

No Return

Written for the Screen by:

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NO RETURN

OVER DARK--

A soft, steady buzzing hum of electricity flowing.

THEN: Water dripping. Footsteps sloshing through water...

OPEN ON:

INT. TUNNELS - DARK.

The silhouettes of TWO MEN armed with SIX SHOOTERS. They creep forward, guns trained ahead at the ready.

INT. LARGE OPEN ROOM - CONTINUOUS.

The two men carefully tiptoe into a large, dimly lit room. The light barely shows DETECTIVE EDWIN PEARCE (30's). He's meticulous, but short-fused.

Pearce makes out the silhouette of someone familiar--

RACHEL PEARCE (30's), his wife, is gagged and bound to a chair front and center. A lone, dull light shines upon her.

Edwin and his PARTNER tiptoe closer, TWO SHADOWY FIGURES appear from the shadows on either side of Rachel. Ed and his partner freeze in place--

PEARCE

Rach. Hon. Are you--

Pearce pensively inches closer before--

The Shadowy Figures stop him dead in his tracks.

SHADOWY FIGURE

Ah. No closer.

Beat.

PEARCE

(to Rachel)

You're still a diamond in the muck,
my love.

She lets out a muffled moan.

PEARCE (CONT'D)

You and I are walking out of here,
alive.

Rachel forces a smile through her terror. It fades as quickly as it came.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
 (to her captors)
 Please don't involve her in this.
 I'd like to see her unharmed.

Cold, dead silence.

SHADOWY FIGURE
 There is no scenario in which she survives. A man in your profession must know that by now.

PEARCE
 She'd already be dead if that were true. You must want something.

SHADOWY FIGURE
 It's not about what we want. It's about what **you** want.

PEARCE
 I don't understand-- I don't know how to help you.

SHADOWY FIGURE
 You're right, you don't understand. You're completely missing the point of all this.

The Shadowy Figures inch closer to Rachel, she whimpers.

PEARCE
 Hiding behind her won't deter us. Without her, you hold no bargaining chip.

SHADOWY FIGURE
 What is there to bargain for?

Pearce fights the urge to pounce, his trigger finger growing heavy...

PEARCE
 Just-- let her go. Please.

SHADOWY FIGURE
 If you only knew.

PEARCE
 What-- what are you saying?

Rachel makes a fuss. She cowers away from them, groaning.

SHADOWY FIGURE
 (to his associate)
 Shut her up, would you?

The Shadowy Figure places his hand on her shoulder. She recoils. He's about to shut her mouth for good when--

PEARCE
 You raise a hand to her again, I'll
 make sure you never lift a finger
 for the rest of your short life!!

SHADOWY FIGURE
 You're going to wish you were more
 cooperative.

The Other Shadowy Figure **swings** to **backhand** her--

PEARCE
 Don't you fucking touch her!!

Pearce fiercely points his pistol at the men when--

BANG! But not from Pearce's handgun...but where from?

A GUNBLAST pierces the room, its boom echoes...

Pearce is transfixed. He raises his pistol to--

SLAM TO BLACK:

BANG! BANG! TWO MORE GUNSHOTS.

OPENING TITLE: NO RETURN.

FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER GUNSHOT...

END OPENING TITLE.

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - FLASHBACK.

PEARCE POV: Rachel, the Queen of comfort, beckons his gaze. Her stare- tantalizing. She lets a smile slip through.

Pearce reaches out and his hand caresses her face. She accepts it warmly.

All the while, a ringing sound shatters the silence.

The ringing grows louder and louder until finally--

SNAP CUT TO:

INT. UNDERCOVER COP CAR - MORNING.

Pearce snaps awake in the driver's seat. The ringing noise has subsided.

PEARCE

Shit.

He groggily regains his bearings.

EXT. RUN-DOWN APARTMENT COMPLEX - CONTINUOUS.

A cold, dreary morning. Barely a soul stirring.

A lone undercover police vehicle sits outside a crumbling, unkempt apartment building.

