that he didn't realize he forgot..and it'll just-

He wrinkles and face swirls his hands around, searching.

She makes a zipper with her mouth, a pro. He smiles.

CAL (CONT'D)

Have a great day.

Cal turns to watch the Hostess disappear inside... Then takes off hobble-running to his car as fast as he can.

INT. CAL'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Cal holds a ringing phone to his ear, eyes darting around in every direction, not knowing where they could be coming from. The call connects.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. APARTMENT IN ISTANBUL - NIGHT

ED, 70, wearing a robe in the dark, closes the door behind him and walks into the kitchen. He sighs.

ED

Hi Cal...

Outside the window features a magnificent city view of the cultural bridge between Asia and Europe.

INT. CAL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

CAL

I know you said I don't have any favors left, and I know it's a little late, but this is a favor to you, I swear to god, Ed. Your gonna thank me.

ED

(outraged)

Uh-

(trying to be calm)

I'm pretty sure, and this is impressive- But I'm pretty sure that was the exact same line you used the *last* time you were pan-handling in the middle of the night.

CAL

I just saw the police chief of Bergamot hand a guy with a gun a stack of cash. In what I can only describe as a clandestine meeting. -And we don't really use that term any more.

There's silence for a half-moment. Cal perks up, as suddenly and unexpectedly all his fear and loathing vanishes.

ED

You- Do you have proof?

CAL

Not yet.

ED

I'm not committing to anything -- I don't even have to say so to commit to anything, but could you even *find* proof? And hypothetically still before you tell people you're working for the New York Times again -- like my bosses -- is this even your kinda thing, Cal? Are you still gonna wanna do this in a couple weeks or is this just your latest fixation?

The words wash over Cal, who first gets angry, looking around at the fall leaves around the highway, then slowly starts to turn it in on himself, doubting everything.

CAL'S DAD (O.S.)

You already lost everything else. Stop fighting it and just hang up your spurs.

Cal looks at the road blankly, considering.

ED

Cal?

Cal reacts to hearing his own name...his demeanor changing. He lets out a little peeved chuckle.

CAL

Yeah it is my kinda thing, Ed. I'll keep you posted about it.

Cal hangs up.

**END OF ACT 2**

INT. TINY OFFICE - SAME DAY

BILLY, 50, a chubby and stout fella, sits on the couch, wearing an Anthrax (metal band) T-shirt and camo cargo pants, waiting for:

Cal, wearing a blazer over his mustard stained shirt, looking very perplexed, clearly not comprehending what Billy just said...

An empty water jug filled up a couple inches with change rests on the floor with a printed sign reading, "Bathroom Fund"

Cal's mouth opens, but no words come out. He shakes his head. Billy looks at him, waiting for him to say something.

CAL

I guess I don't think I heard you right...

(awkwardly smiles)

It sounded like you just said that you were the soldier who found Saddam Hussein.

BILLY

Yes, sir.

Cal looks at his note-pad, pen hovering, not knowing what to do.

CAL

(more to himself)

That's what I thought you said...

Billy smirks.

BILLY

Bodyguard's a piece a' cake.

Cal does a nervous nod and smile. Billy has no idea anything is off.

Cal glances around a little, very aware of his proximity to this maniac in such a small space. Cal gets ready to shoo him out.

CAL

So..I have all your information..And I'll reach out to you and let you know, but there's a lot of great candidates, obviously..So...

Billy's brow furrows, getting down to business.

BILLY

I can start today, but for the whole rate for the day. I have to insist on that in my contract.

CAL

(skeptical)  
What's your day rate?

BILLY

(proud)  
Seventy-five bucks.

Cal's eyebrows raise. He hesitates a moment, waiting for a catch, then extends his hand.

CAL

Deal.

They shake.

INT. VILLAGE HALL - MUNICIPAL BUILDING - SAME AFTERNOON

A meeting open to the public has just ended.

Cal, still rocking the blazer, and Billy elbow their way through the aisle between the church style seating in the hall, as people make their way out or crowd the already crowded space.

Chief Eric, Mayor Latimer, 50s, and several other officials are packing up behind their old wooden desks with title/ name placards. The old wooden desks blend in perfectly to the old wooden walls of the hall.

To himself more than Billy:

CAL

I basically have to talk to three people at once to do this in time. Probably not even worth it.

BILLY

I can do it.

Cal turns back, almost wishing they could just leave, but throws on a smile.

CAL  
That would be great.

Chief Eric starts to make his way out towards another exit (to the main building), and Cal lasers in on him. Cal turns back to Billy-

CAL (CONT'D)  
Just ask the mayor what the crime means for the future of Bergamot. That's it.

Billy nods, and Cal rushes over to Chief Eric, almost knocking multiple people over in the process.

The Mayor is talking to a man, KEN, 65, with two very large men next to him, his security detail, who are watching the Mayor and the entire room very carefully.

Billy starts walking towards the guy with the security team, having found his man as far as he's concerned. The Mayor disappears into the crowd. Billy walks right past him.

One of Ken's goons steps in front of Billy, seemingly out of nowhere. Billy is taken aback. The goon looks through him.

BILLY  
I just wanted to ask your boss a question...

Affable and with a British accent:

KEN  
S'fine, Glenn.

BILLY  
Sorry, I'm a reporter today. I wanted to ask what you think all this means for the future of Bergamot.

KEN  
Who are you writing for? I'm in the industry myself, actually.

With the pride of a Pulitzer winner (and no idea he's messing up the name):

BILLY  
The Chronic.

KEN  
That's not Cal Gilbert's paper, is it?

BILLY  
(like a child)  
Yeah...!

KEN  
How's his daughter doing?

BILLY  
Oh, I didn't even- We actually just  
met.

Cal elbows his way over and notices Ken by the time it's too late. He looks at Ken with unveiled disdain.

KEN  
Hi, Cal-y.

CAL  
Ken.

BILLY  
(happy)  
I didn't know you had a kid, Cal.

CAL  
She hates me. Come on, we're busy.

KEN  
I didn't get to answer his question  
just yet.

Billy squints, placing Ken.

BILLY  
-Wait, you don't own the Buffalo  
Bills, do you?

KEN  
I do...!

Cal puts his hand on Billy's shoulder.

CAL  
Come on, Billy, I already talked to  
everyone important.

KEN  
Glad to see you never changed. So  
many people do after college.

CAL  
You're a different person in every  
interview I see you in.



KEN

You're watching, then?

Billy looks genuinely uneasy with mom and dad fighting. He starts glancing around, feeling like the crowd around him is closing in, PTSD getting triggered.

Cal is fuming now.

CAL

You're the face of the entire industry, I have to...! I know you sold out years ago, but not all of us did. Not all of us *could*...!

