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Stray Bullets

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STRAY BULLETS

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STRAY BULLETS

by

JESSE AARON HANNA, B.A., B.S.

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas at El Paso
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Department of Creative Writing
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
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CRITICAL PREFACE

Scope of the project

Stray Bullets began as an assignment for Professor Cárdenas Advanced Screenwriting class that I had taken in Spring of 2021. For the course we developed a feature length script and began that process from inception to first draft. It was an online workshop class where the students would read and provide feedback on the work. This type of workshopping occurred at every stage of the process of development. From the initial pitch and logline to the treatment until final rough draft. *Stray Bullets* was the story I started in the class and continued to work on sporadically outside of that class and then eventually chose for thesis I and thesis II. Screenwriting and filmmaking have been my primary interests and pursuits since I have been in college. Before enrolling in the MFA program at The University of Texas at El Paso I received a Bachelor's in Arts in English and Bachelor of Science in film at the University of Texas at Austin. I pursued both majors because both offer education and training in specific areas that are important to telling interesting stories in film. I enrolled in English because I wanted to have the education and training of understanding narrative through literature. Although film is a visual language, it still primarily focuses on storytelling and the principles of what makes a story function in a novel remain true to the principles of what work in a film. The film was important to teach the equipment, and logistical aspects of the media, as well as using visuals to tell a story. Composition, lighting, editing, performance, movement all work together to not just tell a story but engage the audience with a story more immediately. When a film works well, the audience becomes part of the story, with the characters, in the world and feels the story as much as they are being told. My pursuit of the Master of Fine Arts at The University of Texas at El Paso was important to pursue after getting those degrees because it allowed me to focus on the craft and

dedicate my time to producing a substantial work of fiction. I chose a screenplay for my thesis and as my final assignment at the University because it fully encapsulates everything I have trained and worked for in my college education.

Poetics & Assessment

I tried to follow the rules of screenwriting that I was taught in my screenwriting classes and from the meetings I had with Professor Williford during thesis I. For the language I wanted to be as clear and direct as possible so that it does not distract from the story. Short and terse action lines with limited description. *Screenwriting: Writing the Picture* describes the dangers of long description. “There cannot be long, unbroken paragraphs of description. There is nothing a reader reacts to with greater fear and loathing than a page of dense, uninterrupted, overwritten prose (26).” While using an active voice I wrote economically, only describing what the audience could see and hear. Using a few words of description when introducing a character, primarily focusing on their appearance. Present tense voice, using strong verbs, while avoiding body movement. These rules and principles of narration are not something that I do naturally, but instead something that I must continually apply through rereading and revision. It is a significant improvement from my earlier drafts but is still an ongoing process.

For the structure of *Stray Bullets*, I followed Joseph Campbell’s *The Heroes’ Journey*. Television writer and showrunner Dan Harmon broke down Campbell’s journey into a more accessible way, that he refers to as a story circle (Studio Binder). In Harmon’s story circle the character follows a series of story beats to reach a conclusion that feels satisfactory for the audience. The journey starts when a character is in a zone of comfort, but they want something. They enter an unfamiliar situation, adapt to it, get what they want, but pay a heavy price. They return to their familiar situation, having changed. I tried to use the same beats for the characters

in *Stray Bullets*. The story begins with Eli working for violent criminals, but he wants to be happy. He believes the only way he can do that is to run, but first wants to get a gun to protect himself. He flees from the criminals and reunites with his estranged sister Grace. Together they drive to their aunt and uncle and Eli gets a gun, but this results in him and Grace falling out again. She follows him into a dangerous situation, which reunites them, but does not resolve his desire to leave. The criminals who are pursuing him eventually find him, and in the final act Eli chooses to stop running and makes the choice to stay with Grace. For Grace, the story begins with her welcoming Eli, but not respecting his agency. Understandable given his history, she does not entirely trust him and throughout the story tries to control the situation and dismiss his concerns. He doesn't want to visit with his Aunt and Uncle, but she ignores his concern, which eventually leads to a fight. He questions the reliability of her car, which in turn breaks down. It is only when she speaks to her Aunt and considers Eli's point of view that she is willing to listen and respect his choices. Because of that Eli then is accountable for his past behavior and decides to choose Grace over fleeing.

For Jackie he begins the story dismissive of the junkies he kills. He does not value them as people. Because of Leo's fear of being caught they pursue Eli and initially he does not have any hesitations about killing him if it means protecting the two of them. Over the course of the story, he has different interactions which force him to learn more about Eli and view him as a person. Additionally, as he and Leo meet these people Leo reveals more about his character which causes Jackie to lose respect and trust in him. When Jackie visits Eli's RV he sees his poor living situation which creates empathy. When he visits the hermit to track down Eli's phone, the hermit questions what Eli did to deserve it, and Jackie must reconcile with the fact that their pursuit of violence is not deserved. When he meets the Aunt and Uncle he learns

more about Eli and Grace's past, which provides some light onto why Eli is who he is. Finally in the last act of the film he sees Eli choose Grace over himself which shows his decency of character. In the final act of the story Jackie instead betrays Leo, changing his views on these two men. Leo's arc is decent. He begins the story in control of the situation and giving orders. Over the course of the story, he is dependent on other people and loses any sense of agency. His boss tells him to destroy the money he had just earned and forces the two of them to lose work. Eli's disappearance forces the two of them to try and track him down, which he had no plans of doing. The meeting with the junkies in the final act should have gone well, but their unprofessional behavior made the situation worse. He, understandably, gets more upset as the story continues. This lack of control combined with his inability to find Eli only causes him to act more irrationally until it becomes apparent that he is more of a danger to Jackie than Eli.

At the same time, it was important for all these characters' decisions to be plausible for their situation. It makes sense why Eli would want to run away from these two men. It makes sense why Grace does not entirely trust Eli and believes she must be the adult of the two. Leo is looking out for himself and is right in viewing Eli as a liability, but also morally wrong. Jackie knows Eli is a liability, but over the course of the story realizes Leo is more of one and changes his views on the two men.

Outside of the overall story circle I tried to make sure every scene had met certain conditions as well. Every scene needed to have conflict, have turning points, and cause change. Syd Field in *Screenplays: The Foundation of Screenwriting* explains, "the purpose of the scene is twofold: Either it moves the story forward or it reveals information about the character. If the scene does not satisfy one, or both, of these two elements, then it does not belong in the screenplay (162)." The characters enter each scene with an intention and

obstacle. They make decisions that affect the plot, which leads them to a different choice, which leads to the next. Each action affects the next, until eventually the story reaches its conclusion.

One thing I have learned, and feel is not explored enough in the many screenwriting books is how important the details are to the story. The characters, the world, the situations need to feel a certain way for the audience to fully empathize and engage with the story. If a character or situation feels off, the audience loses engagement and checks out of the story. To achieve this, I tried to be as authentic to what I know, and research what I do not. The complexity and specificity of the details make the story add to the verisimilitude of the story. Because of how specific the details are in relation to the screenplay it makes it difficult to impose rules or guidelines, but it is the most important aspect of the story for me. The specificity and complexity of a character's demeanor, to their clothing, to the street that they drive on to get from point A to point B matters. It needs to be honest and real if real is what you are going for. A poor version of this movie exists. One in which the character of Eli is not a drug addicted outcast, but instead played as a romantic version of one. A more palatable version where the character is attractive, living a life unaffected by their behavior and facing superficial conflicts. That type of depiction reflects a shallowness of the writing and understanding of the world. For *Stray Bullets* I tried to be honest. Eli lies and puts innocent people in danger. He has visible wounds on his body reflecting the horrible health his life has put him in. He has no money, lives in an RV park, and has an estranged relationship with his family. Similarly with Eli, Grace needed to be a fully realized character. This is an especially noticeable problem in screenwriting with female characters as they often only exist to support the male. This was difficult because the story is about addicts and crime. Often very male centric worlds. At the same time Eli is the protagonist

of the story and does drive the plot. He is also someone that needs help. The approach I took with Grace was first to make sure she has agency in the story. It is her decision to visit their Aunt and Uncle and let Eli stay the night. It is her decision later in the story to go after Eli when he runs to the farmhouse. Her actions help shape the plot of the story, even though she is not the main protagonist. It was important to give her flaws as well as strengths. She is controlling and dismissive, but also empathetic. I did not want the character to become the mom or the harpy that yells at the characters for having fun, which is something seen in so many films and tv shows. While she does have the most moral values in the story, that does not mean her behavior has to reflect be one note. She is sarcastic, kind, and has a sense of humor, while still having a moral code. Without those details, the story becomes superficial. The characters do not matter, the themes do not resonate, and the story becomes nothing more than an exercise in spectacle. The complexity and specific details are important for the antagonists of the story as well. The violent characters in this story, the murderers, drug dealers and addicts need to have the same amount of care and attention put in. Their relationships, their behavior, their reasons for doing what they do need to come from someplace real. The audience will be able to understand a physical threat, but a physical threat is a surface level one. A character that is relatable, says something about the world and creates empathy for the audience. For Leo I wanted to not have him behave like a killer or gangster, but like a boss. Someone who is carrying and supportive but is using other characters. This type of person is more personal and makes the character more interesting and the situation more dramatic. For Jackie I wanted the character to behave not like a hired killer, but someone with a code. Who views the addicts as deserving and through the course of the story finds his views challenged when they pursue Eli. I have realized that great fiction does this already. Amateur screen writers will draft stories of good versus evil, heroes versus

villains, but great work of fiction will reflect a depth and complexity that is not just about overcoming obstacles but reflecting the difficult realities of life.

For the setting I chose to focus the story in a rural area of Texas. I grew up in a large town in Northern California and often lived in poor areas ripe with addicts and shady characters and unfortunately those parts of the story I didn't need to do much research on. Dead patches of grass, empty trailer parks, old sedans, broken down pick-ups are things I am all too familiar with. For the interiors I wanted to give a specific feeling by showing the dirtiness of the world. Stash houses filled with trash, RVs piled with food, burnt foil on the floor, etc. All the details included in give validity to the location and create a feeling of the world.

I wanted to capture the appeal of genre fiction with realism. These two elements are the aspects of a story that I enjoy reading and watching. The dramatic and the personal. The way I was able to combine these elements in *Stray Bullets* was by introducing an immediate dramatic problem for the characters to force them to go in directions that they would not normally go. The physical and external threat forces them to address internal problems that they have previously been able to avoid. For *Stray Bullets* I wanted to address family trauma, estranged relationships, the effects of addiction on a family. I have found that there have not been any films or literature that have been able to articulate what I have felt and experienced. One of the aspects I wanted to address is how negative relationships and substance abuse influence each other. *Screenwriting: Writing the Picture* identifies theme as “it’s the philosophical point of the story that they hope will generate a strong emotional and/or intellectual experience for their audience. (62).” Often in films or books drug use is depicted as being the cause of the fracture of a family, with the addict either being a villain or victim. I wanted to show addiction and the strained relationships to be influencing each other. Eli’s addiction issues effect his relationships with his family, but his

relationships with his families can cause him to seek out drugs as a coping mechanism, which then causes more strain on his relationships, which then causes him to drift further away. I tried to do this by showing how it has affected Eli physically, with his scars and over unhealthy appearance, his living conditions, his comfort with his poor quality of life. Additionally, I tried to indicate this with when and how he uses drugs in the story. In the beginning, immediately after witnessing the killings, at night when he needs to sleep showing he has a dependency issue, and immediately after his fight with his aunt and uncle.

I also wanted to use the story to show what morality is. Eli is a self-destructive character throughout the story, often behaving selfishly and engaging in unlawful behavior. Yet, throughout the story he shows tremendous kindness to other people. To Paul, he buys him food and tries to give him money when he must leave, to Grace when she is embarrassed about her car or home, he assures her that it is fine, and she is doing great. And at the end of the story, he makes the choice to stand up for Grace when his friends try to get her to take drink and take drugs. At the same time, we see Paul and Rose, who are two law abiding, good people. Yet they criticize Grace unprovoked, show disgust to Eli, and act very coldly to the two of them. I wanted to raise questions of how we view people and ethics and show that it is not a simple measurement of legal or illegal actions.

Many of the difficulties I faced could have been avoided if I had approached the screenplay differently. In terms of content the main hurdle I faced was the changing point of views of the characters and their respective arcs. One of the ambitions of *Stray Bullets* was the approach to character arcs and moving from one point of view to the other. There are four main characters of the story, each one with their own arc. They each have agency within the story, undergo change, and find resolution by the end. The way I was able to achieve this was to adhere

to the principles of literary fiction and limited third person point of view narration. Only writing scenes that focused on one of the four, Eli, Grace, Leo, or Jackie. Each scene is meant to focus on the characters and where they are in their respective arc as well as the progression of that plot. Trying to intertwine four-character arcs that move at similar paces, have conflict, and work within the function of plot was extremely difficult. I did not realize how challenging this was at the beginning of the story and regret attempting this. What this meant was mapping out of character arcs, outlines, and rewriting scenes until they all worked together. I did not know how to even approach such a challenge and the only way I was able figure it out in my head was to write out each arc on paper. For hundreds of pages, I would outline the story, while weaving in character beats, find a scene or route that did not work, throw the page away and start over. Eventually once the outline was at a place that I felt worked I could then write the scenes. I was not able to approach the actual writing of the screenplay until the outline was finished. *The Tools of Screenwriting* articulates this well, once the screenwriter is satisfied with the outline, they “are free to concentrate on the fine points of characterization, action, and dialogue (77).”

