

WITHOUT HOPE
A Screenplay

by
Steven Cole

FADE IN-

Est-

Ext-Prison-Morning-

Twin desolate hills descend and converge to reveal a small, isolated valley. A dry mixture of dirt, dust and sand cover the barren ground. Purposely positioned within this deep, natural rut sits several mammoth gray structures. These buildings form an oval which encompasses an unused mile and a half asphalt track. Shiny razor wire lines the top of the thick concrete blocks; a mental reinforcement that the twelve foot high walls might not singularly evoke. A thick steel-woven fence, also twelve feet high, forms the boundaries of the two square-mile compound. The law of this land, with additional accord from man, proves that the only path in is the only path out; a dead-straight one.

Cut To-

Int-Prison-Cellblock "D"-Morning-

Meticulously made bunk beds line the left wall. A stainless steel sink and commode populate the rear of the cell. A small plastic mirror is tightly affixed to the wall above the toilet. Two large lockers sit side by side on the right wall. A SKETCH PAD occupies the foot of the lower bunk. The cells on this entire row share the day's hour of "free time".

JAKE BLEEK, WHITE, late thirties, tattooed, muscular. A typical repeat offender. Like all career criminals, Jake carries, in his shoulders, as well as the piercing windows to his soul, an unwavering amount of pure, absolute tension. Although callous and unwary, he is a man who draws a line in the sand at what is fair and will not allow it to be crossed by anyone, especially himself.

Jake carefully removes a dozen or so pencil-drawn pictures from the pale, gray walls. Each one is stuck to the wall by a small gob of toothpaste. There is one of prison bars inside of a man's head; one of a pregnant woman surrounded by pills and bottles of booze; one of a cat in a silver-spoon cradle, floating in a puffy cloud; one of a quartet playing music on a ghetto street corner, while completely ignoring the vile scene which surrounds them; and a portrait of Frank Sinatra. All beautifully drawn, on LARGE, CRISP, WHITE, SKETCH PAPER, by Jake. The center of the rear wall holds another drawing. However, it is NOT LARGE, but SMALL; NOT CRISP, but WORN; NOT WHITE, but YELLOWED; NOT SKETCH PAPER, but NOTEBOOK PAPER. IT'S AN OUTSTRETCHED ARM, HAND OPEN, EMERGING FROM THE LOWER LEFT CORNER, REACHING OUT; THE REST OF THE PAGE IS BLANK. Jake carefully, gingerly, removes it and places it on the bottom bunk. The others are stacked up next to it.

JEROME SNELL, "pasty white", mid-fifties; sits on the top bunk, back to the wall, pretending to read the Bible. This is Jake's soon-to-be former cell mate. Jerome shot his next door neighbor, point-blank for screwing his wife...for the better part of a decade.

Jerome softly WHIMPERS.

-JEROME-

(sobbing)

What am I gonna do, Jake?

-JAKE-

You're not my problem any more, Jerome.

-JEROME-

I'm gonna die.

Two WHITE INMATES, pushing a laundry bin, appear outside the cell. One has a shaved head, with tattoos all over it, as well as on his face. The other has shoulder-length, stringy hair.

They joke harshly with one another; good jailhouse fun.

-JAKE-

I'm outta this shit hole.

-W.I.#1-

Seven years, Bleek...fuckin' wino time.

What you know about life, homie?

-JAKE-

That mine ain't gonna end in here.

I'd rather be carried by six

than judged by twelve.

-W.I.#2-

No shit, homeboy. Twelve punk mother fuckers got me here. I'd kill 'em all right now if I had the chance.

-JAKE-

I'm sure they all know that.

W.I.#1 eyes Jerome with an eerie, wanton sort of stare. He points at Jerome and mimics sex.

Jake observes the gesture, but continues talking.

-W.I.#2-

Maybe one will slip up and end up my bitch.

-W.I.#1-

Yeah, like fuckin' Jerome over there.
I'm gonna make you my bitch. My fat bitch.

Jerome lets out a soft WHIMPER.

-W.I.#2-

He's got big ass titties.

-JAKE-

Yeah, and a hairy man-ass. Nasty.

-W.I.#1-

I ain't never gettin' out.
I love a hairy ass.

-W.I.#2-

What you kickin' down homeboy?

-JAKE-

The sketches. I told you last week, bro.

Jake grabs the stack of drawings and hands them to W.I.#2.

-W.I.#2-

What's up with that old ass one?

-JAKE-

That stays with me. It has since I
sketched it when I was eight.

Jake shows it through the bars.

-W.I.#1-

It's just an arm on a page.

-JAKE-

Exactly.

-W.I.#2-

I get it. That's you reaching out
and there ain't nobody there.
That's my life, homie.

-W.I.#1-

Stay down on the outs, homeboy.

-W.I.#2-

Fuck a pretty bitch for me.

-JAKE-

Keep sketching. You got talent...and time.

The three inmates shake hands. W.I.'s #1 and #2 to push the bin onward. Jake jokes to Jerome as he collects his personal items from his locker and places them in an athletic bag:

-JAKE-

Stop fucking cryin' Jerome?

-JEROME-

(more sobbing)

I'm gonna get raped.

-JAKE-

Yeah, probably.

-JEROME-

I need protection.

Jake can barely contain his laughter.

-JAKE-

The dude that's gonna fuck you does.

(beat)

You gotta pay some 'wood
to protect your fat-ass.

Jerome continues to cry.

-JAKE-

What the fuck, Jerome?

Want me to catch another case right after I make
parole just to stay here and protect you?

Sack-up, mother fucker.

(beat)

I got bigger fish to fry on the outside.

-JEROME-

(sulking)

I got seventeen months 'til I get out.

I wanna live to see that day.

-JAKE-

Your first day here you should've stuck the biggest nigger on the yard in his fuckin' neck.

(beat)

Now get ready to suck his dick.

-JEROME-

(pleading)

I can't survive G. P.

A sobbing Jerome **THROWS** himself from the top bunk to the cement floor. He reaches out and wraps his arms around Jake's legs, which almost knocks him over. Initially Jake is almost amused, but quickly becomes enraged. He reaches down and **GRABS** the fat of Jerome's arm and twists. Jake twists until Jerome lets go, but only with that arm. His other arm remains wrapped around Jake's left leg. Jake pulls his right leg back and **SLAMS** it into Jerome's chest, freeing his left leg.

Jake steps back, staring at this pathetic, fat slob lying on the concrete floor. He orders Jerome to get up. Jerome does not move. Jake **YELLS** for Jerome to stand. Jerome reluctantly does and leans his considerable weight up against the bunks. Jake's crafty head and gracious heart battle do battle; knowing that he should not care, at least not enough to react... or worse, as usual, overreact; possibly catch a new case. Care...? About this sorry mother fucker...?

Swiftly, Jake **GRABS** the upper mattress and rips **OPEN** the corner. He **SHOVES** his hand inside and pulls out a (shank) toothbrush with the bottom filed to a point. With his hand tightly wrapped around the bristles, Jake **SPINS** around and **SHOVES** the shank into Jerome's lower abdomen. It goes in about an inch; no serious damage. Before Jerome can mutter a sound, Jake **COVERS** Jerome's mouth with his other hand and whispers in his ear:

-JAKE-

Tell Barnes one of these toads did this shit.

You'll get protective custody.

Jake removes the shank from Jerome, breaks it in half and flushes it down the toilet: Jerome **MOANS** quietly as he places his hand on the barely bleeding "pinhole."

-JAKE-

This is the last time I save your fat ass, Jerome.

As he moves to the sink to wash his hands, Jake suffers through a long contented, albeit, self-loathing moment as he faces himself in the mirror...

as if unable to find what he is searching for or isn't being honest with himself that he has; most likely an even amount of both...

Cut to-

Est-

Int-St. Andrew's Church (Classroom)-Morning-

A couple dozen first graders sit at their desks solving the addition problems that have been written on the blackboard. MISS SHAWL, the pretty, twenty-something teacher, shifts her gaze between her well-worn Bible and the conduct of the children. All are cooperative. Except one. HOPE WOLF; who, instead of practicing arithmetic, makes use of her time drawing. It's a picture of a herself drawing on a blackboard. Hope proudly shows it to the little boy seated beside her. RANDALL, the boy, smiles at Hope then looks toward the teacher. Randall RAISES his hand and loudly calls on the teacher:

-RANDALL-

Miss. Shawl. Miss. Shawl.

Hope is drawing again.

We're supposed to be doing math.

Randall LOOKS back to Hope with a holier-than-thou smirk. Miss. Shawl places her Bible on her desk and steps toward Hope. Hope covers her picture with her arms and hands. Miss Shawl stands between Hope and the Randall.

-MISS. SHAWL-

Hope.

Have you finished your math work?

Hope lowers her head.

-MISS. SHAWL-

Art is after math.

Please, take out your assignment and complete it.

Hope slides her math paper out from under drawing.

-MISS. SHAWL-

Thank you.

Miss Shawl turns from Hope to Randall.

-MISS. SHAWL-

We do NOT tattle on others.
If you were doing your own work,
you wouldn't notice what
someone else is or is not doing.
Do you understand, Randall?

-RANDALL-

Yes, Miss Shawl.

-MISS. SHAWL-

Thank you.

Miss Shawl returns to her desk and Bible.

Randall sticks his tongue out at Hope.

Hope slides herself out from her desk and SHOVES her drawing in Randall's face.

Randall flails away blindly at Hope before realizing he'd do better moving the paper.

Randall GRABS Hope's arm and shoves it away, thus enabling him to see.

The entire class "hoots" and "hollers" as Miss Shawl jumps up and quickly situates herself in between them. She directs Hope to her seat.

-MISS. SHAWL-

That's enough from you two.

Hope, instead of returning to her seat, SPINS around and PUNCHES Randall in the face.

Randal SWINGS back, but Hope DODGES and lands another blow in the same place.

Miss Shawl PUSHES Hope away.

-MISS. SHAWL-

Miss. Wolf.

Go to the Rectory.

Dissolve to-

Ext-St. Andrew's Church-Late Morning-

A tall, thin, elderly NUN stands stoically on the sidewalk in front of the large,

gothic building. A large staircase rises up behind her to two oversized wooden doors.

SISTER MARGARET MARY HOLDS a clipboard under her left arm and pen in the same hand. She CLICKS the pen rapidly; continuously. SMM runs, not only the Preschool, but in her mind, she runs the church, the parishioners and their lives; but, oddly, not her own.

SMM coldly LOOKS DOWN to Hope, who sits on the bottom step.

Hope's tattered, filthy uniform clings to her small frame. Her tousled, dark hair HIDES most of her face. Her knees are SCRAPED and BRUISED.

She was in a fight with a classmate. In trouble, again.
Hope SITS very STILL, staring blankly ahead. Her legs and left arm are all streaked and scribbled with BLUE PEN.
SMM PULLS a pocket watch out of her habit and studies it. She SPEAKS condescendingly to Hope without taking her eyes off the timepiece.

-SMM-

...this is the third time that you have
been in a fight; with a boy, no less...
Certainly not the way for a young lady
to conduct herself. What are we going
to do with you, Hope?

(beat)

One is left to wonder where such a young,
impressionable child learns such despicable behavior.

Quick Cut to-

Est-

Int-Laurel Wolf's Apt-Kitchen-Late Morning-

Inside the filthy kitchen a cigarette burns in an ashtray. A small, neat pile of Tapioca pudding rests on the counter. A small empty bowl sits right beside it. Several syringes, a bent spoon, two lighters and a sixteenth of black tar sit on a small silver tray on the edge of the counter next to the fridge. LAUREL WOLF, WHITE, thirties, "dope-fiend-skinny", injects dope into her left arm. This is Hope's mother.

Quick Cut to-

Ext-St Andrew's Church-Late Morning-

The positions and mind sets of both SMM and Hope have not changed.

-SMM-

(to Hope)

I have placed several calls to your home.
Not one has been returned.
We are forced to wait. So we shall...wait.

(to self)

No real family...hardly a mother...
this child needs...someone.

Fade to-

Int-Prison-Cellblock "D" #13-Late Morning-

Jake steps away from the mirror.

The P.A. system alerts the entire cellblock that one of their own has made it to the other side.

JACOB MILES BLEEK REPORT TO THE FRONT OF THE CELLBLOCK FOR RELEASE.

Jake GRABS his bag and drawing pad and completely ignores Jerome as he walks out of the cell. Jake OPENS his drawing pad and extracts a page. Shoving his hand through the bars he releases it. The drawing falls to the cell floor. It's a picture of a man looking back at jail bars with a beautiful sunset behind him.

-JAKE-

That's you, Jerome. In your mind.
Stare at it a minute and you're right there.

Jerome PICKS up the drawing and covers his small wound. A tiny amount of blood soaks through the paper. Jerome continues to quietly sob. He will be having sex and or dead very, very soon.

Jake walks out of the cellblock.

Cut to-

Int-Prison front office-Morning-

Jake, wearing street clothes, signs and dates his release papers.

A guard HANDS Jake a one-way bus ticket to Los Angeles, two one hundred dollars bills and an address of half way house. Jake pockets the address and money and slips the ticket into his gym bag. Jake and the guard EXIT the office, climb into a State van and speed away:

Cut to.

Est-

Int-Bus Terminal-Noon-

The State van pulls away from the curb leaving Jake standing there:

Jake soaks in a breath of freedom then heads for the station. He converses briefly with the odd-looking LITTLE MAN occupying the booth, then heads for the waiting area.

Cut to-

Est

Int-Bus-Noon-

The interior of the shabby bus, riddled with filth and graffiti, is packed with a wide assortment of various freaks and weirdos. Jake confidently SLEEPS among them:

Cut to-

Est-

Ext- Bus Terminal-Los Angeles-Late Day-

It is a warm, pleasant, autumn day in the City of Angels.
The bus pulls into the Terminal parking lot. Jake EXITS the bus with a few other passengers.
Carrying his bag, Jake strolls out of the Terminal:

Dissolve to-

Est-
Ext-Parole Office-Late Day-
Jake walks up the steps and into the large brick building.

Cut to-

Est-
Int-Parole Office- Late Day-
Jake checks in at the front desk then takes a seat on a foldout chair with several other criminals.
After several minutes a well-dressed Mexican man, early fifties, pokes his large head through a doorway and calls out “Bleek”. MANUEL RUVELCABA, always serious, unless *he’s* cracking a joke. Then he’s David fucking Brenner. He is Jake’s P.O.
Jake STANDS and follows him into the rear of the building to his desk.

Inside the cubicle Jake takes a seat while the P.O. looks over his file.

-MANUEL-
Jacob Bleek, aggravated assault, possession
with intent and commercial burglary.
(beat)
Get anything?

Condescending humor never did set well with Jake, unless it was dispensed by him:

-JAKE-
Seven years.

After twenty-plus years “supervising” rapists, dope-fiends, and other various low-lives,
Manuel has absolutely no emotional ties:

-MANUEL-
I see here you’re a dope fiend?
And that this is your third attempt at parole...they
kinda go together like chorizo and eggs.

-JAKE-
Third time’s the charm.

-MANUEL-
That’s what all the fourth-timers say.

Jake chuckles; all apart of the vicious cycle:

-JAKE-

(sarcastic)

With that kind of support....

-MANUEL-

(serious)

You know the routine, Bleek.

Report here twice a week.

Get a *real* job. Piss test.

-JAKE-

You want my piss today?

-MANUEL-

In a container, smart ass. You convicts are just stupid enough to get high the night before you're paroled. One last party with the homies.

Jake unzips his pants.

-MANUEL-

Not here asshole. In the restroom.

Cut to-

Est-

Int-Parole Office(Men's room)-Late Day-

Jake fills the container in front of the urinal. Manuel stands directly over his shoulder.

Jake hands the container to a latex glove-wearing Manuel.

-MANUEL-

You'll be at the Trinity House...on Coldwater Canyon. They're expecting you.

You've got one week to find a real job.

Jake zips up, washes his hands and heads out the door, following Manuel.

Cut to-

Est-

Ext-Trinity House-Late Day-

Dozens of red bricks zig-zag across a large green lawn to form a path from the sidewalk to a sturdy 1920's single-story brick building.
Jake glides up the path and ENTERS the building.

Cut to-

Int-Lobby-Late Day-

The small, colorful lobby is sparsely decorated with several lush green plants, one old chair and a long buffet table which functions as a desk.

Jake is warmly greeted by a pleasant, bodyguard-sized, forty-ish, BLACK MAN who is DRESSED AS A WOMAN. This is OLIVER/OLIVIA...whatever, the Manager:

Oliver/Olivia takes his/her time soaking in Jake from head to toe and back down again. An aloof Jake leans against the makeshift counter.

-OLIVIA-
Hello baby.
Can I help you?

-JAKE-
I'm supposed to live here.