KEN

Just say it, Cal. You hate me because I'm happy, not because I sold out. Let the truth out. It feels good.

Cal looks back at Ken with dead eyes.

KEN (CONT'D)

Same reason you didn't take my help. You *want* to be a loser...

Cal glares at him, letting his words wash over him, not necessarily disagreeing.

KEN (CONT'D)

And you got what you wanted unfortunately.

CAL

At least you'll build another hospital now to show everyone you're not a piece of shit.

Cal turns and walks away. It's less crowded now.

Billy looks at Ken, eyes wide, feeling the awkwardness. His mouth opens as he contemplates saying bye, then decides against it and hurries away.

Billy catches up to Cal.

BILLY

I guess I found the wrong guy, but I think I got it now for next time. I thought I was gonna forget the question.

Cal keeps walking.

CAL  
 (without turning)  
 This can't happen again, Billy.

They exit the hall. Billy is embarrassed, having let down his superior officer.

BILLY  
 Yes, sir.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - SAME AFTERNOON

ASHLEY, 19, dyed black hair, wearing a Joy Division (the Godfather of angsty bands) baseball tee, looks a little confused, clearly waiting for Cal to say something.

Cal looks at her, holding his notebook, waiting for her to say something.

Billy sits at a table close by, watching Cal almost without blinking while absolutely punishing a cinnamon roll.

Ashley's eyebrows raise-

ASHLEY  
 D- Did you want me to respond to that?

Cal nods. There's a fresh coffee stain on his blazer.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
 Can you just say it one more time?  
 -If you don't mind.

CAL  
 The greatest felony in the news business today is to be behind, or to miss a big story. So speed and quantity substitute for thoroughness and quality, for accuracy and context. -Carl Bernstein.

ASHLEY  
 -Right. I definitely agree with that. Quantity over quality is the name of the game these days, the twenty-four hour news cycle really ruined integrity. How can news for the sake of content really be news, ya know?  
 (more interested)  
 You're a weekly, right?

Cal nods.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
That's great.

Cal scribbles something in his pad.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
You didn't do the article about the  
crime disparity in different parts  
of Westchester, did you?

CAL  
(nods, yes)  
"The Two Faces of Westchester"

Ashley looks genuinely impressed, coming much more alive than  
earlier in this "interview"

ASHLEY  
That's really impressive, I'm  
actually really glad to meet you.  
That was such a great-  
(hesitates, thinking of  
the word)  
-Piece?

Cal blushes a little, looking back and forth at his notes.

CAL  
Uh, what are you looking to do  
after you graduate?

Ashley glances out the window, a little caught off guard.

ASHLEY  
I applied to be an apprentice at a  
tattoo shop in Peekskill..but I  
didn't get it, it's really  
competitive. But I've always loved  
writing so I just...

Ashley puts her hands up, the sentence having gotten away  
from her. Cal just looks at her.

CAL  
Well the pay is-(low)

ASHLEY  
-Oh, I'm fine with no pay -- I know  
it's an internship.

Cal raises his eyebrows, having just identified the perfect  
candidate.

CAL  
Can you start tomorrow?

ASHLEY  
I can start today if you want. I probably shouldn't be saying this, but it keeps me out of the house, honestly, so I can be around whenever. I just have to go class every once in a while.

Cal tries to hide his excitement.

CAL  
I'm sorry, remind me your name again.

ASHLEY  
Ashley.

Cal makes a face, confused, not seeing it.

CAL  
Ashley?

She takes a breath, not the first time this has come up...

ASHLEY  
You don't get to pick your name.

Cal's eyebrows raise, caught off guard...He abruptly lowers his head and scribbles in his pad-

CAL  
I have something tonight, so tomorrow might be perfect, actually.  
(thinking it sounded too similar)  
...Ashley.

Ashley does a little, uncomfortable nod.

A MAN, 50, storms up to the table and lasers in on Cal-

MAN  
I don't know how you live with yourself, buddy.

Cal looks up at him, taken aback, but clearly not the first time this has happened to him.

Ashley is taken aback.

MAN (CONT'D)

You really think that pathological liar should still be in the same building as kids?

Cal almost nods to himself as he realizes what this is about. Ashley looks even more confused as she too recognizes the backstory.

CAL

I meant to leave that up to the reader, I'm sorry if you think I failed.

Ashley looks at Cal, still too rattled to be impressed. Billy nods to himself, respecting Cal.

MAN

Who would even *talk* to that scumbag, let alone publish excuses for him?

CAL

Are you a fire-fighter?

The Man hesitates a moment, disliking Cal's calmness.

MAN

My cousin was.

CAL

I'm sorry for your loss. They're a hero.

MAN

(tears in his eyes)  
He *was*. He saved good people, and he saved pieces of shit like you. He didn't care.

The Man paces out of the shop as quickly as he came up to the table.

Cal watches him go. Ashley and Billy watch Cal, suddenly humbled.

ASHLEY

The vice-principal who lied about being a nine-eleven survivor. That was my freshman year...

CAL

No one complains when I write about silent movie stars or Jackie Gleason living here, meanwhile Gloria Swanson only lived in this dump because her married boyfriend -- JFK's dad by the way -- bought her a place here to hide out, with bootlegging money I'm pretty sure. And Jackie Gleason paid for his house by saying he was gonna smack his wife so hard she hits the fucking moon.

ASHLEY

(frowning)

Wait what?

CAL

Should everyone who ever messed up or doesn't agree with us just kill themselves? Is that what we want?

Ashley sees Cal as a full person for the first time. She does a nod.

Billy checks his watch.

BILLY

Is she coming?

CAL

Not tonight.

ASHLEY

-I think I should.

Cal waves her off.

CAL

It might be dangerous.

ASHLEY

Anything you need, I'll do it. I'm at my best in high-pressure situations, I should have said that before. I would've jumped in a second ago, but you were on a roll.

Cal just looks at her, caught off guard.

CAL

I...

ASHLEY

Just let me know when and where.

CAL'S DAD (O.S.)

Great. Another little family you  
can let down.

EXT. HOUSE/ CAL'S CAR PARKED OUTSIDE - SAME NIGHT

Cal's car is parked outside a house in a nice neighborhood,  
looking especially out of place amongst the much newer cars  
in the driveways.

BILLY (O.S.)

(matter of factly)

Going into the shit I knew two  
things: Saddam was out there...And  
I was gonna be the man to find  
him...Playing fair. Or the other  
way.

INT. CAL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Cal looks blankly at Billy, not knowing how either of their  
lives turned out like this.

There's a coffee in each cup holder, and some snacks and a  
pair of binoculars on the dashboard.