Along with the discovery of the character arcs, I also came to the realization the importance of maintaining the momentum of the plot. Initially I had characters have scenes that existed before the inciting incident or adjacent to the plot to show who they were and to establish their needs and wants. These scenes were functional, but they were not interesting and distracted from the main story. I ended up removing these scenes and then tried to integrate those character ideas into the main scenes of the plot. This involved expanding scenes and letting the characters stay in a location longer than originally planned. However, this ended up being a blessing because it forced me to stay in the world and with these

characters longer than I had originally wanted. The more time with them, the greater the depth. It forced me to get to know them better and really think about who they were.

There was also a difficulty I had with the language of the screenplay. The description that I wrote was clear and concise, but also repetitive and undramatic. Professor Williford was great at providing feedback and demonstrating how to make the story more cinematic. However, it is not my instinct to think or write this way, so I have learned, partly through this assignment is my approach to fix this problem. I feel the best way to do this, at least for me, is write the poor version directly, then revise it into a better phrased description. I have made many changes and the screenplay reads better and feels more professional. This is an area I still need to work on but have been able to improve significantly because of the feedback that Professor Williford provided.

It is difficult for me to give a critical assessment of *Stray Bullets* at this point because of how close I have been to it. I have been working on this screenplay for over a year and although I can see the changes and progress, I am not sure if they are better or simply different. The feedback Professor Williford has given me has been incredibly helpful and I have worked hard to try and address the problems he identified, but I am also unsure of what works or what does not. Finding the mistakes is helpful, but I still am not sure if anything works dramatically or structurally. I can proofread for any spelling or grammatical errors, attempt to clarify any confusing story beats, and revise the language, but the themes, story, characters, and dialogue I am unsure about. I have put a lot of thought and care into the story, and can provide reason for all my choices, but that intent does not influence its effect. I am looking forward to the feedback from the thesis committee and hope that will clarify the strengths and weaknesses of the script. Specifically with the characters, plot, their arcs, and themes.

The literary sources I looked both in form and content, would often approach both in their works. Writers like Ernest Hemingway, Raymond Carver, George V. Higgins, Hubert Selby Jr have all been literary figures that I have enjoyed and taken influence from. Their approach to language as well as the subjects they explore. These authors tend to write focus on the poor and working class and their stories are full of vulgarity, violence, sex, and drugs. Sparce and workman like stories that are emotionally bare. Not intended to attract the reader, but instead to show it honestly. However, I feel with these writers there is also a great affection for the people in these stories. They have great humanity in them. Have great loves, losses, sadness, and struggles. There is an extremity of great crassness and sensitivity of these works. An affection for the people, and where they come from and the ugliness of the world around them.

These writers also have similar methods in how they write prose. Additionally, I wanted to have clarity in the prose, to let the characters reveal themselves through their actions and dialogue. To me this type of prose is the most important because it is the most honest. Language that is ornate feels as though it has intention to impress and distract the reader. Often reading piles of pretense to get to a line of truth, and often that truth was not worth the effort. George Orwell once wrote an essay describing his prose as looking through a windowpane. That purple prose was like looking through a stained-glass window, beautiful and intricate, but sometimes muddied what you were seeing. While a clear windowpane has no art or beauty to it, so that it does not obscure. One of the main elements of the craft of screenwriting that is important to me is the language of the screenplay. Like Raymond Carver and Ernest Hemingway, the screenwriters I looked to adopted some of the same techniques which would affect the overall readability of the script. Truthfully, I did not really look to any writers for influence as much as it was that I wrote the

screenplay the way I wanted to and then later found professional writers who could justify my decisions. Walter Hill, the screenwriter of *The Driver*, *The Getaway* and *The Warriors*, was one such writer. Hill who was also influenced by Hemingway, wrote action lines that were short, used few adverbs and adjectives, and valued clarity and directness. Aside from the language of the screenplay, the themes, and characters of Elia Kazan's *On the Waterfront* was something I took influence from as well. Unlike most genre films the characters of *On the Waterfront* had a depth and humanity to them. Not villains or heroes, but complex people that have histories and live as part of a community. The violence in the film is not romantic, but ugly and real. I tried to emulate both the language of Walter Hill and the depth of Elia Kazan.

More directly I also looked at *The Godfather* and *Casablanca* as influences. In the opening of *Stray Bullets* I tried to mimic the opening of *The Godfather*. The opening of *The Godfather* begins on a close up of a man giving a monologue. He tells a story about his past and coming to America and the events that led up to a violent attack that involved his daughter. The screenplay does not begin with an exterior establishing shot, but an extreme close up. Starting in media res and the audience must piece together what is happening. As the man continues his speech the camera pulls back, and we see the other people in the room with him. We realize these men are gangsters and he is asking for their help in getting revenge. We also realize that the speech isn't also about him but reflects the theme of the movie. Of the Italian immigration experience in America, of family, and the cause and effects of violence. After that scene the men leave the room, and the story begins. I wanted to achieve that same thing in *Stray Bullets*. The story opens in medias res on a young man sitting alone in a bedroom. An older man comes into the room and begins to talk to him and persuades him into doing something he does not want to do. As he continues his convincing, the screenplay reveals more information, and the reader

gains a greater understanding of what is happening. Through this opening we learn who three of the main characters are. We see what Eli wants and needs, what conflicts there are, and Leo reminds Eli how alone he is. This reflects the theme of the story that also starts the plot and introduces the characters.

For *Casablanca*, the main element I took from it was its structure, pace, and transitions. *Casablanca* mostly takes place indoors with people talking, and yet there is a liveliness to it. It does not waste any shots; every character is doing multiple things at once. The writers have a story to tell, and they waste no time telling it. It also begins with an act of violence, tells a story that deals with characters past that causes them to change, and then concludes with a final act of violence mirroring the same action at the beginning of the story. All these things I attempted to do in *Stray Bullets*. There are other aspects as well. Who the characters are at the beginning are not who they are by the end. They undergo change because of who that meet and what they do in the story. This is demonstrated in the story as the location and situations at the beginning and the end mirror each other and only the character's decision results in a different outcome. We directly see a mirror opening and conclusion that demonstrates that. I tried this approach as well. The story begins and ends with violence.

4796 Words

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STRAY BULLETS

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Thesis II
Final Draft - May 12th, 2023
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White letters on a black screen:

The dragon is by the side of the road, watching those who pass. Beware lest he devour you. We go to the father of souls, but it is necessary to pass by the dragon. -

St. Cyril of Jerusalem.

FADE IN:

INT. STASH HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

ELIJAH PÉREZ, 25, is sitting on the edge of the bed with his head down. He is wearing an old stained t-shirt and a pair of jeans covered with cigarette burns. He has bandages on his fingers and bruises on his arm. He breaths slowly, trying to calm himself.

INT. STASH HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

LEO KEMP, 60, KNOCKS on the door. Leo wears old tennis shoes, khakis, and trucker jacket. A grandfather, soft spoken and empathetic.

INT. STASH HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

LEO
Everything all right?

Eli looks up at Leo.

ELI
Just wanted to catch my breath.

LEO
You do that.

Leo walks into the room and sits next to Eli, patting Eli on the shoulder. Eli flinches at the touch.

LEO (CONT'D)
You did good today. Never would've
have found this place if it wasn't
for you.

ELI
I thought it was just money we were
after. I didn't think anyone would
get hurt.

LEO

That's what we'd hoped, but some times these kind of things go sideways and you never know how they're going to turn out. I tell you, it's a good thing we were prepared. Things could have turned out very different.

ELI

They weren't bad guys though. I think they just didn't know what they were doing.

LEO

You think that because you're a good kid who thinks too highly of people, take people at their word, trust them, but people like this, they'll take advantage. They had their chance, multiple times, and they blew it.

Leo pats Eli on the shoulder and stands up from the bed.

LEO (CONT'D)

Come on, you just need some fresh air. We all do. Let's get you outside and out of this mess.

ELI

I was wondering, after today. I was thinkin of going back home. Taking a break for a while.

Leo stares at Eli, shakes his head, then sits, back on the bed.

LEO

You not happy?

Outside of the room a loud BANG from a shotgun. Eli jerks up when he hears it. Leo doesn't flinch. Shaken, Eli tries to talk to Leo.

ELI

Not that. I was just thinking of getting a normal job. Maybe get clean. Trying to give that another shot.

LEO

A few days rest would be good for all of us.

(MORE)

LEO (CONT'D)

Anything we can do to help, and, look if you ain't happy here you don't got to stay. But have you thought it through? You still got that warrant out on you right?

Eli nods his head.

LEO (CONT'D)

So what happens with that? You get picked up that's a felony charge. A blackmark. Get one of those, and that's it for you. You end up flipping burgers or cleaning toilets for the rest of your life. And that's only if you're lucky.

ELI

I know, but...

LEO

Okay, what about money? You got any saved up?

Eli shakes his head.

LEO (CONT'D)

Didn't think so. You got a place you can stay? How's your credit? You can't rent any place legitimate, not with that warrant.

Leo looks away from Eli, wipes the sweat from his brow and continues.

LEO (CONT'D)

Look, it's not just you. Everyone's hurting right now. People with education, law abiding citizens with clean records have trouble getting work. And it'll be a hundred times harder for you. People drive their cars as taxis, renting out rooms like hotels. I ain't never seen anything like it before. Country turning to a third world country and nobody fucking says a thing.

Another loud BANG goes off just outside the door, Eli jerks again, but Leo doesn't flinch. Glass breaks and a muffled scream. The gun FIRES again, then silence.

LEO (CONT'D)

I just don't think that kind of life is in the cards for you. You know? At least not right now.

ELI

I'm not sleeping anymore. I'm not eating anything. And I've got-

LEO

Tell you what. Tomorrow's going to be easy. Just drive around a bit and take the rest of the day off. Get some air, spend some of that money. If you still feel this way tomorrow, then you don't have to go. That sound all right with you?

Eli nods. Eli looks up and sees JACKIE COYLE, 30, holding a shotgun at his side. Jackie is wearing black cargo pants, with the cuff rolled into his black combat boots. A khaki shirt under a olive green military jacket. Along with a waist belt, black gloves and a pair of earplugs. Jackie takes out his earplugs, puts them in his pocket and racks his shotgun.

JACKIE

Everything good?

Leo nods.

LEO

Yeah, yeah, everything's fine. He is just not feeling well. He'll go outside and get some air while we finish up in here.

Leo stands from the bed and walks toward Jackie.

LEO (CONT'D)

We about done?

JACKIE

Yeah, just about. They had some cash in the back.

LEO

Oh really? Guess they weren't so broke after all.

Eli gets up from the bed. Leo puts his arm on Eli's shoulder.

LEO (CONT'D)

Just go wait out in the car, we'll be done in just a bit.

Eli walks to Jackie. Jackie steps aside to let him through.

INT. STASH HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eli steps into the living room. Nailed to the walls above the windows are blankets blocking the light. Garbage on the floor, piles of dirty dishes and food left out.

Eli walks to the front door while Jackie and Leo behind.

LEO
Geez, what a mess.

Leo rubs his eyes.

Eli steps over the body of a man, but stops when the body makes a noise. Eli stops and looks back at Jackie and Leo.

Jackie is emptying the shell casings of his shotgun, Leo is in the backroom sorting through something.

Eli opens the door and exits the house.

EXT. STASH HOUSE - DAY

The stash house is isolated in an empty area. Old lawn chairs, a plastic table are outside and empty beer bottles and cigarette butts on the ground. A black town car is parked outside the home.

Eli walks to the car. Eli reaches in his backpack and pulls out an orange pill container and a bottle of water. He takes the pill, drinks some of the water and zips the bag back up. He opens up the backseat of the car, throws his bag inside and lies down inside.

He sits up when the house door SLAMS shut, alerting him.

Jackie walks to the car, holding two duffle bags. He opens up the trunk and throws the bags inside.

JACKIE
We're just about done.

Jackie shuts the trunk and walks to the passenger seat. He reaches in his pocket and pulls out some money.

Jackie hands Eli the money.

ELI
What's this?

JACKIE
For the job. We got paid.

Jackie waves it.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
Take it, before anyone sees.

Eli grabs the money and puts it in his pocket.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
You all right?

ELI
They're all dead?

Jackie nods.

ELI (CONT'D)
I didn't think anybody was going to get hurt. I thought I'd just be making deliveries or collecting stuff. Not this.

JACKIE
Well, things got out of hand today, but we took care of it.

ELI
If I didn't call you, they'd still be alive.

JACKIE
It's not on you. I'm the one who pulled the trigger. They brought this on themselves anyways. Leo said they'd been shorting him for months.

ELI
But maybe they didn't know. Or maybe they didn't have a choice or were desperate.

JACKIE
Maybe. Lot of maybes. Maybe they'd have gotten worse. Maybe they start trafficking people in a couple years. You don't know.

The door to the house SLAMS shut.

Leo walks to the car with a bag in his hand.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
Look, Leo's the only one who will
give you a job. He only did that
because I spoke for you. Don't make
me regret that.

Eli doesn't respond.

Jackie turns back and hits him in his arm. Eli looks up,
rubbing his arm.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
You listening to me? Act right
around him. Even if you ain't
right.