-OLIVIA-
Mmm, mmm.
What's your name, sugar?

-JAKE-
Bleek.

Olivia shuffles through the log:

-OLIVIA-
You're on Marvin's caseload.
You should love him baby.
He's so sweet.

-JAKE-
Which room is mine?

-OLIVIA-
Oh, my. Looks and personality...

-JAKE-
(dry)
Uh, what room?

Olivia remains upbeat.

-OLIVIA-
Seven, sugar. Last one on the left.

Jake walks to his room.

-OLIVIA-
Damn. Nice ass, too.

Int-Jake's Room-Late Day-
Jake steps into a clean, furnished room, consisting of a bed, dresser, small b&w T.V., table and a desk. Jake drops his gym bag and sketch pad on the table. Jake EXITS his room and returns to Olivia.

-JAKE-
Got a phone?

-OLIVIA-
'Round the corner in the T.V. room, baby.

Jake makes his way to the phone.
The T.V. room is loud and crowded. Jake picks up the phone and dials.

Cut to-

Est-
Ext-Johnny Colani's House(backyard)-Late Day-
JOHNNY COLANI, very large, very tan (fake) and very rich, reclines on a reinforced chaise-lounge in his beautiful backyard. A black Speedo leaves nothing to the imagination; just the way Johnny likes it. He barks into a phone he holds in one hand and cradles a glass of red wine in the other. A large waterfall serenely flows into a magnificent, sparkling pool. A well-stocked portable bar stands just behind Johnny.

-JOHNNY-
Call me back later Myron, I got another call.

Johnny pounds the keypad with sausage-like fingers.

-JOHNNY-

Jake Bleek. King Mystique. You out?

Yeah, yeah. We need to talk.

(pause)

Yeah. Tomorrow? One O Clock?.

You remember where the casa is?

Cut to-

Int-Lobby-Late Day-

As Jake replaces the receiver, he notices a fat, older WHITE MAN, testing the load-bearing capacity of the old lobby chair. In his hand a doomed onion bagel smothered in cream cheese awaits its fate. A gob of the cream cheese plops down onto the floor. He scoops it up with his fat, left index finger and shoves it in his mouth. This is MARVIN HEFFER. Jake's in-house counselor. He extends his right hand. Jake grabs Marvin's hand, but leans away slightly in an attempt not to end up mistaken for cream cheese.

-MARVIN-

Bleek? Marvin Heffer. I'll be your counselor here at Trinity House.

-JAKE-

Okay.

Marvin pops the last messy bite into his mouth, then unable to locate a napkin, wipes his chubby fingers on the inside of his shirt. He smiles at Jake upon disclosing his secret trick:

-MARVIN-

These are the rules, Bleek.

All Trinity residents are required to be on these premises at all times, except while looking for work, going-to and coming-from work, school, church, and or A.A. meetings. Any and all visitors shall remain in the lobby.

-JAKE-

Okay.

-MARVIN-

Each and all residents have a weekly schedule, and that weekly schedule is to be filled out and turned in to the office no later than Monday, 10 p.m.

-JAKE-

I don't have a schedule.

Marvin licks his fat fingers clean, then extracts, from his shirt pocket, a folded piece of paper. He unfolds it and hands the paper to Jake:

-MARVIN-
You do now.

Jake carefully takes the paper with his index finger and thumb. Marvin notices a tiny smudge of cream cheese on the paper, he snatches it back, licks it and hands it back to Jake, painstakingly uses the same two digits again.

-JAKE-
Okay.

-MARVIN-
That's what I'm here for, Bleek...to
help you out.

-JAKE-
Okay.

Marvin checks his watch then quickly STANDS:

-MARVIN-
I got lunch to get back to...

Marvin shuffles out the door.
Jake shoves the paper into his back pocket and strolls out through the lobby and the door.

Cut to-

Ext-St. Andrew's Church-Dusk-
Laurel chokes down a cigarette while shoving Hope into her beat up little coupe.

-LAUREL-
Another fight?
What's it gonna take, Hope?
You don't hit people...

Laurel proceeds to SMACK Hope upside her head; several times.
SSM has her arm gently patted by FATHER DONALD O' MALLEY, the real head of the parish. Father O, as he is lovingly referred to, can't hide in his weathered, kind eyes, his deep, genuine concern for a troubled soul.
SMM still manages a few sharp words:

-SMM-

We fed Hope a good supper, so Taco Bell
will not require your patronage, tonight.

Father O ceases patting SMM's arm and applies a well-deserved SMACK, before turning
and walking through the OPEN oversized doors. SMM does not flinch.
Laura's ugly little car rattles away from the curb and chugs down the street.

Cut to-

Est-

Int-Trinity House(kitchen)-Early Evening-

Jake, along with several other occupants, sits along a narrow counter gorging themselves on
a greasy fried chicken dinner. The food is so good, no one says a word.

Cut to-

Int-Jake's room-Late Evening-

Jake falls asleep to the local news. A picture of a man standing between a prison
and a large syringe; a haphazard-looking triangle surrounds all three, highlights
his OPEN sketch pad.

Dissolve to-

Int-Trinity House-Morning-

Olivia sips coffee at the counter while several of the residents munch on omelets.
Marvin, of course, is there stuffing his face, too.
Jake ENTERS and grabs a piece of burnt toast.

-MARVIN-

So what's your line of work you into, Bleek?

-JAKE-

Debt consolidation...

Marvin raises an eyebrow to Jake.

-MARVIN-

Well, you've got just a couple of days to find one.
You don't want your parole to get revoked the
same week that you hit the streets. Even if it's McDonald's
or Burger King, you gotta get something.

Jake contemplates eating the toast, but drops it on the counter.

Olivia watches Jake out of the corner of her eye.

-OLIVIA-
(playful)

There's an opening at my girlfriend's club.

-JAKE-
(unamused)

I need money. Not Aids.

Jake heads for the lobby.

-OLIVIA-
(to Jake)

I'm a nurse, baby. I'll take care of
you when you contract it.

(to Jerome)

That boy ain't gonna last a week.

Marvin swallows what appears to be a pound of food.

-MARVIN-

They're all like that when they first
get out. Remember your...attitude?
You hated everyone in the world.

Olivia and Marvin reflect back on this.

Cut to-

Est-

Int-Diner-Late Morning-

Jake sits in a booth devouring chocolate-chip pancakes. He glances through the newspaper.
He tries to flirt with his waitress:

-JAKE-

Wanna have sex in the bathroom?

-WAITRESS-
Fuck you!

-JAKE-

That's what I'm sayin'.

The Waitress quickly steps away.

Cut to-

Int-Public Bus-Noon-

The vessel is packed like a can of sardines. Jake STANDS directly above an OLD LADY who SITS way back in the seat and clings tightly to her purse. Jake flashes a toothy grin. O.L. clutches purse tighter. Jake PULLS the cord for the bus to stop.

Cut to-

Est-

Ext- Upper Class Neighborhood-Almost 1:00-

Jake casually strolls up the sidewalk. The street is heavily tree-lined. The road freshly paved. Each house bears a different design. The driveways are large and peppered with luxury cars. Meticulously placed, watermelon-sized boulders dot the landscape of each professionally cared for lawn. The street doglegs to the right and slopes down into a cozy and safe cul-de-sac. Three large homes inhabit the protected area. Massive wrought-iron gates block each entrance. Jake stops at the obtrusive hunk of metal in the middle. He taps the button on the small intercom. The gate smoothly OPENS.

Cut to-

Ext-Johnny's House-

Jake jogs up the flagstone driveway of the Johnny Colaini's Tudor-style estate. The large front door OPENS as Jake places his foot on the top step. A shapely BLACK WOMAN, wearing a tiny, red g-string bikini, invites him inside. She makes no eye contact, but smiles pleasantly. This is PEACHES.

Dissolve to-

Ext-Johnny's Backyard-1:01-

Johnny floats, EYES CLOSED, on a huge pink raft in the middle of the kidney-shaped pool. Peaches jiggles her way to the deep end and DIVES IN. Johnny OPENS EYES and notices Jake. Johnny takes the perilous journey to the waters' edge. Peaches, after swimming the length of the pool, SLOWLY climbs the stairs. The water glistens and sparkles across her dark curves. Safe on land, Johnny WALKS toward Jake; who slowly drags his eyes away from Peaches' breathtaking shape to Johnny's massive, unpleasant frame. The two criminals embrace.

-JAKE-
Big Johnny Colani.

Johnny's eyes gaze across his beautiful yard, soaking in Peaches who's bent at the waist adjusting her towel, to Jake.

-JOHNNY-

Holy shit, Jake. Look at you.

Johnny squeezes Jake's arm.

-JAKE-

Lots of time. Lots of weights.

-JOHNNY-

You look good. Healthy.
You went in looking like an aids patient
and you come out looking like Arnold
fucking Schwarzenegger.

-JAKE-

Prison food. Very nutritious.

-JOHNNY-

Yeah, yeah. How'd they treat you up there?

-JAKE-

Like a convict.

-JOHNNY-

(chuckles)

Right.

Johnny calls over to a sunbathing Peaches.

-JOHNNY-

Peaches, baby...get us a couple drinks.

Peaches quickly rises and makes her way to the portable glass bar three away feet from Johnny. She finishes pouring ripe Pinot Noir into a stemless, crystal glass and looks up. A raspy, southern drawl, flows deliciously from Peaches' sensual mouth.

-PEACHES-

Johnny, what's your friend drinkin'?

-JOHNNY

Pineapple juice. Jake always
drinks friggin' pineapple juice.

Peaches dumps a can of P.J. over a glass of ice. She WALKS over to the two men.
Johnny and Jake SIT on patio furniture beside the pool. A .44 Magnum and TWO cell phones rest
on the table. Peaches dispenses the drinks.
Johnny SMACKS his free hand on Peaches' ample backside. A long, slow moan escapes
Peaches lips. Johnny HA HA's.

-JOHNNY-

(to Peaches)

Say hello to Jake, baby.

-PEACHES-

Hello Jake. I heard 'bout you.

-JAKE-

Peaches. That your real name.

-JOHNNY-

(to Jake)

She answers to it.

(to Peaches)

Huh, Peaches?

-PEACHES-

Yes, Daddy.

Jake eyes Peaches like a ravenous wolf finding prey in the deepest cold of winter.
Knowing her place and willing to do anything to keep it there, Peaches saunters
away, quietly, back to her towel. Johnny stares at Peaches' ass. Jake lights a
smoke. Johnny, forever thinking about money, leans in toward Jake.

-JOHNNY-

So. You're *out* now.

You ready?

-JAKE-

Yep.

-JOHNNY-

No bullshit this time?

-JAKE-

I was run off the road into a cop car...

-JOHNNY-

Did you make your last delivery? No.

Did I get paid? No

Were my clients satisfied? No.

Was I a happy man? No.

-JAKE-

I'll make sure no one runs a red ligh...

-JOHNNY-

(joking)

Yeah, yeah. I know. I'm fuckin' with you, Jacob.

Shit happens, but it's all how we deal with it...

Myron had a little problem a week ago.

-JAKE-

What? Myron the Moron *had* a problem?

Myron is a fucking problem. The best thing
about him ran down his mom's leg.

-JOHNNY-

His mom would probably agree with you.

But he's loyal. Stupid, but loyal.

Jake takes a long swig of his juice.

-JOHNNY-

Keep these with you at all times.

The numbers you need are already
programmed...your number is on
the back of the phone.

Johnny hands Jake a cell phone and .44 Magnum.

Jake pockets the phone and closely inspects the gun.

-JOHNNY-

Anyway. You owe me quite a bit of dough.

-JAKE-

I know.

-JOHNNY-

You got pinched with a hundred grand
worth of my dope. Correct?

-JAKE-

That's correct.

-JOHNNY-

So you owe me that amount.

Jake looks at Johnny. Johnny looks at Jake. Eye to eye. Man to man. All business.

-JAKE-

OK. What's the job?

-JOHNNY-

Let's wait for Myron. I don't want
to have to repeat myself.

-JAKE-

Myron?

-JOHNNY-

Yeah. You *and* Myron are doing this job.

-JAKE-

I always work alone.

-JOHNNY-

Not this time. I need two men on this.

-JAKE-

OK. What about Ben.

-JOHNNY-

(sarcastic)

Ben? Oh, he's out sick today.

(serious)

What *about* Ben?

Don't fucking worry about Ben.

You're working with Myron on this.

Besides, you, my friend, you are in no
particular position to broker a change of partner.

You have a debt to settle.

Jake takes a deep breath.

-JAKE-

When's Myron getting here?

Cut to-

Est-

Int-Buyer's House-Day-

Jake and Myron, both nicely dressed, ENTER the colorful, ornately decorated mini-estate. They are led through the formal living room by a YOUNG, clean-shaven MIDDLE EASTERN MAN into a pretentious, gaudy den. The young Man EXITS.

Jake CARRIES a briefcase containing ten kilos of cocaine.

Pictures of various Mosques pepper the sky-blue and gold walls. A large Koran lies open on a small table. In one corner, on the floor, lie several dark-green handmade prayer mats.

A chubby, older, MIDDLE EASTERN MAN ENTERS from the kitchen. He CARRIES a duffle bag. He encourages Jake and Myron to sit on the sofa, which they do. He SITS across from them. The large bag is OPENED, revealing ten million dollars.

Jake HOLDS the briefcase tightly on his lap.

Another chubby, older, MIDDLE EASTERN MAN ENTERS from the kitchen. He CARRIES a semi-automatic MACHINE GUN.

Caught off guard, Myron STANDS. The large gun is pointed at his face.

Myron SITS.

Jake, sensing something, perhaps comical, remains totally calm.

-MYRON-

Hey. We weren't expect...

-JAKE-

(interrupting)

Shut the fuck up, Myron.

A few angry-sounding Farsi sentences are shared between the two M.E.M. They laugh.

-MACHINE GUN-

Open briefcase.

-JAKE-

Move the gun off my partner.

More angry-sounding Farsi sentences; more laughter.

The barrel of the gun moves to Jake.

-JAKE-

Good.

Now are we making a deal or not?

-MACHINE GUN-

Open briefcase.

-MYRON-

Are they gonna kill us?

-JAKE-

If you don't shut up...

Jake, still clutching the briefcase, STANDS and calmly steps forward; the barrel of the gun touches the center of his forehead.

-JAKE-

You need to get laid, my man.

The M.E.M. sitting on the sofa barks some Farsi to his partner and laughs.

-MACHINE GUN-

Mr. Colani said you have balls the size of Texas. He was right, indeed.

Your friend, as we we're told, does not.

This machine gun is not loaded.

This was simply a test.

The machine is turned around and handed to Jake. He points it at Myron, jokingly.

-JAKE-

You got a lot to learn, big mouth.

Jake turns the gun and points it at the man who pointed it at him; he PULLS the trigger:

Nothing happens. It is, in fact, EMPTY

Although knowing it's not loaded, the M.E.M. still flinches.

-JAKE-

(chuckles)

This was simply a test.

Jake steps back to the sofa, drops the gun and briefcase, and zips up the duffle bag.

He throws it over his shoulder and makes his way back from which he came.

Myron follows.

Cut to-

Ext-

Johnny's Backyard-Late Day -

Peaches lies on her large towel at the edge of the pool.

Johnny pulls twenty thousand dollars out of the duffle bag and gives it to Myron. He struts around the pool area fanning his smiling face with the stack of bills. Johnny watches Myron and shakes his head. He nods to Jake to watch also; this money will be gone soon; shared by a dozen or so strung-out strippers and their loser boyfriends. Myron will jack-off, before falling asleep, alone.

Jake is handed five thousand.

-JOHNNY-

You're down to eighty five grand...

Jake peels off one thousand and hands the other four back to Johnny.

-JAKE-

Eighty one...getting you paid off is my first priority.

-JOHNNY-

This is why you're still around, Jake.

You actually fucking get it.

You understand this business.

-JAKE-

Don't know any other kind.

-JOHNNY-

Here's a little somethin' for you...but
do not get high while you're on my job.

Johnny hands Jake an 8-ball of cocaine.

-JAKE-

I know who I work for you, but
don't ever test me again.

You know who the fuck I am.

-JOHNNY-

It wasn't as much for you
as it was for Myron.
Call me tomorrow.

-JAKE-
I gotta get laid.

Dissolve to-

Est-
Int-Strip Club-Night-

A coked-out Jake steps into the darkened establishment and sits in front of the stage.
A thick, large-breasted redhead collects her tips and walks off. Jake follows her to the bar.

-JAKE-
Hey. What's your name, sexy?

-REDHEAD-
Fire.

-JAKE-
I wanna have sex with you.

-FIRE-
You and every other loser in here.

-JAKE-
I just got outta prison.
Seven fuckin' years of using my goddamn hand.
Have a heart and show some sympathy.
Let's get coked out and fuck.