Ashley is absolutely horrified in the backseat, having  
thought until moments ago that she was going to actually do  
something here.

BILLY

A funny thing happens when a man  
reaches his breaking point...

Cal frowns with unease, whether it's real or not.

BILLY (CONT'D)

When he hears those words leave his  
mouth that he thought he'd never  
say...

Billy shakes his head, wistfully, seemingly done with his  
soliloquy...

Cal's face changes, suddenly not quite ready for the story to  
be over. He cocks his head a little-

CAL  
What'd he say? ...And is this  
Saddam or the guy that told you  
where to find Saddam?

Billy takes a slow breath.

BILLY  
Everything.

Cal's eyebrows raise.

Ashley closes her eyes and silently laughs to herself,  
finally breaking.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
I have a lot of respect for that  
man. He was doing exactly what he  
was supposed to do. -Exactly what I  
would've done. It wasn't his fault  
he had what I needed.

Cal nods.

CAL  
(muttering)  
So not Saddam...

BILLY  
They don't make 'em like they used  
to.

Cal nods with purpose.

Ashley enjoys herself more and more as it goes on, having  
just crossed off "They don't make it like they use to" in her  
game of boomer bingo in her head.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
Then it was just me and a shovel...  
And time...

Cal pops a couple pretzels in his mouth.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
Then one day...

Cal starts to chew more slowly and softly.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
There he was in the dirt looking up  
at me...

Cal raises his eyebrows. Billy puts his hands up-



BILLY (CONT'D)

So I did what had to be done...made  
sure those good people had a real  
shot at freedom.

Billy does a valiant look. Cal looks at him, enjoying a good  
story of irrelevant accuracy.

Partly playing along, partly turning the next page out of  
curiosity:

CAL

You turned him in.

Billy shakes his head once, back and forth.

BILLY

No, sir... Some men are just too  
dangerous.

Cal looks at him a moment, mouth starting to open, brow  
starting to tighten.

CAL

He- Uh..Didn't...  
(looks at Billy, who's  
*certain*)  
They hanged him in public, didn't  
they...? I saw the video way back  
when..It was on CNN...

Cal trails off as Billy smiles a smile like he knows  
something Cal doesn't.

BILLY

Stand-in. He had dozens of 'em...

Cal looks at Billy for a moment or two, not knowing what to  
say. Ashley smiles a big sarcastic smile, why wouldn't it  
have been a stand-in.

CAL

(turning to Ashley)  
You- I mean, you've heard about  
this, right?

Ashley pretends to think, playing dumb.

ASHLEY

I was only a newborn, I don't  
really know...

The garage door OPENS on the house they're parked a few doors  
down from. They twitch, turning toward it-

CAL  
Holy shit...

The car starts to become visible-

CAL (CONT'D)  
Get down...!

Ashley and Billy are already down. Billy starts a stop-watch on his phone, already in mission mode.

Cal slinks in his seat just before an SUV approaches, and drives past them, being driven by Chief Eric with his wife in the passenger seat.

The trio slowly springs up in their seats, watching them go. Cal turns to Ashley.

CAL (CONT'D)  
Maybe we should just go.

	ASHLEY		BILLY
What?		What?	

Cal is a little taken aback by their solidarity.

CAL  
We're dealing with a cop and gangster or a- *goddamn* KGB agent, take your pick. Does that sound like a good idea?

ASHLEY  
But it did an hour ago?

Cal glances at Ashley, then Billy, then looks down.

CAL  
I was desperate.

BILLY  
We're all desperate, get over it, man...!

Cal looks up at Billy, he'd be impressed if he wasn't so thrown.

ASHLEY  
Here, here.

Cal looks at the two of them, gears turning in his head...

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

You can't get out of this, Mr. Gilbert. What if you're actually right?

Cal almost rolls his eyes, dealing with punk kids again.

CAL

Fine. But, I'm going in by myself, I'm not going to argue with you.

ASHLEY

I think it's safer if I come.

CAL

I don't care.

ASHLEY

I do. I want what's best for the team.

Billy nods with pride.

BILLY

(quiet, respectful)  
Hoo-rah.

CAL

You're not going, Ashley.

ASHLEY

Then I'll publish my own piece.  
-First.

Cal's face drops-

EXT. CHIEF ERIC'S HOUSE/ NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUOUS

The Chief's car is out of sight. It's quiet a moment.

CAL (O.S.)

GREAT!

**END OF ACT 3**

INT. GARAGE - CHIEF ERIC'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The garage door opens, revealing Cal (holding a garage door opener) and Ashley, frowning with surprise and disappointment that it was that easy.

INT. CHIEF ERIC'S HOUSE - LAUNDRY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Cal and Ashley walk into the cramped space between the garage and the rest of the house. A bottle of red wine with a red bow sits on the washing machine.

A dog BARKS and BARKS in another room in the house-

They retreat, with Cal only getting to the doorway, paralyzed with fear as Ashley hurries into the garage.

CAL'S DAD (O.S.)  
 (chuckles)  
 Still afraid of a little doggie,  
 boy...?

The dog runs in the room, BARKING, Cal freezes, eyes wide.

Ashley searches for the button to open the garage door. The dog lunges and BITES Cal on the thigh. He GRUNTS, wincing.

Ashley looks at the dog, eyes wide, wondering what to do, then has a thought-

ASHLEY  
 Hey...! Out!

The dog looks at Ashley like it did something wrong, but keeps Cal's thigh between her teeth like a vice.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
 Out!

The dog doesn't move, still holding onto Cal, eyes darting around, clearly nervous.

CAL  
 (pleading)  
 Ashley...

Ashley looks on in horror, mind turning, then-

ASHLEY  
 (German)  
 Aus!

The dog wines, then lets go of Cal, to all of their surprise, including the dog.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
Um, shoot-  
(searching for the word)  
*Platz!*

The dog slowly sits, then lies on the ground, not happy, but ready for the next instruction.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
Good girl!

Cal looks at her in disbelief.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
Half the people in town use this  
crazy, bougie German dog trainer.

Cal shakes his head, catching his breath.

CAL  
If that dog spoke Italian...we'd be  
dead.

Ashley raises her eyebrows, too tense to laugh.

INT. HOME OFFICE - CHIEF ERIC'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A desktop computer sits on a desk, and a file cabinet is in the corner. There's a picture of the Brooklyn Bridge on the wall that probably came with the frame, as well as some kind of framed certificate.

Cal and Ashley make their way into the room.

The dog WINES (O.S.). They turn to the source of the noise, Ashley feels it in her heart.

ASHLEY  
Get started, I'll just let her out-  
(face changes, forgetting  
herself)  
-If that's okay.

