

## **The Black Range**

BLACK SCREEN:

SOUND OF BUZZING FLY.

A beat.

SAM (V.O.)  
(in faltering Pashto)  
When setting out on a journey of revenge  
dig two graves.

FADE IN:

EXT. BOTTOM OF HELLS CANYON - PRESENT - DAY

The ashen face of SAM CODY (24) fills the screen.

He stares unblinking.

A thin scar threads its way from his mouth to his ear.

A crimson trickle runs from his nose down his cheek.

A FLY crawls across his stiff dry lips.

SAM'S POV - SYDNEY (26), as if she's looking down a deep well at him, her face framed by azure sky and drifting smoke.

The fly skitters across Sam's face and is joined by another.

SAM (V.O.)  
(English from here)  
The haji have this weirdness, like every  
insult's an opportunity for revenge.  
They dream about it, talk about it,  
suck up to it like a sick refrain for  
their shitty lives. Only human I guess.

Sydney holds something out and lets it go.

It falls, spins, flutters, flashes white and blue - like paper blades.

BACK TO SCENE

SAM (V.O.)  
When I first thought about it, revenge  
seemed like some deranged relative of  
justice; all emo'n off-kilter. I didn't  
dream about it. Actually, I haven't  
dreamt in forever.

(MORE)

SAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I lost my life, I went to war, then I came back. ... That was the fifth worst thing that's ever happened to me, coming back. ... But, like a fucking specter I returned for justice. That's what all this was supposed to be about. Justice. Or at least that was what I kept telling myself. But really, did I come back for revenge, justice, or...

SAM'S POV - Sydney smiles; fond regrets. Then vanishes.

SAM

...something entirely different?

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAWN

Out of the dawn, in a hooded Marine cami, Sam strides toward us.

Combat hardened pragmatist, trained in Explosive Ordinance Disposal, dude's got a chip on his shoulder and he could save you from a bomb or just as calmly shove one up your ass depending on where his head's at.

Hair: shaggy. Beard: scraggly. Eyes: a man whose sole purpose is relentless trudging; one foot in front of the other. All-in-all, Sam's the manifestation of "a little fucking bonkers" and if he were on a corner and you held out a dollar for him you wouldn't roll the car window down more than a couple of inches.

Without breaking stride he sticks out his thumb.

A pickup, 4 wheels held together with bondo, pulls over.

EXT. TWO-LANE HIGHWAY - VAST EMPTY PLAIN - NEW MEXICO - DAY

Spewing exhaust, the pickup is the sole sign of life.

Dead ahead the grim palisade of the BLACK RANGE.

INT. BONDO PICKUP - SAME

A bleary-eyed COWBOY drives. He lifts a beer bottle, drains it and chucks the bottle out the window.

He looks over at Sam, head back against the rear window, burnt skin on his neck and a burn-withered ear. A thin red scar from his ear disappears into his beard. Worn military clothing and a long handled knife sheathed on his belt.

COWBOY

Hey, Bomb-boy.

Sam wakes, pulls his long hair over his damaged skin.

Cowboy nods out the windshield at the mountains ahead.

COWBOY

Black Range. Ever been over it?

SAM

A time ago.

COWBOY

Used to drive it every week. Went off the edge up there twice. Drinking. Wife says it's cuz the Range don't like drunks, I should quit drinking.

Wait for it...

COWBOY

So now, I just drive around.

He laughs like hell, reaches down, fumbles with a bag, pulls a beer out and offers it to Sam who declines.

COWBOY

Range don't like drunks? Hell, ask me just plain don't like people.

Cowboy twists the top off and tosses it out the window.

EXT. THE VILLAGE OF HILLSBORO, HIGHWAY 152 - DAY

Sam takes his pack from the truck bed and starts off.

COWBOY

Bomb-boy.

Sam stops, turns to Cowboy.

COWBOY

Best to wait.

He points to a distant squadron of ROAD SIGNS.

COWBOY

Wouldn't head up there without a ride  
all the way to Silver.

He waves and drives off in a cloud of exhaust.

Sam tosses his hoodie over his pack and starts off.

MOMENTS LATER

Sam walks past the road signs, All are peppered with bullet holes.

FIRST ROAD SIGN: A red Zia circles the highway number 152.

SECOND ROAD SIGN: A dated, tourist-luring, 4x8 painting of Silver City. Worn lettering proclaims: SILVER CITY - MINING CAPITAL OF THE OLD WEST - 52 MILES AHEAD.

THIRD ROAD SIGN: HELL CANYON, 13 MILES.

FORTH ROAD SIGN: WELCOME TO THE BLACK (The word RANGE has been obliterated by gunfire)

EXT. THE BLACK RANGE - HIGHWAY 152 - LATER - DAY

Sam trudges up a hill; the constant trill of cicadas serenades every heated footstep.

Next to him a mountain wall rises at a steep right angle.

Across the road a metal guardrail, a thin shoulder and a sign: HELL CANYON.

The SQUEAL OF TIRES brings Sam's attention to the road ahead and the front of a black BMW M6 as it shreds a tight corner.

Sam watches as the car fishtails down the road toward him.

He checks out the rocky ascent next to him; too steep.

He trots across the highway and steps over the guardrail.

The BMW accelerates down the center of the highway.

Sam looks into Hell Canyon; a gut-wrenching drop.

He turns to the approaching car.

The passenger, a BLOND WOMAN, is slapping the DRIVER.

DRIVER has one arm up for protection.

She turns, her face distorted in anger. She mouths "Fuck you!"

The BMW races past Sam spraying with him dust.

He glares at the receding car and watches stunned as it misses the turn, tears through a guardrail, and drops out of site.

Silence.

Then, like a garbage disposal full of nickels, shredding metal reverberates through Hell Canyon.

RIPPED GUARDRAIL - MOMENTS LATER

Sam runs up and stops at the swinging metal of the guardrail still attached to the post at one end.

Visible below through a small break in the trees, the BMW.

He leaps and runs like a goat down the rocky slope.

Half-way down he comes to a freshly topped pine.

He stops and looks up. Then, aware of the high-pitched whine of the engine, he moves out.

He rounds the pine and stops to stare across the slope of boulders and trees at an unreal spectacle.

The BMW, right side up, hangs desperately to a ledge; a precarious teeter totter.

Machine-like he scans the scene, cataloging the zig-zag track of mowed-down trees, shards of glimmering mirror, glass, car parts, a trashed briefcase, and papers floating in the air. Part nature, part training, he studies everything until...

... a severed hand, long red nails, thin bloody wrist, sits perfectly atop a rock as if it's waving.

He walks over and picks it up.

He turns the hand over to reveal a mega-diamond ring on the index finger.

The car whines. There is a muffled explosion and the sound of grating metal as it begins to drop over the ledge.

Sam sprints down the slope and runs into the back of the BMW, it slides.

He drops the hand and his pack, grips the bumper and strains to hold it.

The car stops and he lets go. It slides.

He grabs, it stops ... then slides again.

He drops his weight, digs his heels in; tug-of-war with a gravity bound chunk of steel.

The BMW stops and he searches, desperate for anything that might help.

He peeks around the trunk on the passenger side and spots a fair sized boulder near the front of the car.

Holding onto the BMW with one hand he hefts his heavy pack onto the trunk.

His fingers peel teasingly away as the car stabilizes.

He sighs and stands.

It tips, slowly.

He sprints, throws himself at the boulder and in one gutsy motion lifts and hurls it beneath the front end of the car.

The car hits the rock, tips up, and comes to a stop.

Sam doesn't.

He falls, slides, fingers digging into soil, eyes desperate as he heads toward the ledge and thin air.

He slams into a boulder and stops with a groan.

He turns to see that he's a foot away from unintended flight.

He peeks over the ledge and looks down 60 feet to a boulder filled dead-end.

He gets to his knees and turns to a handless arm dangling from the passenger window.

Blood drips into a pool on the ground.

Sam stands and looks inside.

Blond Woman stares without breathing, her forehead is crushed in; no seat belt, no air-bag, no brains.

He gently lifts her arm and places it inside with her.

She gasps, blinks, holds her arm up and turns it in wonder at the missing hand.

She shrieks sending Sam stumbling back a step.

She turns to him, her head rocks back and forth.

Sam reaches for her.

SAM

Don't--

A SOFT CRACK from her neck...

Her head tilts to one side and she gasps for air, neck broken.

Sam reaches in, gently lifts her head.

Tears fill her eyes and she stops breathing.

Sam tilts her head back on the head rest.

He peers through the car to the other side.

Driver, an older man heavy with bull-dog jowls, deployed airbag deflated in his lap, stares back at Sam, his lips move as if he's trying to talk. He looks at Blond Woman.

Flames explode from a rip in the hood.

Sam stumbles back, turns and runs.

Driver screams in terror.

Yards away Sam stops.

Gasping, terrorized, unable to move he hears...

FLASHBACK - CRIES AND YELLS, then WHOOMP!

VOICE (V.O.)

Quick! He's all lit-up!

ANGUISHED SCREAMS! GUN FIRE!

He covers his ears desperate to shut out Driver's screams.

BACK TO SCENE

Another explosion from the car.

Sam turns and watches the spreading flames.

Driver's screams beg immediate action.

Sam rubs his mouth hard, kicks the dirt in anger.

SAM

Shit!

He removes his coat, rips his tee-shirt off, looks around and spots a small, dingy pool of rain water.

AT THE POOL he soaks the tee.

His back, from midway up to his neck, is solid burn scar.

BMW - PASSENGER SIDE

He beats the flames out with the sodden tee shirt.

MOMENTS LATER

Sam tries the passenger door, it won't open.

BMW - DRIVER'S SIDE

The BMW top is crushed in. Sam reaches inside, turns the car off and pockets the keys.

He looks down, the car door is buried in the ground. He jerks the handle but the door doesn't budge.

Driver slumps unconscious, blood drips down his face.

With difficulty Sam attempts to turn Driver's head.

BMW INTERIOR

Sam struggles to get his shoulders through the crushed window.

MOMENTS LATER

Sam examines Driver's head until he finds the wound; a jagged gash on the upper right side.

BMW EXTERIOR - MOMENTS LATER

Sam rifles through his pack, pulls out a piece of rope and his only towel and starts back to the car.

He stops short, on a nearby boulder Driver's suit coat.

BMW - DRIVER'S SIDE - MOMENT LATER

With an ivory handled pocket knife he cuts the sleeve off the coat.

BMW INTERIOR

Sam dresses Driver's head with the coat and rope.

Driver comes to and grabs Sam's wrist.

SAM

Whoa!

Sam attempts to wrench his hand away and they struggle face-to-face.

SAM

You been in an accident.

DRIVER

(weak)  
Out.

SAM

What?

DRIVER

Get me the hell out!

Driver twists, screams in pain. Sam yanks back and quickly slides out the window

BMW EXTERIOR

Sam squats.

SAM

Look, this thing's structurally pretty fucked, okay? Frame's crushed, doors'er bound, nothing I got's getting you outta here. I can barely get in and I'm pretty sure I can't pull you out. Understand?

Driver is muddled and barely nods with the bad news.

DRIVER

Brianna?

Sam shakes his head.

Driver moves then groans through clinched teeth.

SAM

Where else you hurt?

DRIVER

Both legs, maybe just one...  
(cries out)  
Right one for sure.

He lifts his left hand and flexes his fingers.

DRIVER

Sore, maybe broken. I don't know.

Driver's eyes glaze over and his head drops back; shock.

SAM

Shit.

Sam reaches in, inserts the key and turns it.

He unbuckles Driver's seat belt then lowers the seat as far as it will go.

Driver comes to.

DRIVER

What the ...?

SAM

You're in shock. What's your name?

DRIVER

Name? Uh...

He passes out again.

Sam picks up the coat.

Driver's wallet falls onto the ground.

Sam takes the coat and wraps it around Driver's head, then takes the keys out of the ignition.

He steps back, sees the wallet on the ground.

BENEATH A NEARBY PINION

Sam drops to the ground worn.

He opens the wallet, fingers through a sheaf of hundreds, whistles and shakes his head "Fucking rich."

He opens the clear sleeves; a book of credit cards.

He flips to the driver's license and reads.

INSERT LICENSE: A photo. Name, THOMAS BULLINGTON.

Sam fixes THOMAS "BULL" BULLINGTON with a stare; something new has come to light.

He pulls on a dry tee shirt, then his hoodie.

He rummages through his pack, pulls out clothes, items wrapped in paper and plastic, a rather large cardboard box. Things are placed precisely on the ground.

He pulls out a blue beat-to-shit composition book, opens it and a pen rolls out.

He flips through pages.

INSERT PAGES: Border to border, top to bottom, every page is covered obsessively in miniature handwriting.

He stops at one page, looks up at Bull then back down and makes a slash mark with the pen and closes the notebook.

MOMENTS LATER

He opens Bull's wallet, takes the hundreds out.

BMW EXTERIOR - MOMENTS LATER

SERIES OF SHOTS - WITH MILITARY-LIKE PRECISION SAM SCRUBS THE ACCIDENT SCENE

- 1) GUARDRAIL - He repairs the guardrail with wire.
- 2) HIGHWAY - He picks up pieces of the BMW.
- 3) GUARDRAIL - He finds the place where he can see the BMW through the trees.
- 4) PINE TREE - He pulls the knife from its sheath. It's a TacTool with a blade, a flat side for hammering, but no point. With this tool he cuts a large branch from the tree.
- 5) HIGH IN PINE TREE - Sam makes a screen with the branch.
- 6) GUARDRAIL - Looking down, the BMW is no longer visible. He hears a car coming and slides quickly down the rocky slope to hide.
- 7) ROCKY SLOPE - He stacks pieces from the accident and picks glass from the rocks.
- 8) BMW - He heaves a stack of BMW parts into the canyon. Looks over the cliff to the bottom, now littered with parts.
- 10) He digs a hole next to the passenger door, places the hand in it and buries it, kneels down, places his hand on the mound as if saying a prayer for the dead woman.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

BULL

(weak)

Help.

Sam goes to Bull.

BULL  
Water.

SAM  
Can't.

BULL  
Please, goddamnit, please.

SAM  
You're in shock, no water. I'll be  
back in a while.

BULL  
You can't leave me!

Bull struggles, the car teeters and he shrieks.

Sam places a hand on the hood to steady the car.

SAM  
Next drop's the last one. Right?

Bull steadies himself and nods.

Sam shoulders his pack and walks away.

BULL  
When are you coming back? ... Hey!

He watches Sam disappear into the trees in what's left of  
the rear-view mirror then slams the BMW horn. It emits a  
low moan and dies.

EXT. THE BLACK RANGE - HIGHWAY 152 - DAY

Sam sits on the guardrail bathed in the last light of day.

The sudden base oom-pah-pah of Ranchera music and he turns  
to see a mex'd-out LOWRIDER round the corner below.

He crosses the road, sticks his thumb out.