-FIRE-
I have a girlfriend.

-JAKE-
Cool. Bring her.

-FIRE-
Fuck off.

Fire abruptly turns and walks away.
Jake goes back to the stage and flirts with the next uninterested dancer.

Cut to-

Est-
Ext-Thrift Store-Morning-

Jake EXITS the store carrying a bag: LAUNDRY DETERGENT, cigarettes, deodorant, toothpaste...he OPENS the detergent and lights a smoke. He scoops a handful of the soap and dumps it in his front pocket.

Cut to-

Int-Parole Office(Men's room)-Late Afternoon-
Manuel hands Jake a small container. Jake REMOVES his HAND from his POCKET. A small amount of the detergent sticks to his fingers. He RUBS HIS FINGERS together as he pees. The soap disturbs the ph balance of his soon-to-be-tested sample.

-MANUEL-

You'd better have a job by Monday or I will
revoke your parole...
I don't care if it's picking up cockroach feces.

-JAKE-

What does that pay?

Manuel caps the container and walks out of the room. Jake follows.

Cut to-

Ext-

Parole Office-Late Afternoon-
Jake exits the building and notices a little girl drawing on the sidewalk. It's Hope. And she is filthy. The blue ink a striking contrast to her pale, white skin. Jake, however, stares at the child a moment; he sees a different-looking kind of filth. A kind that he knows all too well; the unflinching stain of purposeful avoidance. The kind of dirt that boiling water is unable to cleanse.

Quick Cut to-

Int-Chloris Bleek's House-Morning-
A young Jake (9) appears in the kitchen wearing tattered clothes that are obviously too small. His shoes are full of holes, the soles separating from the cheap canvas. A dozen or so, unopened bottles of cheap liquor and several cartons of cigarettes decorate the counter.
Chloris lies on the sofa just outside the kitchen, still drunk from the previous night.

-JAKE-

Mom. You said you would buy
me new clothes before school
started.

-CHLORIS-
Don't have any money for that...

-JAKE-
Well, today's the first
day and...

-CHLORIS-
Shut up. I gotta headache.

-JAKE-
I can't go to school like this...

-CHLORIS-
Then get a job....

Quick Cut to-

Jake looks around noticing the child is alone. He squats down to her level.

-JAKE-
Where's your mommy?

HOPE-
Somewhere...

-JAKE-
You shouldn't be out here alone.

Hope turns away and returns to her drawing. Jake heads toward the sidewalk.
A woman approaches. It is Laurel.

-LAUREL-
(yelling)
Hope. Don't draw there.

Laurel reaches down to Hope and YANKS her up.
Jake spins around.

-JAKE-
I saw her alone and asked her
where her mother...

Laurel looks up and can't believe her eyes.

-LAUREL-
Jake?
Holy shit...when did you get out?

Dissolve to-

Ext-Laurel's Apt-Late Afternoon-
A shitty little apartment building in a shitty little neighborhood.

-LAUREL-
Hope. Go play at C.C.'s.

Hope climbs the stairs. Laurel opens the front door.

Cut to-

Int-Laurel's Apt-Late Afternoon-
The silver tray, full of dope and accessories, rests on the coffee table; in plain sight.
Jake and Laurel proceed to tear each others clothes off. They fall naked
to the sofa-bed and devour on another; conversation flows:

-LAUREL-
I remember this well.

Their rhythm becomes faster:

-JAKE-
Among other things...

-LAUREL-
...drugs.

Faster:

-JAKE-
If my memory serves me correctly,
you were a pretty good little thief.

-LAUREL-
Obviously better than you, Jake.
I've never been to prison.

Faster:

-JAKE-

Trouble seems to just find me...

-LAUREL-

Are you calling me trouble?

Faster:

-JAKE-

We're both fucking trouble...

Faster...faster...faster...

Jake and Laurel explode in unison.

They relax on the bed, totally spent.

Hope's tiny voice perforates the moment:

-HOPE-

I'm hungry mommy.

Jake looks at Hope, then at Laurel, then the tray:

Quick Cut to-

Int-Chloris Bleek's House-Day-

A young Jake (7,8) sits at the kitchen table sketching.

A WOMAN'S VOICE (O.C.) is heard. Jake's mother, Chloris:

-CHLORIS-

Jacob...bring me and my lover a couple of
whiskey's...and mommy's pills.

Jake quickly pours two double whiskeys and grabs several bottles of pills.

He takes a large sip from one and makes his way to his mom's bedroom.

Mom and dad-of-the-week lie naked in bed.

Quick Cut to-

Int-Laurel's Apt-Late Afternoon-

Laurel is instantly upset; not that her impressionable young child is witness to such debauchery, but that she is near. She loves her daughter, but would prefer to from afar.

-LAUREL-

I told you to go to C.C.'s

-HOPE-

I did. She told me to leave.

Jake tosses a pillow on the table, covering the tray.

-LAUREL-

Why? What's C.C. doing?

-HOPE-

(chuckling)

The same thing you are.

-LAUREL-

God dammit, Hope.

Go watch T.V. before

I beat your little ass.

Hope trots off, chuckling.

Jake spins to the edge of the bed and slips his pants on.

-JAKE-

Hey. I gotta go see these dudes.

Cut to-

Ext-Apt House-Day-

Jake and Myron sit in Johnny's Cadillac outside of a small apt complex.

TWO suitcases sit on the floor at Myron's feet. Jake sketches in the driver's seat.

TWO middle-aged WHITE MEN, in suits approach the car. One is tall, the other fat.

Both are completely, obviously gay.

Tall man glances at his watch.

-TALL MAN-

You guys are very prompt.

I absolutely love that.

-FAT MAN-

What are you drawing there?

-JAKE-
A big, fat, wet pussy.
(beat)
We're not doing this here...

Many deep creases form on Fat Man's forehead.
Jake stares him down.

-TALL MAN-
No. Park it in the rear.
(giggling)
Stall #23.
Then come upstairs.

Jake backs the car up as Tall and Fat walk into the building.

Cut to-

Ext-Apt #23-Day-
Jake and Myron step into the unit. Fat closes the door behind them.
A shiny silver case sits on the coffee table. It's OPEN and full of money.
Myron HOLDS the two briefcases.

-JAKE-
Let's do this shit.

-FAT-
Sit down...have a drink...

-MYRON-
I'll take a beer.

-TALL-
Uh, we don't have *beer*.
We have Champagne and Mimosa...

-JAKE-
No drinks. This is a business
transaction, not a fucking party.

-TALL-
Someone needs a drink...

-FAT-
...and then some.

-JAKE-
Look. You want this deal
to happen or not?

-TALL-
The money's all there.
I just thought we...

-JAKE-
This shit is a waste time.

Jake grabs the briefcases from Myron, sets them next to the silver one and checks the money.

He opens both of his.

Tall steps to the coffee table and places his hand on Jake's arm.

Jake places his hand on top of Tall's hand; Tall smiles.

Jake spins around forces Tall to the floor. Tall groans.

Myron and Fat both step toward Jake and Tall.

-JAKE-
I usually don't explain myself...
But since your Johnny's clients
and I like my job, let's just say
that I'm into something soft...
You know, with tits...
And not the kind your friend has.

Jake closes the silver briefcase and steps toward the door.

Myron quickly follows behind.

-MYRON-
I like champagne.

Cut to-

Jake's Room-Evening-

Jake does push-ups on the floor.

A KNOCK on his door. Jake OPENS the door to find Marvin standing there holding Chinese food. His mouth is stuffed.

-JAKE-
Hey, Marvin. What's up?

-MARVIN-
You have a visitor.

-JAKE-
What?

-MARVIN-
Yeah. A woman.

-JAKE-
Who?

-MARVIN-
She didn't tell me her name.

Jake pulls on a shirt.

-MARVIN-
Got a little girl with her.

Marvin checks his watch, almost spilling kung-pao chicken on himself.

-MARVIN-
Twenty minutes til count time.

-JAKE-
I'll only need half of that.

Jake squeezes past Marvin and bolts down the hallway.

Cut to-

Int-
Trinity House(Lobby)-Evening-
Laurel paces the floor in bare feet. She runs her fingers through her stringy hair. Hope fights
sleeps in a chair near the door, CLUTCHING a ragged old DOLL. The blue ink is still present.
Jake stomps into the lobby. He stares at Laurel, not even noticing Hope.

-JAKE-
What are you doing here?

-LAUREL-
(whispering)
I need to get high.

-JAKE-
You look like you still are...

-LAUREL-
Obviously, not enough.

An agitated Jake impatiently scans the room; his eyes become fixed on Hope; now asleep.

-JAKE-
What is she doing here?

Laurel blinks long and hard. She shifts her weight from one bare foot to the other.

-JAKE-
I can't believe you had a kid?

-LAUREL-
Not by myself, I didn't.

Laurel tries to smooth her ruffled hair.

-JAKE-
Where's the father?

-LAUREL-
I...I don't know.

-JAKE-
You don't know where he is...or who he is?

Laurel STARES into Jake's eyes, but finding only anger, she looks at the floor.

-LAUREL-
It doesn't matter...shit happens.
Right now, I just need some dope.

-JAKE-
Only if you let it.

Laurel, looking as if she knows a secret, crosses her skinny arms over her chest, as if freezing.

-JAKE-
You gotta go.
(beat)
She shouldn't be here either.

Jake nods toward Hope.

-LAUREL-
Her mom needs fucking drugs, Jake.

Jake massages his temples.

-JAKE-
Fuck...

Laurel drops to her knees directly in front of Jake:

-LAUREL-
I'll suck your dick...

Jake is not turned on.

-JAKE-
You did that earlier for free...

-LAUREL-
You got me high.

-JAKE-
Get the fuck up.

Jake helps Laurel to her feet. He nods toward Hope.

-JAKE-
Good thing she's asleep right now.

-LAUREL-
She's seen worse. Believe me.

Jake notices Marvin in the hallway.

-JAKE-
Then what the fuck did you
have her for?

-LAUREL-
I got pregnant.

-JAKE-
Wasn't the first time...

-LAUREL-
I thought that...

Laurel's bloodshot, tired eyes find the floor. Slowly, she begins to sob.

-LAUREL-
It doesn't matter...

-JAKE-
Bet it does to her.

Jake nods toward the sleeping child.

-JAKE-
She didn't ask to be here.

-LAUREL-
You don't think I know that?

-JAKE-
Yeah. It's pretty fucking easy to look backwards.

Laurel takes a deep breath.

-LAUREL-
I just need to get high.

Marvin ENTERS the lobby pointing to his watch:

-MARVIN-
Let's call it a night, Bleek.

-JAKE-
(to Marvin)
Sure, she just needed to borrow a few bucks.
(to Laurel)
I'll be right back.

Jake bolts out of the lobby and down the hallway.

Marvin remains with an uncomfortable Laurel and sleeping Hope.

Cut to-

Int-Jake's room-Night-

Jake removes the cocaine from his duffle bag and dumps half onto a sheet of drawing paper. He folds the paper into a makeshift envelope and replaces the rest in the duffle bag. He pulls a hundred dollar bill from his pocket and wraps it around the envelope. He tears out of his room.

Cut to-

Int-Lobby-Night-

Jake bursts in holding the package. Laurel quickly grabs it and shoves into her jeans. Marvin eyes the transaction suspiciously. Laurel snatches up Hope from her chair, momentarily waking the child. Her doll DROPS to the floor, under the chair. Laurel quickly leaves the building. Marvin turns to Jake unsympathetically:

-MARVIN-

See that this does not happen again.

Marvin walks toward the kitchen. Jake stands still for a moment, soaking this all in. He notices Hope's doll under the chair. Jake momentarily becomes mesmerized; staring at the frayed, old toy. After several moments, he grabs it and heads down the hallway.

Quick Cut to-

Int-Chloris' House-Night-

A young Jake (6) LOOKS under the sofa, BEHIND the chair, IN the entry closet; UNDER his bed, IN the bathroom...he sits on the floor beside his bed and begins to cry.

Chloris appears and STARES at her son:

-CHLORIS-

You still can't find that
old, ugly thing?

-JAKE-

No. I looked everywhere...

-CHLORIS-

So learn to sleep without it...

Jake POPS up and runs to the rear porch; he OPENS the dryer and PULLS OUT his well-worn TIGGER stuffed animal.

Jake RUNS back to his room and crawls into bed. A huge smile on his little face.

Quick Cut to-

Ext-Laurel's Apt-Late Morning-

Jake approaches the front door. Hope's ragged doll is stuffed under his arm. He knocks. Hope OPENS the door. Blue pen in hand. The blue ink on her skin has faded slightly, but still remains. Jake offers the doll to her. The child snatches it and brings it to her chest.

-HOPE-

(to doll)

Sarah, you're home. You're home.

-JAKE-

Hi Hope.

-HOPE-

Who are you?

-JAKE-

Jake. I met you the other night, but you were kinda sleeping...

-HOPE-

I kinda remember...

-JAKE-

Hey. Where's your mommy?

-HOPE-

Mommy's sick.

-JAKE-

She's sick? What's wrong?

-HOPE-

Mommy's sick again.

-JAKE-

Is she in bed?

-HOPE-

No. She's in the bathroom.

This does not sit right with Jake. He RUNS past Hope into the bathroom. Laurel lies on the floor. A syringe protrudes from her left arm. Jake drops to his knees. Laurel has OD'd, but is still alive. Hope peeks around the doorframe. Jake catches a glimpse of the little girl out of the corner of his eye.

-JAKE-

(calmly)

Go feed Sarah.

I bet she's hungry.

Hope agrees and skips off.

Jake scoops Laurel up with little trouble.

Stripping off her shirt, he places her in the shower and turns on the COLD water, full blast. Jake bolts from the bathroom and returns momentarily with a bag of ice. He places it on the Laurel's chest. Jake gently brushes Laurel's hair away from her face.

-JAKE-

(nervous)

C'mon. C'mon. C'mon.

Jake splashes water on Laurel's pale, ghostly face. He adjusts the ice bag. Lights a smoke. Laurel lightly GRUNTS and COUGHS. Jake drops back to his knees over the tub.

-JAKE-

C'mon...Laura...c'mon.

Jake pulls out his cell and dials 911.

Cut to-

Est-

Int-Hospital-Day-

Laurel lies groggily in bed. Various tubes and needles pierce and decorate her body. A pair of handcuffs stretch between Laurel and the metal bedframe. Jake enters the room holding Hope's hand. Her little face lights up when she sees her mother; these lights quickly dim into sad lines and a quivering lip, as she notices all of the medical equipment.

-HOPE-
Mommy...are you OK?

Jake gently picks Hope up and sets her on the edge of the bed. Slowly, carefully, she puts her head on her mother's lap.

-LAUREL-
I think so.

Laurel SHOVES Hope off the bed.

-LAUREL-
Goddamn it Hope. Get the fuck down.
Don't sit up here.

Hope, dejected, but remaining tough, stands beside Jake.
Jake throws Laurel a hard look, but it goes unnoticed. He pats Hope's head.

-JAKE-
You must feel like shit.

-LAUREL-
I've felt worse.

-JAKE-
When? The day you gave birth?

Laurel rolls her hallow eyes at Jake.
An old, FEMALE NURSE enters the room carrying a pitcher of water and places it on a small tray next to the bed.
She nods toward Hope:

-NURSE-
Children under fourteen must
remain in the waiting room.
(beat)
The doctor will be in shortly.

The nurse exits the room.

-JAKE-
How much did you do?

-LAUREL-
All of it.

-JAKE-
I gave you like a gram.
That could kill a horse.

-LAUREL-
(joking)
Neigghhhh.

A MALE DOCTOR enters the room. He is about sixty.

-Dr. ELLSWORTH-
Ms. Wolf? I'm Dr. Ellsworth.
How are you feeling?

-LAUREL-
OK, I guess.

Jake takes Hope's hand and leaves the room.
The doctor shines a penlight into Laura's eyes.

-Dr. ELLSWORTH-
The good news is, you're going to be fine.
The bad news is, that whenever an
overdose is brought in, we are legally
obligated to inform the police department.

Dr. Ellsworth makes a few marks on Laurel's chart.
Jake enters the room with Hope and stands at the foot of Laurel's bed; his eyes wide open.

-Dr. ELLSWORTH-
I will send in Officer Truefitt.
Good day, Ms. Wolf.

The Dr. walks to the doorway and converses with the Officer.

-JAKE-
What do you want me to do wi...

-LAUREL-
You got to get her outta here...
They'll call Children's Services.

-JAKE-
I can't take...

-LAUREL-
Get her out of here, Jake.

Laurel *blows* a half-hearted kiss to Hope. Jake takes a deep breath; soaking it all in...doesn't feel too good about all this. Laurel clears her throat:

-LAUREL-
She's used to this kinda shit.

-JAKE-
(affected)
Yeah...I know the feeling.