SUPERIMPOSE: **EAST HARBOR, CONNECTICUT. 1970.**

SUPERIMPOSE ONCE PREVIOUS FADES: **THREE DAYS EARLIER.**

INT. UNDERCOVER COP CAR - CONTINUOUS.

Sitting shotgun is his partner, DETECTIVE ISAAC MCPHERSON (40's). He's been around the block. Battle hardened.

ISAAC

Late night last night?

PEARCE

The wife and I kept busy.

ISAAC

Lucky you.

Beat.

PEARCE

I miss anything?

ISAAC

Yankees lost. Buncha dirtbags, all of 'em.

PEARCE

Like I give a fuck about the-- you know what I meant.

(MORE)

PEARCE (CONT'D)
 (gestures to the
 apartment)
 You know, the task at hand.

ISAAC
 Oh, yeah. What was it we were
 supposed to do again? Rough 'em up
 a little bit? Have a quick snooze?

PEARCE
 Fuck you.

Beat.

ISAAC
 You missed a whole lot of nothin',
 if you must know.

PEARCE
 I don't sleep...ever. That was a
 one-off.

ISAAC
 Yeah, okay, hot-shot.

Pearce cannot sit still.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
 Relax. I've got your back.

Beat.

PEARCE
 And if you must know, it was
 observe and report, you maniac.

ISAAC
 I'm sorry?

PEARCE
 The task at hand.

ISAAC
 Oh, right. Of course.
 (beat)
 You're adorable, you know that?

Pearce's eyes beam to him like lasers.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
 So much left to learn...

Isaac smirks while Pearce sulks.

PEARCE
How did you manage to keep that
badge of yours all these years?

ISAAC
I give insane head.

PEARCE
(shaking his head)
Fucking asshole.

Isaac shrugs. Pearce eagerly scans the building for life.

ISAAC (O.S.)
(softly)
Captain Barry really seems
to appreciate it.

A long silence passes before--

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Here we go. You're up, kid.

TWO MOBSTERS approach the entrance. One is carrying what
appears to be A GIFT BAG. Pearce perks up.

PEARCE
Yeah? And what are you gonna do?

RADIO static breaks the silence.

RADIO (V.O.)
Contact. Visual on two suspects,
possibly armed. Advise caution.

The Mobsters swing open the front door and slide inside.
Isaac snatches up the radio handle.

ISAAC
10-4. Eyes on. Proceed to
intercept, over?

RADIO (V.O.)
Negative. Stand by.

Isaac scoffs as Pearce nabs the radio and squeezes.

PEARCE
Copy that. We'll sit tight.

Pearce hangs it on the hook. He squirms in his seat.

ISAAC
Two well-placed shots...

PEARCE

You know, you've got to be the biggest cunt I've ever met.

ISAAC

Easy there, Seabiscuit... While you're busy observing and reporting, this cunt will be protecting and serving.

Isaac flings the door open, but Pearce fights back.

PEARCE

We're **not** doing **shit**.

A staring contest between them...

ISAAC

Observe me, kid. You just might learn a thing or two.

Isaac waits a beat before making himself comfortable again.

Pearce can finally relax.

EXT. APARTMENTS - CONTINUOUS.

Muffled voices can be heard inside, then SHOUTING.

BANGS boom like THUDS on the walls.

INT. UNDERCOVER COP CAR - CONTINUOUS

The Radio crackles through Pearce and Isaac's quiet--

RADIO

The fuck was that? 2-1, please advise.

Isaac snatches the radio up.

ISAAC

Yeah, this is 2-1. We're moving to intercept. Out.

PEARCE

What do you think you're doing?

RADIO (O.C.)

Roger that. Proceed with caution.

Isaac swings the door open.

ISAAC
What we should've done to prevent
this whole thing.

He draws his service weapon and barrels out of the car.

PEARCE
Shit!

Pearce springs into action.

EXT. UNDERCOVER COP CAR - CONTINUOUS.

Isaac and Pearce, weapons drawn, scurry up to the entrance.
Pearce nods, Isaac manhandles the door with a harsh kick.