INT. LOWRIDER - MINUTES LATER - DAY

The driver, a gray-haired VATO with a bandanna looks over as  
Sam gets in.

VATO  
Bad day to be hitching, huh?

SAM  
Been okay.

INT. BMW - SAME - DAY

Bull hears the Ranchera music and brightens.

BULL  
Hey! ... Help! Help!

INT. LOWRIDER - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Vato turns down the stereo and listens.

VATO  
You hear something?

Sam leans his head back on the headrest, closes his eyes.

SAM  
Nope.

VATO  
Probably just the wind. Out here I  
seen pinche ghosts, you know?

He rolls up the window and puts the car in gear.

EXT. LOWRIDER - CONTINUOUS - DAY

The car pulls away.

VATO (O.S.)  
My bro and me, we saw La Llorona. The  
'crying woman', you know? Killed her  
baby, drown the pobresita to death. We  
seen her out here. Scary shit, man.

The low-rider vanishes around a corner.

BULL (O.S.)  
Help me! Goddamn! Anyone! Help me!

EXT. SILVER CITY - BUSTLING STREET - NIGHT

Ranchera blaring the lowrider pulls over.

Sam exits looking shell shocked from the music.

He waves to the driver and walks off.

LATER

Sam walks a darkened highway, traffic speeds by.

LATER

He walks off the highway onto a dirt road.

LATER

He shines a flashlight on a street sign.

INSERT STREET SIGN: GRACE ROAD. Below that: PRIVATE

He walks into the inky black of Grace Road.

EXT. FOREST - DAWN

Sam squats behind a boulder in the forest.

He shivers in the night air but his attention remains laser focused on an immense two-story house.

One interior light shows in a downstairs room.

Next to the house, a sizable detached garage has a single outside light on.

Suddenly the garage light goes off.

EXT. BULL'S HOME - NIGHT

Sam jogs in a crouch across the expansive lawn.

SIDE OF HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

With his TacTool Sam jimmys a metal box open.

He locates two wires, unscrews them from their connections, wraps them together.

A WINDOW - MOMENTS LATER

Sam peers through a crack in the curtains.

SAM'S POV: The room is vaguely lit from another room.

SECOND WINDOW - MOMENTS LATER

SAM'S POV: A study lit by a single table lamp.

Somewhere a timer shuts the lamp off.

AT THE FRONT DOOR Sam searches Bull's keys.

INT. BULL'S HOME - NIGHT

Sam stands in the open doorway, pack on the doorstep, waiting to enter. He spots the alarm nearby.

SAM

Hello?! ... Anyone home?

Silence.

He moves to the alarm, pries it open with his knife.

The ALARM sounds!

He unscrews two wires and the alarm stops. He carefully winds the wires together then slaps the case closed.

He yanks his pack inside, shuts the door, leans against it exhausted, shivering, and relieved.

LATER

SERIES OF SHOTS - SAM SEARCHES BULL'S HOME - DAWN

1) STUDY - Sam enters the room, it glows with dawn light. He stops at a large gun safe, tries the handle. No go. He spins the dial, it stops on zero. He walks across the room and turns on a computer. The screen flashes on and asks for the password. He turns it off.

2) HALLWAY - It's dark and he feels his way through.

3) LIVING ROOM - At a built-in bar he picks up an unopened bottle of scotch and appraises it approvingly.

4) KITCHEN - He looks inside the refrigerator.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

BULLS BEDROOM - Sam stands at the foot of Bull's king-sized bed, bottle in hand.

He runs his hand over the tasteful white coverlet as if it were skin. Dirt from his hand smudges the cloth.

He stops, looks at his dirty hand as if he is just now aware of how filthy he has become.

He turns, drops across the bed like a worn dark stain and closes his eyes.

A beat.

His eyes open and he stares at the ceiling.

## BULL'S BATHROOM - SHOWER - LATER

Sitting on the shower floor relishing a steaming hot shower Sam drinks from the bottle.

## BULL'S BEDROOM - LATER

Under the coverlet, barely breathing, Sam stares up lost in the texture of the ceiling.

## SYDNEY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Wearing a borrowed robe Sam pushes the door open.

The room is shadowy with drawn curtains.

He opens the curtains and looks out over the driveway.

He turns to a spacious room with a massive canopy bed and expensive furnishings.

A door on one side leads to a bathroom.

Across the room, opposite the bathroom, a walk-in closet.

At the walk-in closet he flips on the light and enters.

## WALK-IN CLOSET

In the center of the closet he turns slowly, carefully cataloging everything.

Large with expensive carpet, chair, cherry-wood built-ins, shelves of expensive shoes, clothes obsessively hung by color, wool sweaters stacked on shelves ... by color.

He fingers a hanging woman's suit then notes that nearly every piece still has a price tag.

He picks up a shoe, turns it over to an unblemished sole. He picks up another shoe. Unused with a price tag in the high hundreds. He shakes his head, perturbed.

He opens the top drawer of the dresser, lifts up a camisole, holds it to his nose, closes his eyes and breathes in.

He drapes the camisole carelessly over the open drawer then smells his hand; the intoxicating scent remains.

## BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Standing in front of a book shelf Sam looks sideways at book titles, pulls one out.

INSERT BOOK TITLE: PRINCESS BRIDE

He smiles, flips through pages then returns it and turns his attention to a series of photos on the shelves.

The photos of Sydney are displayed from youngest to older.

INSERT PHOTOS: A) Bassinet baby, B) Baby being held by Bull who looks uncomfortable, C) a smiling little girl with a baseball bat, D) with friends, E) soccer team, F) many of her and her mother smiling, hugging, and some with Bull nearby always looking like a big, uninvolved third-thumb.

Then...

Sydney's Mother stops appearing and a different Sydney is revealed.

Pale, thin, distant like a vintage pioneer tintype of a young woman staring across a vast empty plain of an arduous life.

He spots an 8x10 stashed in the back and pulls it out.

ON PHOTO: Sydney, maybe 20, stands arm-in-arm with a tall, young suit-and-tie professional in his 20s. She glows like she's won a big prize at the state fair. On the other side of the young man a beautiful brunette holds his other arm and shoots daggers at Sydney.

He sets the photo down and picks up a smaller photo and looks at it.

The sudden sound of a plinky-piano tune startles Sam and he looks across the room to Sydney's bedside stand.

The music comes from a Nixie Clock, Nixie tubes displaying 12:00. The music stops; the clock displays 12:01.

KITCHEN - LATER

The nearly empty bottle of scotch sits on the kitchen table, the small framed photo next to it.

At the refrigerator Sam pulls out packages of meat and cheese.

MOMENTS LATER

Sam sits at the kitchen table with a sandwich neatly cut in two halves.

He bites into the sandwich and savors the mouthful.

He lifts the glass of scotch, looks into the liquid then sips at it letting each sip linger on his tongue like a rite.

He looks at the photo.

ON PHOTO: Teen Sydney stands next to the BMW M6 Bull in the driver's seat. Neither smile.

INT. BMW - DAY

Bull, face bathed in sunlight, sweaty head resting against the door frame, is roused by a gust of wind.

He turns fast; unforgiving pain makes him cry out.

He holds his coat up for shade and smacks his dry lips.

He peers into the mirror searches for Sam ... and help.

BULL

Where the hell are you?

A movement to his right and he turns to a large Raven on the hood of the car. The Raven fixes Bull with an eye.

BULL

Fuck off, bird.

The Raven screeches a complaint and takes flight.

He turns to Brianna. All walking-dead she stares vacantly in his direction, mouth and eyes bloated and rimmed black.

BULL

You too, bitch. ... God, you stink.

He reaches over and pushes her head, but she's stiff with rigor mortis and doesn't move.

He reaches behind her seat, retrieves her clutch, and uses it to push on her head. She still doesn't move.

He punches her head viciously with the clutch until the latch releases and the contents explode across the car.

Tissues, makeup and a candy bar spill into Brianna's lap.

He snatches the candy bar, rips it open and takes a bite. He chews fast then notices that her cell phone has landed perfectly on her knee.

He lunges for the phone, wrenches in pain and knocks it off her knee and onto the floor.

BULL

Shit!

He stretches, reaches between her legs, repercussions are immediate. He screams in pain and falls back defeated.

INT. BULL'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Sam picks up the plate with the remains of half the sandwich, walks to the trash and dumps it in.

He walks away, stops, goes back to the trash, digs out the sandwich.

EXT. BULL'S HOME

Sam strolls across the yard; casual like a guest.

At the garage door he tries several keys.

INT. BULL'S GARAGE - DAY

Sam stands in the doorway, looks across a spotless auto shop.

Expensive work benches, peg-boards covered with tools, shelves of tires and parts, spotless floors. Everything in order.

He stops at a workbench and looks around.

SAM

Nice.

He runs a hand across the sparkling clean workbench. He feels something and picks it up. It's a tiny drill bit. He studies it, then rubs his fingers together. It's oily.

SAM

(sarcastic)

Place needs a good cleaning.

He goes to one of the tool boxes, finds the appropriate drawer, opens it, finds the appropriate slot and places the bit inside.

He turns to the auto bays.

In the first bay a cherry '65 Mustang.

Then a Hummer. Black and beefy.

The last bay, an empty space for the BMW.

Beyond that, the end of the building and a window.

He sees something outside.

He walks back to the door to a locked hanging key box.

He takes out Bull's keys and tries one, then another.

EXT. GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

At the side of the building, next to the window, Sam takes in a nondescript Ford duel-cab pickup. Weeds have grown up around it and one tire is flat.

He opens the door, looks in and nods. Perfect.

INT. BULL'S HOME - HALLWAY - MOMENT'S LATER - DAY

Back pack slung over his shoulder, Sam pulls a blanket from the HALLWAY CLOSET and shoves it into a pillow case.

EXT. BULL'S HOUSE - DAY

The Ford idles in front of the garage.

Sam tosses rope and a crowbar into the truck bed.

EXT. TWO LANE HIGHWAY, SOMEWHERE - DAY

Large Mexican crows crowd around road kill, not aware of an approaching car.

INT. LEXUS - SAME

Thin fingers grip the steering wheel.

Ahead the dark gathering of unsuspecting CROWS.

ON ACCELERATOR. The driver's foot punches the accelerator to the floor.

The wheel turns ever so slightly moving the car into the lane, drilling down on big Mexican crows.

EXT. LEXUS - SAME

The vehicle leaps forward like it's in the last turn at Belmont and making up ground.

INT. LEXUS - SAME

The CROWS react to the approach; too late.

FEATHERS EXPLODE from the hood of the car.

EXT. TWO LANE HIGHWAY, SOMEWHERE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY  
 CROWS circle, land and peck at their dead friends.

EXT. BLACK RANGE - HIGHWAY 152 - DAY

The Ford pickup drives past the repaired guardrail.

MOMENTS LATER

The pickup turns off the highway onto a broad dirt shoulder and down a dirt road.

MOMENTS LATER

Sam gets out of the pickup and takes the rope and crowbar.

AT BMW

Bull sleeps.

A fly lands on his face, he waves it away, opens his eyes and is startled by the sight of Sam sitting on a log several feet away, watching him.

BULL

Oh, shit. Thank God.

He sits up, moans, looks around for others.

BULL

I don't how much longer I can...

He twists and turns trying to find anyone else.

BULL

Where's the help?

He looks in the mirror at the trees in the distance.

BULL

Must be following you down, right?

Sam opens the pillow case and pulls out a plastic bag with the half sandwich and a bottle of water.

SAM

You know Muslims don't use the word "fate"?

He walks over and holds out the food and water.

SAM

I mean at least not like us.

Bull looks mystified and pushes the items away.

SAM  
You know. Christians.

Sam reaches in, sets everything on the dash then walks back to the log and picks up the rope.

BULL  
Son, I don't know what the hell you're talking about. Where's help? You were going to get help.

Sam walks to the back of the BMW.

SAM  
Yeah, about that... this isn't exactly the optimal time to bring help.

At the back of the car Sam notes a sturdy pine up-slope.

BULL  
Not optimal? What the fuck does that mean. Wife's dead and I'm hurt bad, what the hell do you call that?

Sam drops one end of the rope and starts up the slope trailing the rope out behind him.

SAM  
Taking protective measures, sir, to ensure a state of continued safety until such time that it is deemed unnecessary to continue to do so.

Bull shakes his head in disbelief.

BULL  
(To himself)  
What the fuck?  
(To Sam)  
What the fuck are you talking about?!

MOMENTS LATER

Yards up the slope Sam wraps the rope around a large pine.

He ties a Highwayman's Hitch leaving the tail hanging loose and pulls on the knot. It holds.

He grabs the tail, yanks and the rope unravels swiftly and slips off the tree ... easy-as-pie.

He reties the rope to the tree with the hitch.

BMW - REAR - MOMENTS LATER

Sam scoots out from beneath the BMW, pulling the rope tail out with him. He dusts himself off, returns to the log.

SAM  
Little cold last night?

Bull loses patience.

BULL  
What-the-hell is going on?!

SAM  
You in pain?

BULL  
Goddamn leg's broken, wrist swollen,  
haven't moved in hours, pissed in my  
damn pants. Of course I'm in pain!  
Where the Goddamn hell is the ambulance?  
The jaws of fucking life?!

Sam dips into the pillow case and draws out a bottle of OxyConton and a bottle of ibuprofen and hands them to Bull.

SAM  
Take the oxy now. Keep it up all day.  
Little bitches'll get you ahead of the  
pain. Ibuprofen's good for swelling.

Bull jerks them away and reads the oxy prescription.

BULL  
This is mine.

Sam walks away around the back end of the car then walks to the front and checks the rock under the front.

BULL  
What the fuck. You been in my house?

SAM (O.S.)  
My advice, stay the hell away from O's.  
I mean take'em if you have to, but lay  
back pretty quick. Coming off that  
shit is total FUBAR. You know, fucked  
up beyond all recognition.

He stops and thinks about it, then...

SAM  
OIC. Opioid induced constipation. Like  
the sixth worst thing I ever went  
through.

Bull reaches to the ignition; no keys. He searches around him and finds nothing.

BULL  
(to himself)  
Fucker's crazy.

SAM  
Two-hundred-and-fifty-five days. That's  
how long I was oxyified.

Sam lifts a medium stone and jams it behind the rock beneath the front-end of the car.

SAM  
It was all medically supervised, I'm no  
junkie, but it made me a little ...  
mmmmm, psycho.

He forces the crowbar between the two rocks and jimmies at them. Not a budge.

SAM  
And constipated. ... First thought it  
was the constipation that was making me  
crazy and not the oxy. Right?

He pushes the crowbar with a grimacing determination that makes him look suddenly a little ... psycho!

The rock moves, the car drops.

BULL  
Hey! Hey!

Bull grabs the steering wheel and pulls himself up.

BULL  
You're supposed to be helping me!

He jerks at the steering wheel like a spoiled kid, and it's no light tug, he's big and right now he's pissed.