Cal looks at her a moment, barely registering her words. He puts his hands up, I guess.

INT. CAL'S CAR - SAME TIME

A portable mini POLICE SCANNER rests on the dashboard, humming out chatter between dispatch and the boys in blue.

Billy, now wearing driving gloves, curls his hand over the wheel. Ready.

His phone is propped up in the cupholder, displaying the stopwatch. He checks: 5 minutes, 12 seconds elapsed.

INT. HOME OFFICE - CHIEF ERIC'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ashley walks in to find Cal standing over the computer. He looks up, clearly a little desperate.

CAL

We only have nine attempts left...

Ashley's eyes go wide.

CAL (CONT'D)

It's not his son's name.

Ashley raise her eyebrows, it's hopeless, then her face changes, and she scrambles to get her phone out.

ASHLEY

Hold on, I've always wanted to try something.

Cal frowns, forever not understanding kids these days. Ashley taps away on her phone.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

You found out everything about this guy, right?

Cal looks highly skeptical.

CAL

I tried to...

She hands him her phone-

ASHLEY

Type the dog's name, the wife's name, the son's name -- everything thing you can think of -- and birth-years too, if you know them -- anything you have. I think it can get the rest from social media.

CAL  
What are you talking about?!

ASHLEY  
It's an A.I. Chatbot, it's like a  
creepy, futuristic Google, just  
type. -I'm sorry, please.

Cal rolls his eyes.

CAL  
I don't know the dog's name, why  
would I know the dog's name?

ASHLEY  
Did you even know there was a dog?

Cal's brow tightens, getting peeved, then he notices  
something on the wall.

A FRAMED CERTIFICATE with an image of a paw on it.

The certificate reads, "**Best in Show. Medium Dogs. 'Sierra'**"

Cal reads it, not believing it, demeanor changing  
immediately. He starts typing.

CAL  
Alright, fine.

Ashley turns and sees the certificate and the name, and  
pauses for a moment to behold their luck. She turns back.

ASHLEY  
I bet it's the dog's name  
then..something.

Cal's thick thumbs move with surprising speed.

CAL  
It's the son's name...with a  
number...or..*something*.

Ashley watches, a little impressed, and Cal clumsily hammers  
away his dossier of info on the Chief from memory.

Cal hands the phone to Ashley. She looks it over, makes a  
couple changes to phrase it properly, and hits what looks  
like a regular search button. She sighs, annoyed.

CAL (CONT'D)  
What?

ASHLEY  
 (typing quickly)  
 Nothing, it just thinks we're  
 trying to guess a password.

CAL  
 What?!

ASHLEY  
 Hold on, I'm seeing if it'll let me  
 do it as a poem.

She hits the button again as Cal looks on.

Words, then lines, then paragraphs flow rapidly down Ashley's  
 phone screen as the machine speaks, if not rambles.

Cal is utterly horrified, hoping he would be long dead before  
 this moment became possible.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
 I'm starting with the dog ones.

Cal is shaken back to the present.

CAL  
 You don't understand the connection  
 between a parent and a child-

Ashley starts to type on the Chief's desktop.

ASHLEY  
 Uh huh.

INT. HOME OFFICE - CHIEF ERIC'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ashley, smiling a little victorious smile, and Cal look  
 through Chief Eric's email on the desktop computer.

Ashley brings up Chief Eric's direct deposit statement.

Bi-weekly income is **\$15,834**.

Cal and Ashley look at the number, jaws on the floor...

Ashley notices something underneath the dollar amount in the  
 deductions section:

**"Officer's Pension Program Tier 7/ Disabled Coverage"**

She makes a face, but remains quiet for a moment. Cal stares  
 at "**\$15,834**".



ASHLEY  
(points)  
It says he's disabled...

Cal frowns as he reads.

CAL  
That means he doesn't have to pay  
taxes on the pension.

Ashley turns to him abruptly, eyes wide, Cal's a little taken  
aback-

ASHLEY  
Are you serious?

CAL  
(nodding, still rattled)  
Yeah, same with fire-fighters. They  
get their full pension, tax-free.  
-If they're disabled.

Ashley can't believe it.

CAL (CONT'D)  
"Hidden Fees: Where Do My Tax  
Dollars Go?"

EXT. BACKYARD - SAME TIME

The dog happily trots around the grass.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Cal opens a door, revealing a dark staircase to the dark  
basement. He flips the switch on the wall on the basement  
side of the door- Nothing.

Cal looks down to the darkness, contemplating turning around.  
He hangs his head, a snoop at heart. He gets out his phone,  
and turns on the flashlight, descending the steps  
carefully...

He reaches the bottom of the steps and finds another light  
switch on the wall opposite the stairs. He flips it on-

Lights come on.

Cal sighs a little with relief. He turns and immediately  
locks eyes with a smiling CARDBOARD CUT-OUT OF A TEENAGE BOY  
(18, the Chief's son)-

Cal almost falls over-

CAL

Aah!

He realizes it's an *it* and his terror is overcome with fury and condescension toward the Chief.

Ashley rushes to the steps.

ASHLEY

Are you okay?

Cal looks down. Of course.

CAL

Yeah.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - SAME TIME

The bottle of red wine with the red bow looks lonely on the washing machine.

INT. HOME OFFICE - CHIEF ERIC'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

On the computer, Ashley types in, "disability" and hits search. No files found on the computer.

She searches, "Insurance." No results.

She searches, "Medical." A document comes up at the top named, "Christmas Gifts 2022."

Ashley frowns a moment. She has a thought and double-clicks the file-

A window pops up, "Encrypted," prompting her to enter a password. She perks up, maybe on to something.

She types in the password that worked for the computer. WRONG PASSWORD. She methodically retypes it. WRONG PASSWORD.

ASHLEY

Shit.

She takes a flash-drive out of her pocket, sticks it in the computer and starts to copy over the file.

INT. ART STUDIO - BASEMENT - SAME TIME

There's an EASEL with a canvas in the middle of the small room, that's only just sketched out enough to reflect a self-portrait of a woman.

Cal opens a closet in the back corner of the room. New paints and brushes and containers of paint-thinner.

Cal looks into the closet, defeated. He checks the time on his phone, and carefully closes the doors and walks around the easel and out of there.

INT. BASEMENT - CHIEF ERIC'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Cal walks through the narrow section of basement between the art studio and the storage area with the Christmas decorations and creepy cardboard cut-out.

He eyes a 20 year old, white refrigerator, humming just slightly, that's practically wedged into the space under the stairs.

He walks past it and stops. He hesitates...

ASHLEY (O.S.)

We should probably get out of here,  
right...?