INT. APARTMENTS - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce and Isaac march in, checking their corners.

He then gives a motion with his head to Isaac to swiftly tip
toe up the stairs like Ninjas. Both glide up the stairway.

INT. APARTMENTS - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS.

The Detectives cautiously navigate down the hallway.

They spot an UNSUSPECTING MOBSTER down at the end of the
hallway outside the last apartment on the left.

Pearce and Isaac eye each other and nod. Guns prepared.

Through the walls, the MUTTERING and occasional SHOUTING has
not subsided.

The Mobster at the end of the hall remains oblivious.

PEARCE
Don't move!

ISAAC
Let's see 'em!

The Mobster slips his hand in his pocket for--

BLAM BLAM!! Pearce and Isaac don't let him get that far.

EXT. APARTMENTS - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS.

The Mobster crashes through the window, cascading to the pavement.

INT. APARTMENTS - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS.

Detectives Pearce and McPherson stack up on the door. Nod to each other. Go-time.

INT. APARTMENTS - GANG MEETING ROOM - CONTINUOUS.

BLAST! A thunderous kick sends the door slamming into the wall.

Edwin and Isaac swiftly glide tactically through the doorway.

PEARCE

Nobody move!

ISAAC

Everybody shut the fuck up! Get the fuck down!

Three MOBSTERS are all deer in the headlights. The GIFT BAG resides between them. Unfreeze-- They **yank** up their WEAPONS.

GUNFIRE ERUPTS. Pearce and Isaac let loose a salvo of rounds.

Two MOBSTERS immediately drop like rag-dolls to the floor. A STUBBORN MOBSTER desperately barrels into cover behind a SOFA.

Pearce and McPherson hopelessly miss every attempt.

Empty magazines are exchanged for fresh ones.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Give it up, shit-bird! It doesn't have to go down this way!

STUBBORN MOBSTER

Fuck you, blue! I'm not going back!

Isaac snaps his head to Pearce.

ISAAC

No saying I didn't offer.

Pearce shrugs.

The Stubborn MOBSTER rises and **UNLEASHES HELL ON THEM.**

Pearce and McPherson crouch deeper into their cover as the **STORM OF BULLETS** rushes over their heads.

A light bulb pops into Pearce's head. He looks to Isaac.

The sound of RELOADING is heard. They nod to each other.

Pearce pounces behind the other side of the SOFA, opposite the STUBBORN MOBSTER where he presses against the couch with all his might into the Stubborn Mobster.

He is flinged from his cover into the open where--

Isaac takes aim and squeezes the trigger. Twice. BAM, BAM!

The shots land. Chest and head. Stubborn Mobster slumps lifeless to the floor.

INT. GANG APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Isaac and Pearce catch their breath.

ISAAC

Nice move back there.

PEARCE

Just felt it could use a bit of rearranging in here.

Isaac lightly chuckles. Pearce smiles.

EXT. APARTMENTS - LATER.

Police vehicles clog the roads. It's controlled pandemonium.

EXT. UNDERCOVER COP CAR - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce and McPherson lean up against their vehicle.

Another SQUAD CAR rolls up. The window is cranked down to reveal--

CAPTAIN, BARRY DONALDSON (50's). He is rugged, very matter-of-fact, and doesn't take shit from anyone. The job seems to have aged him, and not well.

Barry slides out, hitches up his belted khakis.

Pearce approaches him with the GIFT BAG.

BARRY DONALDSON
You're a little late on my
birthday, Pearce.

PEARCE
Christmas, then.

BARRY
Dare I ask what it is?

Pearce presents his offering. Barry examines its contents.

PEARCE
An expensive gift.

He pulls out MULTIPLE KILOS. Presumably coke.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
I'll tell you that much.

BARRY
(sarcastic)
Ed, you shouldn't have.

PEARCE
(shrugs)
Got it for a bargain.

Barry is amused, until directing his attention to Isaac...

BARRY
Isaac, when we say 'sit tight',
it's not a recommendation.

ISAAC
Call it an aggressive play.