SAM  
(straining)  
They said it wasn't, but...

The rock, under pressure, shoots out and sails over the cliff.

The front of the car drops fast, Bull's head slams into the steering wheel. He screams in pain.

The front-end bounces, then stops, held by the rope.

Sam looks through the passenger window at Bull.

SAM

... soon as I stopped taking o's and started shitting, I wasn't crazy anymore. Good reason to stay regular.

Bull grips the steering wheel, stares long-and-hard at the end of his hood ... nothing but empty space and the stone wall across the canyon.

SAM

Oh, by the way I'm staying at your place while we get things sorted out.

He walks back around to the other side of the car.

Bull wrenches the door handle and spits out mixed Anglo-Mexican profanities.

Sam crouches next to the door and faces Bull who is winding down to pathetic. He whimpers a threat.

BULL

You're supposed to be bringing me help. And you been in my house. Goddamn, when I get out of here, boy, going to be a shit-load of trouble.

SAM

Well that's the thing.

Bull's struggles are slowing down.

SAM

I'm the only one who knows you're here.

Bull stops and stares at Sam suddenly aware that Sam might really be insane.

BULL

What do you want? Car? Drugs? Money for drugs?

Sam stares at him

BULL

I can tell from your coat and boots that you were, what? Marines?

Sam smiles, proud of his past.

SAM

Yes, sir.

Bull manages sincerity.

BULL

Yeah, you guys'r getting screwed. You need some help. I can get you that. Really, I know people. People here, people in Washington. I can...

Sam stares at Bull, cocks his head and smiles as if he's teasing a kid trying to make a deal for a new toy.

It dawns on Bull that talking is not helping. His voice betrays a crack of emotion.

BULL

Please. Please get me out of here.

Sam stands, reaches into the pillow case, pulls out the blanket and drops it through the window.

Bull holds it up questioning.

SAM

It'll get cold tonight.

BULL

Why are you doing this?

SAM

I'm not entirely sure yet. It's like when you have an intention but you don't really understand all the nuances. Know what I mean? ... I know what my intention is but I'm still considering the nuances.

He digs through the pillowcase, pulls out a book and drops the pillowcase into the BMW.

SAM

Here's some other stuff. Food, water, and the Princess Bride. You read it?

Bull is barely breathing at this point.

SAM

It's well worth a read. I marked a particular page for you.

He chuckles.

SAM

Funny how things connect.

Bull looks at Sam as if he were a talking squirrel.

Sam turns away, smugly enjoying Bull's incomprehension.

SAM  
Classic fiction.

He turns back, drills down into Bull's bewildered eyes, and drops the book into Bull's lap.

SAM  
Believe in freewill, Mr. Bullington?

Sam goes to the tools and picks them up still eye-balling Bull like a cop grilling a perp.

SAM  
Do we operate on a basis of freewill or is that just classic fiction? Something we tell others so that we can guilt the shit outa them? Or, congratulate ourselves when we've made the correct decision, the decision we're expected to make. Right?

He drops the tools, walks back to the car door, crouches down inches from Bull and whispers a demand.

SAM  
You believe in freewill?

Bull's mind races until finally his strained voice spews words tainted with doubt.

BULL  
I, I ... I don't know. I guess. I've never given it much--

SAM  
--You guess?! Look, either there's freewill or there's not. Which is it?

BULL  
Yes! Yes, I believe there is freewill. Now please--

Sam stands and walks away musing to himself.

SAM  
--The Haji don't think so. They say they do but actually they believe everything is preordained by Allah as instructed by Mufti Muhammad Baba.

He raises his hands to the side of his head in mock Arab prayer.

SAM

Nothing is fate, no freewill, no destiny,  
only you Allah and you know all past  
and present, and preordain all that  
will ever happen.

He drops his hands to his side, muses to himself.

SAM

Not sure about any of that, but anybody  
quoting God like they just had lunch  
with her is full of shit. And secondly,  
if that's true why the fuck are we even  
going through all this? God that  
interested in eternal reruns?

He walks to the car, inspired, and drops into a crouch.

SAM

You believe in freewill then you believe  
that every freewill action creates a  
certain freewill reaction, but then  
that would preordain those actions ...  
right?

Bull searches, not understanding what Sam is driving at.

SAM

An example. If operating on freewill...

He stands, walks quickly to the back of the car, lifts the  
hitch tail and holds it so that...

...Bull sees it in the mirror but he's still lost.

SAM

...I yank on this rope so that it  
releases...

He fake-yanks the tail and kicks the car bouncing it.

Bull screams.

SAM

If I do that out of freewill and ...

He drops the rope and returns to Bull.

SAM

... send you flying out over the edge  
to your death, there should be  
repercussions right?

Bull's too freaked to answer so Sam answers for him.

SAM

Right.

He stands and talks to himself.

SAM

I'm struggling here. Trying to figure out whether fate and preordination are some kind of fucked up loop that we can never escape.

He returns to the tools and picks everything up.

SAM

I'm not sure. I just don't know and until I do, well I'm back to those nuances we discussed earlier.

Bull turns, grimaces but anger overrides the pain.

BULL

I believe you're bat-shit crazy, boy!  
That's what I believe.

Sam smiles and walks away.

SAM

Can't be, I'm regular.

Bull screams after him.

BULL

Bat shit crazy! And when people find out what you done here there's going to be big problems.

Sam stops, shakes his head. He drops the tool bag, turns and strides to the BMW gripping the crowbar like a club.

AT THE BMW

SAM

Pardon me, sir?

Forgetting that regardless of where he's sitting he's not in the driver's seat, Bull puffs with intransigence.

BULL

There's going to be big problems.

SAM

Problems? ... Here's a fucking problem.

He baseball-bats the rear passenger window into a hail of glass.

Bull ducks and cowers beneath the blanket.

Sam slams the crowbar savagely onto the top of the car repeatedly with such force he rips holes in the metal.

He stops, dives through Bull's window, grinning unhinged. With the crowbar in hand he yanks the blanket aside.

SAM

Only a problem if more than two of us know about this. Right?

Bluster gone, Bull nods all bobble-head and wide-eyes.

INT. SYDNEY'S BEDROOM WINDOW - DAY

Below a black Lexus, tinted windows, rolls into the driveway.

EXT. BULL'S HOME - DAY

The Lexus, feathers pasted to the grill, sits in the driveway.

INT. LEXUS - DAY

Slender fingers peel away from the steering wheel.

Hands stretch and pump.

Sydney gazes at the garage directly ahead, hesitant, as if she's woken from a dream in an unfamiliar place.

EXT. LEXUS - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

She exits the car, tilts her head working out the kinks.

She takes a deep breath, smooths her pants; everything about her is precise, straight, practiced.

She walks to the garage with long purposeful strides that don't match her hesitation moments earlier. Hands balled into fists, she looks into the garage.

SYDNEY POV: The BMW space is empty.

BACK TO SCENE

Her shoulders drop, hands unclench. She takes a deep easy breath, smiles and walks back to the car.

Passing the pickup she notes the tire tracks through the weeds.

She looks up and notes her bedroom curtains open.

INT. BULL'S HOME - DAY

She enters, suitcase rolling behind her, goes to the alarm and taps in the code.

Nothing.

She taps on the alarm box annoyed; "wake up bitch."

Nothing.

KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

She places her keys next to her cell phone on the counter.

She takes a bottled water from the fridge, turns, and notices the empty bottle of scotch on the table.

MOMENT LATER

She pours the last of the scotch into a tumbler of ice and adds a meek splash of water.

BULL'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tumbler in hand Sydney walks to the bathroom

BULL'S BATHROOM

She looks in and notes that the toothbrush holder is empty. She smiles satisfied that she's home alone.

BULL'S BEDROOM

She passes the bed and notes that the bed is slightly messed and that her small photo is on the bedstand. She stops, thinks about it then snatches the photo off the stand.

SYDNEY'S BEDROOM

She lays her suitcase on the bed, places the photo back in its home location, closes her curtains, and turns to the open closet door.

WALK IN CLOSET

She flips on the light, walks in, stops at the camisole draped drawer. Her jaw clinches with displeasure.

SYDNEY  
Fucking Brianna.

INT. CLOSET - DRESSER

She lifts the camisole and folds it.

She freezes, her eyes shift as she tallies: curtain, alarm, scotch, frame, closet, camisole; all things out of place.

Icy fingers roll up her spine, she stiffens, turns to...

The closet door silently swings closed.

She bounds bulldozing into the door. It doesn't budge.

SYDNEY

Brianna?!

Sudden pain in her battering-ram shoulder.

SYDNEY

--Owww. Damn!

CLOSET EXT.

Sam stands at the door, chair shoved against the handle.

SYDNEY (O.S.)

Brianna.

He sits on the bed and rubs his face hard, a conversation going on inside his head about "What-now?"

He unsnaps the levers on her suitcase and opens it.

Her name and address are taped to the inside of the case.

SYDNEY (O.S.)

Out of my suitcase, bitch.

A book is pressed onto the clothes. Sam pulls it out.

INSERT BOOK: Hardback titled The Borden Dispatches.

He tosses it on the bed, walks to the closet, starts to say something, stops, turns off the closet light and walks away.

SYDNEY (O.S.)

Not funny! ... Open the door!

She pounds on the door.

HALLWAY CONTINUOUS

Followed by the insistent pounding, Sam glances back

SAM  
 (to himself)  
 Now it's a problem.

BULL'S BEDROOM

The last light of day fills the room. Sam shuts the door but can't shut out the distant pounding.

BOOM!

He goes to his pack, pulls out his notebook, sits cross-legged on the bed and writes.

LATER

Soundless gray television light flickers across the room.

BOOM!

Sam sits on the bed, a 5x7 faded studio photo in hand.

INSERT PHOTO: Kid Sam and his parents; smiling in good times.

BOOM!

BOOM! Turns into ... A RAPIDLY BOUNCING BASKETBALL

MOSCA (O.S.)  
 Sam!

Sam jumps as if the voice were right next to him.

EXT. SILVER CITY - NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - FLASHBACK - DAY

Thirteen-year-old Sam, lanky, hungry face and eyes that take in everything, trots backward in the middle of the street dribbling a basketball.

SAM  
 You guys suck. Seriously, we're going to get our asses so kicked next week by the lamest junior high in the state.

Following; MOSCA (13) a stout, profusely sweating Hispanic kid, and BIG RAY (14) a red-faced lumbering Anglo who has little control of his own feet and he stumbles.

MOSCA  
 What the fuck, Sam. Slow down.

They round a corner and Sam spin-turns and stops dead. Mosca slams into him.

MOSCA

Not that slow, pendejo.

Across the street a shiny new BMW M6 blings-up the front of Sam's modest home.

BIG RAY

Hey, that's Bullington's car. What's going on at your place?

Sam shrugs but he gives the BMW the once over.

MOSCA

Can we still get something to eat?

Sam ignores them and walks down the sidewalk across the street and parallel to the BMW. Mosca and Big Ray follow.

The driver's side window is down and, slowly, the alluring outline of fourteen-year-old SYDNEY comes into Sam's view.

She turns, aware of the boys. She stares directly into Sam's eyes with a clarity that unsettles him and he drops the ball.

He picks it up quickly and returns the look but she's looking down.

BIG RAY

Rude bitch.

SAM

Shut up, Ray.

BIG RAY

She is. Doesn't talk to anyone cuz her shit don't stink.

MOSCA

Bet it does. Mine stinks, like caca.

He laughs and slugs Big Ray who doesn't laugh.

SAM

Her mom died.

BIG RAY

Yeah, and my pop says she's burning in hell for suiciding herself.

Sam turns, his face hard with concern for Ray's interpretation and more ... protecting Sydney.

SAM

People only repeat what someone else says when they're too ignorant to think for themselves. That's what my dad says.

It's a bit of a scold and Ray looks away, embarrassed.

MOSCA

I bet it's the way she smells, huh?

Mosca grins at Sam, not letting him off the hook.

SAM

Girls don't smell you dip-shit, they're, uh, I don't know, scented.

MOSCA

Whatever, she's always scented like flowers and uh, like ...

SAM

Butter. Butter and flowers.

He walks away to the BMW leaving Big Ray and Mosca.

MOSCA

Sam, can we go get something to eat?

SAM

No.

MOSCA

Come-on, Big Ray, let's go.

They walk off muttering and looking back at Sam.

INT./EXT. BMW - CONTINUOUS

At the BMW Sam hangs on the door, sticks his head in and breathes in deeply trying not to be too obvious; butter and flowers.

SAM

Smells good in here. That come with the car?

Sydney struggles with something in her hands, a white shoe, with a buckle strap.

She looks up with a faint smile; Sam is either very funny or very innocent?

She goes back her buckle problem. It's come off the strap and she doesn't know how to put it back on.

SAM

Here.

He holds out a hand for the shoe and the buckle.

She hands them to him.

He looks at the two items, not really knowing how they fit together, then just takes a shot ... and fixes it.

He hands the repaired shoe back.

She looks it over then looks at Sam with a different, possibly kinder, appraisal.

Sam looks around the interior susceptible to the classy nature of the car.

SAM

Nice car. ... Uh, I'm Sam.

Without looking up she nods. She knows who he is.

Shoe sitting in her lap her hands move together and her left thumb strokes the the palm of her right hand slowly.

He stammers.

SAM

So you, uh, you back for the summer?

She looks up and out the front window and nods.

SAM

Haven't seen you since, uh, since before your mom died. ... I was away when, uh... I'm sorry. Must be hard.

He searches desperately for something to say.

SAM

Pretty hot out here, would you like some hot water or something?

He rethinks that and tries to recover.

SAM

I mean, uh, would you like some cold water it's pretty, uh ...

He looks away and mouths "fuck", knowing he sounds just absolutely lame.

He turns back, she smiles at him and his eyes go a little glassy, like all the air is being sucked out of him.

She stops rubbing her hands, places both of them on her skirt and slowly lifts it, exposing her pale thighs.

Sam stares agog.

She lifts her shoeless right foot, places it slowly on her knee and pulls the shoe on and connects the strap.

She turns and as seductively as a 14 year old girl can, she bites her lower lip, reaches over and hits the window button.

The tinted window rolls up.

Sam stares at his open-mouth reflection.

INT. SAM'S HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Sam enters the living room, turns and looks back through the screen door at the BMW.

WAYNE (O.S.)

Won't! Won't Do it!

Sam sets the basketball down, steals up to the kitchen door, stands at the wall where the framed 5x7 FAMILY PHOTO hangs.

He opens the door a crack and peers in.

INT. SAM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME - DAY

WAYNE (45) Sam's father, a man uncomfortable with dishonesty sits at the dining room table. Absently, he spins an IVORY HANDLED POCKET KNIFE on the table top.

At the sink, back turned to Wayne, stands Bull. In his 50s. with a thick powerful body, his nickname fits.

He stares out the kitchen window at Sam's mother, REBECCA (38) an attractive blend of lean prairie woman and jean-clad hippie. She hangs laundry beneath a large cottonwood.