Leo puts the bag in the trunk and moves to the front seat.

LEO
Feeling better?

Eli nods.

JACKIE
He's okay. Just needed some air.

LEO
Good. Glad to hear it. Tomorrow
will be good for you. Just making a
couple house calls. It'd be good
for you, a nice easy day. No more
guns and shit. Okay?

Eli nods.

Leo starts the car, looks up at Eli through the rear view
mirror.

LEO (TO ELI) (CONT'D)
Put your seatbelt on. I don't wanna
get pulled over for something
stupid.

Eli puts on his seatbelt and looks back at the house.

ELI
What about the bodies? Won't cops
be looking?

LEO
Nah. Nobody cares about a bunch of
junkies.

Eli slinks back into his seat.

Leo puts the car in drive and pulls away.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

The black sedan pulls into a gas station and the backseat door opens.

INT. TOWN CAR - DAY

Leo and Jackie are sitting in the front seat of the car.

LEO
This all right?

ELI
Yeah, this is good.

Eli takes off his seatbelt and opens the door.

Leo looks back to Eli before he gets out.

LEO
We'll be back sometime in the morning. Just some pickups.

JACKIE
Be where we can find you. I don't want to go looking for you.

Eli exits the car and shuts the door behind.

Leo looks over to Jackie.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
What?

LEO
He tell you where he lives? He don't show up tomorrow?

JACKIE
He didn't tell me where he lives, but I know where he lives.

LEO
Okay, good.

JACKIE
He just got spooked a little.

LEO

I don't like the way he's acting.
Making me nervous. Part of me
thinks we should have taken care of
him back at the house.

JACKIE

He'll be all right. Give him a day
to get his head on straight. He'll
pull through.

LEO

He better. I'm giving him the day
cause you say so.

JACKIE

He will.

Jackie looks through window, where Eli was walking. Leo pulls
out of the gas station.

EXT. GARAGE - DAY

Leo and Jackie pull into an auto repair shop. Leo stops the
car in front of the garage and honks his horn twice. The
doors open and Leo drives inside.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

A MECHANIC, 30's, wearing overalls, a painter's mask and
safety glasses holds the switch to the garage door. The door
closes and for a minute there is total darkness, the lights
FLICKER on.

The car rolls to a stop and the trunk pops open. Jackie and
Leo exit and begin to unload the bags onto a dolly.

RENEE, 60's, steps out from the back and stops in front of
the car. Renee, in matching pants and shirt with a logo of
the shop, rubs his hands with an oil rag.

Leo stops unloading and looks to Renee.

LEO

What? Something a matter?

RENEE

We got a problem.

Renee turns back around and walks into the back. Leo follows
behind.

INT. GARAGE OFFICE - DAY

Renee and Leo walk inside the office. Renee sits behind the desk, Leo across. Renee pulls out a bottle of whiskey from the bottom drawer and two glasses. He pours two glasses and sets the bottle on the desk.

RENEE

Want to tell me what happened?

LEO

Why? What's going on?

RENEE

Tell me what happened first. I
wanna hear it from you.

Renee stands up, moves to the door and SLAMS it shut.

INT. GARAGE BACK ROOM - DAY

Jackie and the Mechanic roll the dolly into a back room. Cardboard boxes are stacked on the shelves. The Mechanic pulls a box off the shelf. Jackie opens up a duffel bag.

INSERT: THE LABELS READ: M/30. 26 'FARM. ALPRAZOLAM 90
COUNTY.

Jackie hands him two bags.

Leo opens another duffel bag, pulls out a clear bag and reads the label.

JACKIE

Oxy.

MECHANIC

What happened out there?

JACKIE

Nothing. Leo thought they were
holding out. We went to check it
out, a couple of them pulled, and
it got violent.

MECHANIC

Shit. Thought it was just supposed
to be a pick up?

JACKIE

It was supposed to, but that's how
it played out.

MECHANIC
Always does with Leo.

Jackie frowns, upset at the comment.

JACKIE
Wasn't Leo. They were carrying.

MECHANIC
They always are with him.

Jackie shrugs.

JACKIE
Better to not have any lose ends
anyways.

MECHANIC
That's cold.

JACKIE
You weren't there all right? They
were dope heads.

Jackie takes out the last of the bags, and throws the duffel bag on the shelf.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
Trash everywhere, no furniture,
place smelled like shit. Living
like animals. They were headed that
way anyways.

Jackie rolls the dolly outside into the hallway and heads back to the garage. The Mechanic turns off the lights and follows behind.

INT. GARAGE OFFICE - DAY

Leo and Renee are sitting in the office. Glasses half empty and a bottle of whiskey on the desk.

RENEE
I thought you were going to go in,
take the money and leave. I didn't
want any bodies.

LEO
I didn't want it to either, but
that's what happened. Unavoidable.

RENEE

Unavoidable, huh? It always gets bloody with you. No matter the job. Only one of my guys that it happens to.

Renee takes the whiskey, unscrews the top and fills his glass up. Leo grabs his glass and moves it toward Renee. Renee ignores Leo and puts the bottle back in the drawer.

LEO

Just bad luck is all. We got everything we wanted with no witnesses. I don't see what the big deal is.

RENEE

I don't like escalation Leo. That brings unwanted attention. Which is what we've got now.

LEO

What are you talking about?

RENEE

Thanks to you, the police got involved.

LEO

What? How? There was no one there.

RENEE

There was a CI. The serials on the bills were marked.

LEO

How--?

RENEE

Don't worry about how I know. Just now understand the police are going to be looking a lot closer now. Especially now that they got half a dozen bodies to go along with the missing cash.

Leo shrugs.

LEO

Let them look. They won't find nothing.

RENEE

You seem confident.

LEO
We were clean. Nothing left behind.

RENEE
No survivors?

Leo shakes his head.

RENEE (CONT'D)
And the money?

LEO
Being unloaded as we speak.

RENEE
All of it?

Leo nods.

LEO
Yeah. It's all there.

Leo shrugs and finishes what's left of his drink. It's down to the ice.

Renee shakes his head.

LEO (CONT'D)
What about the pills? You think they got a way to track that?

RENEE
None that I can see. I'm going to have a guy check if it's clean. The money, though, that's going to be a problem

LEO
We could try moving it around. Clean it that way.

RENEE
Can't risk it. One bill spent at the wrong place, cops will be pull up camera footage, cell signals, whatever else they look at.

Renee finishes his drink and stands up. He moves to the door and opens it.

RENEE (CONT'D)
We got to burn it.

Leo stands up and follows Renee out the door.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Renee and Leo walk over to the back of the car and look at the money in the trunk.

Jackie and the Mechanic are by the car, sitting down with drinks in their hands.

RENEE

Here, pull the trash can over.

The Mechanic puts his drink down, stands up and rolls the black trash can to the car. Leo and Renee take the money from the trunk and throw it into the trash. Jackie walks over to Leo.

LEO (TO JACKIE)

You know what this is about?

Jackie shakes his head.

LEO (CONT'D)

He thinks the bills might be marked.

JACKIE

Thinks? Not sure?

RENEE

No, but I'm not risking it.

Renee throws a match into the trash can full of money.

Jackie and Leo shake their heads as they watch their hard work burn.

Jackie pulls out his shotgun from the trunk.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Put that away. I don't want you driving around with that in the trunk.

JACKIE

What about tomorrow? We still making our rounds?

RENEE

No. I don't want you guys doing anything for the next few weeks. Until I know everything has died down. Just keep your heads down and I'll let you know when it's clear.

Jackie looks to Leo, who nods, regrettably. Jackie drops his shotgun onto a table.

Leo shuts the trunk and moves to the front of the car. He opens the door.

LEO
Got to let Eli know we don't need
him.

JACKIE
Shit.

LEO
What?

JACKIE
I gave Eli some of the cash that
was from the house.

LEO
The marked cash?

Jackie nods.

LEO (CONT'D)
What? When?

JACKIE
Outside by the car. He was all
mopey and shit.

Leo looks to Renee.

RENEE
Eli? Who the fuck is Eli?

Jackie steps forward, taking ownership.

JACKIE
A guy I hooked them up with. A
runner. He knew where the house
was. He called once he was inside.

RENEE
A junkie?

JACKIE
But he's reliable. He won't snitch.

RENEE
A reliable junkie? You're serious?

Jackie shrugs.

RENEE (TO LEO) (CONT'D)
No. I'm not risking it. You two
take care of it.

Leo glances over to Jackie, before the two of them get into the car. The Mechanic walks over to the garage switch, turns it on and raises the shop doors.

RENEE (CONT'D)
I don't want any lose ends.

Renee walks back to the office. Leo and Jackie get into the car and pull out of the shop.

EXT. RV PARK - DAY

Two rows of RV's are parked alongside each other in a large dirt area. The trailers old and weathered.

Eli walks down the middle of the rows to one an RV in the back of the park.

INT. RV CABIN - DAY

Eli steps inside and closes the door behind him.

INT. RV KITCHEN - DAY

Eli walks into the kitchen, takes off his backpack and starts unloading items from his bag.

VOICE (O.S.)
Eli, that you?

ELI
Yeah. I got some groceries if
you're hungry.

At the other end of the RV is PAUL POPE, 50's, wearing an old t-shirt, shorts, and no shoes. His skin is sunburned, and his face unshaven. He speaks slowly and can barely keep his eyes open. He is under the influence.

He walks into the kitchen.

PAUL
What time is it?

Eli takes out cans of food, packages of ramen, a loaf of bread and sets them on the counter.

ELI
I got some food.

Paul sees the food and smiles.

PAUL
Thanks man, I'm starving.

Eli walks out of the kitchen with his backpack. Paul grabs some bread and peanut butter and starts to make himself a sandwich.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Want me to make you one?

ELI (O.S.)
No thanks, I'm good.

INT. RV CABIN - DAY

Eli rummages through the back of the cabin, grabs some clothes, and throws them in his backpack.

Paul walks out of the kitchen, eating a sandwich, looking at Eli.

PAUL
You going somewhere?

INT. RV BATHROOM - DAY

Eli takes off his shoe and runs it under the sink. He tries to rub out the dried blood.

ELI
Yeah. I got to get out of here. I think I might be in trouble.

Paul walks inside the bathroom, eating his sandwich. He sees the blood on Eli's shoe.

Eli doesn't respond.

PAUL
From the job you did?

ELI
Yeah. That's why I got to go.

PAUL
You screw something up?

ELI

No. I don't know. I just know they
don't want me leaving.

Eli puts his shoe back on, grabs his toothbrush, deodorant,
and throws it in his bag. Eli walks out of the bathroom.

Paul follows.

PAUL

You want to tell me what happened?

ELI

Better if I don't.

PAUL

But that's why your going?
Something happen?

Eli doesn't answer. He looks around the RV and then looks
into his bag.

ELI

I forget anything?

Paul holds out his hands trying to calm Eli down.

PAUL

Calm down a second. Where are you
going?

Eli sits down. He reaches in his bag and pulls out a bus
ticket.

Paul grabs it and looks it over.

PAUL (CONT'D)

El Paso?

Eli nods.

ELI

At first, then going to go down to
Juárez.

PAUL

You crazy? They got border patrol
on every inch of that place.

ELI

Not going in they don't.

PAUL

It says Thursday.

ELI
Earliest I could get. Just got to
last a few days and then I'm out of
here.

PAUL
And you can't stay here till then?

Eli shakes his head.

PAUL (CONT'D)
And you won't tell me why?

Eli shakes his head again.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You know anyone in Juárez?

ELI
No, and that's the point. Be
completely free. Warrants no good
down there. I can work wherever,
get my own place. Start over.

Paul sighs and gives back Eli his bus ticket.

PAUL
Well, good luck man. I'm happy for
you. I guess.

Eli puts it back into his backpack.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You just going to hang around till
Thursday?

ELI
That's the plan.

PAUL
Well, shit. Just find a place to
lay low until then. You can do
that.

Eli reaches into his pocket and pulls out some money to give
to Paul.

PAUL (CONT'D)
What's that for?

ELI
Rent. I'm not going to be here.

Paul waves it away.

PAUL

I'll be all right. Besides, you're going to need it more than I will, starting over like that.

Eli puts it back in his pocket.

ELI

Thanks. You going to be okay if I go?

PAUL

I got a few weeks until the end of the month. I'll figure out something.

ELI

I mean if they come here? Looking for me?

PAUL

I just wont open the door.

Eli grabs Paul's shoulders to get him to pay attention.

ELI

If they do you can disappear for a couple hours it might be a good idea to do that. You got somewhere you can be?

PAUL

No. But don't worry. I'll be fine. I just won't answer the door. It's okay.

Eli stands.

ELI

Sooner I go, the better it will be.

Eli looks around and sees how empty the RV is.

Paul walks to the door and opens it.

ELI (CONT'D)

I thought I had more stuff.

Eli walks over to Paul shakes his hand.

PAUL

Good luck man. Take care of yourself. Give me a ring when you make it down there.

Paul nods and shakes Eli's hand. Eli stops at the door and opens it. He hesitates.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You know where you're going?

ELI
Yeah. It's just been a while.

Eli looks outside, exits the trailer and shuts the door behind.

EXT. RV PARK - NIGHT

Leo's car pulls up to the trailer. Leo and Jackie step out of the car, go to the door and knock on it.

No answer.