BARRY
You're lucky it worked.

Isaac shakes his head and takes a drag from a cigarette.

ISAAC
Been at this long enough to know,
Chief. Luck had nothin' to do with
it.

Beat.

BARRY
(to Pearce)
There's something else.

PEARCE

Don't leave me in suspense over it.

Barry gestures with his head away from Isaac.

BARRY

Walk with me.

Pearce obeys. Isaac observes their every move.

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - LATER

Pearce barges in, tosses his keys aside, pays no mind to the door.

PEARCE

Rach?

He struts about the house, in searching.

PEARCE (CONT'D)

Rach, hon, it's me. I'm back.

INT. KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Pearce pokes his head in, eyes darting about the room. Nothing.

INT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

He trots up the stairs, frantic.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door swings open to Pearce scanning the room. Not a soul.

PEARCE

Hmm.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Pearce paces through the room. His heart racing. Barren.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Pearce shuffles down the stairs. Flips on the light. Empty.

PEARCE
 (softly)
 What the fuck?

He analyzes the room as if she'll just present herself. Once he's satisfied, he stomps back up the stairs.

EXT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Pearce bursts out the front door. He searches around. Panic.

PEARCE
 Rachel??

He tries to hold back the tears. It's no use.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
 Ra--

Pearce is overcome with emotion as he crumples to the ground.

A BYSTANDER witnesses Pearce's breakdown. Pearce notices this as he fails to regain his composure.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Pearce holds his phone up to his ear.

PEARCE
 She's gone.

MAN ON PHONE (V.O.)
 What?

PEARCE
 Captain may be right. Said Rachel's been reported missing.

MAN ON PHONE (V.O.)
 Sounds like a personal problem.

PEARCE
 Fuck is the matter with you? Dick.
 (beat)
 Seriously. You got any idea where she might be?

MAN ON PHONE (V.O.)
 I think you know your wife better than I do.

(beat)
 (MORE)

MAN ON PHONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Have you ever considered that she
might still be working?

PEARCE
No, she's usually home by now. This
isn't like her.

MAN ON PHONE (V.O.)
You know she has a life too.

PEARCE
I'm well aware. But this isn't like
her.

MAN ON PHONE (V.O.)
People change. Maybe if you paid
attention once in a while, you'd
know that.

PEARCE
Don't be an ass, Jason.

JASON (V.O.)
If honesty makes me an asshole,
then so be it.

PEARCE
Hmm.
(short beat)
Can you meet?

JASON (V.O.)
I'm at the diner every day during
lunchtime.

PEARCE
I'll see you then.

JASON (V.O.)
Perfect.

Pearce hangs the phone on the receiver then collects his
thoughts. Where could she be?

INT. POLICE STATION - DETECTIVE'S OFFICES - DAY.

Detective Pearce sulks at his desk, astounded.

OFFICERS, DETECTIVES, and other DESK WORKERS are scattered
about, shuffling papers, and furiously typing.

Pearce is in a trance. Not a good one.

Isaac marches up to his desk, slaps him on the shoulder.

ISAAC
What's going on? Is something
wrong?

Isaac leans up against Pearce's desk, arms folded.

PEARCE
Rachel's been reported missing.

ISAAC
Are you serious?

Pearce nods.

PEARCE
No one seems to know where she is.

ISAAC
Who called it in?

PEARCE
Said her friend was worried about
her. Hasn't seen her in days. No
sign of her mother either.

ISAAC
Who's the friend?

PEARCE
Hell if I know. To be square, I
didn't know she even had friends.

ISAAC
Please.

Pearce tosses him a glare. Isaac backs off.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
How ya holdin' up?

Nothing from Pearce.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Hey, we'll find the guy, all right?
He can't have gotten far.

Pearce is a statue.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Pearce. I can't begin to imagine
what you're feeling right now.
(MORE)

ISAAC (CONT'D)
 But, we'll find her. You have to
 believe we--

PEARCE
 Even if we do, it could be too
 late.

Isaac's stare pierces through his soul.