She turns to the window and locks eyes with Bull for an instant. Something exists between the two of them not shared with anyone. Her face hardens and she turns away.

BULL

Inquiry's tomorrow and if I take the fall the mine'll close the day after.

WAYNE

Yeah, and I told you last year about that tunnel. Now two good men'er dead because you didn't want to spend money.

Bull moves to the table and leans on it, imposing himself powerfully over Wayne.

BULL  
Past is past, Wayne. You want everyone out of work? That what you want?

Wayne looks up, uncertain.

WAYNE  
I dunno. I tell'em it's my fault, then--

Bull slaps his hand down on the twirling knife and quick-talks like a used car salesman; everybody's a winner.

BULL  
--You get your hands slapped, I fire you, put thirty-thousand in a bank account in your name, and get you a foreman's position at a mine in Tennessee.

Wayne lifts Bull's hand off his knife and shoves it away. He's not cowed by Bull.

Bull returns to the window, leans to look out, searching for Rebecca, but she's gone. He turns back.

BULL  
I got friends there. They'll take care of you, the boy, and...

He looks out the window again.

BULL  
...Rebecca, she'll be better-off away from here.

The way he says "Rebecca" would have another man questioning, but Wayne's focused on the problem at hand.

WAYNE  
I don't know. I just don't know. I--

Bull comes to the table.

BULL  
--Okay, fifty-thousand. In a bank, in your name.

Wayne looks up at Bull. His eyes calculate fifty-G's.

BULL  
Okay?

Wayne nods reluctantly.

WAYNE

It's a deal? I get paid right after.

Bull holds out his hand to shake on it.

Wayne looks at the extended hand like he's making a deal with the devil, then takes it and they shake.

BULL

Know what to say at the inquiry?

Wayne nods sober with the thought.

Bull walks to the kitchen door.

WAYNE

Gonna be a problem. I just know it.

Bull turns back.

BULL

It's only a problem if more than two of us know about it.

He breaks into a condescending smile.

BULL

Trust me. And nothing said to anyone. Not even Rebecca. That's the deal.

His smile fades to rock-hard determination.

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bull walks through, stops at the front door, looks down at the BASKETBALL then looks around his eyes stopping at the couch.

BEHIND THE COUCH Sam hides. Peering underneath the couch he can see Bull's expensive shoes and the basketball.

A beat.

Sam hears a METAL CLICK then watches as a knife blade is driven into the basketball flattening it. His eyes widen.

The screen door SLAMS.

END FLASHBACK

BOOM!

SYDNEY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sam's flashlight beam trails across the room to the door.

BOOM!

SYDNEY

Open the fucking door, Brianna.

Sam walks to the door, hesitates, then...

SAM

It's, uh, Sam.

A moment of shocked silence from the closet, then confusion.

SYDNEY

Sam? ... Sam who? And what are you doing in my house?

SAM

I'm, uh, I'm assisting your father.

SYDNEY

So why'd you lock me in the closet?

Sam makes a face over his lame-assed lie.

A beat.

SYDNEY

Sam, would you at least turn on the light?

He considers, then flips on the light.

CLOSET INT.

Sydney searches for her purse, rifles through it, pulls out a pink pepper spray canister. She's a fighter

SYDNEY

Look, if Bull hired you great, but I really don't want to use my dresser for a toilet, so would you mind letting me out so I can go to the bathroom?

Nothing for a moment then the chair being removed.

Sydney stands takes a deep breath, drops her hands, pepper-spray palmed out of sight.

The door opens.

Framed by the dark room, Sam appears a shadowed raggedy-man.

Sydney's breath catches, this guy wasn't hired by her father. She manages a passible smile and nods across the room.

SYDNEY

Bathroom?

He studies her, turns to look into the dark bedroom, turns back.

The PEPPER SPRAY CANISTER fills his vision as he gets a face full of pepper spray.

He doubles over coughing.

She pushes him aside and darts through the door.

He grabs her by the blouse, buttons pop.

He grabs her wrist, yanks her tight to him, wrenches her empty hand behind her until she cries out in pain.

Face dripping oleoresin capsicum, he smacks his lips.

SAM

Mmmmm.

He grins a bit off center.

SAM

Damn good year for OC.

He grabs her hand, forces the canister between them, presses on her finger. A cloud of pepper-spray fills the air.

SAM

I eat this shit for breakfast.

She normally has a bagel and now she thrashes madly.

He lets her go and she falls to the floor gagging, coughing.

She crawls away and rams her head into the leg of the bed.

Sam reaches down grabs the back of her blouse and drags her to the bathroom.

BATHROOM

Sam flips on the light and yanks her to her feet.

Her blouse, unbuttoned to her navel, reveals prefect bra-less breasts. Sam ogles her; it's been a really long time.

He catches himself and pulls her blouse closed.

Freaking, she swings a fist and nails him in the face.

SAM

Goddamn it!

He grabs her blouse in a bunch around the throat, tightens and pulls her to his face.

SAM

I'm trying to help.

She stops swinging. She coughs, tears stream down her face.

SAM

Now...

He lets her go, she grabs her blouse together. He leads her carefully to the shower and pulls back the curtain.

SAM

Get in, you gotta decon.

She doesn't move.

SAM

Decontaminate, wash this shit off.

She reaches out blindly, Sam offers a hand. She slaps it, leans across the tub to the wall and guides herself in.

SAM

Wash really good before you take off your clothes.

She stiffens. He steals one more glance at her open blouse, a nipple showing. He yanks the curtain closed.

SAM

Don't worry, not into rude bitches. ...  
Get your face, mouth and nasal passages clean, really clean. And the door stays open.

Blindly she searches the wall for the tap.

MOMENTS LATER

Hidden in the steam of the shower Sydney forces her eyes open, rinses them.

She hears the sink water, and peeks through a crack in the curtains.

SYDNEY'S POV - He's laid her clean clothes on the toilet.

Sam washes his face, hair, arms and chest thoroughly at the sink, his burn scars clearly visible.

He grabs a towel, wipes his face.

She's mesmerized until he turns and catches her, his gaze direct, threatening.

She yanks the shower curtain closed.

KITCHEN - LATER

The stove light is the only light on.

Sydney sits at the table. Sam hands her a towel with ice.

She ignores him. He shrugs, sets it on the table, goes to the refrigerator and pulls out two beers.

She picks up the icy towel and holds it to her head using it to hide her interest.

His biceps swell the arms of his tee-shirt.

His shaggy mane.

The thin red scar running down his cheek.

He's attractive in a lost dog sort-of-way, but...

SYDNEY

Liar. You don't work for Bull.

He's at the table in an instant and he slams the bottles down and gets right in her face.

SAM

I-don't-lie.

She swallows hard, nods and lips soundlessly...

SYDNEY

Whatever.

He unscrews the bottle tops and snaps them expertly into the trash and offers her one.

She refuses. He sets it on the table.

SAM

I said I was assisting your father.

SYDNEY

Doing?

A beat.

SAM  
Car problems.

Sydney stiffens.

SYDNEY  
With the BMW?

He nods.

SYDNEY  
Is everything okay?

SAM  
For the moment.

SYDNEY  
Is Brianna with him?

Sam guzzles his beer then burps.

SAM  
Yep. ... Come-on, back upstairs.

She gets up and walks across the room past Sam, reaches the end of the counter, spots her phone and keys.

SYDNEY  
I'm sorry, I would like my beer.

She smiles and looks over at the table but Sam doesn't move.

Refused she huffs and walks across the room and picks up the beer.

She turns, Sam stands with her keys and phone in his hand.

INT. BMW - NIGHT

A large moon casts the interior in a phosphorescent glow.

Clay-white, Brianna stares sullenly at Bull as he sleeps.

Her head moves toward Bull.

He groans.

She moves back from Bull.

A low GROWL comes from Brianna.

Bull jerks, sits up and stares at Brianna hard, as if he thought he heard something.

A beat.

Nothing, he takes a quick look around and sits back.

Brianna leaps at him, growling.

Bull bellows, shoves her away.

A massive coyote leaps onto the BMW hood and peers through the glass.

Another coyote lunges through the passenger window, snatches Brianna's stump and yanks on it, growling.

Brianna heaves back and forth.

Bull bellows and with everything he has he shoves Brianna across the car nailing the coyote.

Rods of pain shoot up his leg and he screams.

BMW EXT.

Coyotes scatter and run from the BMW.

Bull's wail echoes through Hell Canyon like a thousand anguished voices.

INT. SYDNEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sydney walks in and flips on the light.

Sam right behind, flips the light off

SAM

No lights.

His flashlight directs her across the room to the closet.

Sydney turns defiantly.

SYDNEY

No.

CLOSET - MOMENTS LATER

Light from the flashlight bounces off the walls.

Sydney is shoved through the door.

SYDNEY

At least tell me what's going on!

The flashlight fills her face. Tears stream down her cheeks and she sobs.

SAM

You'll find out tomorrow.

SYDNEY

The light?

Sam stops in the doorway.

SYDNEY

Nobody'll see with the door closed.  
Please.

He switches on the light and shuts the door.

Her face hardens and she rubs the tears away, her act disappears instantly.

MOMENTS LATER

She stands on a stool, sweeps through the high shelves knocking things to the floor below.

She stops, smiles and pulls out a .38 revolver. She holds it out confidently, sights expertly down the barrel.

She checks the cylinder, it's empty.

SYDNEY

Fuck.

She sweeps everything off the shelf searching for ammunition.

MOMENTS LATER

Amidst the clutter on the floor, Sydney holds the empty gun in her lap contemplating her next move.

A metal yardstick in a pile of clothes catches her attention. She reaches for it.

BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The yard-stick slides beneath the door, moves back and forth until it finds the propped up chair leg. It moves until it slips off the leg then stops and moves slowly until its end presses flat against the leg. The yard-stick bends with pressure then slips off the leg again.



Two feet away Sam blocks her path, numerous men's dress ties strung around his neck, none of them tied.

SAM  
Couldn't wait, huh?

He shakes his head, perturbed.

SAM  
Some people just don't like surprises.

He steps toward her.

SYDNEY  
Fuck you!

She swings the stick with the power of a home run slugger. He catches it mid-air, wrenches it away and flings it.

SYDNEY  
Help! Help me!

He snatches a tie from his neck, shoves it into her mouth, wrestles her to the ground, ties her hands behind her, yanks her to her feet, throws her over his shoulder and stalks off into the forest back toward the house.

INT. SYDNEY'S CLOSET - NIGHT

Sydney's tied to the chair with Bull's ties.

Sam secures her remaining free foot to the chair then stands.

He takes her chin in his hand, forces her to look into his deep set eyes. He speaks low, almost pained with the words.

SAM  
There's nothing in Afghan civil or religious law that makes it illegal for a young woman to run away. But all you have to do is watch'em kill...

He swallows hard, reliving something deeply disturbing.

SAM  
...a seventeen-year-old because she didn't want to get fucked by a fat pig three times her age, then you think, "Maybe, maybe she should'a just" ...

His voice trails away, the incomplete reflection gone.

She mumbles something, low and level.

Sam looks into her eyes. He sees something more than fear, understanding, maybe? He removes her gag.

She licks her lips.

SYDNEY

Water.

BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Sam fills a cup. He watches her reflection in the mirror.

CLOSET - MOMENTS LATER

Sam stops in front of her. She sniffles.

He kneels down, holds up the cup.

She lifts her head and drinks.

He waits until she finishes drinking then takes a tee-shirt from the floor and wipes her mouth.

A tense giggle escapes her.

SAM

What?

SYDNEY

I laugh when I get nervous.

She stares at Sam with disarming frailty.

SYDNEY

If you're going to do it ... you know,  
if you're... Just get it over with.

Sam gets it, is taken aback, and shakes his head adamantly.

SAM

Oh fuck. God, no!

He stands.

SAM

Your dad owes me money. Actually money  
and a life, but I'm good with the money.  
That's all this is about, and after I  
talk to him in the morning--

SYDNEY

--I don't know what you're doing with  
the BMW, but they're gone on vacation.

Sam stands.

SYDNEY

They're not here, understand?

He looks around at the clothes.

SAM

No, he's not here, but somewhere close.  
You wanna see him, right?

She flinches unsure of how to answer.

SYDNEY

Not really.

SAM

Whatever. Look, when I'm done with my  
business I'll leave and you can go back  
to...

He sweeps his hand over the racks of clothing.

SAM

...buying shit, or whatever it is you  
do.

She snaps at the insinuation of irrelevance.

SYDNEY

I attend law school. Harvard.

SAM

Hmmm, always were smart.

She looks up, surprised.

SYDNEY

Do I know you?

SAM

No, you don't know me.

He walks to the door.

SAM

Don't run away again, Sydney.

Her head snaps up with her name.

SYDNEY

How do you know my name?

SAM

Inside of your suitcase, Ms. Smarty Law  
Student.

SYDNEY

Sam.

She says his name with a tone that stops him.

SYDNEY

This isn't Afghanistan, or Iraq or wherever you were. You're aware of that, right?

He considers this, smiles at the inference and nods.

Then turns off the lights and leaves, shutting the door.

SAM (O.S.)

I know exactly where I am. I'm in the home of Thomas Bullington.

INT. BMW - DAY

Sweat drenched, Bull struggles with the bottle of OxyConton. Suddenly the cap pops open and the pills explode outward.

He gathers several, grabs the water, dumps the pills in his mouth and swallows fast. Then shoots two more.

He leans back and groans in profound pain triggered by every move.

From somewhere the hip-hop version of Good Girls plays.

He stops, turns and stares at Brianna. He sits up, jolted by the sound of the hip-hop ring tone, recalling her phone.

He sits as far forward as he can and stretches. He groans, grits, growls as he pushes himself to get his arm between Brianna's legs.

His fingers barely reach the phone. He flips it sideways to pick it up. He raises his fingers but they're wet with sweat and the phone slips out and drops farther away.

BULL

Shit!

He wipes his hand, takes *The Princess Bride* from the dash and uses it to shepherd the phone closer.

He lays the book in his lap, reaches down, and grabs the phone.

He laughs, pure relief. He's saved! But... it's apparent that he doesn't know cell phones.

He pushes a button and the screen flashes. He grabs his glasses from the dash and puts them on.

He hits button after button until he finds the "dialed" list and he pushes whatever and waits while it rings.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Brianna?

Startled by the male voice Bull is still overjoyed.

BULL

Hello.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

--I told you to stop calling me. It's over, you hear? Over!

BULL

(yells)

I've, we've been in a wreck, Hell's Canyon.

An audible Click and the line goes dead.

BULL

No, no, no, look I don't care. Don't hang up. Don't. Don't hang up. Please. You can fuck the bitch all you want. Really, just don't...

A different more insistent beeping from the phone. He looks at the screen; hoping.

INSERT SCREEN: CHARGE BATTERY.

The screen flashes several times then goes black.