The Dr. and Officer finish talking.
Officer Truefitt, a FEMALE, butch-like cop, ENTERS.
Jake and Hope step into the hallway and STOP.
Officer Truefitt can be overheard (O. C.)

-OFF. TRUEFITT-
Laurel Wolf...you are under arrest.
Under the influence of a controlled substance,
possession of a controlled substance,
possession of illegal contraband. And
you have an outstanding warrant...
your probation has been revoked.

Fade to-

Ext-Hospital-Late Day-
Jake and Hope EXIT the building.
Jake stares at the little girl and shakes his head.

-JAKE-
(aloud, to self)
I didn't sign on for this shit...
The last thing I need is some kid.

-HOPE-
I want ice cream.

-JAKE-
No.

-HOPE-
Ice cream!

-JAKE-
Too bad.

Hope's bottom lip immediately begins to quiver, but she does not cry.
Jake takes notice of the child's emotional reaction, but remains firm:

-JAKE-
Quiet. I need to think...
I have to think.

Jake leans against the wall and lights a smoke.
Hope THROWS herself to the ground and begins KICKING and SCREAMING:

-HOPE-
(screaming)
I want ice cream! I want ice cream!

Jake eyes Hope curiously, but is firm.

-JAKE-
(yelling)
Shut the fuck up!

Hope POUNDS the ground HARDER.

-HOPE-
I want ice cream. NOW!
NOW! NOW! NOW! NOW!

Jake stares longingly down the street. He wants to run; alone.
He looks down to the baby-like display of rampant emotion:

-JAKE-
Stop fuckin' crying.

Dissolve to-

Est-
Ext-Ice Cream Parlor-Dusk-

Jake and Hope occupy a small table; each holds a dripping cone.
Hope thoroughly enjoys her treat. Jake's scowl shows through, between bites.

-JAKE-
You like strawberry, huh?

-HOPE-
Mmm-huhh.

-JAKE-
Rocky-road is my favorite.
Hey. Sorry I yelled at you back there.

Hope is completely occupied.

-HOPE-
It's OK.
Mommy does it a lot.

-JAKE-
My mom yells a lot, too.
(beat)
I'm not around kids that much.

Jake takes bite of the cone, dripping some on his shirt.
Hope giggles.
Jake points to her left arm.

-JAKE-
What's with the blue ink?

-HOPE-
I like to draw, but I not on paper.
Blue is my favorite color.

-JAKE-
Why not on paper?

-HOPE-
'Cause I never have any.
Mommy won't buy it for me.

Quick Cut to-

Est-

Int-Chloris Bleek's House-Day-

A young Jake (6) presents his mom with a gift.

His own colorful version of Van Gogh's "Sunflowers". The quality is exceptional for a six-year old. A large, dusty copy of the famous work hangs on the wall beside the kitchen window. The other side of the window is bare; enough room to lovingly ensconce the new treasure.

-JAKE-

Happy Mother's Day.

I know you like that picture...

I did my best to make it look...

Chloris shuffles her alcohol-blurred vision between the two versions.

She begins to laugh; chuckling at first, then gradually building to an insulting, disrespectful, sickening, full-bellied roar.

-CHLORIS-

What am I supposed to do with *this*?

-JAKE-

Hang it across the window
from the other one.

-CHLORIS-

You can't be serious, Jacob.

That's a Picasso.

This... ain't.

Jake snatches it from Chloris' paw, turns and walks away; quietly crying.

-JAKE-

That's Van Gogh.

Quick Cut to-

Ext-Ice Cream Parlor-Dusk-

-JAKE-

Where do you go to school?

-HOPE-

St. Andrew's.

The notion of religion sits with Jake as well as a day without drugs.

-JAKE-

At a *church*?

-HOPE-

Yeah. I hate it. It's boring
and the nuns are mean.

-JAKE-

(thinking aloud)

'Cause they've never been laid.

-HOPE-

What?

-JAKE-

Nothing...

How are they mean?

-HOPE-

They hit you...with rulers.

-JAKE-

(genuinely concerned)

They hit you?

-HOPE-

If you're bad, they do.

-JAKE-

Hope. Are you bad?

-HOPE-

The nuns at school say I am.
And mommy does too.

Jake stares ahead; straight through the child. He wants no part of this.

-JAKE-

C'mon, c'mon. Let's go.

-HOPE-

I'm not done, yet.

Jake looks as if he is going to knock the cone out of her hand, but takes a deep breath: Jake's head drops. He wraps his hands around his head. A long, low GROAN escapes his lips. Looking down at Hope; it becomes clear what Jake must do.

-JAKE-

I guess we're going to my...place.

Cut to-

Ext-Trinity House-Night-

Jake walks up the sidewalk carrying a sleeping Hope. Her mouth completely conceals her thumb. He stops in front of the building. Jake counts the windows; locating his. He steps to it. He sets Hope down and removes his key. Jimmying the screen, he removes it and pushes the window OPEN. He leans down and tickles Hope's armpit. Her thumb pops out as she giggles. Jake ssshhhh's her quiet.

-JAKE-

This is a secret.

Hope's eyes light up at the word "secret".

-HOPE-

A secret? I love secrets.

-JAKE-

OK. Then we have to very quiet.

-HOPE-

What kind of secret, Jake?

-JAKE-

I'm not allowed to have anyone here.

-HOPE-

Why?

-JAKE-

'Cause I was bad.

Hope drops her head, slightly.

-HOPE-
I was bad before, too.

Jake can't help but chuckle.

-JAKE-
Now I'm gonna put you inside.
Then I'm going through the front door...
I have to check in. Be very quiet. OK?

-HOPE-
OK.

Jake carefully puts Hope through the window and onto the floor. He replaces the screen.

-JAKE-
(to Hope)
I'll be in there in two minutes.
(to self)
I gotta get high.

Cut to-

Int-Jake's Room-Night-
Hope dances, cross-legged in the OPEN doorway. Jake moves through the hallway toward his room.

-JAKE-
(annoyed)
I told you to wait *in* the room.

-HOPE-
I have to go potty.

-JAKE-
(aloud, to self)
Shit...

-HOPE-
No...pee.

Jake begins to quietly chuckle...then giggle...Hope softly joins in...this develops into full-blown laughter.

After a moment, Jake abruptly STOPS laughing. Glad to kill this relationship before it is even born. He goes out of his way to avoid kids.
Jake, not wanting to get caught, quickly nudges Hope, two doors down, to the bathroom. Olivia sashays by, eyeing Jake, with a mixture of attraction and curiosity.

Cut to-

Int-Jake's Room-Night-

Jake LOCKS the door. He fluffs his pillow and pats the bed.

-JAKE-

You can sleep here. I'll take the floor.

-HOPE-

On the bed?

-JAKE-

Yeah, on the bed.

-HOPE-

I don't have a bed.

-JAKE-

Where do you sleep?

-HOPE-

At home.

-JAKE-

(patient)

Where do you sleep at home?

-HOPE-

On the floor, in a corner.

Jake's mind does cartwheels.

-JAKE-

Well, *tonight* you get a bed.

Hope jumps on the bed and slides under the covers. Jake curiously looks at Hope; something is not quite right. Jake grabs a small towel and pours some bottled water on it. He wipes her dirty face and hands; not a long, hot shower, but better than before.

-HOPE-
I like you, Jake.

Jake forces a smile.
Hope pops her thumb in her mouth and closes her eyes.
Jake reaches into his duffle bag and removes his small, black case and OPENS it.
He rips open the balloon with his teeth and dumps the contents into the spoon.
Jake pours some water into the bottle cap; sets both down. He inserts the tip of the needle into the cap of water and pulls the plunger back.
Hope COUGHS, startling Jake. He turns and looks at her; still sleeping.
The plunger is depressed, releasing enough water to liquify the dope.
Hope COUGHS again...
The spoon drops, spilling the liquid.
Jake raises his fist to slam it on the table:

-HOPE-
I'm thirsty.

Jake's freezes his hand, takes a deep breath and collects himself.
He grabs the bottle of water hands and takes it to Hope.
She gulps a bit down, then plops back onto the pillow, asleep.
Jake, eyes burning, stares at the child. He dumps out more dope.

Cut to-

Int-Trinity House(Kitchen)-Morning-
Jake fills a plate with pancakes and bacon; enough for two.
He dashes back to his room and enters.

Cut to-

Int-Bus-Morning-
Jake and Hope occupy a dirty double-seat. He guards the aisle, she stares out the window.

-HOPE-
I've been on the bus with mommy before,

-JAKE-
Doesn't she have a car?

-HOPE-
Sometimes it won't work
and mommy kicks it.

Jake reaches above Hope and PULLS the cord; *ding*. They STAND as the bus slows.

Cut to-

Int-St. Andrew's Church(School Office)-Morning-
Jake stands across the long counter from SMM. Hope draws on her arm.

-JAKE-

...as I explained, Laurel is in the
hospital, so I'm taking care of Hope
until she is released.

-SMM-

I understand that Mr. Bleek.
Do you know when Ms. Wolf
will be released?

-JAKE-

Do I look like a doctor?

-SMM-

Hardly...no.

-JAKE-

Then, I'll pick her up after school.

Dissolve to-

Est-

Int-Court Room-Morning-

An angular faced, silver-haired MALE JUDGE is behind his highly-perched podium.
A LARGE BLACK MAN, decked out in full Sheriff's regalia calls order.
Well dressed attorneys occupy the desks on either side if the aisle.
The gallery is peppered with nosy onlookers and concerned loved ones.
A few rough-looking inmates, in matching county jail uniforms, sit on benches behind
a thick glass panel. Laurel sits between two of them.
Laurel, disheveled and unkempt, STANDS, as her name is called from the daily docket.
A young, tired-looking Public Defender STANDS as Laurel's name is called.

-JUDGE-

Laurel Sinclair Wolf, you have been charged with under the influence of a controlled substance, possession of a controlled substance, possession of illegal contraband. How do you plead?

Although she's quite familiar with the routine, Laurel looks to her legal advisor. He silently mouths "not guilty" to her. Laurel directs her half-hearted attention to the Judge. She twists the ends of her hair in her thin fingers.

-LAUREL-

I want to explain my side of the story. I was at home...

-JUDGE-

(interrupting)

I do not wish to hear commentary, Ms. Wolf. Please inform this court as to how you plead to the charges that have been brought against you.

Laurel's P.D. glares at his client, and again, mouths "not guilty". Laurel, as she always has, straddles the fence between hard-headed and stupid.

-LAUREL-

Your Honor, I just want a chance to explain...

-JUDGE-

Ms. Wolf...this is an arraignment, not a trial. You will have a chance to explain, in great detail, your version of the story, as your case moves forward. However, at this time, all that is required of you is to enter a plea. Either guilty or not guilty. How do you plead?

Laurel looks up to the ceiling, as if hoping to locate something magical, something Devine.

-JUDGE-

Ms. Wolf. How do you plead?

Unable to find something...anything, Laurel's hollow eyes come to rest upon the Judge.

-LAURA-
Not guilty.

The Judge notes her file. A clerk points to the Judge's calendar.
Laurel's P.D. and the Judge agree on a future date:

-JUDGE-
September ninth. Superior Court,
Room 2112. Ten o' clock?

-P.D.-
Agreed, Your Honor.

The Judge directs his attention back to Laurel:

-JUDGE-
Laurel Wolf, you will report to Superior
Court, Room 2112, on September ninth
at ten a.m. Until that time, you will be
remanded to the County Jail.
Good afternoon.

Fade to-

Est-
Int-Large Truck-Late Morning-
Jake steers a large, rented truck along the 405 freeway. Myron smokes a joint on
the seat next to him.

-MYRON-
(joking)
Do anything last night before curfew?

-JAKE-
Don't fuckin' ask.
(beat)
What'd you do last night, Myron?

-MYRON-
Yesterday, I had a...date..

-JAKE-
No shit? How's that goin'?

-MYRON-
Not good.

-JAKE-
What happened?

-MYRON-
There was an accident...

-JAKE-
(joking)
Did someone run a red light?

Myron takes a huge drag of the joint.

-MYRON-
Wha...no, no. She got shot.

-JAKE-
Shot? You shot her?

-MYRON-
No. Her husband.

Jake is thoroughly confused.

-JAKE-
Were you two in bed?

-MYRON-
No. We were hunting quail and...

-JAKE-
I don't know if you need to smoke
more of that shit, or throw it out the
goddamn window.

Myron takes another rip and sucks the lit roach into his mouth;
gagging, coughing, choking:

-JAKE-
So when did Johnny get
into the firearms game?

-MYRON-

When he realized he had access to them.

-JAKE-

Johnny loves that money.

-MYRON-

So do I.

Cut to-

Est-

Ext-Warehouse-Day-

A uniformed GUARD OPENS the chain-link gate.

Jake backs the truck up to the loading dock.

FIVE MEN wearing SWAT-type uniforms surround the vehicle.

Myron and Jake remain calm; all part of the deal.

Cut to-

Int-Warehouse-Day-

Jake, Myron and FOUR of the SWAT men unload crates of weapons from the truck to the warehouse, while one supervises them; DETECTIVE RAINES, WHITE, mid-fifties.

-DET. RAINES-

So you're Bleek?

Johnny says good things about you.

Raines TWISTS and TURNS his ugly PINK RING.

-JAKE-

He's been good to me.

-DET. RAINES-

He's real big on loyalty.

Jake NODS in agreement.

-DET. RAINES-

You don't remember me, huh?

-JAKE-

Should I?

-DET. RAINES-
Think back about twenty years...

Jake looks Raines up and down; nothing.

-DET. RAINES-
It'll come to you.

-MYRON-
Did Johnny say anything about me?

-DET. RAINES-
(to Myron)
Yeah. Get back to work.
(to Jake)
If you ever need anything
you just let me know.

Raines hands Jake a business card; Det. Chuck Raines.
Jake studies it and puts it in his pocket.

-JAKE-
Thanks. Never had a cop
on my side, before.

-DET. RAINES-
I'm a friend first...a cop second.
Remember that.

Dissolve to-

Est-
Int-Sybil Brand(Women's)Jail-Visiting Room-Day-
Jake is part of a large group of visitors. Fathers, mothers, wives, girlfriends...and kids...
The group undergoes the various requirements to visit an inmate before being led
down a hallway and into a large visiting room. A plexiglass partition separates the
visited from the visitors. A direct-line phone is mounted to either side. Jake takes
a seat at window seven. He soaks in the setting from the unusual side of the partition.
Opposite where the visitors enter, the inmates are led in.
Laurel, looking like a dope fiend, who hasn't had a fix in a while, takes a seat
across from Jake. Her entire emaciated body shakes from withdrawals.
She manages a smile.

-LAUREL-
This is unexpected.

-JAKE-
I know what it's like. Never thought I'd be on
this side, though. Doing okay, Laurel?

Laurel coughs, then rubs her hand over her face.

-LAUREL-
Fuck no. I need a fix.

-JAKE-
I know that feeling.

-LAUREL-
I'm fucking shaking in here. I'm all itchy...
I can't eat. I can't fucking sleep.
I got Tylenol from the infirmary. I don't got
a goddamn headache...they gave me
fucking aspirins for withdrawals.
These fuckin' wanna-be's, they don't know
what this shit is like...you know, it's
like having the most important thing in
the world ripped from your hands...

Jake's attention has been diverted from Laura to a six month old girl sitting on her mother's
lap next to him.

-LAUREL-
...If I had the strength, I'd...
I need some fucking Methadone...something...
other than two stupid, little white pills.

Laurel rubs her eyes, hard, as if waking from a bad dream.

-JAKE-
It goes away...after, like a month.

Laurel SLAMS her fist on the small counter.
A guard throws her an icy glare.

-LAUREL-
I'll be fucking kill myself before then...

Jake remains still, having gone through this before; more than once.

-LAUREL-

Fuck...

I need to get loaded.

Laurel rubs the dark track marks on the inside of her left arm.

-LAUREL-

Did you bring me some money?

-JAKE-

Yeah.

What did the court say?

-LAUREL-

I go back in two weeks. Preliminary hearing.

-JAKE-

(lighthearted)

Those are a lot of fun.

Laurel, in no mood for jokes, scratches her neck.

-JAKE-

Think you'll get
time served?

-LAUREL-

I don't fucking know. This is the third
time I've gone through this.

-JAKE-

What happened the last time?

-LAUREL-

Probation. Rehab...but I flaked out.

-JAKE-

Holy shit, Laurel. They're gonna fuckin'
take your kid away from you.

-LAUREL-

That might not be the worst thing...
Her mom's a fucking junkie.

Jake cannot help but notice the eerie parallels between his own mother and Laurel.

-LAUREL-

It's not like I planned to be here.
I need to get fucking high.
The last thing on my mind is my kid.

Cut to-

Ext-School-Day-

A young Jake (8) STANDS in the pouring rain after class. All of the other children pile into warm cars.