ISAAC
 Don't talk like that.

PEARCE
 I just-- I don't understand. Where
 do we even start?

ISAAC
 It's not for us to understand. Our
 only job is to bring her back.

Pearce rises and slides on his coat.

PEARCE
 I can't wait around like this. I
 need to be out there.

ISAAC
 About that-- Captain wants to talk
 to you... and stressed the urgency.

He thinks twice about leaving.

INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce sneaks through the door and slips into a chair.

PEARCE
 Isaac said you wanted to see me.

Barry hardly looks up. He gestures to Pearce, the door.

BARRY
 Yeah. I'm gonna need ya to close
 that door for me.

Pearce obliges.

PEARCE
 What's on your mind, Cap'n?

BARRY
 (sighs)
 I can't have you on the case, Ed.

PEARCE

Like hell I'm not! This is my--

BARRY

Ed, please don't make this any more difficult than it needs to be. I just can't abide it. It'll blind your judgment.

PEARCE

And how do you know that? I'm the best you've got--

BARRY

It doesn't matter if I have Sherlock fucking Holmes on this! My hands are tied. It goes further up the chain than you or I could see.

PEARCE

I won't allow myself to sit idly by while someone-- who knows what they could be doing to her?!

BARRY

Pearce, you're not hearing me. I just can't do it! That's it!

PEARCE

You can't, or you won't?

BARRY

This is not open for discussion. It's beyond our control.

PEARCE

All the more reason I need to be involved!

BARRY

I'll hear no more about it from you. My decision is final.

A long, tense beat.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Hey, listen to me. We're gonna find her, all right? I won't rest until we do. You have my word on that.

Pearce shakes his head.

BARRY (CONT'D)
 Take a leave of absence, paid. I
 need you back with a clear mind.
 Otherwise, what good are you to me?

PEARCE
 This is--

Pearce is fuming. He erupts from his seat.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
 You'll regret this.

He turns on his heel and storms the door.

BARRY
 I hope you didn't just threaten me.

PEARCE
 I think you'd know if I did.

A staring contest.

BARRY
 I'm gonna need you to leave now.

Pearce reaches for the doorknob when--

BARRY (CONT'D)
 One more thing...

He turns back around to face Barry.

BARRY (CONT'D)
 If I see you looking into this case
 at all-- there will be hell to pay.
 Do I make myself clear?

Pearce nods as he throws open the door, slams it, and storms
 off. Barry deflates as we--

SLAM TO BLACK.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

The sound of cutlery against plates, chatter, laughing...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT.

Edwin and Rachel pick away at their food together.

RACHEL

So then I told him, 'There are several accounts missing from these ledgers. You're either cooking these books or you're just stupid.' Either way, he's a total dipshit. Sometimes I wonder how they even--

She scoffs. Ed chews his mouthful before--

PEARCE

Is it really that much of a surprise to you that you're the smartest person in the room every day over there?

RACHEL

(shaking her head)

It's not much of an achievement, believe me. I feel like a diamond in the muck most days.

Pearce chuckles, she shares in the laughter a bit.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I swear, one of these days you ought to bring 'em in.

PEARCE

Just say the word, I'll have the whole precinct come down on their asses.

Rachel giggles.

PEARCE (CONT'D)

You enjoy it though, right?

RACHEL

Nobody really enjoys what they do, I mean, do they?

Pearce is silent as a crypt.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I don't know, sometimes it really gets to me. I feel like you can only handle so much stress in one lifetime.

PEARCE

There's enough to go around in my line of work, trust me.

RACHEL
You can't possibly enjoy what you
do.

Beat.

PEARCE
No, it just runs in the family,
right?

RACHEL
That's not what I meant. I just--
you know... All that running
around, chasing criminals. Putting
your life on the line everyday.
It's gotta get old.

PEARCE
The rush will always outweigh the
toll.

Rachel lets that sink in a moment.

RACHEL
I'm just saying, there doesn't seem
to be any joy in valor.

Pearce finally raises his eyes to her, meditates on it...

END FLASHBACK.