Bull stares at the screen.

He wipes sweat out of his eyes, tosses the phone out the window. He lifts *The Princess Bride* from his lap, opens it to a page that's tabbed.

INSERT BOOK: One line is highlighted.

He reads.

BULL

My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die.

EXT. BLACK RANGE - HIGHWAY 152 - DAY

The pickup drives past the mended guardrail.

MOMENTS LATER

Sam, hooded cami on, opens the passenger door, reaches in the back, pulls Sydney, bound, from the floor of the back seat.

EXT. BLACK RANGE - FOREST - DAY

Sydney, hands tied in front, picks her way down through trees and brush. Sam follows.

SYDNEY

Kidnapping's capital crime, you know.

SAM

That's what I love about you college folk, don't know shit. It's capital if I murder you, otherwise it's a felony, and so far I haven't kidnapped you. All I did last night is keep you from getting hurt in the woods. Now I'm taking you to see your father. No kidnapping here.

SYDNEY

Yeah, well I don't know about that, Bull doesn't do woods. Neither do I.

She stops, plops down, and glares at Sam. This is as far as she goes.

SYDNEY

What he does do, and he's really good at it, is take little piss-ants like you and twist their heads off

Bored, Sam grabs her wrists and drags her.

SYDNEY

Okay, okay! Stop!

He yanks her up, holds a warning finger in her face.

SAM

I'm familiar with the kind of shit Thomas Bullington is capable of. Remind me again and I'll tie you to a tree and leave your skinny little bitch ass here ... in the woods.

He points ahead.

Seething, she moves out.

MOMENTS LATER

She rounds a tree and beholds the BMW.

Drawn slowly into the scene, she struggles to comprehend, rubs her right thumb into her left palm.

SAM

Went off the road two days ago. I don't know how it happened. Maybe, I dunno...

She stops and looks up at the trail of devastated trees.

SAM

I was hitchhiking, they passed. She seemed pretty pissed.

SYDNEY

Brianna?

Sam nods, she turns, starts off rapidly then turns back and snaps.

SYDNEY

Two days? You left 'em for two days? What kind of person does that?

SAM

The kind you don't want to fuck with.

He shoves her on.

BMW MOMENTS LATER

Sam sets his pack down, pulls out a roll of packing tape.

Sydney's at the back of the car checking out the rope that holds the BMW. She looks at Sam for an answer.

SAM

Yeah, that's all that's holding it.

She reaches down and grabs the tale.

Sam bolts up, storms over to her and yanks the tail away.

SAM

Don't touch anything!

She considers this, looks the rope over like she's figuring something out then walks around Sam to Bull's door.

She kneels down, looks in and reacts immediately to the sight of Brianna. Spinning onto all fours she retches.

She spits, then forces herself back up. Ignoring Brianna she pulls at the blanket covering Bull's head.

SYDNEY

Bull?

Bull opens his eyes, wavering confusion transitions to hope. He chokes and blubbers like a scared kid.

BULL

Oh, thank God, thank God. You're here.

He holds out his hand for comfort, but it's as if she doesn't know what this simple action means and he has to grab her hand in his.

SYDNEY

You look like shit.

He notices her hands are tied.

BULL

What--

Sam's hand slaps the windshield startling the two.

They turn to see that he's taped his 5x6 FAMILY PHOTO onto the windshield facing in. Their decade old smiles greet a confused Bull.

Bull squints then searches for his glasses.

BULL

What the hell's that?

SAM

Justice.

Sam goes to his pack and pulls out his notebook, walks back, squats in front of the two and holds his notebook up to Bull.

SAM

This is my book. Not as good as *The Princess Bride*, but worth a read.

He opens the notebook and flips through then stops, folds the notebook and holds it up.

He stares into Bull's eyes and recites the passage verbatim; it's been seared into his soul.

SAM

"I do not pretend to understand the moral universe; the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but a little ways and I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight but I can divine it by conscience.

He stops, smiles as if this were his best day ever.

SAM

And from what I see I am sure it bends toward justice."

Sam walks to his backpack and puts the notebook away.

Bull puts his glasses on, turns to the photo and suddenly everything makes sense as a past wrong comes clearly into focus.

BULL

(to himself)

Fuck... Only two of us know, only two of us... Sam?

His head whips around to Sam.

BULL

Sam Cody?!

SAM

I've traveled that arc, lived the worst of it, and I am bent on justice!

BULL

Oh, God, no.

SYDNEY

(to Bull)

What's he talking about? The Codys moved away years ago.

SAM

Moved away? That's what you know?

(to Bull)

Tell her. Tell her how you killed my parents.

BULL

I didn't do anything to--

SAM

--Don't you fucking say that!

He walks casually to the back of the car, grabs and holds up the long tail of the Highwayman's Hitch.

SAM

People live lives determined by a single strand of justice held in someone else's hands. And you wanna know how I know this? Look around.

He turns and takes in the scenery.

SAM

Look the fuck around. You're here, I'm here. How is that? The Range brought us to this junction of fate and freewill to finish what needs finishing. And if all fate and freewill flows from God then, Thomas Bullington, this mountain range is my fucking god, and yours too.

Watching Sam in the rear-view mirror, Bull's eyes bulge.

Sam rocks the car forward. Sydney jumps up. Bull grabs the steering wheel but no scream this time.

SYDNEY

Sam!

SAM

We're all on this ledge, Bullington. Balanced here without any awareness of the tiny, incremental dynamics that can end our lives. Then some son-of-a-bitch does one thing and that clarifies everything. What about you Thomas? You aware? Am I clarifying shit for you?!

BULL

Okay! Stop, please!

Sam drops the rope and comes back to the door.

Bull, ashen, shaking, stares at Sam.

BULL

I knew you were there that day.

SAM

Yeah. And the last day too. Tell her, tell her how you took everything from my dad.

Bull looks up at the photo and stares at it, unable to speak.

Sam squats.

SAM  
My thirteenth birthday. He was taking  
me to buy a new bike before we moved.

EXT. SILVER CITY - TOWN STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK

Wayne, Sam in tow, stops on the sidewalk and looks across  
the street to where Bull, followed by two MINE WORKERS, is  
heading toward the SILVER CITY BANK AND TRUST.

SAM (V.O.)  
My first bike.

WAYNE  
(calling out)  
Bullington!

Nearby several men glare at Wayne.

WAYNE  
Sam, come on.

The two step off the sidewalk and hustle across the street.  
A car slows and the driver shoots a finger at Wayne.

DRIVER  
Should be in jail, fucker!

Sam glares at the car and steps fast, closer to his dad.  
Wayne steps onto the sidewalk and heads toward Bull.  
Several yards away he stops and turns to Sam.

WAYNE  
Wait here.

He walks away to Bull.

Sam hesitates then follows.

MINE WORKER ONE steps out to intercept Wayne, but Bull waves  
him back and with a look commands the two workers to stay  
while he talks to Wayne.

WAYNE  
Bull, been a week.

BULL  
It has and that's why I'm wondering why  
you're still here Wayne?

Wayne moves close enough to speak low and personal.

WAYNE

We have a deal. Fifty-thousand and a job. You forget that? We shook.

Bull smiles as if he's humoring a drunk. Behind him the two Mine Workers look away attempting not to hear the discussion.

BULL

What are you talking about?

Wayne grabs Bull's coat.

WAYNE

Fifty-thousand and a Goddamn job! What you promised!

Mine Worker One jumps between the two and shoves Wayne hard sending him stumbling back. Wayne falls into the street.

Sam charges Mine Worker One and punches the man hard in the face.

Mine Worker One backhands Sam, sends him reeling to the ground.

Bull snatches the back of Mine Worker One's collar and swings him hard into the brick building.

BULL

Don't touch him!

Dazed, Mine Worker One backs away.

Bull walks to Sam and stands above him without saying anything for a moment, then bending over, eye-to-eye, he speaks low, the two of them the only people in the world who know Sam was there when the deal was struck.

BULL

You remember this, boy, don't you ever trust anyone.

Bull extends a hand.

BULL

Now get up and help your dad.

Sam swats Bull's hand away and for a split second Bull looks hurt, as if Sam's rejection could possibly mean something.

But then he turns and walks to the bank door. Mine Worker Two opens it and Bull enters with the Mine Workers following.

Sam gets up and hurries to Wayne who sits in the road staring as if he's lost.

A car rolls by and the passenger spits on Wayne.

He doesn't flinch; he just looks at nothing, the realization sinking in that he's fucked.

He stands looking stooped and old.

He looks around aware that everyone's watching, he looks down and walks away.

Sam hesitates, then follows at a distance.

SAM (V.O.)

I only had one question that day. And it had nothing to do with the bike, or the argument, or why someone would spit on my dad.

INT. SAM'S HOME - DAY

Rebecca slides through the door, arms loaded with empty boxes, Sam follows with more boxes. The front room is in various stages of being packed up.

REBECCA

Get in, and get your stuff boxed up.

SAM

Why do we have to leave?

Rebecca's "brave-face" sinks but she mends fast.

REBECCA

Already been through this, Sam. Go finish up.

Sam goes to his room.

Rebecca walks into the kitchen.

SAM'S BEDROOM

Sam kicks a cardboard box then flops on his bed.

The CLATTER OF FALLING ITEMS, then Rebecca screams.

KITCHEN MOMENTS LATER

Sam runs in. Boxes are all over the floor. Rebecca, at the sink, stares out the kitchen window.

He walks over.

SAM

Mom?

She grips the sink edge sways unsteadily.

SAM (V.O.)

All I wanted to know was what was on  
his mind the moment he did it.

Sam looks out the window at the large cottonwood.

His gaze travels down to where his father's body swings from  
a strand of rope.

END FLASHBACK

Sydney's eyes are fixed on a spot on the ground.

SAM

The worst day in my life. You took  
everything from him, everything. Mom  
died two years later. The second worst  
day in my life.

Bull looks away at the mention of Rebecca.

SAM

I spent years going from one fucked-up  
foster home to the next.

He stands, takes his hoodie off.

SAM

Then I found a home with Uncle Sam.  
Three trips to Afghanistan ...

He pulls his tee up revealing scar tissue.

SAM

...and one to the burn unit.

Sydney swallows hard, but stares.

SAM

Explosives. Best job I ever had. Best  
job that ever had me.

He pulls the tee down and stands at the car door above Bull.

SAM

Way I see it you owe me fifty-thousand.

He looks into Bull's eyes.

SAM

Then we'll get out of here. Trust me.

Rarely finding himself on the shit-end of the stick, Bull's obstinate refusal is all he's got and he sputters indignantly.

BULL

You get nothing.

SAM

All we gotta do is figure out how I get paid.

BULL

Nothing!

SAM

(to Sydney)

Let's move out.

BULL

You hear me? Nothing!

SYDNEY

(to Sam)

Wait.

BULL

You can go fuck yourself! That's what you can do!

Sam walks away, Sydney holds back.

SYDNEY

Sam.

Sam returns, takes her by her bindings and yanks her along.

SAM

Gets old dragging your ass around.

She digs her heels in.

SYDNEY

Goddamn it, stop!

Sam stops.

SYDNEY

There's a safe.

BULL

Shut-up! I'm not paying this bastard!

Sam starts toward Bull, but Sydney stops him.

SYDNEY

There's cash. Lots of it. No hassles.

Sam thinks about it then nods.

Sydney drops next to Bull.

BULL

Not giving you the combination.

SYDNEY

(quietly to Bull)

Look, this isn't the time to be Bull.

And you're not giving me one combination,  
you're giving me two.

Bull's eyes narrow and calculate as he understands what she's planning but he still doesn't like it and his face scrunches up like he's shitting cactus.

BULL

The cash. Nothing else. Understand?

He glares at Sydney, she nods agreement and leans in for him to whisper numbers.

MOMENTS LATER

Sydney walks past Sam wearing a subtle look of triumph and strides off into the woods without him.

EXT. BLACK RANGE - FOREST - DAY

In silence Sam walks behind Sydney, keeping an eye on her.

Then...

SYDNEY

I'm sorry about your father.

She turns to him hoping for a reaction. Nothing.

SYDNEY

He seemed like a nice man.

She stops suddenly and turns.

He runs into her, she tips back and he grabs her around the waist pulling her close.

She looks up at him, the same look from years ago, a look that clearly unnerves him.

SYDNEY

So, what's the plan, Sam?

A deer in the headlights, he holds her for a breathless moment.

SYDNEY

I mean what happens once you get the money? Drop him in the canyon? Stuff my body in a trunk?

He releases her, the spell broken.

SAM

Been watching way too much *CSI*.

He pushes her forward but she refuses and continues.

SYDNEY

I'm just saying suppose there's enough cash in the safe. Then what? You simply call the ambulance and meet them over here and save him and you're what? A hero?

It's obvious that Sam doesn't have this part of the plan figured out and he looks around for an answer.

SYDNEY

So what the hell's this all about if you haven't even got an exit strategy?

SAM

Pain and justice. ... And, I'll figure it out. Now move.

He shoves her but she's become the immovable object.

SYDNEY

Pain and justice? Really? That's it? I don't think so. I think it's all about revenge? And I think you hurt so bad inside that you don't really have a plan. You never did. That's emotion and that's the difference between justice and revenge.

SAM

A deal was struck and your father broke it causing undue harm to my family. That's legal, and this is about justice not revenge.

SYDNEY  
Wrong. Everything's about revenge,  
Sam. Everything.

A beat.

SYDNEY  
I'll help you.

Sam smiles and shakes his head like "Ain't no fool, lady."

SYDNEY  
Seriously, just untie me, please, for  
old times' sake?

She holds out her hands.

SYDNEY  
I really hate this.

Sam looks at her, he thinks, then he thinks better of it.

SAM  
Don't recall old times being that cozy.  
But, nice try.

He points onward. She turns and walks but her eyes search everywhere.

SYDNEY  
I can help.

SAM  
Don't need your help.

SYDNEY  
You're very judgmental, you know.

SAM  
You don't know anything about me.

SYDNEY  
Yeah. Well, there's a lot you don't  
know about me either. Like, some games  
I enjoy and some I don't.

She holds her bound hands over her head.

SYDNEY  
I don't like this game.

She scans the ground ahead, notes something in a BUSH just ahead.

SYDNEY

Makes me feel helpless and I detest that.

She turns and smiles at Sam who is bored with the conversation.

She trips and falls into the BUSH before Sam can react.

SAM

Shit.

Out of Sam's sight she grabs a thick branch hidden in the bush and pulls it close to her chest.

Sam reaches down and helps her up.

She deftly gains her feet, spins, swings the branch and whacks his damaged ear.

He stumbles back, both hands holding his exploding head.

SAM

Fuck!

She rushes him, slams the stick into the side of his knee; he buckles but grabs her foot.

She reaches for his TacTool, yanks it out and slashes at his hand, he yanks it back and releases her foot.

She moves back.

Sam jumps up snarling like a pissed dog.

SAM

What? Gonna stab me?