He lifts his foot without taking his shoe off the ground to meet her upstairs... Then changes his mind and whips around and opens the freezer.

He looks inside, holding the freezer door, seeing only very normal boxes of frozen food. His eyes change and stomach sinks.

Ashley walks up to the foot up the stairs.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

Mr. Gilbert...?

Cal looks directly up at her like a deer in the headlights- Then frantically picks up box after box, checking the weight, in the relatively full freezer-

Ashley looks down with a start, partly seeing him underneath her through the steps.

She walks down the stairs, starting to worry a little...

She slowly approaches him, the refrigerator door blocking her view of his face.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

I think we should leave soon, Mr.  
Gilbert. Right...?

Cal's face changes as he looks into a cardboard box, all of his worries vanishing.

Cal swings the door shut- He's looking right at her with a Jack Nicholson à la The Shining face.

Ashley jumps a little-

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ.

Cal holds up a box of frozen jalapeño poppers. Ashley raises her eyebrows, he definitely lost it.

He pulls out a BAGGY OF WHITE POWDER that's almost the size of the palm of his hand.

Ashley cover her mouth, starting to laugh in shock.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

Holy shit...

EXT. BACKYARD - CHIEF ERIC'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

The dog perks up and starts panting, noticing headlights approaching.

EXT. CHIEF ERIC'S NEIGHBORHOOD - SAME TIME

Billy stands with his back to Cal's car, peeing into privacy hedges outside of one of Chief Eric's neighbor's house.

Billy turns nonchalantly to the lights. It's Chief Eric's car.

Billy's eyes go wide. He turns to his pee stream, then the Chief's car, a real Sophie's Choice-

INT. BASEMENT - CHIEF ERIC'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ashley takes a picture of:

The bag of cocaine, alongside a bag of little white pills, a plastic wrapped dark mass of what almost looks like tar (heroin), and three thick, rubber-banded bundles of cash, on a work-bench near the refrigerator.

CAL

I think you should reapply to the  
tattoo parlor.

Ashley rolls her eyes. She looks at the bundles of cash, finding a serial number on one of the outer bills, and shrugs. She snaps a picture of the serial number.

CAL (CONT'D)

I'm literally trying to get my  
daughter and granddaughter to love  
me again, you don't need this shit.

ASHLEY

Have you ever tried talking to her?

CAL

Whenever I see her.

ASHLEY

When's the last time you saw her?

CAL

When's the last time you lost  
custody of your kid?

INCOMING CALL: Billy

ASHLEY

(sliding to answer)  
Oh, fuck-!

EXT. CHIEF ERIC'S NEIGHBORHOOD - SAME TIME

Billy is hunched down, looking at Chief Eric and his wife seemingly arguing, parked outside the house, engine running-

BILLY

(whispering)  
Get the fuck out of there.

Billy looks genuinely terrified for his squad.

CAL (O.S.)

*Shit, shit, shit, shit, shit!*

ASHLEY (O.S.)

*Oh shit! Oh shit! Fuck, fuck!*

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

(to Cal)  
No! The Percocet goes in the mixed  
vegetables...!  
(to Billy)  
*Billy, stall!*

Billy's face floods with panic. Ashley hangs up.

He breathes in, then breathes out the fear...becoming the hero he needs to be.

INT. CHIEF ERIC'S CAR - SAME TIME

Chief Eric's Wife faces out her window, refusing to look at him. Chief Eric, the image of a cold, distant husband on a good day, opens the door to get out-

Cal's car SCREECHES UP to them, missing the door by millimeters.

Chief Eric's Wife turns, freaked out- Chief Eric's eyes practically turn black with rage.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CAL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Billy rolls down the window, chuckling nervously through his terror.

Chief Eric rolls down his window, noticing Billy's driving gloves.

CHIEF ERIC  
Are you fucking retarded!?

Billy reacts a little to the slur, but perseveres.

BILLY  
I can't find my ass from my elbow  
in this town, I'm sorry, I needed  
to ask directions.

Chief Eric shakes his head, laughing a little he's so angry.

EXT. BACKYARD - CHIEF ERIC'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Ashley shuts the back door and they goofily hunch all the way over and hurry through the yard, heading to a gate to the front yard and street.

The dog watches them go from inside. She taps her paw against the glass door, missing her new friends.

Cal opens the gate and they escape to freedom.

The water bowl and kibble Ashley brought the dog remain outside...

EXT. CHIEF ERIC'S HOUSE/ NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUOUS

Cal and Ashley immediately run into JUSTIN, 50, walking an especially pissy chihuahua on the sidewalk who snarls and jumps up at the sight of them.

JUSTIN

Hi, how you guys doing?

Cal glances over to Billy and the Chief in the cars.

Ashley is smiling politely in panic, a strange look for her. Cal's game-face comes on. Calm and quiet:

CAL

You must be one of Eric's neighbors.

JUSTIN

Yeah.

(nods and smiles)

Known the Smiths...

(looks up thinking)

*Fourteen...?*

Justin's chihuahua JUMPS and SNARLS, trying to get at Cal. Cal looks at the thing, terrified it knows.

Cal nonchalantly edges them over from the yard to the sidewalk.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

*Fifteen years, probably.*

Justin looks at the Chief exit his car as Billy drives away, leaving the street.

Cal glances back, as does Ashley, who's having a full-blown panic attack. She tries to breath silently through this, resorting to looking down seemingly for no reason.

Justin looks at them, face starting to change, suspicions dawning, a second away from yelling to the Chief-

CAL

(quiet, somber)

You have to promise you won't tell,  
but we were trying to do them a  
favor...

Justin makes a face, confused-

CAL (CONT'D)

Their H-VAC is as old as the house and they can't afford to fix it. We were taking some pictures to get a quote.

Justin watches Chief Eric get into his car. Eric notices him, and Justin nods warmly to him, seeing him in a different light, enjoying pitying him.

CAL (CONT'D)

Please, *please*, don't say anything... Nobody knows. And it would be so embarrassing for Paul, he just started college.

JUSTIN

Oh, of course.

The chihuahua SNARLS and SNARLS.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

*Quiet.*

Cal nods somberly, with only about 30 seconds more of this that he can do. Justin looks at Ashley, and she manages to do a sad little friendly smile that she probably saw her mom do.

The chihuahua SNARLS and SNARLS, JUMPS and JUMPS. Ashley puts her hand on Cal's shoulder with some force, trying to get them out of here-

ASHLEY

(voice a little shaky)  
We're bothering your dog, sorry.

The chihuahua JUMPS at Ashley, who looks down, convinced the little fucker knows.

JUSTIN

*Bailey! Quiet.*

They try and walk away.

CAL

Well have a great night.