SNAP CUT TO:

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - PRESENT.

Pearce fights back sobbing as he cradles a photo of RACHEL.

He slumps as he drops the framed photo.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY/ENTRANCE - DAY.

Pearce mopes in the entrance of the building.

He bumps into someone familiar...Jason Kincade (30's). He's a
perky smart-ass who's fully aware of it, and he flaunts it.

PEARCE
Hey.

JASON
Hey yourself.
(beat)
I heard about...you know.

PEARCE
Yeah.

JASON
How are you fairing?

PEARCE
I'll make it.

Jason nods.

JASON
I hope you find her.

PEARCE
Me too.

Beat.

JASON
Let's get that lunch. Seriously.

PEARCE
I know. We will.

JASON
All right.

Pearce nods.

JASON (CONT'D)
See you around, huh?

PEARCE
(cracks a smile)
Yeah.

Jason smiles too. He glides off and pushes through the door.

Pearce pivots, marches towards commotion around his desk.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES - CONTINUOUS.

A WHITE BOARD shows a list of leads which is largely made up of empty space, a timeline for his wife's disappearance, known associates and her PHOTO at the center. The leads are a whole lot of nothing.

OTHER DETECTIVES are all huddled around each other chatting indistinctly and laughing sporadically. Pearce spies Isaac, strides up to pull him aside when...

DETECTIVE BLACKMON

Well, I mean, you know, I'm not saying I would go out of my way, but if she was lying naked on my bed waiting for me, I wouldn't say no!

The other detectives burst with laughter. Detective Blackmon joins in when he knows it's safe to laugh at his own joke.

Blackmon barely has time to enjoy himself before--

Pearce comes from nowhere and clocks him dead in the jaw.

The other detectives are caught gawking, but Isaac doesn't miss a beat as he holds a lunging Pearce back.

Detective Blackmon staggers off to the side, hands pressed against his face. Organized chaos ensues.

Captain Barry emerges from his office, furious.

BARRY

Hey hey hey! Knock it the fuck off!

The commotion subsides. He turns his attention to Pearce.

BARRY (CONT'D)

You-- you're not supposed to be here.

Pearce hasn't stopped his dick-measuring with Blackmon.

PEARCE

I just came to get my stuff.

He shrugs Isaac off of himself.

PEARCE (CONT'D)

I'll be on my way.

BARRY

(pointing at Pearce)

You're damn fuckin' right. I'll be seeing your badge on my desk. Immediately.

Pearce finally snaps his head to Barry who then directs his attention to Blackmon.

BARRY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
And you-- we'll talk later.

BLACKMON
I didn't do shit, Cap. This fuckin'
hothead comes in and--

BARRY
(raising his voice)
I'll not hear another word about
it! The show's over. Get back to
work. All of you!

Pearce sharply points to Barry.

PEARCE
Get their dicks out of their hands
and start searching for my wife!

BARRY
What do you want? Missing posters?
Go home, Pearce.

Barry storms back into his office.

BARRY (CONT'D)
(his voice softer now)
I've had it with this bullshit
circle-jerk.

Pearce blazes a path out of the building, but his eyes remain
glued to Blackmon. Isaac keeps pace at his side.

SLAM! Captain's door practically rattles the entire building.

Pearce tosses his badge over his shoulder. Not a care in the
world where it lands. Isaac escorts him out.

ISAAC
Just what the fuck was that back
there?

Isaac looks back to make sure no one just saw him.

Pearce has barely acknowledged Isaac.

PEARCE
(directed at Barry)
Fucking shit-stain.

ISAAC
You know-- I don't give a shit what
you do.

(MORE)

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Blackmon's a dick, I get that. But you need to hold it together.

PEARCE

I need you to keep me up to date on the case.

Isaac looks over his shoulder.

ISAAC

I can't do that and you know it.

PEARCE

You know I won't be able to stay away from this.

ISAAC

I didn't just hear you say that.

PEARCE

Isaac, please.

(pointing to the white board)

You've got fuck all on that board over there. I have even less than that.