She looks and sees there's no tip on the knife. It doesn't take any steam out of her and she holds it out threatening.

He moves. She stands her ground, then suddenly turns the tool and grabs the blade offering Sam the handle.

SYDNEY

Please.

She's cool and she pulls her hands apart for him to cut the bindings.

He hesitates.

SYDNEY

I have the combination, so it's a given that you're not going to hurt me. And I'm not going to do anything to stop you, I have a lot at risk wouldn't you say?

Sam thinks about it, then takes the TacTool.

The TacTool whistles through the air and severs the binding.

Sydney drops the binding, rubs her wrists, turns and walks away. She smiles knowing a shift in power has occurred.

SYDNEY

And, I'm not riding back on the floor.

Sam grumbles, rubs his head, sheathes the TacTool and follows.

INT. PICKUP - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Sam drives, Sydney stares out the window.

SYDNEY

You're not the only one, you know.

She looks over at Sam.

SYDNEY

He's hurt a lot of people.

She looks back out the window placid, reflecting.

SYDNEY

This is karma.

Sam turns to her, surprised by her testimony.

A siren sounds behind them. Sam looks up into the mirror, then turns to Sydney.

SAM

Not a word.

He turns the car to the shoulder and comes to a stop.

He looks in the rear-view mirror.

INSERT REAR-VIEW MIRROR: A tall, beefy State Policeman, crew-cut and dark glasses climbs out of the patrol car.

Sydney looks out the back window.

SAM  
You know him?

SYDNEY  
Yeah, so do you.

He looks again.

INSERT MIRROR: the cop walks toward the pickup.

Sam looks at Sydney: a warning. She smiles and turns away.

Big Ray looks in and gives Sam the once over.

BIG RAY  
Afternoon. You gotta expired plate.

Sam winces; kicking himself for not checking the plate.

SYDNEY  
Ray?

Big Ray looks in, stern cop face changes to acknowledgment.

Sam turns to face Sydney; a dangerous moment.

She leans over and places a hand on Sam's leg.

BIG RAY  
Ms. Bullington, when'd you get out?

The word "out" stops her momentarily, but she smiles and moves on.

SYDNEY  
Just recently.

BIG RAY  
You better?

SYDNEY  
Yes, yes I am, thanks. This is Sam,  
he's helping Bull.

Ray checks Sam out briefly then smiles and nods; no clue.

SYDNEY  
Can we go, please? I'm really tired.  
I'll tell Bull about the plate.

Sam looks at Sydney appraising the calm, the charm, the way she rubs her thumb into her hand.

BIG RAY  
Sure, no problem, just get it taken  
care of. Good to meet you, Sam.

Big Ray walks away. Sam watches in the mirror.

INSERT MIRROR: Big Ray walks back to his car, slips off the  
pavement, rights himself and continues on.

SAM  
Fucker still can't walk.

He starts the truck and pulls out into the street.

Sydney looks out the front window, smiling as if she just  
pulled a fast one.

SAM  
What'd he mean, "out"?

Her smile disappears, she straightens and again rubs her  
thumb into her palm, fast and hard.

Sam looks at her wondering about the comment but he nods and  
says nothing; everyone's got secrets, and that's okay.

INT. BULL'S HOUSE - STAIRWAY CLOSET - NIGHT

Sam stands at the open door of the stairway closet and looks  
in.

Sydney pulls a latch on the top of a small wall panel then  
presses the panel. It swings open revealing a hidden space  
with a large safe inside.

She turns, looks up and smiles at Sam.

SYDNEY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Piles of CASH cover Sydney's desk.

Sam counts the cash.

Sydney plows through a pile of documents from the safe.

In all of the official clutter there's a pink envelope,  
singular in its personal appearance. She picks it up.

INSERT ENVELOPE: Old, looks as if it's been crumpled up then  
flattened out again. One name is hand-printed on the front:  
THOMAS.

She opens it and pulls out two stiff handwritten pages.

She reads silently.

She slumps slowly as if she's melting or being drawn inexorably into the bed.

Her breath catches, she stiffens, her fingers follow ink as if she's trying to capture the words. Her eyes water, she swallows hard stifling a moment when she'd rather scream.

INSERT LETTER. At the end of the last page the signature is simply the letter: R.

SAM

Something wrong?

She looks up as if caught doing something wrong, folds the letter, shoves it into the envelope, drops it onto the bed.

Her voice shakes and she stammers revealing an edge of something disturbing, but quickly recovers.

SYDNEY

Just a, a letter, from ... from someone  
Bull knew a long time ago.

Sam tamps a stack of bills.

SAM

How come you never call him dad?

She forces a smile.

SYDNEY

I dunno, just habit. He's always been,  
distant. Never very "dad" like.

Sam shakes his head not understanding and goes back to counting.

Sydney studies him intensely. Water forms in one eye and she wipes it quickly away.

SYDNEY

I remember your dad was Wayne.

Sam nods, concentrating on counting.

SYDNEY

And, your mom?

SAM

Rebecca.

Sydney's jolted by the name but remains still.

SAM  
Twenty thousand, that's it.

Sam shakes a wad of bills with frustration.

SYDNEY  
Don't worry, I'll help you get what you  
should have.

SAM  
Why? Why would you help?

Sydney gets up and walks over to him.

SYDNEY  
Pain and justice.

She sees the hair on the side of his head is clotted with  
blood. She slips a hand to his head where she whacked him.

SYDNEY  
Sorry.

Sam yanks away shakes his hair over his ear suddenly aware  
of how close she is.

She walks to the bathroom

BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

She holds a wash rag under running water and watches Sam in  
the mirror.

He looks haggard as shit.

She fills a glass with water.

BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

She sets the water glass on the desk, reaches out and sweeps  
Sam's hair back from his gnarled ear.

He jerks away, but she persists.

SYDNEY  
Let me clean this.

She touches him with the wash rag.

He leaps up from the chair and shoves her away.

SAM  
Stop it!

Her retaliation is vicious and lightning quick and she hurls the balled up wash rag in his face.

SYDNEY

What, join the Army and become a total dick?!

Sam wipes the water from his face.

SAM

Marines.

She pulls herself into check, but not surrender.

SYDNEY

Marines, navy, Matza-gobbling storm troopers on crack, I don't fucking care! You've survived some pretty shitty things with this perception that you're the only person in the world who's been hurt by Thomas Bullington.

She snatches the envelope from the bed, opens it, pulls out the letter and flaunts it in the air. Tears stream down her face but she speaks with a level of cold vindictiveness.

SYDNEY

Want to know why my mother hung herself?! Huh? ... Because that bastard fucked every whore in this fucking town. You found your dad under a tree. ... I found my mother in our closet while he was out fucking someone.

Tears stream unbroken; raw angry pain spews out in gut-wrenching sobs.

SYDNEY

I ... I tried to hold her up...

INT. CLOSET - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A very young Sydney sobs as her mother's feet struggle to balance on her daughter's tiny shoulders.

SYDNEY (V.O.)

... while she clawed at the...

Her mother rips madly at the rope around her neck, but because Sydney can't hold her up she can't pull the rope loose.

Sydney fights to hold her mother up, looks over at the chair she can't reach.

SYDNEY (V.O.)  
But I couldn't. I couldn't hold her  
... up.

END FLASHBACK

She crumples the letter in her fist as she folds inside.

SYDNEY  
I was too small.

A long beat as the tears slow and she gathers herself,  
seemingly embarrassed.

She has relived this a million times but she's never spoken  
it and she takes a deep breath to settle herself.

She looks up at Sam and a nervous giggle escapes. She wipes  
her eyes apologetically.

SYDNEY  
I've never told anyone.

A beat.

Sam holds out the wash rag, Sydney looks at it and then at  
him.

He sits in the chair and waits.

She stares at him momentarily, wipes her eyes, folds the  
letter, puts it in the envelope and pockets it.

She takes the wash rag kneels next to him and runs her hand  
through his hair pulling it back. With the tender walk of  
her fingers she examines the scar tissue.

Sam closes his eyes as if Saint Sydney could heal him.

She dabs at the dried blood.

SYDNEY  
Pain and justice isn't that what you  
said? Well, you're not the only one.

She hits a spot with the rag and he winces. She notices the  
spot and washes around it.

SYDNEY  
The thing that matters to him most is  
money.

She dips the wash rag in the glass and continues.

SYDNEY

Why do you think I have all that shit  
that's never been worn?

She nods to the closet and Sam looks.

SYDNEY

He's impervious to pain unless it's  
tied to money.

She finishes, puts the rag on the desk, stands and stares at  
the closet.

A beat.

SYDNEY

Come on. Let's deal some pain.

She rips the cover off her bed and throws it on the floor,  
enters the closet and starts flinging clothing and shoes out  
the door into a pile on the cover.

Sam watches, silent, unwilling to stop her.

MOMENTS LATER

She stands over the pile, flips the corners together and  
strains to lift the heavy bundle.

SAM

What are you doing?

She struggles but can't lift it then straightens and looks  
at him like "help or shut the fuck up."

He moves over the bundle but she waits for a moment staring  
up at him before she moves back.

She walks out of the room as if Sam's the hired help.

SYDNEY (O.S.)

Come on.

He hoists the bundle easily.

EXT. CANYON - NIGHT

The lights from the house fade behind them as Sam follows  
Sydney down a moonlit trail.

SERIES OF SHOTS - SYDNEY'S BONFIRE

A) Sydney's clothes and shoes in a pile on the ground.

- B) Sydney lifts a bottle of Jack to her lips and gulps.
- C) She pours a can of gas on the pile.
- D) She drinks Jack, passes the bottle to Sam, he refuses.
- E) She stands over the pile and starts to light a match but Sam takes the matches.
- E) Sam strikes a match then lights the end of a 10 foot trail of flame travels to the pile of clothes and explodes. Sydney nods a begrudging thanks and hoists the bottle.
- F) Yards away Sam watches Sydney sway in front of the bonfire; an internal song playing somewhere in her head.
- G) She shoves the bottle insistently at Sam. He refuses then snatches it away and drinks, long.
- H) She pirouettes around the flames discordant and distant like a Tom Waits melody; weirdly sensual.
- I) She stops in front of Sam, a smokin'-hot wraith, she winds her arms around him and pulls him to her lips.
- J) The bonfire rages.

INT. SYDNEY'S BATHROOM - SHOWER - LATER - NIGHT

Naked in the steam of the shower their arms locked around each other.

Sam stops suddenly and pushes her away as if he won't go any farther.

Sydney locks eyes with him, reaches down, grabs him and pulls him to her savagely.

SYDNEY

You stop I'll kill you.

He smiles.

She doesn't.

SYDNEY

I swear to God, I will kill you.

There's something insanely dangerous in her tone and the way she stares at him.

He lifts her off the shower floor and up against the wall.

She arches, lolls back and ... cries out.

BEDROOM - LATER

She lies against him, asleep.

He stares at the ceiling.

EXT. BMW - NIGHT

Gusty wind blows through Hell Canyon bouncing the BMW.

INT. BMW - SAME - NIGHT

Moonlight fills the car. Startled and confused by the bouncing, Bull wakes, looks around and turns to...

BRIANNA

I told you we should have taken the  
hummer. Why you insist on driving this  
piece of shit I'll never know. Guess  
it was good for pussy at one time.

Heavily sedated and worn sick Bulls not the least surprised that Brianna is giving him shit.

She files her fingernails like a *Walking Dead* cast member on a break.

BULL

Had you in it.

Brianna laughs.

BRIANNA

Yeah. Yeah, you and your dick-toris.

Bull looks at her, questioning the word.

BRIANNA

Dicktoris, clitoris.

Bull turns away from her, unable to escape her chiding laugh.

She holds up her pinky, waves it at Bull, laughs hard until her neck cracks and her head drops forward.

He turns and looks at her, then turns back around and settles.

REBECCA

She's a bitch, don't think about it.

He opens his eyes, but doesn't turn.

BULL  
I know. She was just--

REBECCA  
--Too young?

He turns. Rebecca sits in Brianna's place, as young and beautiful as the day he watched her hang laundry.

REBECCA  
You always did like 'em young.

BULL  
I loved you. You're the only one.

She laughs, light, airy, bringing a fond smile to Bull.

REBECCA  
If we'd married it wouldn't have been a year and you would've been fucking the shoe-girl at the bowling alley.

BULL  
Not true. I always loved you, always.

REBECCA  
Even after?

He stiffens, turns away, his face a mask of grief.

REBECCA  
After I married Wayne? ... Is that why? Revenge?

BULL  
No. No. ... Maybe.

REBECCA  
Sam's come back. He doesn't know it yet, but it's what he's after. He doesn't know it yet. But he will. He'll find out. What are you going to say to him? About Wayne. About me. What are you going to say, Thomas?

She smiles; pity and understanding. She reaches over and strokes Bull's head tenderly.

A beat.

BMW EXTERIOR

Bull stares out the window like a ghost in an empty house. Behind him, Brianna's head hangs.

Far off, a searing cry like a soul in anguish. Bull hears it but it barely registers, right now he's elsewhere.

INT. SYDNEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room glows in moonlight. Sydney watches Sam who stares at the ceiling.

SYDNEY  
Did you know her?

He looks over at her cradled in his arm like a dream.

SAM  
Why aren't you asleep?

SYDNEY  
Why aren't you?

SAM  
Don't sleep much.

SYDNEY  
So?

He looks up at the ceiling.

SYDNEY  
The girl that was killed?

This is a breach he's not comfortable with and he looks away.

A long beat.

SAM  
She was our translator.

SYDNEY  
What'd you do?

A beat.

SAM  
EOD. Explosive Ordinance Disposal.

SYDNEY  
Like bombs and shit?

SAM  
Yeah, bombs and shit.

Sydney runs a finger tenderly over his ear.

SYDNEY  
Is that what happened here?

SAM  
No.

Sam sits up fast, like he's ready to bolt. Sydney grabs his arm.

SYDNEY  
You don't have to tell me if you don't want.

Gritty emotions are right at the surface and his voice shakes.

SAM  
We went to pick her up. ... A crowd had pulled her out of her home. ... Forty, fifty, sixty of'em, I dunno. ... She was on her knees, bleeding everywhere. We tried to stop it and I was picking her up when someone hit me with a brick.

He swings his legs over the side of the bed, stands.

SAM  
Mufti Muhammad Baba, local cleric poured a can of gas on us...

She pulls the sheet across her breast for protection.

He goes to the bathroom, drinks water from the sink.

He walks back, looks down at Sydney and shrugs dismissively.

SAM  
Then set us on fire.

It dawns on Sydney that the girl was more than a translator.

SYDNEY  
You were in love with her.

Sam's eyes catch moonlight and cast him like some kind of soulless phantom standing in weary silence beside the bed.

SAM  
She was supposed to come back with me. We were going to get married.

She drops the sheet, scoots to the edge and pulls him down.

He lays back, tired of not sleeping, tired of constantly playing this in his head.