LEO (TO JACKIE)
Open it up.

Jackie reaches into his pocket and pulls out a screw driver and pries the door open.

Leo looks around for witnesses and the two step inside.

INT. RV CABIN - NIGHT

Leo and Jackie walk into the RV and shut the door behind. Leo looks around the RV.

There is food and trash on the kitchen counter. Empty bottles and cans.

JACKIE
Eli, you here?

LEO
What a mess.

Leo walks over to the end of the cabin. He digs around a pile of blankets.

Jackie moves to the other end of the cabin and rifles through some newspapers and pulls out a piece of cardboard. Black sharpie on a cardboard sign.

IT READS: "NEED MONEY. ANYTHING HELPS."

He drops the sign, and walks toward the bathroom door. He presses his ear against the door. He looks back to Leo.

JACKIE (TO LEO)

Hey.

Leo turns and looks. Jackie gestures toward the bathroom, Leo walks over.

Leo knocks on the door.

LEO

Hello? Anybody inside?

Leo cracks open the door and peaks his head in.

INT. RV BATHROOM - NIGHT

Paul sits naked in the bathtub with his eyes shut and wearing headphones. A SMOKING burnt piece of foil is on the ground next to the tub.

Jackie holds the door open and Leo walks further in. Leo waves his hand in front of Paul.

Paul doesn't answer. Leo snaps his fingers a few times in front of him.

He pulls off the headphones.

LEO

Hello? Anybody home?

Paul opens his eyes a little.

LEO (CONT'D)

You not hear us knocking on the door back there?

Paul turns to Leo.

LEO (CONT'D)

We're looking for Eli? You know Eli?

PAUL (MUMBLING)

I know Eli.

LEO

Is he here? Is Eli here?

Paul looks around, but doesn't answer.

PAUL (MUMBLING)

I don't see him.

Leo looks back at Jackie and Jackie shrugs.

LEO
You know where he went?

Paul shakes his head.

Leo reaches in his pocket and pulls out his wallet. He takes out a few hundred dollar bills and sets them on the edge of the tub.

LEO (CONT'D)
Eli helped us out and we just wanted to make sure he got paid for all the work he did. You know where he went?

Paul sits up.

PAUL
You can leave it with me. I'll give it to him.

LEO
I'd like to, but I got to make sure it's okay with him first. Only way I can do that is if I talk to him. We just need his number. Okay? Just want to talk.

Paul doesn't respond. Leo grabs the money and puts it back into his pocket.

LEO (CONT'D)
That's okay. No harm done.

Leo stands up.

LEO (CONT'D)
I think I saw someone in the office when we were outside, maybe they'll be able to help.

LEO (CONT'D)
Sorry for bothering you.

Paul turns to them as they are about to exit.

PAUL
You're just going to talk? That's it?

LEO
That's it, just need a number.

Paul nods.

PAUL
Okay, I'll tell you. You got a pen?

Leo takes out the money and puts it onto the bathroom counter.

EXT. RV PARK - NIGHT

Leo and Jackie get in the car.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Leo starts the car. Jackie turns to him.

LEO
I knew we shouldn't let him leave the house. The moment he started acting weird.

JACKIE
He's got that warrant out. He ain't going to the cops.

Leo shakes his head.

LEO
He's a goddamn junkie. How long before he gets picked up by the cops? Looking the way he does? It's only a matter of time. And when they do, how long before he tries to make a deal for himself.

JACKIE
But he didn't do--

LEO
But nothing. Right now, it's a small problem, but he goes to cops, then it's a big problem, one that we won't be able to control.

Leo pulls out a cough drop from the ash tray and puts it in his mouth.

LEO (CONT'D)
You still got your friend over in Lubbock?

Jackie nods.

JACKIE

The contractor? Yeah. You want me to give him a call?

Leo pauses and thinks it over.

LEO

Yeah. I'm think we might have to.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

GRACE PÉREZ, mid-20's, asleep in her bed when she is awakened by KNOCKING on her front door. She gets up.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Grace walks to the front door. She looks through the door window and is surprised at who she sees.

GRACE

Eli?

EXT. GRACE'S HOUSE - DAY

Grace opens the door and sees Eli standing at the front door.

ELI

Hey Grace.

Grace looks him over. His ragged clothes and backpack show some signs for concern.

GRACE

Eli? What are you doing here?

ELI

I didn't have your number. I wasn't sure if it'd be okay to stop by. I can go if it's not a good time.

GRACE

No. It's find. Just surprised. Come on in.

Grace steps away from the door and Eli steps inside.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - DAY

Grace turns on some of the lights.

GRACE

Have a seat. Want something to drink?

ELI

Sure. Anything cold is fine.

Eli walks over to the kitchen table and sits down at a chair.

Grace walks inside the kitchen and pulls out two glasses and sets them on the counter.

GRACE

How long have you been in town?

ELI

A couple weeks. I wasn't sure if you were still living here.

Grace fills the glasses with ice and water.

GRACE

Yeah same place. Same job too. Haven't really done much since you've been gone.

Grace walks over to Eli, puts down the drinks on the table and sits down.

ELI

You got your own place, your own car, a job. That's something.

GRACE

A house falling apart, a car that barely runs, a job that doesn't pay.

ELI

That's still pretty good.

She shrugs.

GRACE

I guess.

She looks him over.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Your hairs different.

ELI

Yeah.

GRACE
Lost some weigh too.

ELI
Yeah.

GRACE
Everything all right?

ELI
Yeah. Just thought I'd come see
you. That okay?

GRACE
It is been four years. You just
coming by out of the blue like that
is kinda strange.

ELI
Yeah.

GRACE
I didn't even know you were in
town. Geez, I didn't even know if
you were alive.

ELI
I moved around a lot. But I'm back
now so.

GRACE
Where you staying?

ELI
I have some friends up north I
might stay with.

Grace takes a sip of her drink.

ELI (CONT'D)
Hey, do you still have the box that
Dad left?

GRACE
Yeah, it's in the closet. You want
something from it?

Grace gets up and walks down the hallway into her room.

ELI
I was just curious. You don't have
to--

GRACE

No, it's fine. I got it right here.

Grace walks back into the kitchen with the box and sets it on the table.

GRACE (CONT'D)

He didn't have much when he left.

Grace takes off the lid and sets it on the table.

Eli stands up and looks in the box.

ELI

His army stuff in here?

GRACE

No, that's at Dales. Is that what you were looking for?

ELI

Yeah. Sort of.

GRACE

This is just some old photos, yearbooks, adoption stuff. Things like that.

Eli rifles through the papers, but doesn't find what he is looking for. He puts the lid back on the box and sits back down.

ELI

Dales? He and Rose still down in Lubbock?

GRACE

Yeah same place, but they just sold their house. Dale retired and they're going to move to Colorado.

ELI

You talk to them?

GRACE

Yeah, like every month or so. Go visit them around the holidays.

ELI

They doing okay? I mean, no big changes? Healthy and everything?

GRACE

They're good. They ask about you,
from time to time. Wondering if I
heard anything.

Eli nods.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I'm sure they'd like to see you.

ELI

I don't know about that.

GRACE

It's been a long time. I'm sure
it's water under the bridge.

Eli shrugs.

ELI

Well, it's getting late. I should
probably get going.

Eli finishes his drink and stands up.

GRACE

You just got here.

ELI

I know, but I'm still not sure
where I'm staying. If my friends
don't pick up their phone I got to
find another place. Plus I've got
laundry to do, wanted to get
something to eat. Then I got to
head back--

GRACE

You should stay.

ELI

I can't I--

GRACE

You can stay here. For the night
even. You don't have to wait on
your friends. You can do laundry
here, have diner, sleep on the
couch.

Grace stands up. Excited at the idea.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I've got tomorrow off, we can drive over to Rose and Dale's in the morning. You said you wanted to get Dad's army stuff. We can go over there first thing in the morning.

ELI

I don't think that'd be such a good idea.

GRACE

I'll call Rose and ask okay? If she says no, we don't have to go.

ELI

I don't know.

GRACE

Just stay for dinner. I'll give her a call and see how things are. Okay?

ELI

All right, but if she says she doesn't want to see me, or that Dale doesn't want to, then we're not going. I don't want you forcing anything.

GRACE

Fine.

ELI

I mean it Grace.

GRACE

It's a deal.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Eli is sitting in a chair in Grace's kitchen. He's looking around the room, out of place and uncomfortable.

Grace walks into the kitchen with her phone and hangs it up.

GRACE

Rose said it's fine. We can come by around noon or so, have lunch if we want.

ELI

She didn't seem upset?

GRACE

No. She wants to see you.

ELI

And Dale?

GRACE

Dale will be at work. Rose said she wasn't going to tell him.

There's a beat. Eli nods, realizing there is still tension.

ELI

Probably for the best.

GRACE

That sound like a plan? We can head out in the morning. You'll stay the night?

ELI

Yeah, I'll stay the night. Would it be all right to take a shower? After dinner? I know you've already done a lot, but--

GRACE

Yeah, that's fine.

Grace walks over to the refrigerator and looks inside with disappointment.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I forgot how much food we have. I don't get paid until next Friday. I wasn't planning on buying groceries until then.

Grace picks up a plastic container, looks at it suspiciously and puts it back inside.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I've got eggs, some milk. Some butter.

Grace opens the drawers and looks for any other food. Eli gets up and walks over to the refrigerator. He starts to riffle through her things.

ELI

Let me see. You got all kinds of stuff. You got flour, baking soda, cheese, eggs.

GRACE

I already said eggs. You want eggs for dinner? I can make eggs.

Eli shakes his head in disappointment.

ELI

Let me do something. You are letting me stay here. Let me do something. What do you have?

Eli looks around the kitchen for cookware. Grace opens some shelves, shows him the mixing bowls and measuring cups. Eli grabs stuff out of the shelves and sets them on the counter.

Grace keeps getting in the way of his working. Eli frowns at her.

ELI (CONT'D)

Please, just sit down. I'll do everything.

GRACE

What are you doing?

ELI

Just sit back and let me work.

Grace steps back and watches.

GRACE

You can't cook.

ELI

Yes, I can.

Eli opens up the fridge, pulls out food and sets it on the counter.

GRACE

Macaroni and cheese, ramen, peanut butter and jelly.

ELI

No. I can cook real stuff. What do you think I've been doing all these years? You'll see. I've picked up a few things since I've been gone. Just wait and see.

Grace sits down and watches Eli as he cooks.

GRACE

You we're a cook? That what you've been doing?

ELI

For part of it yeah. I did everything. I washed dishes, I did prep, I baked, I worked the grill. I worked at hotels, restaurants, anything with a sink and grill and I've done it.

GRACE

Where?

ELI

Everywhere. In California, on a cruise ship in South Texas. At a resort in Mexico city.

GRACE

In Mexico? You have a passport?

Eli turns on the oven and pours water into a measuring glass.

ELI

Yes. Well sort of. It's more like I have a passport and license of someone that sort of looks like me.

Eli smiles.

Grace shakes her head in disapproval.

GRACE

Geez.

ELI

I worked for a resort down there. Right next to the ocean. People who stayed there could just wake up and walk to the beach.

GRACE

Why'd you leave?

ELI

They closed down. And some of the other people who worked there started getting busted for visas. So...

GRACE

Not there. Why'd you leave here? I mean, I know why.

ELI

I don't know. It got too hard. I could never get a handle on it. Like no matter what I did, I was always struggling, always broke, couldn't get ahead of it.

GRACE

You're doing okay now?

ELI

Of course. Things are better then ever.

Eli looks around the kitchen, opens up some drawers.

ELI (CONT'D)

You got an oven pan or something?

Grace points to the bottom rack.

Eli pulls out a muffin pan and pours the batter into it, and breaks an egg on top of the batter and sets it in the oven.

He puts the dirty dishes in the sink and turns to Grace.

ELI (CONT'D)

Okay, twenty minutes and it'll be done. Just you wait.

He walks over to the kitchen table and sits back down.

ELI (CONT'D)

I'm going to go back though. Once I get some money saved up, I'm going to go back.

GRACE

You're not going to stay here?

Eli shakes his head.

ELI

Everyone I know moved away or got arrested or died.

GRACE

Not everyone. You got family here.

ELI

Yeah, barely. But it wasn't like things were great when we we're all together. Maybe it's better for me down there. Maybe that's more important.

Grace sighs. The two sit in silence and wait for the food to finish cooking.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

The shower is on and the bathroom is full of steam. Eli is standing over the sink with his shirt off. He has scars and wounds on his back and chest. His backpack is on the counter and he is looking through it.

Eli reaches inside his backpack and takes out a bottle of pills. Eli takes one and turns on the sink to drink some water to wash it down.

There is a KNOCK on the door.

GRACE (O.S.)

I'm going to do a load of laundry if you want me to wash anything.

ELI

Yeah hold on. I got something.

Eli reaches into his bag and pulls out some clothes.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Grace is outside the bathroom with a laundry basket.

Eli opens the door and sticks his hand out, holding his dirty clothes.

GRACE

Just drop it in the basket.

ELI

What?

GRACE

Just drop it in. I don't want to touch it.

ELI

What? You serious? It's just a shirt and pants.

GRACE
I don't want to touch it!

ELI
Quit being weird.

Eli drops it in the basket. Grace starts to walk away.

GRACE
It's my house. I can be weird in my house.