Jake walks home, alone. A speeding car SPLASHES water all over him.

At home, Jake STANDS on the porch, in the rain, unable to enter the house.

Night has fallen when Chloris finally is dropped off at the curb; Jake SITS on the stoop, SHIVERING:

Cut to-

Int-Sybil Brand(Women's)Jail-Visiting Room-Day-

-JAKE-

I'm not one to give advice, but
that kid needs her mom.

Laurel slowly drops her head. Ashamed.

-JAKE-

She's your kid, Laurel.

Laurel wipes tears from her eyes as she slowly brings her head up.

-LAURA-

I know...I know...
I love her, but...

Jake notices that the six-month old next to him has taken on Hope's face. Shaking his head, Jake is unable to clear the image from his mind.

-JAKE-
Look, I gotta go.

-LAUREL-
Gimme a wet forty, Jake.

Jake HANDS a Sheriff TWO TWENTIES. The Sheriff slides them into a square metal container that's full of a liquid cleanser. The "wet" bills are then HANDED to Laurel; her eyes dance as the money touches her thin fingers.

Cut to-

Int-St. Andrew Church (Rectory)-Late Day-
Hope sits on the floor of the office blue pen in hand. She finishes a drawing of Jake and herself, holding ice cream cones.
SMM invites Jake into the office.

-SMM-
May I have a word with you?

-JAKE-
Okay.

-SMM-
Mr. Bleek, it appears that Miss Wolf is unable to conduct herself in the manor consistent with the strict Parochial traditions of the Catholic Church. The St. Andrew Preparatory School will not allow itself to tolerate anything less.

(beat)

Drawing on the walls, fighting, stealing, a vulgar mouth. I am unaware how the young Miss Wolf conducts herself outside of St. Andrew, but her inability to control herself, while here, has proven to be, shall we say, too much for the staff. Miss Wolf deprives her fellow students of the individual time they require. And deserve.

Hope, by this time, stares at SMM intently, just as Jake continues to.

-SMM-
This is the young Miss Wolf's last chance. Any subsequent outbursts, verbal, physical or otherwise, will result in her expulsion.

-JAKE-

Jesus. Cut her some slack...
She is going through a lot right now.

-SMM-

Slack, as you call it, has already been afforded to her,
many, many times. She is at the end of her proverbial rope.

-JAKE.-

Show some compassion...this is a church.
Her mom is in the hospital for god's sake.
C'mon, Hope. Let's go.

Jake abruptly turns and steps toward the door:

Cut to-

Int-Jake's Room-Night-

Jake and Hope sit in the center of the room on the floor. She draws. He sketches.

Dissolve to-

Int-Jake's Room-Night-

Later, Hope sleeps in Jake's bed peacefully.
Jake grabs his duffle bag and places it on the table. He extracts his
"works" from the bag.
Jake melts away into the floor; completely wasted.

Fade to-

Int-Sybil Brand(Laura's Cell)-Night-

Laurel sits on her bunk, shaking. TWO BLACK FEMALE inmates
approach. One enters and moves to Laura, the other remains at the cell
gate; the lookout. Laurel exchanges the two twenty's she received from
Jake for a small balloon of (powder) heroin.
The two inmates leave the cell.

-B.F.#1-

If you need more, you know
where to find me.

Laurel bites off the knot and dumps the contents into her shaking hand. She buries
her nose into her palm and snorts.

Cut to-

Ext-Trinity House-Day-

Johnny glides his shiny Cadillac up to the curb and parks. Jake rides shotgun.

-JOHNNY-

Good work, Jake, my man. Good work.
See, I told you that you and Myron would
work very well together. He reminds me
of you about ten years ago...completely loyal.

-JAKE-

I think he's a fucking idiot.

-JOHNNY-

He's got a lot to learn...just like you at one time.
He looks up to you, Jake.

-JAKE-

I'm taller.

-JOHNNY-

Smart ass.

Johnny removes a large stack of bills from his briefcase and hands them to Jake.

-JOHNNY-

Call me day after tomorrow.
We got more product to move.

-JAKE-

OK.

Jake EXITS the car. Johnny drives away.

Cut to-

Int-Bus-Late Day-

Jake sits in the back of the bus staring ahead; mentally willing the bus
to go faster:

Cut to-

Ext-St. Andrew's Church-Late Day-

Jake and Hope descend the stairs.

Cut to-

Ext-Apt #23-Late Day-
Jake and Myron leave Hope in the car.

-JAKE-
We'll be right back.
Stay in the car.

Jake LOCKS the door and pockets the keys.
A quick glance in the side mirror affords Jake a moment of self-contempt; his eyes shuffle to Hope.
Jake and Myron move toward the building. Jake carries a briefcase.

-MYRON-
So, whose kid *is* that?

-JAKE-
A friend's.
Mind your business Myron.

-MYRON-
What's with you...

-JAKE-
Her mom's in jail and there's no one
else to keep an eye on her.

-MYRON-
Johnny's not gonna like this.

Jake GRABS Myron by the collar and SPINS him into the wall.
He gets right into Myron's face.

-JAKE-
Johnny don't need to know anything
about this. Got it?

Myron remains calm. Knowing not to fuck with Jake.

-MYRON-
Okay...okay.
Let go.

Jake lets go and climbs the stairs. Myron adjusts his shirt and follows.
Jake lifts his hand to KNOCK, but sees a note:

“Couldn’t wait. Called Johnny.”

Jake KICKS the door.

-MYRON-

Guess, Johnny’s gonna find out, anyway...

Jake whips out his gun and shoves it in Myron’s face.

Myron leans back and almost falls down the stairs.

-JAKE-

Shut the fuck up, Myron.

I’ll deal with Johnny.

Jake and Myron hurry to the car and hop in.

Jake ssshhh’s Hope and calls Johnny on his cell.

-JAKE-

I know I fucked up, Johnny.

(pause)

He’s right here.

(pause)

Okay. I will. Okay...okay.

Jake pulls up in front of the strip club and Myron jumps out. Jake screeches away.

-JAKE-

When I stop the car.

Stay in the car and draw, Hope.

-HOPE-

Okay.

Cut to-

Ext-Johnny’s House-Day-

Jake parks the Cadillac at the curb and jumps out, briefcase in hand.

Johnny stands at his gate; gun in his waistband. He is PISSED.

Jake hands over the briefcase.

Johnny OPENS it as he barks at Jake:

-JOHNNY-

(yelling)

What the fuck is it with you, Jacob?

All you do is fuck up.

-JAKE-

A bitch through a monkey wrench
into my program.

-JOHNNY-

Into *my* program.
That's one of my best clients.
We've been doing business for years.
I can't have my man's head in
a place where it's not supposed to be...

-JAKE

She's out of the picture, now.

-JOHNNY-

That does not help me right now...

-JAKE-

I'll smooth it over.

-JOHNNY-

No. I will. And Myron will
make the drop.

-JAKE-

You're firing me?

Johnny laughs:

-JOHNNY-

Hardly, Jacob. If I was, you, my fucked
up friend, would already be dead.
You're indebted to me...
Now, get the fuck out of my sight.

-JAKE-

For what it's worth...I'm sorry.

Johnny stares at Jake and shakes his head.
Jake steps toward the Cadillac.

-JOHNNY-

Uh, I'll take the keys...
You can take the bus.

Jake's eyes grow very wide as he tosses the keys to Johnny.
Jake nonchalantly looks inside the car, hoping that Hope can see him;
he places his finger to his lips.
Johnny sets the alarm and steps inside his gate.
Jake steps from his driveway and slowly walks away.
Jake bolts back to the car and motions for Hope to unlock the doors.
Hope unlocks the doors and pulls the handle.
The alarm WAILS, scaring Hope.
Jake GRABS Hope out, CLOSES the door and pulls her into the bushes.
Johnny returns, GUN IN HAND, and checks his car; nothing.
Johnny clicks the alarm, twice.
Moving back to the gate Johnny eyes a cat. He SHOOTs it, dead.
Johnny, satisfied, walks back through the open gate. It closes.

Fade to-

Int-Denny's-Early Evening-
Hope picks at a plate of spaghetti while Jake powers down a giant burger, sketch
pad sits beside him.

-JAKE-

So, who is this C.C. person?

-HOPE-

Mommy's friend. She lives upstairs.

-JAKE-

Do you know her well?

-HOPE-

Yeah. Is stay there sometimes.

-JAKE-

When do you stay there?

-HOPE-

When mommy's mad at me.

-JAKE-

(chuckling)

So, all the time, then...

-HOPE-
Yeah...kinda...

Cut to-

Ext-C.C.'s-Evening-
Hope steps in front of Jake at the top of the stairs:

-HOPE-
I wanna knock.
Mommy never lets me.

-JAKE-
Go for it.

Hope KNOCKS.
No answer.

-JAKE-
Try again. Louder.

Hope POUNDS on the door.
Still no answer.
Hope leans against the door casing, dejected.
Jake KICKS the door a few times. It cracks noisily, startling Hope.
Jake directs his anger from the situation at Hope.

-JAKE-
Where is this fucking bitch?

-HOPE-
C.C.'s not a bitch. She's nice.

-JAKE-
(firm)
Well, we can't go back to my...

The tumblers of the lock slowly turn.
C.C. YELLS as she opens the door.

-C.C.-
Who the fuck is
kicking my door?

C.C. , a very pretty, twenty-ish hooker, notices Hope in the middle of her question. She is wearing a pink-lace teddy. Her hair is done up and a collage of makeup hides her skin. She DROPS to her knees and embraces Hope.
She notices Jake.

-C.C.-
Who the hell are you?

-JAKE-
The fuck who kicked your door.
Are you C.C.?

-C.C.-
Yeah...and what are you
doing with Hope?

-JAKE-
Bringing her to you.

-HOPE-
He's mommy's friend.

C.C. is totally confused.

-C.C.-
Okay. Wait a minute.
Where's Laurel?

-HOPE-
Mommy's in the hospital.

C.C.'s mouth drops wide open:

-C.C.-
What? What hap...

-JAKE-
She don't need to hear this...

-C.C.-
(to Hope)
Go inside and watch T.V., sweetie.
(to Jake)
Okay. What happened?

-JAKE-

Last week, I found Laurel on
the bathroom floor. I called 911.

The initial shock has worn down. C.C. shakes her head.

-C.C.-

Shit...that's like the third time.

Jake is surprised, but tries not to show it.

-JAKE-

That's why I have...had the kid.

C.C. looks Jake up and down; she'd fuck him...and might not make him pay.

-C.C.-

I didn't get your name.

-JAKE-

Jake.

-C.C.-

Okay...

Hope returns with a bag of potato chips; mouth full.

-JAKE-

(lost)

That kid...she's got...no clothes
with her...and shit...she needs a shower...
you know...fuck...I can't deal... fuck...
man, I gotta go. I gotta go.

(found)

She is not my problem.

-C.C.-

(sympathetic)

I can't watch her tonight.

Jake steps down one stair:

-JAKE-

Neither can I.

-C.C.-

Laura left her with *you*.

-JAKE-

And I'm bringing her to *you*.

Jake continues to stare at C.C., but speaks to Hope.

-JAKE-

Hope, you're gonna stay with C.C.
until your mom comes home.

-HOPE-

I wanna go with you...

-JAKE-

(interrupting)
You can't go with me.

Hope drops the chips and wraps herself around Jake's legs.

-HOPE-

Take me with you, Jake.

Jake eyes C.C. curiously as he peels Hope from his legs and points to the chips.

-JAKE-

No, Hope.

Jake hands Hope the sketch pad:

-JAKE-

Now you don't have to draw on yourself.

Hope remains silent as tears roll down her cheeks.

Jake quickly turns away and heads down the steps.

Cut to-

Int-Trinity House(Jake's Room)-Night-
Jake slams some dope into his waiting vein.

A very high Jake puts the finishing touches on a portrait of a smiling Hope.
The cell phone at the foot of his bed RINGS:

-JAKE-
Yeah, Johnny?
(pause)
I'm really high...
(pause)
Yeah, I guess...
Ten minutes? Okay...

Jake squeezes Visine into his eyes.

Cut to-

Int-Trinity House(Lobby)-Night-
Jake is stopped as he attempts to leave.
Marvin holds his hand up to Jake, his other cradles a chili-dog:

-MARVIN-
You're not off to work *now*, are you?

-JAKE-
(lying)
No. Uh...an A.A. meeting.

-MARVIN-
I thought that might be the case...
Olivia is getting ready...perhaps
you could accompany her?

-JAKE-
I don't think so...
I would, but it's kind of embarrassing...
and I already got a ride.

-MARVIN-
She's very well known there.
She's to be the guest speaker, tonight.
All Trinity House residents lookout
for one another. Understand?

-JAKE-
Look, Marvin. In here is one thing,
but outside, I do not know him...her...
whatever...

Marvin glares at Jake disapprovingly:

-JAKE-

Besides. I'm trying to get with
this cute little crack head.
That will kill my chances. Understand?

Marvin shoves the last of the dog into his mouth.

Cut to-

Ext-Trinity House-Night-
Jake jumps into Johnny's waiting Cadillac.
The car speeds away.

Cut to-

Int-Strip Club-Night-
Jake, Johnny and Myron recline in the VIP section.
A half-a-dozen buxom beauties seductively dance before them.
Champagne and various alcoholic drinks steadily flow.

-MYRON-

This is my favorite place.
I love coming here.

-JOHNNY-

(lying)

The girls love it when you're here, too.

-MYRON-

Ya think so?

-JAKE-

I know so...you pay for all their implants.

Two extremely large-breasted girls are draped all over Myron; who splashes them with bills.
Johnny leans in to Jake:

-JOHNNY-

Enjoying yourself?

-JAKE-

Sure.

-JOHNNY-
Could've fooled me.
You upset about earlier?

Jake spots a gorgeous, but small-breasted, brunette and waves her over:

-JAKE-
Look, Johnny. I know I fucked up,
but, like I told you, this girl...

The brunette arrives; Jake points to Myron:

-JAKE-
That idiot right there has a lot of money for you...

Brunette saunters over to Myron and sticks her ass in his face.
Myron showers her with what appears to be a thousand dollars.
She buries her face in his crotch; for a brief moment, before disappearing.

-JOHNNY-
You got all the girls you need right here.

Three more girls appear and gyrate between Johnny and Jake.
Jake slides his head around a pair of double-D's:

-JAKE-
I told you she's out of the picture..

-JOHNNY-
You got big-ass titties right in your face
and you fucking look annoyed.
I know you, Jacob. Something's up...

-JAKE-
I'm just really high.

-JOHNNY-
You can bullshit Myron or your P.O. or even yourself,
for that matter, but not me, Jacob. I fucking know you.
For years, I've gotten you the dope that keeps you really
high, so save your goddamn fairytale lines for one of
these money-hungry prick-teasers.

One of the “money-hungry prick-teasers” shoves her ample backside in Johnny’s face. He inhales deeply and SLAPS it with the authority of a long-standing VIP. Johnny slides five one hundred dollar bills into her crack.

-JAKE-

I was preoccupied with a broad that’s a bigger dope fiend than me...she had a problem that needed to be...dealt with... That’s it...and, like I said, I’m really fucking high.

-JOHNNY-

As you know, Jacob, I have many, many friends... Do you have a problem that needs to be dealt with?

-JAKE-

Right now? No.

-JOHNNY-

Very well, then.

Johnny whips out an enormous wad of cash and throws it up; all the girls dive down and wrestle around for their share and more:

-JOHNNY-

Everyone loves to look at skanks.

Cut to-

Int-C.C.’s Apt(bedroom)-Late Day-
Rap music crackles LOUDLY from a small, cheap boom-box.
C.C., wearing a black bra and matching garter belt, “entertains” a naked, skinny, creepy-looking “john”.
The “john” describes his pleasure in heavy, panting breaths.
C.C., ever the consummate pro, encourages him on.

-JOHN-

You love the way I give it to you.
Mmmmmm.
Tell me I’m the best.
Tell me I’m the best.

C.C. picks at the tip of one of her fake nails.
She turns her head to the side and yawns.

-C.C.-
Yeah, baby. You're
the best...
C'mon daddy give it to me.
Give it to me hard.
You know how I like it...

Hope, wearing underwear, a t-shirt and a pair of C.C.'s high heels, stands, unnoticed, in the hallway. Gobs of makeup cover her little, dirty face. She peeks through the slightly ajar door.

Hope quietly mimics the animalistic sounds that come from the bedroom. On the floor, at her feet, is the sketch pad. It's a picture of C.C. wearing bra, panties and high heels; in blue ink.

Fade to-

Int-Parole Office(Men's Room)-Morning-
Jake extends a "doctored" sample to Manuel.

-MANUEL-
Is this clean, Bleek?