She straddles him, her hair hangs down offering a private space where they can only see each other.

She takes his face in her hands.

SYDNEY

Let me be her, just for now.

She kisses his face, his lips, his neck, and moves slowly down.

He stops her, yanks her to her back and rolls on top of her grabbing her wrists and holding her down.

She struggles and looks up with a hint of fear; did she cross a line.

SYDNEY

Sam, I didn't--

SAM

--Don't be her.

A beat.

SYDNEY

Sorry, I wasn't. ... Sorry.

He shakes his head.

SAM

Be you.

His burning stare says it all and she's caught off-guard by the revelation of possibly meaning anything to Sam.

SAM

That's all I want.

He bends down, lays light kisses her lips while all the time their eyes remain open, connected, finding in one another something indefinable but necessary.

LATER... she sleeps soundly in his the crook of his arm.

He stares at the ceiling.

He turns snuggles into her hair, breaths in deeply - butter and flowers - closes his eyes and sleeps.

LATER - MORNING

In bed, Sam barely breaths.

Alone.

## LIBRARY

Sydney turns the dial on the gun safe.

## LIVING ROOM

Sydney sits on a couch, Sam's backpack open, his belongings on the coffee table in front of her.

She holds the large box, shakes it, presses it. Carefully she unwraps one end, peels tape back revealing four blocks in plain brown wrappers with the letters C4 in bold yellow.

She looks up at the door while her eyes calculate some new thought, then she smiles coldly and quickly repackages the C4 and lays it aside.

She picks up the blue notebook, opens it and gawks at the cramped over-written pages.

She flips through then stops, sits back and reads.

## INT. SYDNEY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sam yanks his pants on, pulls on his tee and shoes.

SAM

Sydney!

## SERIES OF SHOTS - SAM SEARCHES MADLY FOR SYDNEY

A. IN BULL'S BEDROOM.

B. IN BULL'S BATHROOM.

C. HE LEAPS DOWN THE STAIRS

D. SEARCHES KITCHEN

E. LIVING ROOM - He rips open his pack. He scramble's, searching for the ... he pulls out the C4. It's easy to tell that it's been opened.

SAM

Shit.

F. He yanks the front door open. Sydney's car sits in front.

SAM

Sydney!

## END SERIES OF SHOTS

SYDNEY

What?

She walks casually from the garage carrying a small cardboard box.

EXT. BMW - DAY

Heat waves rise off the metal of the BMW.

The car suddenly lurches and Bull wakes and looks in the rear view mirror.

A mountain lion stands near the trunk next to the rope holding the car. It paws at the rope playfully.

Bull's eyes widen as the car rocks back and forth.

He turns his head forward, stares at the photo of Rebecca, stuffs his hand into his mouth to keep from screaming and sits as still as possible.

Suddenly the tawny form of the cat leaps from the ground to the hood of the BMW.

He lies back and closes hoping the animal would disappear.

The lion snarls then shrieks and it's the exact sound of the anguished soul from the night before.

Unfazed the lion leaps to the ground next to Brianna.

The lion stands on its hind legs, paws on the door frame, sniffs Brianna, then savagely bites her shoulder and tugs.

Lifted half-way through the door, she jerks like a puppet.

Bull whimpers and bites his hand, holding his fear in check.

The lion rips a large chunk of flesh from Brianna and leaves.

Worn to the last iota of his senses, hand stuffed into his mouth and bleeding from the pressure of his bite, Bull gurgles incoherently.

EXT. BULL'S HOME - BACK PORCH - DAY

The box from the garage sits on a table. Hair cutting tools lie around.

Sydney pulls a hand mirror from the box and holds it up for Sam to see.



SAM

Not funny ha-ha, but ... Shit, I was afraid of you when we were kids. You were, uh, cold, really distant...

He pulls her down to him.

SAM

But as intimidated as you could make me feel, I felt like I knew you, knew there was something about you that I could ... I dunno, something I could touch and nobody else could.

She hovers over him; a cat gaming a mouse.

SYDNEY

You should still be afraid.

He laughs, yanks her down and spins up on top of her.

SAM

I am.

She reaches up and touches his scar.

SYDNEY

I thought you were horrible.

Sam sobers.

SYDNEY

Remember that time I was out in front of your house waiting for Bull?

Sam lies, shakes his head.

SAM

No.

SYDNEY

You, Big Ray, and Mosca. I was in the car and you came over, talking really nice like. And then you fixed my shoe. I mean it was really sweet. I thought you were so clever. And then I just rolled the window up. You don't remember that?

Sam stares as if it something he had never thought about.

SAM

No. Why?

SYDNEY

Even before you got to the car you looked straight into my eyes, and it was like an icepick, like somehow you got inside of me, read my thoughts, felt my feelings. Made me ... it ... it scared me. And you were standing there offering me water and I just shut you out. ... You don't remember that, really?

Sam shrugs.

They lock eyes, each knowing that he's lying.

LATER

Sam wakes, alone in the bed.

SYDNEY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Sam enters, looks around, there's sound from the closet.

At the closet door he looks in. Sydney is turned away digging through a drawer. She's dressed in a black business suit.

She pulls out a necklace.

SAM

Hey.

She turns looking like a cross between the girl-next-door and a Vargas pin-up and suddenly Sam, looking like that kid standing outside her car years ago, seems ashamed to even look at her, but...

His eyes travel south -not too far- just below her slender neck where the expensive blouse reveals pale cleavage.

She holds out a small gold coin necklace to Sam.

SYDNEY

Please.

She turns her back to him, waiting.

He returns to reality.

SAM

What do you think you're doing?

SYDNEY

I can't very well go sit with our banker and ask for thirty thousand without doing him a little favor. He's like ancient, but he's not dead.

She turns just her head, looks up at him and smiles wickedly.

He shakes his head.

She turns around.

SYDNEY

What? You got a better way?

He's filled with mistrust and she feels it.

SYDNEY

Sam, I could'a slit your throat half-an-hour ago. I could'a called Big Ray. But I've been up for hours trying to figure out how you get your money and then get you out of here.

SAM

And?

She turns away and waves again for him to help.

Unsure he moves close and fastens the necklace for her.

SYDNEY

Well, the money's not the problem. Bull owns this town and I'm his daughter, I'll get the money. It's what happens after.

She turns and smiles with the necklace dangling perfectly between the cleft of her half-exposed breasts.

SYDNEY

Bull and Bri were supposed to be in Cruces this week and I've already called the hotel and they said he never checked in.

SAM

So?

Sydney feigns worry.

SYDNEY

It means I'm terribly worried about daddy. And so, you and I, the guy hired to help around the house, go search the road and we find that he never stopped in Hillsboro where they always stop for pie and coffee, and so we back track and find the place where someone went off the road and...

With a Vanna White flare.

SYDNEY  
Daughter finds daddy.

SAM  
Nobody's going to believe that and when they get him to him, they'll find out.

SYDNEY  
People are stupid. I'm constantly surprised what people believe. And as far as what Bull's going to say...

From the top of the dresser she lifts an envelope and waves it.

SYDNEY  
A statement witnessed by me that Bull was responsible for the mine accident your father was blamed for and that you were a witness to the deal. Just...

SAM  
What?

She hands it to Sam.

She stops and looks into into Sam's eyes, prying, accusing.

SYDNEY  
I was just thinking when I was writing this. Why didn't you say anything back then?

Sam, unable to meet Sydney's stare, turns and walks away. This is something that he struggles with.

SYDNEY  
We were kids. What the fuck did we know. Right?

She follows him out of the closet.

BEDROOM

SYDNEY  
I know you've got trust issues here, but look...

She goes to the Nixie clock. It displays 10:37.

SYDNEY  
...Bull gave this to my mother.

She picks up a remote device and taps in instructions.

The Nixie tubes flash off then flash back up as zeroes. The plinky-piano tune plays again.

Several of the tubes flicker on then off. She taps the tubes carefully.

SYDNEY

Besides me, the only thing he ever gave her that she loved. It's so old that I think it's...

She moves back, eyes on the clock, and rubs her hand worried that the clock is failing.

SYDNEY

He had it modified so it plays her favorite song but I think he fucking broke it.

All the tubes flash off, then on again correctly. Relieved she sets the remote down and walks over to Sam.

SYDNEY

You don't have a lot of choices, Sam. You can kill me and Bull, blow us up with your C4, or chop us into little pieces, or whatever. But you're not going to do that. You can just walk away, in which case if I have to have help getting him, he'll have the law hunting you down in a day. Or you can wait here, two hours...

She nods at the Nixie clock, Sam looks, the Nixie tubes are clicking off seconds.

SYDNEY

Then we'll have Bull sign the paperwork, you'll get your money and have some security. Obviously it's your choice, but that pretty well sums it up.

Sam looks away considering but knowing his options are limited and he nods.

She smiles, walks up and wraps her arms around Sam like he's the only man in the world for her.

SYDNEY

Good. Eat something. When I get back we'll go get Bull.

MOMENTS LATER

Sam watches from Sydney's window as her car pulls away.

BULL (V.O.)  
You remember this, boy, don't you ever  
trust anyone.

He draws her curtains.

LIBRARY MOMENTS LATER

Sam, coffee cup in hand, walks in and past the gun safe.

He stops and turns to the safe.

SAM'S POV: the dial is no longer on zero; it's been moved.

BULL (O.S.)  
Anyone.

MOMENTS LATER

At the computer Sam taps the mouse and the screen comes up.

He sits and types.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

Google comes up.

He types in: SYDNEY BULLINGTON, ELIZABETH TOWN, HARVARD

The first item to appear: BULLINGTON TO RECEIVE PSYCH CARE.

The cursor clicks on this heading and the story comes up on the front page of the Harvard Crimson.

Two photos lead the story; in one Sydney stands in a courtroom and in the other a woman who has been beaten nearly unrecognizable. The headline blares: BULLINGTON TO RECEIVE TWO YEARS PSYCHIATRIC CARE FOR ROOMMATE ATTACK.

The cursor scrolls down the list of stories.

Numerous stories about the beating flash by.

The cursor stops on another story: BULLINGTON ORDERED TO STAY AWAY.

The story is written in the Silver City Daily News. A photo of a woman in a wheelchair with her head bandaged. The text below reads: ANGIE NELSON FILES FOR PROTECTION FROM SYDNEY BULLINGTON. The woman looks familiar.

Below the article is a mug shot of Sydney. She looks like she does in many of the photos on the shelf - empty.

SYDNEY'S BEDROOM MOMENTS LATER

Sam looks at the 8x10 of Sydney holding the young man's arm. The woman in the photo shooting daggers at Sydney is the woman from the wheelchair.

He puts the picture back, goes to the Nixie, picks up the remote, looks at it and then at the changing numbers: 17:19.

MOMENTS LATER

Sam walks out of Bull's room, his pack in one hand and the Nixie cradled in the other.

BULL'S GARAGE - LATER - DAY

Sam puts a pair of pliers back in a drawer of a tool box. He holds a screwdriver.

SOUND - A car pulling into the driveway.

He stops, goes to the garage door, looks out the window to see Sydney get out of the car and walk to the house. He rubs the blade of the screwdriver on his scar.

BULLS'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Sydney exits the kitchen and starts up the stairs.

SYDNEY

Sam. Hey.

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

SYDNEY (O.S.)

Sam?

Sydney exits Bull's bedroom and goes to hers.

SYDNEY'S BEDROOM

Sydney looks around, goes to the closet searching.

SYDNEY

Sam?

She turns and sees that the Nixie clock is gone. A wild look crosses her face and she goes to the spot where it was.

Sam appears in the doorway, screwdriver in hand.

SYDNEY

Shit! Scared the fuck out of me.

SAM

Sorry.

The look on his face doesn't say "sorry," he stares at her as if he's searching for the real Sydney.

SYDNEY

Where's my clock?

She rubs her thumb into her hand.

SAM

My money?

She looks over to where her purse lies on the bed.

Sam picks it up, opens it, and pulls out a cashier's check.

SAM

What's this?

SYDNEY

Thanks?

He doesn't get the sarcasm.

SYDNEY

It's a cashier's check, Sam. Like I'm going to carry thirty-thousand cash around? ... Where is my clock?

Sam looks at her but doesn't say anything.

She starts toward him, head down ready to brawl.

SYDNEY

Where's my fucking--

He holds up his hands.

SAM

--Whoa!

She stops, jaw-jutted, but if she were Cyclops Sam would be a vapor trail right now.

SAM

I took it downstairs to take a look at it.

He watches her as she considers.

SYDNEY

You, uh, you took it to look at it?

SAM  
Yeah, I can fix it.

He turns and leaves down the hall.

SAM  
It's not the tubes, it's the power  
adapter.

SYDNEY  
Thanks, for fixing the uh...

SAM (O.S.)  
Power adapter ... Really should do  
something about that anger.

She laughs at being caught but she stares at the space he  
left as if the vapor trail were real.

SYDNEY  
(calls out)  
I could say the same.

SAM (O.S.)  
I'm not angry. ... I'm due.

A beat.

SYDNEY  
(to herself)  
Yeah, you are.

INT. BMW - DAY

Bull's lips are claylike; caked with dried flesh and spit.  
His half-closed eyes roll around like two off-center marbles.  
He's hanging on, barely.

SOUND FX - DISTANT, TUMBLING STONES.

Bull struggles to lift his eyelids enough to look in the  
mirror.

BULL'S POV: Something sleek, very blurry, dark and moving  
with stealth down the slope to the car.

Bull's eyes grow wide with apprehension as he identifies the  
mountain lion.

The big cat strolls down the slope, stones slide down in  
front of it.

The cat stops and roars!

Bull freaks, hides in his blanket and whimpers like a kid.

BULL

No! ... Go away! Go away! Please!

SYDNEY (O.S.)

Bull.

He jumps.

SYDNEY (O.S.)

Bull!

He pulls the blanket down so he can peek out.

HALLUCINATION - The mountain lion's head is right at the window. It looks in and speaks to him.

SYDNEY AS HULLICINATION

Bull.

He shrieks and pulls the cover back.

SYDNEY

Bull, it's Sydney.

He peeks out.

HALLUCINATION - The mountain lion slowly morphs into Sydney.

BULL

Oh, I uh, I uh... I was expecting someone else.

Sydney pulls the blanket down.

SYDNEY

It's okay, it's me, and Sam. We've, uh, we've found you.

Bull looks confused.

BULL

Found me? Found me where?

He's gone, she knows it and she turns to Sam and smiles.

She takes the paper form and a pen from a pocket and hands it to Bull.

SYDNEY

Sam's going to get you out but you have to sign this first.

Bull takes the paper, looks at it then at her, helpless.

SYDNEY

Where are your glasses?

He feels his face, where they are not.

BULL

I don't, uh, uh...

She shoves the paper and a pen into his hand and leans down to point at the line for him to sign.

SYDNEY

Here, sign, and--

She looks at Brianna, arm torn from her body, stops and stumbles away.