JUSTIN

Wait, wait, hold on...!

They stop and look at him, terrified. Justin checks that Eric is in the house and the Wife in the car, then leans in.



JUSTIN (CONT'D)  
What happened to all their money?

Cal can't believe this dickhead. Ashley almost rolls her eyes, completely brought out of her panic.

ASHLEY  
He has a brother with a severe disability and all their money goes to taking care of him.

Justin does a wince-like expression.

JUSTIN  
Gosh, that's so sad.

ASHLEY  
Say a prayer for him.

Justin nods, Ashley almost shoves Cal-

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
(it's not)  
Really nice to meet you.

Ashley and Cal head off.

JUSTIN  
You too.

Justin keeps walking the dog, looking at Chief Eric's house.

Cal and Ashley walk down the sidewalk, no idea what the hell to do.

Billy pulls Cal's car up to the end of the street, and Cal and Ashley speed-walk towards it.

INT. CAL'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Cal glances at Ashley, who's looking out the window. He hesitates a moment or two...

CAL  
You didn't see that in a movie, did you? The brother.

ASHLEY  
That would make you feel bad for anyone, huh?

Cal looks at her moment, then turns away, not possessing the words.

EXT. CHIEF ERIC'S HOUSE/ NEIGHBORHOOD - SAME TIME

The Russian starts his car and follows after our heroes...

**END OF ACT 4**

INT. MODERN MANSION - SAME TIME

Cazzie (the unlucky teen from the car) closes the door behind her in the cavernous, all white, excruciatingly pristine space. The tables are white, the picture frames are white, etc.

She walks through a long hallway to the:

KITCHEN

The gigantic kitchen island features white marble with pink flecks worth more than your house. Cazzie grabs the Brita out of the fridge and fills up her water bottle.

Ken looks up, holding a huge iPad, seated at a white industrial-chic concrete picnic bench/ table/ fabulously wealthy person impulse-purchase, an espresso cup and coaster in front of him.

KEN

Where were you?

CAZZIE

I can't believe you noticed.

KEN

Where were you, Cazzie?

Cazzie drops her head down, done with this. She takes a breath.

CAZZIE

(as calm as possible)

You didn't give a flying fuck when Amelia committed suicide. And she was basically my sister. She came with us on vacation about ten times but you probably have no idea who I'm even talking about but--

Ken thinly veils his anger.

KEN

--Of course I do.

CAZZIE (CONT'D)

But *this* is important.

CAZZIE (CONT'D)

Well this is the first time we've ever talked about it.

They look at each other a moment, an unstoppable force meets an unmovable object.

CAZZIE (CONT'D)

So you wanna know where I was on a  
random Tuesday, or...?

Ken looks at her, refusing to explain himself, despite the growing feeling that he should. Ken's phone BUZZES for a call.

Cazzie lets out some air, wow, and walks away. Ken watches her go. She'll understand one day.

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

See ya, dad...

INT. CAL'S CAR - SAME TIME

Cal drives down a residential road with Billy sitting shotgun and Ashley sitting in the back. Headlights become visible behind them.

They approach a stop-sign and Cal slows to a stop. Cal glances at the car approaching behind him, recognizing it as the Russian's car.

He looks at it approach a moment, still stopped. He can just make out the Russian's face.

He glances at Ashley in the mirror, then Billy, who are none the wiser, then reluctantly pulls off. Cal's little office becomes visible...

"Happy Together" comes on over the radio.

Cal glances at the speakers, simultaneously not believing it and completely expecting it.

He pulls into the gravel driveway of his office, feeling like they're moving in slow motion. He eyes Billy and Ashley, wishing they had never met him.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

"Happy Together" plays. None of the dialogue is audible.

INT. NICE OFFICE - MORNING

It's only walls and carpets, not a single desk or phone.

Cal, 27, walks into the space to find it completely empty, aside from Ken, 27, who's standing there, avoiding eye contact.

Ken looks up and says, "I'm sorry, Cal". Cal is devastated and completely blindsided.

INT. NEW YORK TIMES OFFICE - AFTERNOON - YEARS LATER

Cal, 30, walks into the office. Ed tells him to close the door and take a seat and Cal does so without thinking.

Ed takes a breath and says, "I'm sorry, Cal. He slides his severance papers in a manila folder to him.

Cal is devastated and completely blindsided.

INT. KITCHEN - THAT NIGHT

Cal walks into the room, holding the manila envelope, to find his WIFE, 30, sitting at the kitchen table.

He walks over to find tears in her eyes and a bracketed stack of papers in front of her.

She says, "I'm so sorry, Cal". Cal is devastated and completely blindsided.

INT. HOUSE - MORNING

Cal's Daughter, 7, sitting in the car, looks at him through the window as they drive away.

MUSIC ENDS, DIALOGUE AND STREET NOISE BECOME AUDIBLE

CAL  
(voice breaking)  
I'm sorry...

END FLASHBACK

Cal, tears in his eyes, quickly slaps the button to lock the doors in the car. Ashley and Billy are confused.

ASHLEY  
Uh?

Cal eyes the Russian's car as it creeps along, watching them.

CAL  
How friggin' great is this song...?  
Ashley, ever heard this one?

He nervously looks back at them. Ashley and Billy look at him, yet again thinking he's losing it.

Cal tries to nervously smile his way through it, till he sees the Russian's car park at the library across the street.

CAL (CONT'D)  
 Alright, sorry.

Cal unlocks the car and they all exit.

EXT. CAL'S TINY OFFICE/ VARIOUS - CONTINUOUS

Cal puts his phone high up, like he's filming himself (and so it's visible).

CAL  
 (LOUD, nervous)  
 Just Facebooking live us coming  
 back from a *great* day's work...!

Ashley and Billy look concerned.

ASHLEY  
 Please don't do that.

CAL  
 (eyeing Russian's car)  
 No, it's great-! People are  
 watching!

BILLY  
 Go to a single's resort or  
 something in Florida if you're  
 lonely, brother. They're cheaper  
 than you think.

BILLY (CONT'D) CAL  
 Maybe I can give you some No, that's--  
 Greyhound points for the ride  
 down.

Cal hesitates a moment, perplexed, momentarily brought out of everything. He nods in thanks, though not completely sure for what.

CAL (CONT'D)  
 Take tomorrow off, guys.

Billy nods, Ashley's face changes from weirded out to upset. She almost protests, then decides against it.

Ashley and Billy get in her car.

CAL (CONT'D)  
 And be careful.

Billy nods to his superior officer, stone cold serious.  
Ashley nods, repressing a smirk.

Cal notices Billy's phone on the dashboard in the car, and turns to Billy to say something..then stops himself-

Ashley and Billy drive away.