ELI
You said it was a rental!

Eli SLAMS the door behind.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

Grace opens up the washer and starts to load the laundry with clothes. She pulls out Eli's shirt and sees spots of red on the inside.

She examines the clothing more closely and gets a worried look on her face.

She puts the clothes in the washer and starts it. She turns off the light.

EXT. GRACE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Outside Grace's house is quiet and peaceful. Fireflies are in the night air. A single light is coming from inside the kitchen.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Grace is asleep in her bed when she is woken by the sounds of a faucet and cleaning. She tries to dismiss the noise and go back to sleep. The noise continues. She gets up and turns on her light.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Grace walks into her kitchen and sees Eli washing the dishes.

GRACE
Eli? It's 3 in morning.

Eli looks up at Grace.

ELI

Oh hey. Sorry didn't mean to wake you.

He turns off the sink and sets the dishes on a towel.

GRACE

What's going on? What are you doing?

Grace walks closer to Eli and sees that Eli's eyes are glazed over, and he is visibly under the influence. He seems sluggish and unable to concentrate.

ELI

I couldn't sleep and I felt bad leaving everything dirty.

GRACE

It's 3 in the morning.

ELI

I know, I have trouble sleeping.

GRACE

Come on back to bed. I can finish this later. We got a long day tomorrow.

Grace walks over to Eli and puts her hands on his shoulder. She gets him to stop and walks him back to the couch.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Come on.

Eli sits down on the couch. Grace goes to the kitchen and pulls out a mug and tea.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I have some tea that might help. Just natural though, don't have anything stronger.

She puts the mug under a coffee maker and puts the tea bag inside. She wait is for the hot water to fill.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Are you cold? I can turn on the heater if you want.

Eli doesn't hear this. He is just zoned out and his head is down, barely able to keep it up.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Eli? You cold?

ELI
No, I'm fine, thank you.

Grace walks over to him and sees the pillow on the floor and the blanket crumpled into a ball. She puts the pillow on the couch and unravels the blanket and lays it out.

GRACE
It might help calm you.

ELI
I have a high tolerance; I don't think it'll work.

GRACE
Just try it. If I'm wrong no harm done.

Eli sits on the couch and starts to sip the tea.

ELI
I'm not going to be able to--

GRACE
Just try. All I'm asking.

Eli nods and Grace walks back into her room.

GRACE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Got a long drive in the morning.

She turns off the light behind her.

INT. HERMIT HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

The light turns on inside a garage. Jackie and a HERMIT, 70, enter the garage. The hermit is in a wheelchair, has long gray hair and a beard. The garage is packed full of boxes, newspapers, and crates of electronics.

The Hermit rolls next to his computer workstation and turns on the desk light.

HERMIT
You got the number?

JACKIE
Yeah it's 51-

The Hermit pulls out a yellow post-it notepad, pulls out a pencil from his drawer and sets them on the counter.

HERMIT

Write it down, I don't wanna keep asking.

Jackie writes down the number and the man grabs the post it and sets it on the computer screen.

HERMIT (CONT'D)

You know the carrier or who made it?

JACKIE

It's just a burner. Some twenty-dollar phone he got from a gas station.

HERMIT

Oh, okay. Should be easy enough. Never understood why so many dealers think those phones are hard to track.

He turns on his computer and waits for it to boot up.

HERMIT (CONT'D)

It's 800 cash. Regardless of what I find. And cops come by in a couple weeks asking about you, then you and I are done.

JACKIE

That's fine and they wont be.

Jackie pulls out his phone and shows it to the man.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

You want Venmo or--

HERMIT

Cash.

Jackie looks at his phone.

JACKIE

I can send it through--

HERMIT

Cash. Paper cash. No exceptions.

Jackie puts his phone away and pulls out his wallet.

JACKIE

All right.

Jackie takes out some money from his wallet and hands it to the Hermit.

HERMIT

Pleasure. Should just be a few minutes.

The Hermit starts to work on the computer. Jackie looks through all his stuff as the man continues to work.

JACKIE

You ever worry about the cops showing up in here? Finding all this?

HERMIT

Shit, where do you think I got most of it?

Jackie looks back confused.

HERMIT (CONT'D)

Half off it was bought from police auctions. They send me newsletters every month letting me know if something comes up. I'm probably their biggest customer.

JACKIE

And it's all legal?

HERMIT

Well, the stuff they'll be able to find is.

The hermit opens up a file on his computer, types onto his keyboard and waits for the system to scan.

Jackie looks next to the computer and picks up a pair of BCG glasses. A couple cans of RIP IT are empty next to them.

JACKIE

I can't believe you still got these.

The Hermit turns around and looks at what Jackie is holding. He sees the glasses and turns back to the computer to continue working.

HERMIT

They last. Comfortable too. Say you want about what they look like.

Jackie puts the glasses back on the desk and continues to look through his things.

JACKIE

Always about comfort with you guys.

HERMIT

Well, you can go drink your piss in the woods in 15 degree weather and I'll go have a steak diner and eight hours of sleep. That sounds fine to me.

The Hermit continues to type on his computer.

HERMIT (CONT'D)

Got something.

Jackie looks closer at the screen.

HERMIT (CONT'D)

These are pings from the past few days.

JACKIE

GPS?

HERMIT

Yeah. Looks like he's headed to down 35. Stopped moving, past hour or so.

The Hermit writes on a post it with the GPS locations on it.

HERMIT (CONT'D)

I'll put the locations and times in order on it. Bottom one is the most current.

He hands the note to Jackie.

JACKIE

All right. Let me know if it moves any.

HERMIT

Can do. Limited time table?

JACKIE
Something like that.

The Hermit nods, assessing the situation.

HERMIT
Uh-huh. Look, I don't need to know the details or anything like that, but if any of the alphabet boys come by, I don't want to be explaining myself in a courthouse couple weeks from now.

JACKIE
No, it's nothing like that. Just a junkie that fucked up. Nothing serious. Nobody gives a fuck if anything happens to him.

The Hermit nods his head, still trying to get more information.

HERMIT
He rip him off or something?

JACKIE
No. He didn't do nothing.

HERMIT
Geez. Leo sure can pick him. You need thick skin and a short memory you wanna work for that guy.

The Hermit turns off the computer and two men exit the garage.

EXT. GRACE'S HOUSE - DAY

Grace's truck is parked outside of her house with the hood open. Eli is looking in the hood of the car.

The door to Grace's home is open. Grace walks out of her house carrying an ice chest.

ELI
I don't think we'll make it.

GRACE
What are you talking about? I drive down there all the time.

ELI
When was the last time you drove
down there?

GRACE
I don't know. Christmas time I
guess.

ELI
That's almost a year ago Grace. You
have it looked at since then?

Grace doesn't answer.

ELI (CONT'D)
Grace? How long since you've taken
it to a shop?

Grace sets the ice chest in the back of the truck.

GRACE
You're just looking for an excuse
not to go.

ELI
Yeah, but that don't mean I'm wrong
either.

GRACE
We'll be fine. Worse case scenario
we need a tow.

Grace locks the door to her house and gets in the driver's
seat.

GRACE (CONT'D)
I put your bag in the front seat.

Eli shuts the hood and walks to the passenger seat. He opens
the door and looks inside.

ELI
We're only gonna be gone for a
couple hours. We need all this
stuff?

GRACE
I wanna be safe. You never know.

Eli sits in the truck and closes the door.

GRACE (CONT'D)
The ac don't work.

ELI
Yeah, I figured it didn't.

GRACE
And the radio don't work either.

ELI
What? What are we supposed to do
then? Talk?

Grace starts the car and pulls out of her driveway.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Jackie and Leo are inside a hotel room. Leo is in the bathroom, getting dressed and talking to Jackie who is in the other room.

Jackie is sitting in the chair looking around the room. His jacket is on and he looks uncomfortable.

LEO
You want some coffee? You help
yourself.

Jackie looks at the coffee pot. It's white and stained. Paper cups with spilled dried creamer next to it. A plastic red and white stirrer is inside the cup. Next to the coffee cup is a half eaten Danish that Leo bought from a vending machine.

JACKIE
No. I'm good.

LEO
I can make some more. If you want a
fresh pot.

JACKIE
No, I'm fine.

Leo steps out of the bathroom and into the room. He's wearing a tank top and spraying on his deodorant.

LEO
I'm almost ready.

JACKIE
I'm in no hurry.

LEO
Your friend going to keep you
updated if Eli moves?

JACKIE

Yeah. But I don't know for how long. Might not be worth it.

Leo starts shaving. The noise from the shaver makes it harder to hear.

LEO

Well, we got to try. Exhaust all resources.

JACKIE

Feels like a waste.

LEO

What? Hold on I can't hear you.

Leo steps inside the room.

LEO (CONT'D)

What?

JACKIE

Feels like a waste. He may not even have the phone on him. Maybe he didn't spend any of the money.

LEO

Maybe not, but we gotta be sure.

JACKIE

It's a lot of effort for a small chance.

LEO

You got plans? Cause last I checked they told us to lay low the next few days anyways.

JACKIE

That's not the point. He's got the warrant out. He's not gonna talk. We're out running around chasing after him, burning up our money for a bunch of rumors. It feels like amateur shit.

Leo stops shaving.

LEO

Yeah and whose fault is that? You were the one who told me to help your friend out. Give him a chance to make some money.

(MORE)

LEO (CONT'D)

Someone you vouched for. You were one who gave him the marked bills, when nobody fucking told you to. And you were the one who fucking told Renee that you gave him the marked bills, making us look like a couple of assholes.

JACKIE

I didn't--

LEO

You're right. It is a bunch of amateur shit. Be fucking grateful I'm willing to spend my fucking day driving you around, cleaning up your goddamn mess.

Leo walks back into the bathroom and continues to get dressed.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Grace's truck is parked on the shoulder of the highway. The hood is propped open, and a small amount of steam is coming from the engine. The doors are open and Grace is lying down in the seat with her bare feet out.

Eli, wearing his backpack, is twenty feet down the road and walking toward the truck. He walks over to the front seat and puts his bag on the front seat. His shadow blocks the sun from Grace's face, alerting her that he is there. She sits up.

ELI

Anything happen while I was gone?

GRACE

Yeah, a car came by and replaced the radiator, we drove around for an hour and then came back here and switched it back so you wouldn't notice.

Eli scowls at Grace.

ELI

Could just say no.

GRACE

I called Rose and told her we'd be late.

(MORE)

GRACE (CONT'D)

She said she'd come get is if the car won't start, but it always does.

ELI

You said the car would make it.

GRACE

It will make it. This just happens some times when it's hot out.

ELI

You could have said something earlier.

GRACE

I could have, but then you wouldn't have gone and we wouldn't have been able to spend this time together.

ELI

This isn't funny.

GRACE

We just got to wait a little bit.

Eli pulls out a can of soda and Grace grabs the bag from him. Grace looks down in the bag.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Where's the water?

ELI

I didn't get any.

GRACE

What?

ELI

It was two fifty. I'm not paying two fifty for water. I got tea and some soda. Help yourself.

GRACE

Are you kidding me? That was the entire point of you going!

Grace gets out of the car and digs into his backpack. Eli grabs his bag from her, pours out everything he bought onto the seat.

ELI

You packed water, remember? Just use the water from the ice chest.

GRACE

We drank that. I thought you were going to get more.

Grace opens up the ice chest and shows Eli the empty bottles inside.

GRACE (CONT'D)

The water was to cool down the engine. We can't cool the engine with soda and tea.

Eli shakes his head.

ELI

You can't pour water on a hot engine Grace. It will crack the manifold.

GRACE

No, it won't. I do it all the time.

ELI

Geez, I wonder why it broke down.

GRACE

That was the whole point of you walking to the gas station. Now we got to wait until the engine cools by itself. That could take hours.

ELI

I thought we were doing that anyway.

Eli shakes his head.

GRACE

Holy crap Eli.

ELI

You can go back there if you want. It's only mile and a half if you want water so badly.

Grace walks over to the engine and puts her hands over the radiator. She shakes her head annoyed. Grace walks back over to the seat and sits back down.

Eli riffles through the food on the seat and picks out a bag of chips.

ELI (CONT'D)

I got some chips, and some candy.

GRACE
I don't eat sweets.

ELI
Well, how would I know that?

Grace reaches out her hand.

GRACE
What kind of chips? What flavor?

Eli throws the bag at her.

ELI
It is free. It's flavor of free.

Grace sighs, annoyed. She takes it angrily, opens it up and eats.

Eli pulls out a drink and food and sits down in the front.

Grace turns to him.

GRACE
What else do you got in there?

ELI
Nothing. Just got all my stuff in it.

GRACE
Prescriptions?

Eli doesn't say anything.

GRACE (CONT'D)
I'm not an idiot. I know you were on something last night.

ELI
I'm not... I just need it to sleep. Calms down my nerves. It's just temporary.

GRACE
Every night?

ELI
Pretty much.

GRACE
For how long?

ELI

I don't know. A couple years or so.

Eli takes a drink of his soda. Grace walks over to the hood and tries to feel the heat coming off the engine. She walks back to the car.

GRACE

I didn't know what happened to you.
I didn't know if you were dead or
in jail.

ELI

Wasn't sure that you'd want
anything to do with me. Way I left
it.

GRACE

I wasn't thrilled with you.
Especially at the time. But that
don't mean I wanted you gone
forever.