-JAKE-
It's clean...they're all clean.
Can't you tell by my sunny
disposition?

Jake follows Manuel out of the restroom as he heads back to his desk:

-MANUEL-
Maybe if you stayed sober for longer
than six months you'd realize how much
better off you would be.
That is the longest you've stayed out, right?
Bleek? Six months?

-JAKE-
You got my file right there.
Look it up.

-MANUEL-
What about a job?
You got a job, yet?
A *real* job?

Back at Manuel's desk, the large man takes a seat; Jake stands.

-JAKE-

That's another thing I'm fucking pissed off about. Any place I go to, I gotta fill out an application, right? And on that stupid fucking piece of paper that holds my freedom in it's balance, is a question... Which asks if I've ever been convicted of a felony. I can't leave that shit blank... If I answer "yes" I'm a criminal and fucking criminals don't get hired, even honest ones. And if I answer "no", they look at me like I'm a goddamn liar and don't hire me...

-MANUEL-

I know jackass. I've been doing this for twenty years.
What's with the goddamn speech?

-JAKE-

(joking)

Dramatic affect.

(serious)

I'm just fucking pissed.
Anyway. So I been going to Home Depot every morning, hanging with all your cousins...
Trying to get some work.
And you know what? I got work...as much as I want, 'cause I'm white and I speak English...
But the fact that I'm working don't fucking matter because I'm gettin' paid in cash. See?

Jake whips out about a thousand bucks and waves it.

-MANUEL-

Blah, blah, blah...

Heard it all before, Bleek.

-JAKE-

I'm fucking working. Hard, too.

Technically not lying:

-MANUEL-

All you convicts are dumber than the
smartest one of you...and he's a goddamn idiot.

-JAKE-

Huh...?

But Jake's a convict and Manuel knows they all lie, cheat, steal...hurt, maim, kill...

-MANUEL-

You think I'm stupid, Bleek?

You think I'm new?

Got a name? Phone number?

Did you get a business card?

-JAKE-

No. I did not.

-MANUEL-

One week, Bleek.

I want to see a paycheck in one week.

Fade to-

Int-Trinity House (Jake's Room)-Night-

Jake sketches a picture of his face, melting. He personifies the drawing
as he reclines on his bed; totally wasted.

Fade to-

Est-

Int-Police Station(Evidence Locker)Night-

Jake and Myron carry four boxes of narcotics out of the chain-link fence
enclosure and set them on a table.

They transfer the items into to THREE thick briefcases.

While transferring the contents, Jake stares into the case; it is no longer a case, but
his sketch pad with the portrait of Hope smiling back at him.

He tries to shake the image from his mind, but cannot.

They are "supervised" by Det. Raines.

-DET. RAINES-

There's twenty kilos here. Myron, you're taking fifteen of them to Chinatown. The payment has already been secured. So don't worry about that.

You are to deliver it to a factory and leave.

Pull around back, in the alley.

A man named Ling is waiting.

(beat)

We've been trying to close this Ling deal for the last goddamn month.

Jake, the other five is going to my good pal Johnny.

He's expecting you...like yesterday.

Any questions?

Myron begins to speak, but Jake cuts him off immediately.

-JAKE-

No.

Cut to-

Ext-Police Station-Night-

Myron loads TWO suitcases into the trunk of one of Johnny's Cadillacs. Jake loads ONE. They drive the separate cars out of the parking lot. Det. Raines closes the gates behind them. He drives off in his narc car.

Cut to-

Int-C.C.'s Apt-Night-

C.C. and Hope munch on McDonald's. The T.V. is on. Hope's sketch pad lies at her feet.

The front door is POUNDED on. An ANGRY MAN YELLS from outside:

-ANGRY MAN-

C.C.? Open this mutha fuckin' door.

C.C. jumps out of her skin.

Hope turns and looks to the door, not frightened at all.

C.C. hops up immediately to answer the door.

Hope shoves fries in her mouth.

The door is SHOVED open as soon as C.C. turns the handle. She is almost knocked over.

A short, skinny, young BLACK MAN barges inside. C.C.'s pimp, DOLLA.

-DOLLA-

Nex time open dat door wit a quickness, ho.

Dolla gets right in C.C.'s face.

-DOLLA-

You got sum chedda for me, bitch?

C.C. LOOKS at Hope, as if she could save her; realizing her inability to do so, she quickly shifts her eyes back to Dolla.

-C.C.-

I haven't been working, Dolla. I haven't worked in this whole week. I got my...

-DOLLA-

(interrupting)

Wut da fuck you mean you ain't worked in a mutha fuckin' week? Yousa ho. Ho's fuck...all da got dam time. Ho's fuck and da pimp get da muny. So where the fuck my mutha fuckin' muny, ho?

C.C. takes a step back. Dolla gets even closer.

-C.C.-

One trick. I had one trick the other...last week or whatever. My friend's in the goddamn hospital. She fuckin' OD'd. And I got her kid stayin' with me. It's kinda hard to...

Dolla mimics a mouth talking with his left hand. C.C. shifts her attention from Dolla's face to his left hand. Dolla SLAPS C.C. with his right hand, knocking her back. Hope's head SNAPS UP from drawing.

-DOLLA-

Bitch, you talk too got dam much. Shut you mutha fuckin' mouf. Da only ting a ho do wit her mouf is suck dick. HA HA HA HA HA Bitch you betta gimme sum mutha fuckin' muny right got dam now...don make me beat your mutha fuckin' ass.

-C.C.-

I haven't been working, Dolla. I don't have any...

BAM. A right cross to the chin.

C.C. stumbles back and drops to the floor with a THUD.

Hope immediately jumps up and RUNS toward Dolla, who yells down at C.C.

-DOLLA-

You peece a shit mutha fuckin stupid
white bitch. You know who da fuck you
fuckin' wit? Dis is mutha fuckin' Dolla...

Hope attacks Dolla. She POUNDS her little fist away at his leg.

Dolla looks down, sees the child, chuckles and PUSHES Hope down.

C.C. and Hope both STAND.

-DOLLA-

Bitch. Who da fuck tol' you to get up?
I didn't mutha fuckin' say get up.
Bitch, did you hear me say get da fuck up?
Hell mutha fuckin' no.

BAM. Dolla leans down and HITS C.C. again in the face.

Hope WRAPS her ARMS around Dolla's LEG and BITES, HARD.

Dolla SCREAMS as he PULLS Hope's face from his leg.

He PUSHES her back and KICKS her in the stomach.

Hope FLIES back, HITS the side of her head on the wall and FALLS
to the floor. OUT COLD.

Seeing this, C.C. KICKS Dolla's legs, almost tripping him.

He KICKS her in the stomach.

-DOLLA-

Bitch, when I come back to dis mutha
fucka, you betta hav my got dam muny.
You ain't got no muny...I'll kill you.

Dolla adjusts his coat, checks his leg and tries to stroll out the door.

C.C. crawls toward Hope.

Fade to-

Ext-Chinatown(Alley)Night-

Myron swings the Cadillac into the alley, behind Ling's factory and parks.

A small, round CHINESE MAN; LING, stands on a tiny loading dock.
Ling WAVES.

Cut to-

Int-Cadillac-Night-
Jake SPEEDS down the street. He LOOKS into the rearview and sees Hope's face.
Shaking his head the image turns to a dark street.

Cut to-

Ext-C.C.'s Apt-Night-
Jake stops the Cadillac at the curb.
He jumps out and heads up the stairs.
The front door is wide OPEN.
Jake calls out: "C.C.?" - "C.C.?" - "Hope?" No answer.
Jake steps inside.

Cut to-

Int-C.C.'s Apt-Night-
Jake walks into the mess that Dolla has left.
C.C., beaten and bruised, lies on the floor. Hope is cradled in her arms.
Jake scans the scene and DROPS to the floor next to them. He gently, but firmly
takes a dizzy Hope from C.C.

-JAKE-
(yelling)
What the fuck happened here?

C.C. wipes blood from her mouth.

-C.C.-
I upset my pimp...

-JAKE-
Your pimp...what the fuck?
What happened to the kid?

C.C. begins to cry.
Jake slides Hope onto his lap and gently brushes Hope's hair away from her face.

He finds a large bump on the side of her head. He spreads Hope's hair and rubs the spot.

Hope groans.

-JAKE-

(yelling)

C.C.? Tell me what happened?

-C.C.-

My pimp hit me.

Hope bit his leg.

He kicked her.

-JAKE-

He kicked a little kid?

-HOPE-

Mmm, hmmm.

-JAKE-

(to Hope)

Do you feel okay?

Hope looks up to Jake and shakes her head.

-JAKE-

Follow my finger, Hope...

Just with your eyes, don't move your head.

Hope's eyes follow Jake's shaking finger.

She will be okay. Sore, but okay.

C.C. reaches out to touch Hope. Jake squeezes Hope tightly.

-C.C.-

I haven't been pulling in any money since...

...since Laurel's been in the hospital...

-JAKE-

So it's the kid's fault?

-C.C.-

There's no time...I didn't have any time...

-JAKE-

You let some two-bit, street hustler,
beat the shit out of a little kid?
You fucking piece of garbage...
Did you make her fuckin' trick, too?
(beat)
Who the fuck is this loser?

-C.C.-

I didn't mean for this to happen...

-JAKE-

Who?

-C.C.-

I'm sorry...

-JAKE-

(screaming)

Who the fuck is he?

-C.C.-

His name is Dolla.

I'm sorry...

I'm so sorry, Hope.

Jake stands up, drapes Hope over his shoulder and heads for the door.

A set of KEYS hang next to the door. Jake grabs them.

Hope wriggles herself loose and slides to the floor.

She GRABS her sketch pad and blue pen.

She LOOKS at C.C. and bends down and HUGS her. A short, but comforting hug.

She hurries back to Jake who scoops her up and WALKS out the door.

Cut to-

Ext-C.C.'s Apt(Staircase)Night-

Jake descends the stairs. He holds Hope, who holds her pad and pen.

Jake turns away from the walkway to the car and toward Laurel's Apt.

Hope instantly becomes excited:

-HOPE-

Is mommy home?

-JAKE-
(focused)
No. Hope.
She's still in the hospital.

Hope frowns, but does not cry. She buries her head in Jake's shoulder.
Jake turns the key and OPENS the door.
The unit is messy and dark.
An awful odor instantly hits Jake.
He steps inside, almost tripping over the junk that's strewn about.

Cut to-

Int-Laurel's Apt-Night-
Jake locates the light switch and flicks it. A tiny, mangled, lamp pops ON in the corner;
Next to which, is Hope's makeshift bed; a lumpy pile of nasty, old blankets.
Three small boxes, stacked atop one another, function as a dresser.
SCRIBBLE MARKS and SMALL DRAWINGS OF PEOPLE and ANIMALS, ALL IN BLUE INK pepper THE WALLS surrounding Hope's "area". They're quite good.
A picture of a smiling and healthy-looking Laurel, in a frame Hope obviously crafted, sits on the top box.
Jake puts Hope down. She GRABS the picture and kisses it.
Jake locates the closet and removes a small suitcase. He fills it with Hope's clothes.
He shakes his head as Hope drops the picture in the suitcase.
Jake MOVES to the front door.

-JAKE-
C'mon, Hope.
We gotta go.

Hope RUNS to the kitchen and OPENS the oven. She pulls out a shopping bag.
It's full of COLORED PENS.

-HOPE-
Mommy took them away.

Hope RUNS back to a waiting Jake.
Jake hits the light as he pulls the door closed behind him.

Cut to-

Int-Cadillac-Night-
Jake SPEEDS down the street. He is not panicked, but alarmed, tense.
Johnny BARKS into the cell phone Jake holds to his ear.

Hope sits in the middle of the back seat.

-JAKE-

...What?

(pause)

Of course I got it. It's in the trunk.

Hope kicks the back of Jake's seat.

-HOPE-

Are we there yet?

-JAKE-

(to Johnny)

...I'm running a little late and you're...

(pause)

What?

(pause)

No one...no one...

It's a long fuckin' story...

Jake glances at Hope in the rearview mirror and shakes his head.

-JAKE-

What?

(pause)

No one's in the car with me...

no one you need to concern yourself with.

Johnny can CLEARLY be heard through the receiver:

"Five kilos of my narcotics are not in my hand...and my man is telling me not to concern myself..."

A SIREN is HEARD as a cop car pulls in BEHIND Jake:

-JAKE-

(yelling)

Mother fucker.

Johnny can CLEARLY be heard through the receiver:

"Not again..."

Jake tosses the cell on the passenger floor.

-HOPE-

Where are we going, Jake?

-JAKE-
(panicked)
Not now...not now.
The fucking cops are pulling me over.

Jake angrily pulls over to the side of the road.

Cut to-

Ext-Street-Night-
The cop pulls over and EXITS his car.

The cop SLOWLY makes his way up to the driver door:

Cut to-

Int-Cadillac-Night-
Jake is not so much nervous, as he is agitated.
Hope SHOVES her finger way down her throat coaxing herself to VOMIT:
The Cop is now outside the driver's door.
Jake and the cop notice simultaneously.
Jake quickly produces a lie:

-JAKE-
I know I was speeding, Officer, but
my little girl is sick...

Even though the vomit is nowhere near the cop, he takes a big step back.

-COP-
Ugghhh. I...I see that.

-JAKE-
I just picked her up from her friends...
I'm taking her to urgent care...

-COP-
Good. Good.
We don't need a trail of puke all over the road...
(to Hope)
Feel better, sweetie.

Hope wipes her mouth as the cop returns to his car.
Jake takes a deep breath as the patrol car drives off.
Jake looks at Hope in the rearview mirror:

-JAKE-

How did you know to do that?

-HOPE-

Mommy showed me.
She get's stopped by the police a lot.

-JAKE-

Thanks. You saved my ass.

-HOPE-

That's what mommy always says.

Cut to-

Ext-Johnny's House(Front Yard)Night-
Johnny and Det. Raines occupy the sidewalk. They HOLD handguns.
A bodyguard-sized goombah stands next to them. This is BEN. He HOLDS keys.
Myron waves more money in his face.
Jake pulls the Cadillac into the cul-de-sac and stops.
Ben moves to the back of the car, key outstretched.

Cut to-

Int-Cadillac-Late Day-
Jake glances at Hope in the rearview:

-JAKE-

When we stop, just stay in
the car and draw.

DO NOT GET OUT!

Jake swings the driver's door open and climbs out.
Raines moves toward Jake, gun pointed at him.
Jake stands still, knowing it will all be over as soon as:
Ben REMOVES the suitcase from the trunk.
Jake NODS to Ben "What's up?".

-JOHNNY-

You made it. I thought for sure that you
got busted. Again...

Ben closes the trunk and sets the briefcase on it.

-JAKE-

I haven't seen Ben in like seven years.

Ben OPENS the case. The dope is there; all accounted for.

-BEN-

It's all here, Johnny.

Johnny moves toward Jake, pissed.

-JAKE-

I told you on the phone, Johnny.

It's me. Of course it's all there.

-JOHNNY-

You can explain later...right now...

...I'm fucking pissed.

I gotta...hit...something...

Johnny WHACKS Jake on the back of the head with the butt of the gun.

Jake DROPS to the ground; OUT COLD.

The right rear door of the Cadillac swings OPENS.

Johnny and Raines draw-down on the open door.

Ben moves around the back of the car; ready to pounce.

Hope YELLS as she EXITS the car:

-HOPE-

You hit Jake...you hit Jake.

Johnny, Raines and Ben watch, in wide-eyed amazement, as the concerned child RUNS to Jake. Hope DROPS to her knees and wraps her arm around Jake's neck.

Johnny and Raines shove their guns in their waistbands as they move toward Jake...and Hope.

Ben remains at the car, suitcase in hand.

Myron dances with his money.

Johnny looks down to Hope, a faint smile streaks his angry face.

-JOHNNY-

Who the fuck are you, little girl?

And how did you get in my car?

Hope keeps her attention on Jake, not knowing whether he's dead or not:

-HOPE-
Hope.

-JOHNNY-
Uh...how do you know Jake?

-HOPE-
He's my friend.
I sleep at his house, but it's a secret.

Johnny stares wide-eyed at Jake. He knows him to be an honest dope fiend, even, dare say, an honest thief; but little girls...

-JOHNNY-
I gotta find out...what the fuck...
Ben, give me the dope and
go get a bucket of water
and throw it on Jake.

Ben trots off diligently fast.

-JOHNNY-
This is pretty fucking weird...
I do not like it.

Johnny PULLS his leg back as if to KICK Jake, but decides against it...

-HOPE-
Wake up, Jake...

-RAINES-
Pretty weird? Pretty weird?
This is fucking sick!

Ben returns and dumps a bucket of cold water on Jake...and Hope.
Jake MOVES his head and COUGHS.

-HOPE-
(angry)
Stop it! He could drown.