Cal opens the door, grabs Billy's phone, glances at the library parking lot for the Russian, then hurries into the little office.

With only Cal remaining, the Russian's car drives without urgency over to Cal's office, and parks on the street, blocking the driveway.

Cal exits the office wearing a baggy Bard College hoodie with the big middle pocket.

The Russian exits his car.

RUSSIAN

I wanna tell you about my friend  
Sergei.

Cal raises his eyebrows, utter confusion eclipsing the tension...

RUSSIAN (CONT'D)

We were in-  
(thinking of the word)  
*Street gangs* when we were young-  
Kid stuff.

Cal isn't sure what he's hearing, feeling very different than when he was listening to Billy's story.

RUSSIAN (CONT'D)

I was the best man at his wedding.  
Then one day, he says he's writing  
a book...  
(almost smiles,  
remembering)  
I didn't know he could write.

Russian's face gives something away, he's trying to level with Cal.

CAL

They don't know anything,  
it's just me-

RUSSIAN (CONT'D)

He never wrote the fucking  
book, dude.

RUSSIAN (CONT'D)

-Then save their fucking lives.

Cal nods frantically, seemingly abandoning whatever plan he had moments ago.

Russian opens his car door, then hesitates a moment, and turns back.

RUSSIAN (CONT'D)

Sometimes it's selfish to tell the truth.

The words move through Cal. Russian gets in his car. Cal misses a breath, thinking, deciding everyone's fates...

CAL'S DAD

Shit or get off the pot, boy.

He puts his hand in his sweatshirt pocket and pulls out Billy's phone with a wad of doubled-up duct-tape stuck to the back. He stumbles towards the street-

INT. RUSSIAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Russian shakes his head, watching Cal in the mirror... Cal gets upright, bracing himself on the car.

Russian pulls off- causing Cal to FALL flat on his face.

EXT. CAL'S TINY OFFICE - DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Cal quietly groans in pain and regret...

Billy's phone is taped under the back bumper of the Russian's car, screen displaying a muted call with Cal.

Cal braces himself and gets up, looking at the phone on the car. It's too late to turn back.

He tries to act natural as he walks back to the office, dusting off gravel.

He pulls out his phone and fusses...pulling up Find My Friends on Billy's contact.

EXT. HUDSON RIVER PARK PARKING LOT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Russian sits in his car, on the phone. The parking lot that faces the water is empty aside from him and a couple Village utility vehicles.



INT. RUSSIAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Russian sits back in his seat, far more at ease than he was a moment ago, on a call coming in over bluetooth in the car.

Chuckling from the male voice on the other end.

BOSS (O.S.)  
(in Russian)  
*Say it again.*

Russian shakes his head, smirking. He leans forward to over-enunciate the Western sounds.

RUSSIAN  
*'Cal' 'Gilbert'.*

Boss BURTS OUT LAUGHING on the other end... Russian rolls his eyes.

BOSS (O.S.)  
*So- What did he say? About pawning  
it off to Khazanov?*

Russian silently sighs.

He closes his eyes, forgetting he didn't do it already.

Clearly lying:

RUSSIAN  
*Took it well. For now.*

BOSS  
(chuckling)  
*So you're gonna talk to 'Cal'  
'Gilbert' now?*

Russian looks up at the stars.

Lying again:

RUSSIAN  
*If he can find the place.*

Boss does a snort laugh.

BOSS  
*I'm done with these fools. All of  
them.*

Russian is thinking.

RUSSIAN  
*He's more dangerous than he looks.*

BOSS  
 'Gilbert'?

RUSSIAN  
 Da...

Headlights become visible.

RUSSIAN (CONT'D)  
*I'll call you back.*

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS - CONTINUOUS

Cal watches from above, shitty earbuds in, phone out displaying a call with "Billy", peeking his head over a concrete wall at the edge of the walkway.

The approaching car becomes visible and parks. It's a Prius. The DRIVER and the PASSENGER get out and approach the Russian.

RUSSIAN  
 Khazanov is going to take over the political end next week.

KEN  
 What are you saying?

Cal's face sinks, staring at the figure that must be Ken, refusing to believe it to his own surprise.

RUSSIAN  
 (it's nothing)  
 He takes the money from the cop.

KEN  
 (amused)  
 What are you not saying?  
 (smiles)  
 What does this mean for our future...? Or is it just a coincidence?

Russian eyes him, reacting to the word 'coincidence'.

RUSSIAN  
 Why are you talking like you're my boss.

KEN  
(amused)  
I believe I am, aren't I?

RUSSIAN  
I think you talk too much on the  
computer and you talk too much to  
people who work for you.

Cal grows nervous, a pit swallowing his throat.

KEN  
Are you a parent?

Cal closes his eyes a moment. Silence...

RUSSIAN  
Yes.

KEN  
So you know exactly what you're  
walking away from, then. You're  
fine with violence, just not the  
change it begets.

Cal swallows, feeling like he's inches away from them.

RUSSIAN  
Where was your daughter last night?

Cal closes his eyes tight, wishing he didn't just say that.

KEN  
Excuse me?

RUSSIAN  
She has a new story to tell,  
doesn't she...?

Cal is confused.

Ken does a sarcastic snort, the gall.

KEN  
Not that she'll tell me about it,  
but yes, I imagine she does.

RUSSIAN  
My guys were told that BMW, that  
street, that time. Now they're in  
the fucking paper for *cock-blocking*  
your daughter...!

Cal's jaw almost falls off his face.

Ken's angry, but mostly keeping it back.

KEN

What's your point, Mikhail?

RUSSIAN

Think about who you're fucking with. That's my point.

Russian turns away to get in his car, finished with this silly man.

Ken's driver pulls out a K-Bar (old school military knife)- Ken delivers a knowing look, 'I have to do this'-

Ken takes the knife and STABS Russian in the back-

Russian stumbles, but manages to jerk around and grab Ken by the throat. Ken's eyes bulge, too self-important to have ever conceived of his own demise-

The Driver grabs Russian and restrains him-

Ken holds his throat, 'recovering', and looks at Russian, "Why did you make me do this to you?", knife at the ready.

KEN

Business is business... But never get in the way of my family, Mikhail.

Ken cocks the knife back to strike-

EXT. PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS - CONTINUOUS

Cal watches on, eyes wide, actively repressing the urge to vomit, yet unable to look away as he witnesses something that will be with him till the moment he dies...

**END OF ACT FOUR**

INT. CHIEF ERIC'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The dog is looking at its kibble through the glass.

The front door opens, and Chief Eric and his wife enter, bickering (O.S.).

Chief Eric walks into sight and notices the dog.