Pearce fights off his emotions, but is choked up all the same. Isaac consoles him best as he can.

ISAAC

If you're doing this, I don't wanna know a thing about it.

(pointing to his head)

Plausible deniability.

PEARCE

Just-- keep me posted, all right?

ISAAC

Pearce, you know I can't. Just let us handle it. Can you do that for me?

PEARCE

Stop sitting on your hands and find her. You got me?

Isaac nods and mopes back to his desk.

Pearce storms away and manhandles the door on his way out.

INT. DINER - DAY.

Jason pecks at his food and slurps his coffee.

Pearce locates Jason who gives him a wave and joins him.

JASON
You're late.

PEARCE
I don't have to be on time for
anything anymore.

Jason gives him an inquisitive look as he sips his coffee.

JASON
The hell's that supposed to mean?

PEARCE
Barry's superiors muscled me off
the case.

JASON
And you're surprised by that...why,
exactly?

Pearce stares daggers. Jason backs down.

PEARCE
I just feel so helpless. How am I
supposed to find her?

JASON
You know what you have to do.

Pearce's eyes wander out the window.

A tall and gorgeous WAITRESS suddenly appears at Pearce's side, stares at him as if he should have ordered yesterday.

PEARCE
Sorry. Coffee, please.

The Waitress scribbles on her pad.

WAITRESS
And?

PEARCE
That'll be it.

WAITRESS
Okay. Be right back with that for
ya, dear!

Pearce forces a smile to her. She smiles big and vanishes.

JASON
Any idea who it might be?

PEARCE
You think I've got it solved
already, do ya?

JASON
You're a detective. You must have
made some enemies along the way.

The Waitress glides over, fills his cup and scoots away.

PEARCE
You mean to tell me I have to know
all the enemies I've made over the
years?

JASON
If you don't know who your enemies
are, they've already won.

PEARCE
I wouldn't be very good at my job
if I couldn't find out, now would
I?

Jason rolls his eyes.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
You don't think I'm a very good
detective, do you?

The Waitress is Johnny-on-the-spot.

JASON
(to the waitress)
Thanks, hun.
(to Pearce)
You don't want me to answer that.

PEARCE
(shaking his head)
I mean-- something like this...
where do you even begin?

JASON
I don't know, hot-shot. I thought
you might tell me!

PEARCE
I need all the help I can get at
this point.

JASON
(chuckles)
Never thought I'd see the day. I
gotta say, I'm flattered.

Pearce has had enough of Jason's shit.

JASON (CONT'D)
You know, it takes a lot to admit
you need help. I admire that.

PEARCE
What would you do? Huh?

JASON
(sarcastically)
Sorry, I'm just taking it all in.
It's a lot to process.

PEARCE
(scoffs)
Would you just--

JASON
Okay, alright.

PEARCE
--already.
(shaking his head)
Jesus.

JASON
I know I don't see much action
behind my desk over there-- what
with being just a lowly pencil-
pusher, and all...

PEARCE
Just-- out with it. Come on.

Jason leans in closer.

JASON
You have to look at who would
benefit from this. Who profits?

PEARCE
Hell if I know.

Beat.

JASON

Have you ever considered the possibility that she kidnapped herself?

PEARCE

Never. She would never do that.

Jason pries into Pearce's soul.

JASON

And just how well do you think you know your wife?

PEARCE

Well enough to know that she wouldn't go to such lengths.

JASON

Does anyone know their own spouse that well?

Pearce ponders that as Jason lets out a smirk.

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Pearce babysits a beer as he just stares blankly at the wall.

An abrupt KNOCK at the door is heard.

Pearce strolls to the door, swings it open to show: Isaac.

He invites Isaac in who follows. Pearce returns to his beer.

ISAAC

Well, aren't you gonna ask me why I'm here?

PEARCE

I thought you-- Why are you here?

ISAAC

Glad you asked. May I sit?

PEARCE

(shrugs)

Country may not be entirely free, but my home is.

Isaac grins as he snags a seat next to him.