-DET. RAINES-
He won't drown...not here, at least.

-JOHNNY-
Wake the fuck up...
I'm too fucking old for this shit...

Jake shakes his head as he sits up. Raines GRABS him under the arm and pulls up.
The hap-hazard group heads for Johnny's house.

Dissolve to-

Int-Johnny's Kitchen-Night-
Johnny, Raines, Myron, Ben and Jake sit around the table.
Hope draws on her sketch pad in the adjacent dining room.

-DET. RAINES-
...Okay, okay...wait a minute.
Explain it to me again like I'm a four
year old. 'Cause this little girl thing is
making my trigger finger very itchy.

-JAKE-
Her mom's in jail. She asked me to watch her.
But, I'm living in a goddamn halfway house.
I'm repaying my debt to Johnny, my P.O. is on my
ass to find a job, the kind with a paycheck and taxes...

-JOHNNY-
Fuck taxes. That's why I'm in the drug business.

Jake rubs the back of his head.

-JAKE-
Right about now I'd give all this
shit up for a tax-paying job.

-DET. RAINES-
What about the kid?

-JAKE-

Yeah, yeah. I gave the kid to her neighbor, but the neighbor likes to get kicked around by her sorry-ass pimp. So I took her outta there...the mother fucker kicked the kid...

-MYRON-

Who kicked the kid?
The neighbor?

-BEN-

No, dip-shit, the pimp did.
Pay attention.

Myron glares at Ben.
Ben NODS angrily at him.
Myron looks at the floor.

-JAKE-

Exactly. The pimp was beating the shit out of the neighbor, so the kid, Hope, bit that piece of shit in the leg. Then he kicked her in the head. In the fucking head. As soon as I realized what happened, and that she was okay...I took her out of there and got here as fast as I fucking could.

I know who I'm working for. I left her in a bad situation, and like all bad situations, it got worse. It's on me that some dime-store skank-pusher fucking hurt her.

I got all this shit going on and all I can fucking think about is the kid. And the lump on the back of my head.

Jake rubs his head.

-JOHNNY-

OK. What about the secret sleep over?
We're all into dirty things, but...

-BEN-

At the halfway house. Hope slept over at the halfway house.

-DET. RAINES-

Did you fucking touch that kid?

-JAKE-

Fuck no! And I'm fucking sick of you insinuating that I would. I couldn't just leave her there. She's got nowhere to go. The kid's got no one. I know what that's like. I had to do something...

(beat)

Anybody got any aspirin? Booze? Pills?
Thirty cc's of black tar? A gun?

-DET. RAINES-

I got it. I got it.

Sorry, Jake. I just get freaked out when kids are thrown into the mix.

I apologize.

Det. Raines extends his hand. Jake shakes it while eyeing Johnny with contempt.

-DET. RAINES-

I gotta take a leak.

Raines exits the kitchen. Passing by Hope he looks at her drawings.

-JAKE-

It's not our secret.

It's secret from the halfway house.

-JOHNNY-

Prison has been known to change a man.

-JAKE-

You don't come outta prison a fucking child molester. You walk in one and get carried out in a wooden box.

-JOHNNY-

From my point of view, Jake it didn't look to good.

-JAKE-

Johnny you know me better than that. At least I thought you did...

-BEN-
So what do you do now?

-JAKE-
Get really high...
blow my brains out...
I don't know...

-JOHNNY-
Get back to paying off his debt.

-BEN-
With the kid, I mean?

-JAKE-
I don't fucking know.

Raines enters the kitchen carrying the sketch pad. Hope follows in tow.

-DET. RAINES-
When does her mother get out?

-HOPE-
I want to draw. Give me my paper.

-JAKE-
She goes to court next week.

-DET. RAINES-
(to Hope)
One second, sweetie. I want to show it to Jake.
(to Jake)
Did you draw these?

Raines shows Jake a sketch of a mother bird on an empty nest in a tree; a fallen egg lies smashed on the ground below. He flips the page to another; a perfect image of Hope's, beautiful face; smiling.

-JAKE-
Yeah...just fu...messaging around. Why?

Raines hands the pad back to Hope. She studies the sketch of herself.

-HOPE-
I'm pretty.

Hope sets the pad in Jake's lap and wraps her arms around his neck.
Jake hugs her back, tenderly, genuinely, lovingly.

-JAKE-
You're beautiful.

Raines smiles adoringly at the display of true affection.

-HOPE-
I'm really hungry.

Raines OPENS the fridge and removes a small bowl of fruit.
He hands it to Hope. She trots off with the pad and the bowl.

-JOHNNY-
This is quite a touching scene.
But we got business to discuss.

-DET. RAINES-
(to Johnny)
Relax, Colani.
Your business is *MY* business.
(to Jake)
What's the mom in for?

-JAKE-
Drugs, warrants...a failed stint in rehab...

-DET. RAINES-
I cannot help with that...

-JOHNNY-
We'll talk tomorrow, Jake.

-DET. RAINES-
Let's call it a night. C'mon, Jake.
Get the kid and I'll drive you
back to the halfway house.

Fade to-

Ext-

Trinity House-Night-

A light, but steady rain has begun to fall.

Raines pulls his unmarked car up to the curb and parks.

Cut to-

Int-Raines' Car-Night-

Raines leans against the steering wheel. Jake sits shotgun.

Hope sleeps in the back seat.

Jake reaches for the handle. Raines touches his arm.

Raines shows Jake the ring on his pinky finger.

A simple gold band with a large almost too big, sapphire stone in the center.

-RAINES-

Fourteen years ago, my son was
killed in a drive-by.

You see this ring, Jake?

It's not handsome. Some might
even call it gaudy. My last partner
said it was pretentious. This ring means
more to me than anything else in the world.
I never take it off...hell, I can't now.

Fingers got too fat.

I bet you noticed me touching it.

Twisting it. Everyone notices.

I kiss it whenever I think no one is looking.

It was our tenth anniversary
and my second wife had shopped
around for months looking for the perfect
amethyst...I'm a February baby...

she found it at a little mom
and pop store on the other side of town.

It had to be sized so she went to pick it
up the following week. It was a Tuesday.
She was pushing my son...I got step kids,
but only one of my own...in his stroller
to the jewelry store. A gang member
fired a dozen rounds into a crowd.

My wife was hit in the leg and shoulder.

My boy took one in the side
of the head. He was three.

Raines clears his throat:

-RAINES-

I had my birth stone removed when we
divorced and a sapphire was put in it's place.
His birth stone. Tommy's stone.
Every time I look at this ring I see my son.

Jake is speechless, staring blankly ahead at Raines.

Raines clears his throat:

-RAINES-

The reason I'm telling you this is
because I know what it's like to not be
able to get the image of someone out of
your head. I see it in your eyes right now.
Some people never experience it, and so,
they are unable to see it when it happens
right in front of them.
Like our friend, Johnny.
He has no idea, but he is a good man.
(beat)
That little girl needs you.

Jake wipes away tears from his eyes and looks to the back seat at Hope,
peacefully sleeping.

Raines SLAPS Jake on the shoulder, as he OPENS the door.

Jake retrieves Hope from the back seat and heads up the walk to his window.

Raines pulls away.

Jake "jimmies" the screen while Hope leans against the building.

Cut to-

Int-Jake's Room-

Jake enters the room with his arms wrapped around his shoulders; COLD.

Hope lies on the bed, UNDER the covers.

-HOPE-

It's cold in here, Jake.

-JAKE-

Yeah. The heater's broken.
It won't be fixed 'til tomorrow.

-HOPE-
My toes are frozen.

-JAKE-
Mine too.
I have an idea.

Jake GRABS Hope's colored pens and the sketch pad.
He sits on the floor at the foot of the bed.

-JAKE-
Bring the blanket down here.

-HOPE-
No. I'm cold.

-JAKE-
I meant you *and* the blanket.

-HOPE-
Oh. Okay.

Hope jumps off the bed and plops down next to Jake.
She wraps the blanket around Jake and herself.
Jake MOVES the blanket, freeing his arms.

-JAKE-
Wrap the blanket around
your body, but not your arms.
We need our hands free.

Hope WRIGGLES their arms free.
Jake grabs a YELLOW pen and hands it to Hope. She DOES NOT take it.
He takes an ORANGE out and begins coloring.

-HOPE-
I want to use blue.

-JAKE-
I knew you'd say that.
But you gotta wait.
You can use blue last.

-HOPE-
(firm)
I only color with blue.

Hope grabs the yellow pen from Jake and THROWS it down.
Jake raises an eyebrow to Hope. He places his index finger over his lips.

-JAKE-
(calm)
Hope. Don't speak to me that way.
You can use the blue color, later.
Now, get the yellow pen.

-HOPE-
Blue. Blue. Blue.

Jake takes a long, deep breath.

-JAKE-
Let me ask you a question, Hope.

-HOPE-
(annoyed)
What? I'm cold.

-JAKE-
First, grab the yellow pen. Then
tell me why you only like blue?

Hope picks up the yellow pen and hands it to Jake.

-HOPE-
I like other colors, too. I like red,
light green, brown. I like a lot of colors.

-JAKE-
Okay. So why do you only color with blue?

-HOPE-
Mommy took all my pens. Blue was
the only one that she didn't take away.
It's the only one I'm really used to now.

-JAKE-

Well, unless you draw on the walls, I will never take your colors away. So why don't you try yellow or this orange one. Then you can get used to all of them.

-HOPE-

Okay. Brown. I want brown.

-JAKE-

Sure. We need brown too. But, we're not using every color. This is a special project.

-HOPE-

I'm cold. I'm cold.

-JAKE-

Making this project will warm you up.

-HOPE-

What are we making?

-JAKE-

Keep coloring. You'll see.

Jake and Hope continue to color for quite a while.

They both fall asleep at the foot of the bed, on the floor in front of their beautiful, homemade fireplace with colorful, cone-shaped flames. Each one with a perfect blue tip.

Fade to-

Int-Sybil Brand-Day-

Jake is led through the circus-like regimen of visiting an inmate.

Hope is at his side.

He winds up at window #13. He lifts the receiver in anticipation.

Hope SITS ON THE FLOOR beside Jake and colors on her pad.

Laurel, although still hallow looking, has gained a few pounds and some of the color has returned to her face.

Laurel SITS and GRABS the phone.

-LAUREL-

Wow. You gonna visit me every week?

-JAKE-

(firm)

No.

-LAUREL-

Thanks a lot...

-JAKE-

You torture yourself in between them.

It's tough on the visitor, but
a slow walk in hell to the visited.

Makes your time go by a lot slower.

(beat)

Seven years...not one visit...

-LAUREL-

I understand...I guess.

Hope STANDS and views her mother through the glass:

-HOPE-

(excited)

Hi, Mommy.

Laurel looks at her only child and lowers her head:

-JAKE-

You just need to do your time and
get back to your kid, Laurel.

-LAUREL-

What the fuck did you bring Hope for?

-JAKE-

You act like you hate her...
She misses you.

-LAUREL-

You've been a fuck up your whole life, Jake...
and now you're gonna fucking lecture me?

Laurel scratches the inside of her left arm; hard.

-JAKE-

That's what I'm saying...my mom was
never there for me and look how I turned out...
Jesus Christ...your kid fucking needs you.

-LAUREL-

You're not into kids...

-JAKE-

I'm not saying I'm a role model...

-LAUREL-

But, all of a sudden you are?

Jake is more than confused:

-JAKE-

You're pissed 'cause I'm being cool to your kid?

-LAUREL-

You never wanted one...before.
You wouldn't even speak to
Hope two weeks ago...and now
you're fucking father knows best?

-JAKE-

I still don't want one.

-LAUREL-

What's with you Jacob Bleek?

-JAKE-

Your kid is in a fucked up place...
And kids in a fucked up place need...

-LAUREL-

C.C. can handle it...
Probably better than me...

-JAKE-

That two-bit fucking whore?
Her pimp kicked her in the head...

Jake catches his emotional self and motions to Hope to continue drawing; on the floor.

Hope DROPS to the floor and continues.

-LAUREL-

I told her to work for herself.
C.C. isn't the brightest...

Jake's voice slowly grows louder as his face slowly turns red:

-JAKE-

Neither are you...
The mother fucker kicked Hope.

-LAUREL-

Dolla kicked Hope?

Genuine concern is heard in Laurel's voice, but is not seen in her face.

-JAKE-

You know that piece of shit?

Laurel self-loathing expression has many, many layers...

-JAKE-

That's all you can say?
Some low-life scumbag kicks your kid
in the goddamn head and all you can say is...
(beat)
Fuck. You can't even look at her...

-LAUREL-

I'm...I don't know...
Before, I just wanted to get high...
Now I fucking need to...

-JAKE-

(interrupting)
That's it? That's it?
Getting loaded is how you deal with
all kind of issues...
fucked up family...I know that shit.
Every fucking waste case out there
knows that...and when you realize that's
why you get high...you just get high again.

-LAUREL-
What do you want me to say, Jake?
That I'm a fucking piece of shit?
That she'd be better off with someone else?
Anyone else...?

Jake: LOUDER; REDDER;

-JAKE-
You don't get high when you find out
your little kid was kicked by some pimp...
You fucking reign down fire that the Geneva
Convention wouldn't fucking stand up for...

A large Sheriff glares at Jake.

-LAUREL-
I'm sorry...

-JAKE-
Yeah. For having her.

-LAUREL-
Think you can do better?

-JAKE-
I didn't ask for this shit...
But at least I'm fucking trying...

-LAUREL-
Good. Then you can keep her.

Laurel is extremely clear-eyed and lucid as these words flow.
Jake stares right through the glass, as if hoping to melt it,
so he can kill this deadbeat:

-LAUREL-
She's yours...

Jake SLAMS the receiver against the glass, scaring Hope.
The large Sheriff quickly steps forward and GRABS the receiver with
one hand, and Jake with the other.
Laurel, while holding the receiver to her ear, continues to stare blankly at Jake.

Placing it to his ear; the Sheriff hears nothing:
He speaks into it:

-SHERIFF-
Can you hear me?

Silence:

-SHERIFF-
Ma'am? Say something if
you can hear me...

-LAUREL-
Something.

-SHERIFF-
This visit is over.

The Sheriff replaces the phone.
Laurel continues to hold her line.
Jake is escorted out. Hope trots along behind.

Fade to-

Int-Laurel's Cell-Night-

Laurel sits on her bunk, back to the bars.
She snorts heroin from the palms of her hands.
On the edge of the sink, sits a "Jheri-curl" bottle; a balloon of dope next to it.
These items obviously DO NOT belong to Laurel.

Laurel leans back allowing the drug to sweep over her.

Outside the cell, the two black, female inmates she previously scored from
quietly approach her cell. One remains outside; the lookout.
One RUSHES in, shank in hand, and violently, incessantly STABS Laurel.
Caught completely off-guard, Laurel GRABS the bedpost.
The attacker continues to repeatedly impale her skin.

-ATTACKER-
Stupid-ass white bitch...
You done stole from da wrong nigga.

Laurel's lifeless body FALLS to the floor.
The attacker SHOVES the makeshift weapon into her jumpsuit.

She takes the hair product and balloon and nonchalantly slips out of the cell.

Cut to-

Ext-Trinity House-Morning-
Jake sneaks a clean and appropriately dressed Hope out undetected.
They make their way up the sidewalk.

Cut to-

Ext-Bus Stop-Morning-
Jake and Hope EXIT the bus in a small crowd.

Cut to-

Ext-St. Andrew's Church-Morning-
Jake escorts Hope up the steps.

-JAKE-

Try not to get caught being bad.

-HOPE-

I never know when they
are gonna catch me.
But they always do.

-JAKE-

Everyone messes up, but
some people don't get caught.

-HOPE-

How?

-JAKE-

Lots of practice.

-HOPE-

Okay, Jake.
I'll practice.

-JAKE-

But you don't have to worry
if you just try to be good.

Hope NODS, turns and trots up the steps.

Cut to-

Int-Manuel's Cubicle-Morning-
A tired-looking Manuel sits at his desk reading the sports page.
Jake saunters in.

-MANUEL-
(sarcastic)

I was at Burger King yesterday...
Didn't see you. Must've been
your day off...

-JAKE-

You love this sorry-ass job, huh?

-MANUEL-

I spoke to Det. Raines...your off the hook.
For now.

-JAKE-

Better devote your time to finding
a hooker that'll say yes.

Cut to-

Int-Police Dept.-Late Morning-
Raines, DRESSED in FULL PROTECTIVE GEAR, barks into a phone.
THREE other cops, identically dressed, hover nearby.

-RAINES-

...he's a rookie who has absolutely
no business on this bust.

I need experienced cops on this...

(pause)

Penny, Nickels and Dimes are all chomping at the bit,
as well as myself. We've put in all the hours on this and,
frankly, Chief, I don't want some rook shitting himself
when some spooked junkie shoves a canon in his face.