CHIEF ERIC  
(a little drunk)  
What's wrong, princess?

He notices the kibble and water in the yard through the glass sliding door and his face changes.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Doors open to the Prius and two goons get out and immediately cart off Russian's body.

Another Prius cruises down the street, pulls right up to Ken, he climbs in and they're off.

INT. CHIEF ERIC'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Chief Eric stands, ringing phone to his ear, watching his dog lap up water from the bowl. It goes to voicemail a little quickly, clearly not the first try.

He grits his teeth and shakes his head, happy to be angry.

CHIEF ERIC  
I wanna be very clear, you Rusky  
fuck...  
(over enunciating, NY  
accent coming out)  
I'm gonna put a bullet in the brain  
of whoever the fuck broke into my  
fucking house the second I fucking  
find him...!

INT. CHIEF ERIC'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Chief Eric's Wife violently rolls her eyes in the next room, thinking of all the paths in her life that could have led away from him.

EXT. PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS - SAME TIME

Cal watches the goons put the Russian's body in the trunk of the Prius, somehow only just reaching the ceiling for his horror.

He looks away, unable to take it, then his eye catches Billy's phone under the Russian's car.

Cal does a double-take, eyes wide, having not gotten this far in the plan in his head...

Cal glances at the path away from this madness. He could just leave...

His brow tightens. He shakes his head, ashamed he ever even had the thought.

EXT. PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS - STAIRS - MOMENTS LATER

Cal creeps down the steps, hunched over, shoeless, looking distinctly like the Grinch.

He reaches the bottom and edges towards the Russian's car and the Prius.

The Prius starts to pull out. Cal drops his ass down to the steps, ducking for cover.

At least two goons are still present in the parking lot, walking over to the Russian's car (and Cal).

Cal peers at them as he edges out from the staircase. He has to act now. He glances down at his phone, then at the goons.

Cal hesitates a moment, eyes wide, then raises his phone to his mouth and cups his hands. He can do this-

CAL  
(engine noise)  
**Tuft-tuft-tuff...**

Silence a half moment. Cal winces in anticipation.

GOON  
Fuck. Did you hear that?

Cal's eyes go wide.

GOON 2  
Was that a tire or the engine?

GOON

*Fuck!*

Goon 1 leads them around to the front of the car. They pop the hood and prop it up, blocking their view through the windshield.

Cal closes his eyes tight, then hunches and moves with silent, deliberate steps to the bumper, closing his eyes every now and then in terror as his socks fail to absorb the many pebbles scattered about the pavement.

GOON (CONT'D)

Lemme pop the trunk and see if he has any tools.

Cal's eyes bug- He hunches lower and gets the fuck over to the passenger's side of the car as the Goon opens the door to pop the trunk.

Cal stares at what he can see of the 2nd goon, who could turn and see him any second as the 1st goon rifles through the trunk.

There's a small beach in front of Cal, and a large drainage pipe coming out of the ground that slowly leaks into it.

The trunk closes. Cal's eyes close. He rises and watches the Goon through the window as he walks to the hood.

Cal creeps into position and starts to peel-

GOON 2

Do you hear that?

Every muscle in Cal's body freezes.

GOON

What?

A gun COCKS.

GOON 2

Something's up.

Cal eyes a little rock on the pavement next to him. He looks at the railing of the walkway steps on his left.

He winds up and BEAMS the rock at the metal siding to the stairs leading down from the walkway-

CLANG

The goons rush over on the driver's side, guns drawn- Cal moves to the passenger's side of the trunk- Then back into position.

Cal slowly and silently peels as the Goons make their way to the stairs, guns pointed.

GOON  
You picked the wrong fucking night,  
kids!

Cal's eyes dart back and forth between the tape and the goons. Why is this taking this long.

Cal frees the phone, then stops. Looking at the staircase back, his exit.

One of the goons turns around and Cal darts behind the car. Cal glances at the drainage pipe. It could easily fit him.

With Billy's phone in his tight grip, Cal crawls down the beach on his hands and knees to the giant drainage pipe, fucking up his knees on rocks, tears of desperation forming in his eyes, the heart of a champion beating in his chest...

INT. BED ROOM - THE BRONX - SAME TIME

Phone BUZZES on a night stand. A WOMAN, 40s, flips on the light and answers.

WOMAN  
(in Russian)  
*Hello?*

BOSS (O.S.)  
*Is Mikhail with you?*

Every muscle in her body sinks, having lived in fear of this moment every single day for decades.

WOMAN  
(voice breaking)  
*Why...?*

EXT. AIRFIELD - RUSSIA - SAME TIME

BOSS winces a little. Every basic item of his clothing is the needlessly most expensive version of it.

BOSS  
*I'm so sorry.*



He hangs up and climbs the steps to a private jet, where the Captains and the Flight attendants are smiling at attention.

BOSS (CONT'D)

*Take me to hell.*

EXT. CAL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Cal's car pulls into the driveway of his oddly charming house, which admittedly looks particularly nice next to him and his car.

Cal slowly exits his car, clothes and hair damp, eyes hollow with 1000 mile stare.

LITTLE GIRL

Grandpa...!

Cal's eyes almost fall out of his face as he turns to the source of the noise as his deepest fears are realized, as his granddaughter:

TAYLOR, 6, stands by the front door, really jazzed to be there, with Cal's daughter, SAM, 35, powering through awkwardness and exhaustion.

TAYLOR

I've never seen your house before.

Sam looks at his wet pants and half wet, half dry shirt, not quite sure she needs to know.

SAM

Hey dad.

Cal looks like he could cry. Sam doesn't notice, too preoccupied with life.

SAM (CONT'D)

We need somewhere not complicated for a little bit.

(puts hand on Taylor)

...If that's okay.

(almost hoping it's a no)

Toby went to check out a motel nearby anyway, so it's no big deal either way.

Cal, at a loss for words, looks from his daughter to his granddaughter.

SAM (CONT'D)

Ed told me about the article you  
might be doing for him, that's  
great.

Cal tries to nod.

SAM (CONT'D)

Him and mom really wanna see you in  
July for their vow renewal...

Cal barely hears this. Sam misinterprets the cause of Cal's  
Broken soul.

SAM (CONT'D)

I know it's far and it's a lot, but  
still..We'll be there.

Tears well in Cal's eyes, the prospect of them all living  
months into the future seeming impossible.

Sam notices something on Cal's shirt and makes a face,  
disappointed but not surprised.

She hesitates, wondering if there's a point, then-

SAM (CONT'D)

You haven't had those all day have  
you?

Cal looks down at the mustard stain on his shirt...and the  
coffee stain on his blazer.

FADE OUT.

**END OF EPISODE ONE**