ELI

I didn't know.

GRACE

You planning on disappearing again?

ELI

I don't know. I don't think that
far ahead.

GRACE

Well, I hope you don't.

Eli doesn't answer.

Grace sits back down in the car.

EXT. DALE'S HOUSE - DAY

Eli and Grace pull up to the house in their truck. Their Aunt ROSE PÉREZ, 50, is sitting at table with a pitcher and glasses on it. She stands up from the table and walks over to the truck to greet Grace and Eli.

Grace walks out of the truck and walks over to Rose. Rose hugs Grace. Eli walks sheepishly behind Grace, holding onto a plastic container of food. Rose looks him over, but doesn't hug him.

Rose gestures to the table behind her.

ROSE

I made some tea if you're thirsty.

Outside of the house is a table and chairs. The three of them walk to the table and chairs. Eli sets down the plastic container on the table.

GRACE

We brought cookies. Eli made them.

Rose looks to Eli, then back to Grace.

ROSE

He's staying with you?

GRACE

Last night he did. Not sure what his plans are.

Grace looks to Eli.

ELI

I'm not sure yet. Dale here?

ROSE

He's at work. Probably best if you two stay separated.

GRACE

So you have more to pack?

ROSE

Mostly got it all. Couple of the essentials, food and whatnot until we go.

Rose puts her hand over her eyes to block the sun.

ROSE (CONT'D)

We put all your stuff in the garage. It's a good thing you called, we were going to throw it out if you didn't come by.

ELI

Is it okay if I go look?

ROSE

It's your stuff. Do what you like. Anything you don't take though is going in the bin.

Eli stands up and walks to the door.

ROSE (CONT'D)
It's on the washer in the garage.

Rose gets up and opens the door for him. Eli looks down and sees that he tracked dirt on their floor.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Second on the left.

Eli walks inside, looks around the house before stepping inside.

ELI
I remember.

Eli walks into the house.

Rose shuts the door and sits back down at the table.

ROSE
No reason? Just pops back into your life?

GRACE
He said he's back in town and starting over. Just trying to reconnect.

Rose gives her a skeptical look.

Grace pauses.

GRACE (CONT'D)
I want to believe it.

ROSE
Well, Eli's going to be Eli, not much we can do about it one way or another.

GRACE
Guess so.

ROSE
Enough about Eli. I haven't seen you in a while either. What about you, what's going on with you?

GRACE
Not much. Just same as it was last time I saw you. I work, days off I do laundry, try to catch up on housework and go back to work. Same as it ever was.

ROSE
You seeing anyone?

GRACE
Why's that matter?

ROSE
So that's a no.

Grace shoots Rose a dirty look.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Time goes by faster as you get
older. Don't spend all your days
just working.

GRACE
I have friends.

ROSE
You just said you didn't do
nothing.

GRACE
I go out. Every once and a while.
We went out for my birthday. I do
all kind of things. You don't know.

Rose raises her hands, conceding the argument.

ROSE
I was just asking. You got any idea
what you're gonna do for Christmas?

GRACE
What do you mean?

ROSE
We'll be gone. You're welcome to
come up to Colorado, but don't know
if you wanna make the trip.

GRACE
I hadn't even thought of that. I
don't know.

Rose pours herself a glass of tea. Grace grabs a glass and
moves it over. She pours Grace a glass and hands it to her.

ROSE
Dale's been going around getting
everything ready for a garage sale.
Anything we don't sell is going to
the dump.

(MORE)

ROSE (CONT'D)

You should look around, see if there is anything else before we're gone.

GRACE

I'll look around, but I don't think we left anything.

ROSE

We'll you two never had much to begin with. Moving around as much as you did. Guess that was one of the perks of you two coming to live with us.

GRACE

It was easier that way.

Rose nods.

ROSE

His idea to come down here?

GRACE

He wanted Dad's army stuff. But I thought it would be good for everyone. Be like a normal family.

ROSE

You're trying to force something that shouldn't be forced. You're different people. You grew up in the same house, but that doesn't mean you're the same.

Rose picks up a pack of cigarettes that were on the table, takes one out and lights it.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Do you remember that time when we had you in that school over in Slaton? I think it was fourth grade, around then?

GRACE

Yeah, why?

ROSE

Well you remember the time where the teacher was going to send you to the principal? To get swatted?

GRACE

No. I don't remember that.

ROSE

They called Dale at work and he was so upset he drove down to the school and threatened the principal, the teachers, everyone. Made a big stink of it. Got right up in there face.

GRACE

I didn't know that.

ROSE

Only time he ever left work. Never seen him so angry.

GRACE

He never mentioned it.

ROSE

Probably didn't want you to remember. But how many times Eli got sent to the principals office? How many times you think Dale drove down?

Rose takes a sip of her drink.

ROSE (CONT'D)

The two of you are different. What's good for you might not be good for him. What Eli needs to get through this life isn't what you need. That's all I'm saying.

INT. DALE'S HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

Eli opens the door to the garage and turns on the light. He walks over to the washing machine and opens up a box that was sitting on top.

Eli sorts through books, papers and finds an old photo inside. He takes a moment to look it over. The photo is of him and Grace as children with their father. There is a birthday cake half eaten and unwrapped gifts surrounding them.

Eli looks it over and smiles. He folds the photo up and sticks it in his shirt pocket.

He digs further into the box and pulls out a wooden chest and sets it outside the box. He opens it up and inside is a military service medal, a letter and a revolver.

Eli takes out the revolver and puts it in his backpack. He closes the box, and puts it back into the box.

He pulls out his phone and dials a number.

ELI
Hey Phillip? It's Eli, how's it going man? You still up at the farmhouse?

Eli turns off the light and walks out the door.

EXT. DALE'S HOUSE - DAY

Eli walks outside the house and joins Grace and Rose at the table. He is still on his phone when he walks outside. He hangs up the phone and sits down at the table.

ROSE
You find everything you were looking for?

ELI
Yeah, wasn't a lot there. Just got some photos and some of his service stuff.

ROSE
Don't know why you came all the way down for that. I could have told you nothing was in there.

Eli looks off into the distance.

ELI
Dale get a new pick up?

Grace and Rose turn to see what Eli is looking at. A pickup truck pulls into the driveway and DALE PÉREZ, 50, gets out. Dale is wearing work boots, jeans and a flannel shirt.

DALE
You got to be shitting me!

ROSE
Dale, it's all right. He just came by for lunch.

DALE
Bullshit he did. I should be calling the cops.

ELI
I'm leaving in a bit. Don't worry
about it.

Grace turns to Eli, surprised at what he said.

GRACE
You're leaving?

ELI
Yeah, Philip is going to come pick
me up.

GRACE
Philip?

ELI
Yeah, since I'm in town he wanted
to catch up.

GRACE
You serious? I drive you down here
and you're ditching me?

ELI
I'm not ditching you. I just
haven't seen them in a few years.

GRACE
I haven't seen you either.

Dale walks to the table.

DALE
You see? This is the type of shit
he does. He doesn't care about
anyone but himself.

ROSE
Dale--

DALE
I want you gone.

Eli stands up, puts his backpack on and starts to walk away
from the house.

ELI
I'm going.

DALE
He stays any longer I'm callin the
cops.

ROSE

Dale!

ELI

Thanks for the ride Grace. See you
in another four years.

GRACE

Eli!

Eli walks down the road. He opens up his backpack, pulls out an orange pill container and swallows a pill. He continues down the road.

DALE

If he comes back I'm calling the
cops.

Dale goes inside the house.

Rose turns to Grace.

ROSE

Well, that went well.

Rose walks inside. Grace looks back at the food and glasses on the table.

GRACE

Dammit Dale.

She grabs the plastic container and walks inside the house.

INT. DALE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Dale is in the kitchen rummaging through the fridge. Grace and Rose walk in.

DALE

I don't want to hear it.

GRACE

That go the way you thought?

Grace sets the plastic food container on the kitchen table.

DALE

I said, I don't want to hear it.

GRACE

You want him gone forever? That it?

DALE
He's lucky he isn't in jail.

GRACE
What good would that do?

Dale stops looking through the fridge and looks back to Grace, surprised by what she said.

DALE
It keeps him accountable. For once
in his life. Keep him from hurting
anyone else. That's what it'd do.

Dale grabs the plastic container on the table and looks in it.

DALE (CONT'D)
This you?

GRACE
Eli made it. We brought it for you
two.

Dale throws it into the trash and goes back to searching through the refrigerator.

DALE
You're welcome to sit and have
lunch with us, but I'm done talking
about him. I got enough troubles in
my life without bringing anymore
into it.

Rose puts some plates and glasses on the table. Rose sets a tea pitcher down and sits down.

GRACE (TO ROSE)
You're not going to do anything?

ROSE
Do what Grace? I've tried to get
them to get along and it never
worked. I'm too old and tired now.

Dale pulls containers of food from the refrigerator and sets them on the table. He sits down.

Dale and Rose start to eat.

Rose looks at Grace standing with her arms crossed.

ROSE (CONT'D)
You just going to stay there eyeing
us our whole time?

Grace sighs, lets her arms fall and sits down at the table.

GRACE
I haven't seen him in four years.
We didn't know if he's alive or
dead or in jail. And now he's gone
again. Maybe forever.

DALE
Why'd he come down here anyways?
Just to visit?

ROSE
He wanted his Dad's army stuff.
That he left him.

Dale stops eating and looks at Grace in disbelief.

DALE
His army stuff? That didn't seem
off to you?

Grace doesn't answer.

DALE (CONT'D)
The gun? You think he came all this
way cause he wanted a photo?

Dale shakes his head, goes back to eating.

DALE (CONT'D)
Unbelievable.

GRACE
It's his stuff. So what if he
wanted his gun. Dad left it to him.
You just are looking for a problem
with him.

Dale stops eating and addresses her again.

DALE
Grace, I was going to retire. Years
ago. When we took you two in, it
messed us up financially.

Grace looks annoyed.

GRACE

You didn't have to--you can't blame us--

DALE

I'm not. I'm not.

Dale raises his hands, trying to interject.

DALE (CONT'D)

Let me finish. When we took you in we thought it would be for a few years, help you two until you both could get on your feet and then we'd retire. Which is what we had set up. We'd been saving for years, but then Eli started getting arrested, Rose's checks started going missing--

Grace looks to Rose. Rose nods, confirming Dale's claim.

DALE (CONT'D)

Bogus credit card charges were showing up. Hundreds, thousands of dollars went missing. Okay? He wrecked us. I had to go back to work, put in 6 more years because of him...

Dale takes a bite of his food.

DALE (CONT'D)

I just don't have it in me anymore.

GRACE

He's not well. You don't know how hard it was for--

DALE

I know that. But you or me or anyone letting him get away with all his shit hasn't been helping him. And he's been hurting other people for years, never thinking about anyone else.

Dale sets his fork down and looks to Grace.

DALE (CONT'D)

You need to cut him off, before he hurts you too.

GRACE
You're just being stubborn. If you
just sit and talk--

Dale SLAMS his hands down on the table. The glasses and
silverware shake.

DALE
Dammit Grace. Enough.

Grace stops.

DALE (CONT'D)
Stop telling me what I got to do in
my own goddamn house. I don't want
to talk about this anymore. Okay?
You're welcome to sit and have
lunch with us, but that's enough
about Eli.

Dale and Rose sit and eat in silence.

GRACE
I can't do this.

She gets up and walks out the door.

Rose stands up to stop her.

ROSE
Grace.

DALE
Let her go. She's an adult, she can
take care of herself.

Rose sits back down.

EXT. DALE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Leo's car pulls up in front of Dale's house and comes to a
stop.

INT. DALE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dale is sitting down on a couch drinking a beer, watching TV.

There is a KNOCK on the door.

Dale gets up from the couch and goes to the door to open it.

EXT. DALE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Leo and Jackie are standing outside the door.

DALE
Can I help you?

LEO
Yes, well sorry to bother you, but
do you know a young man named Eli?

Dale sighs and rolls his eyes.

DALE
Yeah. I know him. Dammit I knew
he'd done something.

From the back of the house Rose yells to Dale.

ROSE (O.S.)
Who is it?

Dale turns back to the living room and yells back inside.

DALE (TO ROSE)
What did I tell you?

Rose walks to the front door.

DALE (CONT'D)
Goddammit, it's always something.

ROSE
What is it?

DALE
They're looking for Eli. We don't
have any money if that's what your
looking for.

LEO
No, nothing like that--

ROSE
You police?

LEO
No, it is not that either. Just, we
had a little fender bender a couple
days back and we exchanged
information, but he isn't answering
his phone.

DALE
And he tell you he'd be here?

LEO
This was the address he gave us.

Rose looks back at the car.

LEO (CONT'D)
To be honest, we weren't really
sure if the address was real.

DALE
Well we know him, but he aint here.
Missed him by a few hours. But I
can tell you where he went.

Dale turns to Rose.

DALE (CONT'D)
Where'd he say he was going? To his
friends? Philips? That the old
farmhouse on 71? You know where
that is?

ROSE
I got it written down somewhere.
Hold on a sec.

Rose walks back into the house leaving Leo, Dale and Jackie
at the door.

DALE
Don't know what good it will do
though. He's got no money and
pretty damn sure he wont have any
insurance on him. We'll tell you
where he went, but it's probably
not going to do much.