SYDNEY

Oh, fucking shit!

Sam moves quickly to Sydney and she points to the car.

He drops his pack and walks to Bull's window, looks in then looks up and around.

SAM

Lion.

Sydney, suddenly alert, peers into the trees as if the cat were looking back.

SAM

It's okay. That much meat, it'll eat for a while.

He looks down at Bull who holds the pen and paper. Sam takes them, goes to his back pack and pulls out water and food.

He walks to the car and carefully tips the water bottle to let Bull drink.

After a couple of sips Bull grabs the bottle and sucks greedily.

When he's done he looks up at Sam, the light of intelligence returning and he nods a "thanks."

Sam hands him the paper and pen and points to the signature line.

SAM

Sign it.

BULL

What is it?

SAM  
Says you killed my dad.

BULL  
What?

SAM  
Not arguing. Sign it or stay here'n  
rot, your choice.

BULL  
But, I didn't kill your father.

SAM  
Hung himself because of you, same  
difference.

BULL  
No! I didn't kill your father.

Sam grabs a handful of Bull's shirt and nearly lifts him,  
screaming and struggling, through the window.

SAM  
Wayne Cody fucking work for you?!

BULL  
Yes, yes he did.

SAM  
And did you promise him a job and fifty-  
thousand dollars if he testified that  
he caused the mine collapse!?

He yanks Bull's shirt.

BULL  
Yes! Yes I did, you know I did, but I  
didn't kill your father, I didn't, I  
didn't!

Sam lets him go and steps back.

SAM  
You did.

BULL  
(sobbing)  
No, no, I didn't. You want the truth  
or not?

Sam turns to Sydney who watches, a thin, cold smile stretched  
across her lips, as if waiting for the punch line.

SYDNEY

He didn't, you know.

Sam's not finding any humor here.

SAM

Funny.

He turns back to Bull.

BULL

I didn't kill your father ... He's alive.

He looks up at Sam, tears stream down his face as something dark and old and hidden is dredged up.

Sam stands there open mouthed, not comprehending.

BULL

Your mother ... she was ... Rebecca was involved with someone before ... before Wayne.

Like a man who's spent his life holding onto every human feeling Bull is shattered and this revelation swamps him and he stammers with choked emotion.

Sam moves away, shaking his head, growls with growing rebuke.

SAM

You shut up! Just shut the fuck up and sign! Just trying to slime your way out of... Out of everything!

BULL

No, it's true. It's true. I know. Rebecca--

Sam stomps back to the car, fist balled up, ready to hit Bull, hit anything.

SAM

--Don't you say her name!

He gets right into Bull's face.

SAM

You don't even say her name! You fucking hear me!

SYDNEY

Yeah, like you don't have any anger issues.

He turns to Sydney who's having a ball and it shows in a big grin. She waves something at Sam. It's the piece of paper that she found in the safe.

SYDNEY

You were always so one-dimensional, simple really. Not in a bad way, more like uncomplicated. No tricks, nothing to hide. Trusting.

She laughs like she's heard the best joke in the world and holds the paper out.

SYDNEY

Here.

Bull sees the paper.

BULL

Sydney! No! Don't... please.

She stops laughing.

SYDNEY

(to Bull)

You know, watching this is so much fun, except when you open your mouth, then it all comes back. The pain, the hurt ... my mother ... me.

She walks slowly to Sam, wraps her hand around the back of his head and pulls him down for a kiss.

Eyes open he kisses her because she commands it.

Bull groans as if his heart is being ripped from him, slowly.

She stops, holds a hand up for Sam to wait, turns and walks to Bull.

She kneels down until they're eye level and smiles at Bull like she's having the best day of her life.

SYDNEY

(low, to Bull)

It's okay daddy, we've kissed before.

Bull turns away.

SYDNEY

(low, to Bull)

We fucked really good last night ... on your bed.

Seduction drips from every syllable.

SYDNEY

(low to Bull)

You would be so proud to know that your son's got a big one. And he knows how to use it.

She laughs low and rubs her neck lustfully.

Behind her, Sam watches, lost as to what's going on.

She stands and walks to Sam, holds the paper out, and drops it into Sam's hand and walks away.

He stares at the paper then carefully unfolds the stiff correspondence.

He reads, and slowly the light begins to dawn on him and he turns like an empty automaton to Bull.

Bull drops his eyes.

SYDNEY

Sam, meet daddy. Daddy, Sam. Oh, that's right you know who Sam is, don't you?

She laughs ... the joke just gets better and better.

SYDNEY

Oh my God, I should be filming this for Facebook. Your fucking faces.

Sam turns to Sydney then looks back down at the note like it's still not registering.

SYDNEY

I found it the other night, but I knew for years.

(off the letter)

Your mother's little love note just confirmed what I knew.

Sam looks at Bull, then turns and walks to the ledge and looks out over the canyon.

Sydney turns her face to the sky as if God has finally answered all her prayers.

SYDNEY

I knew the day you walked up to our car and I closed the window on you. And I know you remember that. ... Hurt like fuck, didn't it?

She laughs teasingly.

Sam spins and within a breath he's at Sydney. He grabs her by the throat and squeezes.

SAM

You knew? You knew all this time?!

Her face is beet-red and his hold has to hurt but she can't stop grinning and she grinds out...

SYDNEY

How was it, fucking your sister?

He shoves her away.

She strolls to Bull who stares blankly through the front windshield.

SYDNEY

How could I know when I drilled that tiny little hole in the break lines this would be the end result?

She reaches out tenderly and strokes Bull's face.

SYDNEY

There I was holding my mother's feet and the whole time I just kept thinking of all the ways I was going to kill you ... I just didn't know it would turn out so well, here...

She holds up her arms to take in all of Hell's Canyon.

SYDNEY

How appropriate. Black Range, black hearts.

Suddenly she's shoved away by Sam and he takes her place, crumpled note in his fist, held up to Bull's face.

He squats and holds onto the door, shakes the note at Bull.

A long beat.

SAM

True?

Bull, head bowed, nods and sobs.

SAM

(whispers)

This?

A beat.

SAM  
(louder)  
This?

Raging he pokes Bull who flinches and howls more in self-loathing torment than in physical pain.

SAM  
This!?

He pokes Bull!

SAM  
This!? This!? This!?

He jabs Bull with each beat of the word.

Bull sobs until he's simply limp beyond care.

Sam stops, flops back on his worn-to-the-bone ass.

He stars at Bull who's leaned his head up and against the doorframe and stares back, the tough old man he always was.

BULL  
I loved her!

He's dying, he knows it and he makes an effort to lift his drooping head and make eye contact with Sam.

BULL  
Your mother. I loved her.

The car bounces.

Bulls head jerks up.

Sam jumps to a crouch and turns to the back of the car.

SYDNEY  
Fuck that sniping cunt!

Sydney stands with the rope tail in her hand, she's pulled it and has the end wrapped around her waist as she struggles to hold on.

She giggles as if this were a fun ride at the park; no real consequences.

She lets go of the rope.

The car jerks forward a foot then slows.

Sam springs up and starts toward her, menace in his eyes.

BULL

Sam!

Sam turns, grabs the window frame and slows the gradual tug of gravity on the BMW, but the car is sliding.

Sam strains, his head next to Bull.

BULL

Sam.

Sam looks at Bull, beads of sweat breaking out as he struggles.

SAM

Goddamnit, Sydney attach the--

BULL

--Sam.

He looks at Bull who shakes his head.

BULL

I didn't think Wayne would... He took her from me.

A gunshot rings out!

Sam grabs a shoulder and spins away from the car. He turns to Sydney. She holds the thirty-eight like someone who sure as shit knows how to use it.

Sam looks at his shoulder, he's been grazed.

He reaches out to grab the window frame, but too late. He looks Bull in the eyes.

Bull doesn't say a word, he simply turns forward, holds his hand out to the photo of Rebecca and lays his head back, knowing this is the end.

The car slides rapidly, grinding across stone. Sparks fly until it tips end up and drops over the ledge, portions of the ledge follow along after it.

SAM

No!

He runs to the ledge and looks over. Sixty feet below the BMW hits the ground and erupts in flames. An EXPLOSION sends car parts and a cloud of smoke whirling through the air.

He turns to Sydney in disbelief. She smiles coyly.

SYDNEY

Isn't this what you wanted? Revenge?

SAM

I didn't want to kill him.

SYDNEY

You're so wishy-washy, little-bro.  
Seems to me that you just don't know  
what it is you want.

She raises the thirty-eight, fires and hit's him in the leg.

He drops and grabs his leg.

SAM

Fuck!?

SYDNEY

That's not what your little blue book  
says.

Sydney retrieves the notebook from his pack and waves it in  
the air.

SYDNEY

All you talk about in here is killing  
Bull. What happened? Huh? Lose  
direction?

She walks over to Sam, bends down, sneers, waves his notebook  
in his face.

SYDNEY

I never lose direction. I've wanted  
revenge for so long that I would get  
wet every time I thought about it. But  
this, this is the best.

Sam looks away, then with surprising speed grabs her wrist.

As she steps back to get away she pulls him up.

Sam lets her go, then walks forward to grab her again.

He jerks spasmodically, huffs in pain and grabs his stomach.

The loud BOOM of a rifle echoes across the canyon.

Blood sprouts between his fingers and he looks down at the  
wound then up at her, speechless.

Sydney appears surprised.

Then voices from the forest above.

She turns and looks; men with guns run through the forest above them.

She turns back

SYDNEY

Sorry, I called Big Ray and told him where we'd be. In case we needed help.

She drops the thirty-eight, reaches into a pocket, takes out her phone and waggles it in the air with a smile that disappears immediately as tears form in her eyes.

She walks over, snatches Rebecca's note from the ground and shoves it in a pocket.

Then, slowly she transforms, affects a bare quiver...

She looks at Sam ... more like looks through him, as if recalling lines rehearsed that have become reality.

SYDNEY

Poor Bull, he was here for days. Brianna dead, him here suffering. Nobody deserves that.

The only movement between the two of them are the tears rolling down her face and onto her hands. She rubs her thumb into her palm furiously.

Sam groans.

SAM

Fuck. Fucking hurts.

She winces, a single moment of regret.

Sam takes a step toward her, hand held out for her to take.

She stops rubbing her hand and almost looks as if she might take his hand, then...

...he's knocked off his feet and lands next to the ledge. The second resounding BOOM of a gunfire follows.

Struggling, he stands and turns to Sydney kinda like what "What the fuck?".

SAM

I just wanted...

He looks around unable to voice what he really wanted all of his life.

SYDNEY

You got what you wanted.

He looks at her and she smiles softly.

He nods acknowledging the truth of that.

SAM

I suppose.

He inhales deeply, stands up straight, closes his eyes, leans back and drops over the ledge.

Sydney stares at the empty space.

A beat.

She walk to the ledge and looks over.

Smoke fills the air below and Sam is not visible.

She turns and sees the blue notebook.

She retrieves it and walks back to the ledge.

She opens it up and reads.

SYDNEY

When embarking on a journey of revenge,  
dig two graves.

She closes the books, looks over the ledge and sees Sam spread out on the ground below.

SYDNEY

Done, little brother, two graves.

She drops the notebook and watches it's fluttering fall.

BIG RAY (O.S.)

Sydney!

She lifts her head, turns and moves away from the ledge.

Ray arrives breathless, other deputies follow; everyone is loaded for bear.

BIG RAY

Shit!

He looks around.

BIG RAY

We're too late?

Sydney almost rolls her teary eyes, but she nods an insincere yes.

SYDNEY

They're dead.

She chokes with fake emotion, but she's really good at it.

Big Ray goes to the ledge and looks over.

He walks back to Sydney and wraps his arm over her shoulder; his dream come true.

BIG RAY

I'm sorry, Sydney, we didn't get your message until late.

She lays her head on Ray's shoulder.

SYDNEY

I know you could have stopped him, Ray. It's just fate, that's all, just fate.

BIG RAY

(to the deputies)

Okay, boys, get some rope and get down there.

SYDNEY

Ray, can you take me home, please. I just can't...

BIG RAY

You sure you don't want to wait till we get yer dad up.

SYDNEY

I can't, please.

This makes Big Ray's day and he shouts louder.

BIG RAY

I'm taking Ms. Bullington home. Mosca?

DEPUTY MOSCA answers with a look.

BIG RAY

Take care of things here.

Mosca nods and starts ordering men around and they scramble to secure the area.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

Sydney climbs out of Big Ray's car.

BIG RAY  
(hoping)  
Would you like me to stay?

Sydney shakes her head.

SYDNEY  
Thank you, Ray, I need some time alone.

BIG RAY  
Okay, Sydney, I'll call later.

She closes the car door and watches as he drives away.

She turns and looks at the house. A smug, satisfied smile creeps across her lips as she walks to the door.

EXT. BOTTOM OF HELL CANYON - SAME - DAY

Sam stares up, his lips move slightly into an odd smile.

SAM (V.O.)  
It's in my book. ... When setting out  
on a journey of revenge, dig two graves.

Men shout from above.

Sam's smile grows, then spitting blood he laughs like hell.

INT. BULL'S HOME - SAME - DAY

CLICK!

The front door opens. Sydney stands at the entrance soaking in the moment.

She walks buoyant; free from a rock that she's carried for a long, long time.

The ALARM SOUNDS. She jumps and turns to the alarm box.

She leans back against the wall, with the alarm blaring like trumpets she relaxes, lets it all go.

She smiles to herself; a job well done.

A deep breath and then she walks to the alarm, opens the box and enters the code.

The alarm stops as abruptly as it started.

The muffled plinky-piano tune plays from somewhere.

Sydney stops and listens.

She walks down the hall following the music to the closet under the stairs.

She smiles.

SYDNEY

How sweet, little brother fixed your  
clock, Mother dear.

She opens the closet door...

...the Nixie Clock plinks cheerily away while all of the  
tubes flash... 6 ...

She reaches for the clock, pulls her hands back, stopped by  
a sense of intrigue.

... 5 ...

Four white wires run from out of the back of the clock.

... 4 ...

They twist and wind over the walls and the ceiling, beneath  
the stairs and over her head.

... 3 ...

All terminate in brick-blocks of C-4.

... 2 ...

She chokes out a laugh. Irony's imminent sense of humor,  
and she'll see Sam again ... in hell.

SYDNEY

Little brother, so fucking clever.

... 1 ...

BLACK SCREEN.

A gasp from Sydney.

FADE IN:

EXT. HELL CANYON - LEDGE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

SFX - A DEEP AND GROWING RUMBLE REVERBERATES THROUGH HELL  
CANYON.

Mosca looks in the direction of the town.

A distant plume of smoke rises.

He looks at the guy next to him who makes a face and shrugs.

MOSCA

(to everyone)

Andela cabron's. I want to be out the  
hell outa here before dark.

Men lower themselves over the ledge to the smoking wreckage  
below. Their voices echo through the Black Range.

FADE OUT