(pause)

I know we all had a first...

(pause)

Okay...okay, sir.

A pissed off Raines SLAMS the phone down.
Raines looks up to Penny, Nickels and Dimes, disheartened:

-RAINES-

Penny, you're out. Ward is in.

-PENNY-

Ward? Are you kiddin' me?

(whispering)

He's gonna play by the rules
and fuck everything up.

-RAINES-

You just leave him to me.

Get with Grimes and get
on the Newsom case.

Penny stomps away.
Raines introduces Nickels and Dimes to Jake.

-RAINES-

Alright boys. Let's roll.

Fade to-

Ext-Low Rent Neighborhood-Late Morning-
Raines, and Nickels stand on either side of the front door
of a known dealer's house; GUNS DRAWN.
Ward and Dimes BREAK the door with a handheld battering ram.
All four officers creep inside.

Cut to-

Int-Dealer's House-Late Morning-
Raines SCREAMS as they enter.

-RAINES-

Police!

Freeze!

I will shoot if anyone moves.

Three chubby MEXICAN MEN sitting around a coffee table FREEZE.
Dozens of kilos of heroin and a large scale occupy the table.
Dimes and Nickels point their weapons at the men as Raines follows

Ward through the rest of the house. Raines has a .44 in his HOLSTER and a cheap .38 in HAND.

An obese MEXICAN WOMAN flings OPEN the bathroom door, from inside and SHOOTS Raines in the forehead. Drops DEAD to the floor.

Ward SHOOTS Mexican Woman in the neck and head. Drops to floor, dead.

Dimes RUSHES toward the sound of the shots and sees his boss, mentor, friend, lying face down in a pool of his own blood, dead; and Ward, stupid-ass, by-the-book rookie, gun still drawn, like a goddamn hero.

Knowing his second, more lucrative career is over, Dimes, does the right thing and calls for back-up; and a hearse.

Nickels remains with Mexican Men.

Cut to-

Int-Father O's Office-Late Morning-

A dejected Hope sits in a chair. Father O looks across his large desk at her. His eyes move from the child's thick file to her pouting face.

-FATHER O-

This is becoming quiet a routine,
you in my office.
Wouldn't you agree, young lady?

-HOPE-

Yeah. That's what Sister
Margaret Mary said, too.

-FATHER O-

Yes. Not yeah.
(beat)

Well, at least we all agree.

-FATHER O-

This is a sacred place. A house of God.
We will not tolerate theft here.

Hope looks down at her feet, sullen.

Father O clears his throat, LOUDLY.

Hope immediately returns her gaze to Father O.

-FATHER O-

What do you think should be done, Hope?

-HOPE-

(exhausted)

Move me to another classroom?

-FATHER O-

Sister Margaret Mary's classroom is reserved for students with...shall we say ...particular needs.

-HOPE-

Troublemakers?

-FATHER O-

I did not say that.

-HOPE-

Sister Margaret Mary calls me that.

-FATHER O-

I choose not to use such a word.

-HOPE-

I want to do good, but sometimes, my brain tells me to do bad stuff.

Father O lets the file drop to the desk and leans forward, genuinely concerned.

-FATHER O-

You hear voices?

-HOPE-

No. Like, sometimes I do bad things, even when I don't want to.

-FATHER O-

Oh, you mean you have a hard time controlling yourself?

-HOPE-

Yeah. I mean, yes...I guess.

-FATHER O-

Are the assignments too...challenging?

-HOPE-

No.

-FATHER O-

Too easy?

-HOPE-

No. I'm just bored in class.

Father O and Hope eye one another with an intent gaze.

-FATHER O-

Sister Margaret Mary prudently oversees
her classroom and has offered you more than
your fair share of her time. A lot more.

-HOPE-

She doesn't like me.

-FATHER O-

Sister Margaret Mary adores all of
the children, here, at St. Andrews.

(beat)

Even you, Miss Wolf.

Father O smiles lovingly at the troubled, young girl.

-HOPE-

She doesn't like me.

(angry)

And I don't like her.

-FATHER O-

I am very sorry to hear you say that.

-HOPE-

It's true, Father O. It's true.

I don't like her.

(beat)

She's a bitch.

-FATHER O-

Sister Margaret Mary, as well as this school,
will not tolerate insolence.

Father O takes a long, deep, purposeful breath.

-FATHER O-

And to that end, Miss Wolf, your
options here at St. Andrews,
have been thoroughly exhausted.

(beat)

This was your final day here.
Please wait outside.

Dissolve to-

Ext-St. Andrew's Church-Late Day-
Jake descends the stairs with Hope.

Cut to-

Int-Bus-Late Morning-
Jake and Hope share a seat in the rear of the vehicle.

-JAKE-

I thought I told you to be good...

-HOPE-

I was practicing...

-JAKE-

Well, now you don't have a school...

-HOPE-

Good. I hate school.

-JAKE-

What would your mom do?

-HOPE-

Hit me.

-JAKE-

That ain't gonna help...
I don't know what to do with you.

Fade to-

Int-Jake's Room-Night-

Hope sleeps peacefully in Jake's bed.
Jake sits on the floor, completely wasted.
Jake's sketch pad lies on the ground beside him; a picture of a cop arresting a teenage boy; the officer's badge reads: Raines.

Cut to-

Int-Sybil Brand-Late Day-
Jake and Hope are stopped by TWO SHERIFFS, ONE MALE, ONE FEMALE,
at the window of the visitors entrance.
Both Sheriffs are professionally icy:

-MALE-

There's been an unfortunate incident.
Please come with us.

The two Sheriffs lead Jake and C.C. to a small room.

-FEMALE-

Please have a seat.

-JAKE-

Serious shit, huh?

-MALE-

Gravely, I'm afraid.

-JAKE-

Can the kid wait outside?

-FEMALE-

Of course.

Female Sheriff escorts Hope outside:

-MALE-

Last night a guard on routine
bed count, found Ms. Wolf...
in her cell, Dead.

Jake is completely shocked; staring in wide-eyed disbelief.

-JAKE-

What? What happened?

-MALE-

It appears that Ms. Wolf was on the wrong end
of a drug deal that somehow went awry.

-JAKE-

Who did it? Do you know?

-MALE-

We have the two inmates responsible in lock-down.
They will both be charged with her murder.

Jake EXITS the small room with tears in his eyes. Hope waits outside.
Her large smile quickly turns to a frown when she sees Jake.
Jake GRABS Hope's TIGHTLY.

-HOPE-

What's wrong?
Are we gonna see mommy?

Jake STARES down at Hope's little innocent face:

-JAKE-

Later, Hope...I'll have to tell you later...

Quick Cut to-

Ext-Park-Day-

It's a beautiful, sunny afternoon. A group of Boy Scouts enjoys a local outing. Each boy is accompanied by his family; parents, grandparents, brother's, even sisters. All are taking part in potato sack-races, water-balloon tossing, face-painting, there's even a baseball game. Several large barbeques waft gray plumes of thick smoke skyward; burgers and dogs filling their grills. Troop 413, Jake's troop, proudly conducts these simple, but masterfully produced, "Family Day Festival"'s twice a year. It's a lovely, wholesome, picturesque day that even an passerby or onlooker would walk a mile just to be a part of.

About thirty feet away, a young Jake (12), stands behind a weathered tool shed. The pride with which Jake wears his clean, pressed, immaculate Boy Scout uniform is completely, sadly, ultimately stifled by the pure unrelenting shame of his pitiful home-life.

He peeks around the corner of the shed with the look of a wide eyed, innocent four-year old on Christmas morning, imagining hordes of gifts and a giant fairytale tree.

His body language, however, is willfully rigid, stern and forceful as he woefully discovers no presents and no tree under which they would lie in wait.

A lot to endure for a twelve-year old, who's reflecting back to when he was four, and, simultaneously trying to block out the eight painful in-between years, as well as trying to soak in the scene in front of him, while pressing himself hard to instantly forget it.

Quick Cut to-

Int-Sybil Brand-Day-
Jake and Hope step out of the building.

Fade to-

Ext-Johnny's House-Dusk-
Jake and Hope stand at the end of the driveway.
Jake TAPS on the intercom.
The large gate swings OPEN.

Cut to-

Int-Johnny's Porch-Dusk-
Jake POUNDS on Johnny's front door.
Johnny motions to Jake and Hope to "come in". They step into the foyer.
A T.V. BLARES the NEWS in the B.G.

-JOHNNY-
What's up, Jacob?

-JAKE-
It's a long story Johnny.
Very long.

-JOHNNY-
(joking)
Look, Jake. My business does not
take a backseat to your parenting.
(beat)
You don't seem all there...

-JAKE-
She can't hear this...

-JOHNNY-

Go get some fruit in the kitchen, kid.

Hope trots off to the kitchen.

Jake makes sure Hope is out of earshot.

-JAKE-

Look, Johnny...Hope's mom was killed last night...

-JOHNNY-

What?

-JAKE-

Yeah, over a drug deal.
Shanked in her cell.

-JOHNNY-

I'm sorry...For the kid, I mean.
But you've got a delivery...

-JAKE-

Can it wait a few days?

-JOHNNY-

(sarcastic)

Sure. We offer a two week
bereavement period...

(serious)

Fuck no, it can't wait.

-JAKE-

I'm thinking about the kid, Johnny...

-JOHNNY-

You better get your priorities
in order. This is *my* business.

(beat)

Right now, you need to open up a can
of "act-right" and drink every drop.

-JAKE-

I'm doin' the best I can right now.

-JOHNNY-

I think that dead bitch Laurel has
your head all fucked up.

-JAKE-

No. That *dead bitch Laurel's* kid has my head all
fucked up. Well, not fucked up...preoccupied.

Jake blinks hard. Thinking that if it weren't for this Hope situation, he would be very high
right now with some kinky stripper licking his balls.

-JAKE-

In business you've always been up here...
(holds hand up)

I've always been down here...
(lowers hand)

I respect that. I respect you. You fucking
know me, Johnny. And I'm cool with that, like
I've always been. But this is different, this ain't
about me or you...or business. This is about a little kid.
And her situation is fucked up.

The T.V. has 'BREAKING NEWS'

Johnny and Jake act as if E. F. Hutton is in the house:

Newscaster - "Detective Charles Steven Raines was killed in the line of duty
this afternoon. He was gunned down at a known drug dealers house in Long Beach
about 2:00 this afternoon. The attacker, a female undocumented immigrant, was
killed by fellow Officer Cameron Ward; a rookie.
More details later on this tragic story."

Johnny STARES at Jake in disbelief:

Jake just STARES at Johnny:

Hope returns with a large chocolate doughnut:

-JOHNNY-

(angry)

There goes my fucking business...

Jake looks down to Hope and smiles. Chocolate is smeared all around her mouth.

-JOHNNY-

I've invested a lot of time growing
this...baby, into a smooth running
and very profitable machine...
What other runners you know got
it this fucking easy. You deal with
quiet people, mature people, who
have tons of money...they want
problems like I want a kid...
Do you know how many people
this is going to affect...?
A fucking lot...and those people
got people and they got people...
We keep half this goddamn county
stoned.
Now...it's all gone.

-JAKE-

...I've done time with some of them...

Johnny does not laugh:

-JAKE-

...See, that's what I was saying.
There's dirt everywhere...everything is
fucked up...and almost everyone.

Johnny stares at Jake, blankly...

-JAKE-

Hope's mom is dead. She beats people up at school.
She steals shit. She's always fucking filthy, too. Her clothes
are two sizes too small, her hair is a goddamn rats
nest. She's on the same fuckin' nowhere path I met you
and her mother on. She smelled when I met her. She's fucking
six years old, Johnny, and she smelled. We both know that
awful fucking smell. It's the smell of neglect. The putrid stench
of nobody wanting you. We used to fucking smell just like that.
It's a weird smell, you know. The only people who
can *smell* it are the ones living it. Everyone else
just looks the other way...
I want to give her a chance not to smell like that.

-JOHNNY-

(joking)

What is it? Every mother fucker who rolls out of
the joint is obsessed with personal hygiene.

-JAKE-

(not joking)

It's a dirty fucking place.
There's dirt everyfuckingwhere.
Hope's a cool kid...a really great kid...
man, they all are until somebody fucks them up.

-JOHNNY-

(sympathetic)

Call me in a couple days.

Jake rubs his hands through his hair.
Johnny SLAPS him on the shoulder.

Cut to-

Int-Jake's Room-Night-

Hope sits on the floor in front of their fireplace drawing.
Jake GRABS his "works" from his duffle bag and STEPS through the door.

Cut to-

Int-Trinity House(Bathroom)-Night-

Jake flushes his dope and syringes down the toilet.

Cut to-

Int-Jake's Room-Night-

Hope colors a picture of a man and a girl sitting in front of a fireplace.
Jake HANGS a sketch on the wall:
His OLD SKETCH OF THE ONE ARM; NOW THERE IS ANOTHER THAT
IS REACHING OUT. THE FINGERTIPS ALMOST TOUCH.
Jake leans over and kisses Hope on the forehead.

-JAKE-

Hope. Look at this...I first drew this when I
was a little older than you...see, one arm is reaching
out, but no one was there...
well, now...I have you.

Hope studies the picture:

-HOPE-
And I have you...

Hope STANDS and THROWS herself into Jake's arms.

Cut to-

Ext-Johnny's House (backyard)-Morning-
Johnny and Jake sit on the patio furniture in the sun.
Hope splashes in the pool.
Peaches, the Nubian goddess, is in her usual attire and spot.

-JOHNNY-
So, Raines is dead...
along with my business...our business...

Jake soaks this in, not knowing what or how, to feel:

-JAKE-
So what are you gonna do?

Johnny stares at Peaches and rubs his crotch:

-JOHNNY-
After this last deal, I'm selling this place
and moving to an island where the sweet
drinks, with those little, colorful umbrellas,
never stop coming. Peaches has been on my fat ass
to get the fuck out of dodge for the last two years.
(beat)
Look at her. You can't argue with
that fucking body...I can't stay here, Jake.
I'm getting to old for this shit.

-JAKE-
And what about me?

Johnny slides a briefcase across the ground to Jake.

-JOHNNY-
This is yours.

-JAKE-
What about...?

-JOHNNY-
You're loyalty is thicker than
the blood shared between twin brothers.
Even though you are a fuck up...
We, my friend, are square.

Jake and Johnny stare at one another. Eye to eye. Man to man. All business.
They both NOD.

-JAKE-
Hey. What about 'the moron'?

-JOHNNY-
Myron? I gave him fifty grand...
Probably gave it to some
stripper's boyfriend to watch
the guy bang her.

The two crack up:

-JOHNNY-
Said he's going to Virginia or South Carolina...
wherever the hell it is he's from.

-JAKE-
He ain't right for this business...

-JOHNNY-
Everyone is. Most just don't know
when to get out of it...
Open the case.

Jake OPENS the briefcase.
One hundred thousand dollars sits inside:

-JAKE-
A hundred grand...

-JOHNNY-
Kids cost money, Jacob.

Johnny makes his way to Peaches.

Fade to-

Int-Theodore Roosevelt Elementary (Main Office)-Morning-
A pleasant, heavy-set WOMAN greets them warmly:

-WOMAN-
Good morning.
May I help you?

-JAKE-
Yes. We're here to enroll her.

-WOMAN-
(to Hope)
What grade are you in?

Hope steps behind Jake and hides.

-JAKE-
Uh...first.

-WOMAN-
Okay. What's her name?

-JAKE-
Hope Sinclair Wolf.

-WOMAN-
I'm Mrs. Kimball.
Where did she last attend school?

-JAKE-
St. Andrew's.

-MRS. KIMBALL-
Great. Do you have her records?

-JAKE-
No. I do not.

-MRS. KIMBALL-
We can call for them.

Mrs. Kimball grabs a list of the first grade classes and studies it.

-MRS. KIMBALL-
It looks like she'll be in
Gloria Maldonado's class.

-JAKE-
Does she include art in her program?
Hope loves...needs...to draw.

Jake notices a SIGN on the wall:
ART INSTRUCTOR NEEDED PART TIME
MON. WED. FRI. 8a.m. to 3p.m.

-JAKE-
About that job...?

Fade to-

Ext-Cemetery-Day
Dark ominous clouds blanket the sky a deep, charcoal gray.
A small groups surrounds the plot area as Laurel's casket is lowered
into the ground.
Jake, kneeling next to Hope, comforts her with soft, strokes of her head.

-JAKE-
I wish I knew what to say, sweetheart...
(beat)
You know your mommy loves you.

Jake kisses Hope's forehead.
Hope wipes tears from her eyes.

-HOPE-
I know my daddy does, too.

Hope buries her sad little face in her father's shoulder.

FADE OUT-

WITHOUT HOPE

A Screenplay

by
Steven Cole