LEO
Oh yeah? He didn't seem to be all
there.

DALE
Been causing trouble long as I've
known him.

JACKIE
You're his parents?

Leo shoots Jackie an annoyed look.

DALE

No, Aunt and Uncle. We adopted him and his siter when their Dad passed away.

Jackie nods.

LEO

That was nice of you.

Rose comes back with a piece of paper in her hand. She hands it to Leo.

ROSE

I wrote his sister's number and address on it too. He's been staying with her, if he's not at the farmhouse, I'd try hers next.

LEO

Thank you for your help. Sorry to bother you.

DALE

I hope you find him and get him to pay you. Maybe you'll have better luck than I did.

Dale shuts the door behind.

Jackie and Leo walk back to the car.

INT. CAR - DAY

Leo gets inside the car and puts on his seatbelt. Jackie follows.

LEO

What was that about?

JACKIE

What?

LEO

You asking about him?

JACKIE

Just curious.

Leo shoots Jackie an annoyed look.

LEO

Who gives a fuck.

Leo hands him the paper.

LEO (CONT'D)
Just figure out where this is,
okay? That too much to ask.

Jackie looks at the address.

JACKIE
I know this place. A small timer,
but loyal.

Leo raises an eyebrow.

LEO
Oh yeah? They help us out?

JACKIE
Yeah, give him a couple hundred
they might.

LEO
All right. Finally some good news.
Give them a call. See if they can
keep Eli there till we arrive.

LEO (CONT'D)
I want to be done with this shit.

EXT. DALE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The sedan pulls out of the driveway.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

A gun is being fired by Eli. He pauses and puts his gun down.

Eli is standing underneath a walkway with a gun in his hand.
He fires four rounds.

Next to Eli is MARCOS MARTIN, 35, barefoot and wearing an old
pair of jeans and tank top. His hair is long and is smoking a
joint.

Next to Marcos is PHILIP BROOKE, 25, wearing matching
overalls and boots. He has a beard and a baseball cap.

The three of them are standing at one end of a makeshift
firing range in the backyard of a farmhouse.

PHILIP
Let me try.

Eli hands Philip the gun and steps back. Philip moves to his spot and fires a few rounds.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
You stiff legged bastard.

Eli watches. Philip hits the targets.

Marcos's phone rings and he pulls it out and steps into the house.

Philip steps back to Eli and hands to gun back to Eli.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
It's an old gun man, they're harder to aim. You just got to practice more. Should be fine at close range though.

ELI
Well, hopefully I won't have to.

PHILIP
You're probably being paranoid. I'm sure you're fine.

ELI
Hope so. Your neighbors ain't going to mind you firing these off back here?

PHILIP
What neighbors? Closest one's a few miles out.

Philip opens the screen door and the two step inside.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
That's what's great about this place. Can do whatever the fuck we want. Complete and total freedom.

Philip closes the door behind and the two step into the kitchen.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Eli and Philip walk into the kitchen. Philip opens up the oven and looks inside.

PHILIP

Guess we're having pizza for diner.
He fucking always forgets to put a
timer on.

Philip yells to Marcos.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

Where'd you put the timer? Set your
phone you idiot!

Philip opens up the refrigerator and hands Eli a beer.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

You can stay as long as you like.
Not like we got anything going on.

ELI

It's only for a day. Tomorrow
morning I'm out of here.

PHILIP

What time is the bus leaving?

ELI

Eleven.

INT. FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Eli and Philip walk into the living room and sit down on the couch in front of the TV. The living room is a mess; a table with stacks of newspapers and old food containers are on top of it. Ash trays, empty soda cans, and beer bottles are covering the table.

Eli and Philip sit down on the couch. Eli sets the gun on the table.

PHILIP

I got to be at work around then so
I can take you there before.

ELI

That'd be perfect.

PHILIP

You got a place lined up down
there?

ELI

Not yet. But I got a little saved
up, should be good until I get
something going.

PHILIP
You still got that warrant out?

Eli nods.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
You're an outlaw.

ELI
For some stupid shit. Not like I
ever actually hurt anybody.

Marcos walks inside the living room and sits down on lazy boy. Next to him is a casing machine, and some large tin cans full of casing pieces. He is making ammunition on the couch while they are watching TV. As they talk the sound of a metal bullet hitting the tin RINGS every few seconds as Marcos drops a completed bullet into the pile.

Philip looks back to him.

PHILIP
Who you been on the phone with?

MARCOS
No one.

Philip continues to look at Marcos, expecting a better answer.

MARCOS (CONT'D)
Guy I used to work with. Wants some
help with something.

Philip turns back to Eli.

PHILIP
You know how much your bail is for?

ELI
More than I got.

PHILIP
How much?

ELI
Sixteen grand.

PHILIP
Shit. Sixteen? Might as well be a
million.

ELI

Yeah. I know. It started as two grand, but they just keep adding fees and charges and longer sentences.

PHILIP

Fucking assholes. How the expect people to pay that shit? Of course you're running. We just got to make sure you get on that bus.

ELI

That's the plan.

PHILIP

It will be good for you. To start over. Shit man. I'm jealous.

Philip and Eli knock their beer bottles together like they are making a toast. The three of them continue to watch the game when they hear a KNOCK at the door.

Philip stands up, walks to the door and opens it. Grace is standing outside.

GRACE (O.S.)

I'm looking for Eli. Is he here?

Philip turns back to Eli.

PHILIP

Eli? You've got a visitor.

Philip opens the door and steps aside to let Grace in.

Eli turns to see Grace at the door. He is surprised. He stands up and walks to the door.

Philip walks back into the living room and sits back down.

GRACE

Can we talk?

Eli steps outside and shuts the door behind.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Eli and Grace are standing outside.

ELI

What?

GRACE
Why'd you leave?

ELI
You were there remember? Dale said
he'd call the cops on me.

GRACE
Before that. You said you called
them and were leaving. You were
planning on leaving the whole time?

ELI
What? Yeah so? I can't see my
friends.

GRACE
Was that what this was? You just
used me to get down here?

ELI
It was your idea to drive me down
here remember? I was going to find
on my own place.

GRACE
You let me think you were going to
stay.

Eli doesn't answer.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Dale said there was a gun in Dad's
box and now it is gone.

Eli is taken aback and doesn't know how to defend himself.

GRACE (CONT'D)
That why we came down here?

ELI
Yeah. So? He left it to me anyways.

GRACE
That's why? You used me. You lied
to me.

ELI
Whatever.

GRACE
I stood up for you. I defended you.
I was the only one who did.

ELI

I didn't ask you to. You put yourself there.

GRACE

Because you're my brother.

ELI

So. So what. That doesn't mean anything.

GRACE

I want you to come back with me.

ELI

No, thanks. I'm fine. Thank you for the ride, I'm sorry for lying to you, but I'm fine. Next time I'm up north we can have lunch or something.

GRACE

I don't think these people are good for you. I don't think you shouldn't be around them.

ELI

They're not good for me? You don't even know them.

GRACE

I know the type. I know what it means when you hang out with them.

ELI

These people have treated me better than any of you ever have. They give me a place to stay when I needed one. They give me food. When I needed a ride they offer to come pick me up. If I need a place to stay they let me stay with them. I call you up, anyone up and you either ignore me or yell at me. Just like today.

GRACE

Today was bad. I shouldn't have surprised them. I shouldn't have told you they would be fine-

ELI

It wasn't just today. It's been like this forever Grace.

(MORE)

ELI (CONT'D)

You know that. Before I ever got arrested, before I ever did anything. You know that. I've spent my whole life with my head down, hiding from them, trying to stay out of sight. Hiding in my room, staying out of the house till everyone's asleep. Dale and Rose don't want me around because they like me. They want me around because they want someone to yell at. To beat on. To make themselves feel good. And I'm fucking tired of it.

GRACE

I'm not them. That isn't me.

ELI

No, it wasn't you, but you act like everything's fine when it isn't. You just want to pretend everything's fine. You're comfortable ignoring however they treat me, as long as you got what you want.

GRACE

I'm trying to keep our family--

ELI

I just fucking told you they didn't want me there, that it would be a bad idea and we still went. I fucking told you it would be bad, but you didn't listen. You thought you knew best and took me there anyways. You always do that. You never listen to me. You never trust me.

GRACE

Because I'm the one cleaning up after you. You leave and run away and I'm left trying to pick up the pieces. You know how many times I've gotten you out of trouble? How many times I've apologized for you? How many times you would be in jail or worse if it wasn't for me?

ELI

I never asked you to. I never wanted you to.

(MORE)

ELI (CONT'D)

Anything that I did, I did on my own. I don't need looking out for. I can handle myself.

GRACE

You saying that doesn't make it true. It never did. You were never alone. I was alone. You just walked away.

Eli takes a minute for this to sink in and it hits him and he relents.

ELI

I'm sorry, okay. I'm sorry for lying to you. I'm sorry for it all.

Eli takes a few steps forward, tries to be sincere and direct.

ELI (CONT'D)

It's just better for everyone to go our separate ways, okay? We're just not that kind of family.

Grace is defeated.

Eli walks back inside the house and shuts the door behind.

Grace walks back to her car.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Grace gets inside her truck and starts the car. She puts it in reverse and starts to drive away. She stops. Puts the car back in park and turns off the engine. She yells in her car and hits the steering wheel.

She gets out of the car and walks back to the house.

INT. FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Marcos is sitting in his chair. Philip and Eli are on the couch, watching TV. There is a KNOCK on the door.

PHILIP

It's open!

Grace opens the door of the house and walks inside.

Eli turns to see Grace.

ELI

Grace. You shouldn't be here.

GRACE

The car is overheated. Is it okay
if I stay here until it cools down?

Grace turns to Philip.

PHILIP

Yeah, it's fine.

Grace looks to Eli.

GRACE

He said it's fine.

ELI

Fine.

Marcos pulls a tin can closer to him. He throws the bullet
into the tin can. The bullet CLANGS when it hits the pile of
bullets.

GRACE

What are those?

PHILIP

Casings. He's too cheap to buy em.

Marcos grabs one and hands it to Philip. Philip hands it to
Grace. She looks at it and passes it back.

Eli notices Grace is uncomfortable.

Eli looks down at the table, sees the bong, the empty
bottles, and ash tray. He is embarrassed.

Marcos takes the bullet and throws it into the bin. The
bullet CLINGS against then tin.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

You want something to drink?

Philip hands Grace a bottle of beer.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

I got beer or something stronger?

Eli pushes the bottle away.

ELI

No and no.

Philip shoots Eli an annoyed look.

GRACE
I'm fine. Thank you.

Eli scowls at Philip.

Philip grabs the bong and moves it over to in front of Grace and Eli.

PHILIP
You smoke?

Eli grabs it before Grace has a chance to answer and moves it back over to Philip.

ELI
She's fine.

Marcos sees this and laughs. He throws another bullet into the tin and it CLINGS against the tin.

PHILIP
I like your necklace.

GRACE
Oh. Thanks.

Eli scowls at Philip.

Philip shrugs.

PHILIP
Rose and Dale still got that place by the creek?

ELI
Yeah, but they sold the house and are moving out.

PHILIP
Them too huh? Man, everyone's leaving. Be a desert town soon enough. They going to El Paso too?

ELI
No, I think they're going to Colorado.

GRACE
El Paso?

Philip looks at Eli.

ELI

Yeah.

Eli coughs and adjusts himself. He looks to Grace.

Marcos throws another bullet into the tin and it CLINGS against the tin.

ELI (CONT'D)

I've got a bus out of here tomorrow. Philip said he'd give me a lift, so that's what I'm going to do.

GRACE

So you are leaving.

Eli nods.

Eli looks down at the table and sees the gun is gone. He looks back to up Marcos and Philip.

ELI

What happened to the gun?

The gun is in front of Marcos on the table.

MARCOS

I wanted to make some adjustments.

ELI

Can I have it back?

Eli reaches his hand out.

MARCOS

I'm almost done with it.

Eli puts his hand back down. Eli looks to Grace, worried. Grace looks back at Eli, acknowledging his look.

ELI (TO GRACE)

Your truck really overheat?

Grace shakes her head.

Eli stands up.

ELI (CONT'D)

Grace said I can stay with her, so I think I'm going to go with her.

PHILIP

We barely had a chance to catch up.

ELI
Yeah I know, but family.

PHILIP
You don't want a ride then?

ELI
No, I'll get ride with her.

ELI (TO GRACE) (CONT'D)
Lets go.

Eli looks to Grace, gestures for her to stand up.

ELI (CONT'D)
Yeah, thanks for having me over. I
owe you anything for the drink?

PHILIP
Nah, you're good..

MARCOS
Why don't you hang around for a
bit.

ELI
No. I think we're going to leave.
Thanks though. I'll take the gun
now.

Marcos stops casing the bullets and moves the can of bullets.

MARCOS
I'm not done with it.

ELI
Now.

Eli sticks his hand out, waiting for the gun.

Marcos stares at Eli.

The smoke alarm from the kitchen goes off. Marcos and Philip
turn to see the noise.

Philip runs into the kitchen full of smoke.

PHILIP
The pizza. Goddammit! I told you to
set the alarm!

Eli looks to Marcos and sees that he's distracted.

Eli grabs his gun from the end of the table.

Marcos turns to Eli.

Eli kicks the table over and raises his gun at Marcos.

Marcos is moving toward the other gun on the table.

ELI

Stop!

Eli fires a round into Marco's shoulder and he falls on the ground.

MARCOS

Fuck!

ELI

I said stop!

Eli walks over and kicks the gun away from him.

Philip runs out of the kitchen into the living room to see the disruption.

PHILIP

What the hell is going on?

MARCOS

He fucking shot me.

ELI

He was going for the gun. He was going to pull.

Phillip looks to Marcos.

ELI (CONT'D)

Just don't move. Don't try anything.

He looks to Grace.

ELI (CONT'D)

Come on. Lets go.

Grace gets up and runs towards the door. Eli fires two shots into the roof.

ELI (CONT'D)

Just stay back. Just let us leave.

Philip is standing in the doorway of the kitchen looking at Eli confused.

PHILIP
Eli what the fuck?

ELI
I'm sorry man. It wasn't me.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Grace and Eli run out of the house. Grace gets in the drivers seat and starts the car. Eli keeps his gun fixed on the door while he gets into the passenger seat.

GRACE
What was that?

ELI
Just go.

They pull out of the driveway.

The front door swings open and Marcos comes running out with a gun in his hand. His shoulder still bleeding from the wound. He raises the gun to shoot at them, but lowers it when he sees they are out of range.

MARCOS
Goddammit.

He turns around and walks back into the house.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -NIGHT

Leo drives the sedan along a dirt road until they reach the farmhouse. He pulls to a stop.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

Leo and Jackie are sitting in the car. Leo turns to Jackie.

LEO
You sure this is the place?

Jackie nods.

JACKIE
That's what he said.

LEO
Don't look like he's here.

Leo and Jackie step out of the car and walk to the front door. They knock, and no one comes to the door. Leo grabs the handle to check if it is locked and opens the door.

INT. FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jackie and Leo walk inside the house. Phillip and Marcos are on the ground cleaning up the around the table. Neither notice Jackie or Leo.

Leo and Jackie look at the mess. The TV is on, but it's just static. Leo walks over and unplugs it, getting their attention.

They stop cleaning and look up to Jackie and Leo.

LEO
What happened here?

PHILIP
Who the fuck are you? What are you
doing in my house?

Marcos stands up and wipes himself off.

MARCOS (TO PHILIP)
I got it.

Philip continues to clean.

MARCOS (CONT'D)
You fucking friend happened. He
freaked out and pulled a gun on us.
Shot this place up.

LEO
Oh yeah? Why'd he do that?

MARCOS
I don't know man. Cause's he's
fucking crazy.

Leo walks over and sees the guns and the casings on the ground.

LEO
You couldn't keep him here? You two
bright boys with all your fire
power?

Leo kicks the tin can of bullets.

Philip notices this and goes back to cleaning.

JACKIE
When this happen?

MARCOS
About half hour ago. He and his
sister took off after shooting this
place up.

LEO
They know we were coming? That why
they take off?

MARCOS
No. I didn't say shit. I did what
you wanted.

LEO
Well no, not really. What we wanted
was for you to keep him here until
we arrived.

MARCOS
I fucking tried.

LEO
You fucking failed.

Leo looks to Jackie, he gestures to the door.

LEO (CONT'D)
Come on, lets get out of here.

Marcos sees them walk away and runs after them.

MARCOS
Hey wait. Where you going? What
about the money?

Marcos stops at the door. He turns back to Phillip in the
living room.

PHILIP
Don't look at me. This is your
problem.

Phillip continues to clean.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Leo and Jackie exit the house. Marco yells after them as the
two walk to their car. Still holding the towel to his
shoulder, still in pain from the shot.

Leo and Jackie continue walking to the car. Jackie is on his phone.

MARCOS
Hey, what a minute. I got shot.

LEO
I can see that. Poor some seltzer on it. See if that helps.

MARCOS
What about the money?

LEO
What's that?

MARCOS
You said we'd be getting paid.

Leo stops and turns to face Marcos.

LEO
For what? You see Eli here? You want to get paid for doing what? The one thing you were supposed to do, you didn't do.

Jackie gets inside the car and sits down in the passenger seat.

Leo continues to walk back to the car.

MARCOS
Okay, well, then what about if I go to the cops.

Leo stops cold and turns back to him.

Jackie watches the two of them from the passenger seat.

Leo steps closer to Marcos.

LEO
You better be joking.

MARCOS
I'm not. I did what you asked. Our place got shot up cause of it and I want what we're owed.

LEO
Okay, fine. You want to play it that way, we can play it that way.

Leo reaches into his wallet and pulls out four hundred-dollar bills. He crumbles them up and drops them on the ground.

LEO (CONT'D)
There you go, there's your money.

MARCOS
Asshole.

Leo turns around and walks back to the car.

Marcos picks up the money and walks back inside the house and SLAMS the door behind.

Leo opens the door to the car, reaches over and opens the glove box. He pulls out a pistol and exits the car.

Jackie doesn't move. He stays frozen in the car, watching Leo.

Leo walks to the front door of the house, opens it up and shoots Marcos twice in the head. He walks further inside fires three more rounds.

He comes back outside and walks back to the car with the pistol in his hand.

Jackie opens the car door and stands up.

Leo sees Jackie exit the car and gets upset. He points the gun in his direction.

LEO
Get back in the fucking car. Okay?
I don't want to hear anything
you've got to say. Just get back in
the fucking car.

Jackie scowls at Leo, but sits back down in the car.

Leo opens the door, sits down and puts the gun into his coat pocket.

LEO (CONT'D)
Un-fucking-believable.

Leo shakes his head.

Jackie is silent, looking forward, shook by what happened.

LEO (CONT'D)
Everyone's a fuckin asshole, I
swear to God.

JACKIE

I knew them. I told them we'd pay them.

Leo turns to Jackie.

LEO

What?

JACKIE

I told them we'd pay them. I told them you were good for it.

LEO

If they'd done there job they'd be paid, okay.

JACKIE

So you kill them?

LEO

Weren't you listening? They were gonna go to the cops.

JACKIE

You told me no guns.

LEO

What?

JACKIE

Back at the shop, you told me to leave the gun, that we were laying low. You planning on telling me about that?

LEO

I didn't think we'd need it, but good thing I did. Don't be so fucking sensitive.

Leo starts the car.

LEO (CONT'D)

You got the address then?

Jackie nods.

JACKIE

Back up North. Same address the aunt gave us.

LEO

Then lets finish this. It has been a long fucking day and I want it to be over with.

JACKIE

What about his sister?

LEO

What sister?

JACKIE

Eli's. That's who he's with.

LEO

Well, that'll be up to him.

Leo pulls the car out of the farmhouse.

EXT. GRACE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Grace's truck is parked outside her house and the lights to the kitchen inside the house are on. Outside the house are a few flickers of light coming from the fireflies.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Grace and Eli are sitting at the kitchen table. There is food and drinks on the table. Grace looks at the bus ticket on the counter. The gun is next to it.

GRACE

So you were just going to leave forever? Never come back?

ELI

What else am I supposed to do? I got the warrant out.

GRACE

I think we should call the police. Just tell them everything. Be better that way. It will be hard, but eventually it will be over and we can go back the way things were.

ELI

It's never going back to the way things were. And the cops, I don't even know what they'll charge me with.

GRACE

You're going to have to face them eventually.

ELI

Not if I leave. I can start over. Get a job, a place to live, a safe place. Not have to look over my shoulder anymore.

GRACE

You grew up here and you're going to leave it all behind? It's your home.

ELI

It isn't for me.

Grace takes a moment to think it over. Looks up to Eli and addresses him directly.

GRACE

If you got to go. And I don't think you should, but if you made up your mind. I'll take you to the bus station in the morning.

ELI

That's what I'd like.

GRACE

But you can't disappear like before. You got to keep in contact and get a phone and address. If you promise you'll do that, I'll take you there myself.

Grace is defeated by his answer, but accepts it.

GRACE (CONT'D)

What time do you wanna be there?

ELI

Leaves at eleven. Anytime before then should be fine.

GRACE

Okay. Then well leave in the morning.

ELI

Okay. Thank you.

Grace grabs the dishes on the table and puts them in the sink. She turns off the lights to the kitchen and the hallway. She walks back to her bedroom.

ELI (CONT'D)
You're going to bed? It's only 9
o'clock.

GRACE
I'm tired Eli.

Grace walks into her room and shuts the door behind.

Eli is alone in the kitchen.

EXT. GRACE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The lights to Grace's house are off and it's quiet outside. There are fireflies in the sky. Leo's car pulls up to the house and comes to a stop.

Jackie and Leo exit the car.

Jackie and Leo walk over to the front door. Jackie puts the screwdriver to the door and pries it open.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jackie and Leo walk inside the house, quietly. Jackie shuts the door behind him. Eli is asleep on the couch.

Leo and Jackie walk inside the living room. Leo grabs Eli's backpack and hands it to Jackie.

LEO
We good?

Jackie opens it up and looks inside and sees the gun. He doesn't answer. Leo looks back waiting for a response.

LEO (CONT'D)
We good?

Jackie nods. Leo crouches down in front of the couch.

LEO (CONT'D)
Eli. Hey Eli.

Leo puts his hand on Eli, slowly rocking him awake.

LEO (CONT'D)
Come on buddy, time to wake up.

Eli jerks up when he sees them. He looks around the room to check for Grace.

Leo puts his hand over his mouth, signaling to Eli to be quiet.

LEO (CONT'D)
Don't need to get her involved do we?

LEO (CONT'D)
Why don't you put your shoes on and come outside for a bit?

Leo stands up.

Eli doesn't say anything. He looks to Grace's door, but doesn't make a noise.

Eli sits up and puts his shoes on. He stands up and walks to the door. Leo and Jackie follow behind and the three exit the house.

EXT. GRACE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The three of them walk to Leo's car. Leo opens up the driver's side door and POPS the trunk.

Jackie walks to the trunk. Leo opens up the back door and waves for Eli to get in.

LEO
We're just going to go for a ride.

Jackie watches from behind.

Eli stops. He looks up to Jackie.

ELI
Act right huh?

Leo gestures to the car.

LEO
Get in the car.

Eli stops.

ELI
No. I'm not getting in there.

LEO
I'm getting real tired of all the
trouble you've caused. Now is not
the time.

Leo walks closer to Eli. He speaks in a low voice.

LEO (CONT'D)
If you're not getting in there,
then we go back inside. Your call.

Jackie is standing by the trunk, Eli's backpack is inside,
open.

Eli gets into the back of the car.

Leo shuts the door and turns to Jackie.

Jackie has the gun raised and pointed at Leo. Leo looks
surprised and tries to say something before Jackie fires two
shots into him.

Eli ducks down when he hears the shots.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Grace is asleep in bed when she gets woken by the sound of
BANG of the gun. She jumps out of bed and runs out of the
room.

EXT. GRACE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Leo jerks back and stumble over. He tries to grab to the side
of the car and slides down onto the ground.

Jackie lowers the gun.

Eli peaks his head out from the backseat to see.

Grace comes through the front door.

GRACE
Eli!?

Grace stops when she sees Jackie holding the gun and Leo on
the ground.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Eli!? Eli are you hurt?

Eli opens up the backseat of the car and looks to Jackie.
Jackie drops the gun.

ELI (TO GRACE)
No. I'm fine.

Eli gets out of the car and walks over to Grace.

Leo is on the ground and breathing heavily. He WHEEZES and tries to speak.

Jackie bends over to face Leo on the ground.

LEO
I... gave you a job...

Leo tries to raise his hand to point to Jackie, but struggles.

LEO (CONT'D)
When nobody else would...

Leo lets his hand fall.

JACKIE
I know you did.

Leo runs out of breath and collapses on the ground. Jackie reaches into Leo's pocket and pulls out his keys.

Jackie stands up and looks over to Eli.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
This ain't on you.

Grace looks to Eli.

GRACE
I have to call the police.

Grace walks inside the house.

Jackie picks up the backpack and throws it to Eli. He turns around and walks back to the front of the car.

Jackie goes to the driver's side door, opens it, but stops before getting inside.

JACKIE
I can take you somewhere. If that's what you want.

Grace exits the house, on the phone. Eli stops and for a moment considers his offer. He looks back at Grace.

ELI
I think I'm going to stay.

Jackie nods. He gets into the car and pulls out of the driveway.

Eli walks to the porch and sits down on the steps. Grace hangs up the phone and joins Eli.

GRACE

They're on their way.

ELI

They're going to arrest me. Might be going away for a while. Will you stay with me? Be there when I get out?

Grace leans in and bumps shoulders with him, reassuring him.

GRACE

I'll be there.

The light from the living room pours outside and fills the dark space where Eli and Grace sit. Fireflies flicker in the air while Grace and Eli sit and wait for the police to arrive.

FADE OUT.

VITA

Jesse Aaron Hanna was born and raised in Redding, Ca. After completing high school, he graduated from the New York Film Academy's film directing program before moving to Austin, Texas. He attended The University of Texas in Austin and received the Bachelor of Arts in English and the Bachelor of Arts in Science at the school for Radio, Television, and Film. After graduating he attended the University of Texas at El Paso and received a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing in May 2023.

While pursuing his education he volunteered at the University of Texas and worked as a photographer for The Daily Texan newspaper, producer for Austin Public, and technical director for PBS. He lives in Austin, Tx.