ISAAC

I got a lead.

PEARCE

And?

ISAAC

Guy I used to know. Sort of. Goes by the name of Dustin. He runs his operation out of the docks.

PEARCE

He runs shit through there and we haven't done a thing about it?

ISAAC

Haven't caught him in the act yet.

PEARCE

How does this relate to the case?

ISAAC

Well-- he may just be running drugs, but who knows what else?

PEARCE

(shrugs, sips his beer)
Go on.

ISAAC

There's also a rumor floating around that he may be joining up with the most powerful crime ring in the city.

PEARCE

What would a drug runner want with my wife?

ISAAC

(shrugs)
Beats the fuck outta me.

Beat.

PEARCE

So...if this is all just hear-say, then why do you think he may have snagged her?

ISAAC

Wouldn't hurt to ask him.

PEARCE

I think I know what he would tell me to do with myself.

ISAAC
 (chuckles)
 If nothing else, he may be able to point you in the right direction.

PEARCE
 And how would he know that?

ISAAC
 I'm just telling you. Could be a good starting point. Could end up being nothing. I don't know. It's for you to find out.

PEARCE
 Me? Might I remind you I'm not technically on the...you know. I don't have a badge anymore.

Isaac shrugs.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
 Why can't **you**?

ISAAC
 Because you told me to keep you in the loop.

PEARCE
 I'm not supposed to be in the loop, remember?

ISAAC
 No, not officially.
 (beat)
 You wanted me to help. So, here I am. Helping you. What more do you want?

Pearce mulls that over a moment.

PEARCE
 If you know the guy, wouldn't it be better for you to pay him a visit?

ISAAC
 You know Barry. He doesn't want me stickin' my nose around where I shouldn't.

PEARCE
 That why yours is so brown?

ISAAC
(rolls his eyes)
You said you didn't have any leads,
wise-ass.

Pearce shrugs.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Pearce. I know this is difficult
for you. But sometimes, the only
way is to get your hands a little
dirty.

PEARCE
You expect me to just confront a
gang of criminals I know nothing
about after losing my badge?

ISAAC
They aren't inclined to help anyone
with a badge anyway.

Pearce turns to his beer for help.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
You need to ask yourself, how badly
do you want to find your wife?

He ponders that as he takes one last gulp.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DAY.

Pearce steps out of his car, guides the door shut, and
strides on down the pavement to a large, open WAREHOUSE.

ARMED GUARDS are scattered about, on edge.

Pearce puts on his best poker-face for their LEADER who
struts towards him.

GANG LEADER
You've either got a lot of guts or
no sense coming down here alone.

PEARCE
Perhaps a bit of both.

The Armed Guards all clench their rifles, shotguns tighter...

PEARCE (CONT'D)
If I wanted to cause trouble, I
wouldn't have come without help.

GANG LEADER
How'd you find us?

PEARCE
The how is not important. I'm
trying to find someone else.

GANG LEADER
Hmm. Isn't that how it always
starts?
(beat)
You a cop?

PEARCE
Not anymore.

GANG LEADER
(folding his arms)
Tell me why I should believe you.

Pearce glances at the Armed Guards who stare intently at him.

PEARCE
I stopped being a cop the day they
sentenced my wife to die.

Beat.

GANG LEADER
Do I get to learn your name?

PEARCE
Detective Edwin Pearce.

GANG LEADER
Former detective, now, I suppose.

PEARCE
You're Dustin. Right? Dustin...?

DUSTIN
Would be mighty convenient for you
to have my last name, wouldn't it?

PEARCE
I told you. I'm not here for you.

Dustin presses his hand over his heart.

DUSTIN
You wound me, Pearce.

Beat.

PEARCE

I don't much care for time wasted.

DUSTIN

Right to the point. I might like you, after all.

(beat)

I think you can handle walking and talking, would I be correct in that assessment?

Dustin leads the way. Pearce follows closely behind.

PEARCE

You would.

Dustin motions to his men to guide them on their flanks.

DUSTIN

You mentioned your wife.

PEARCE

She's gone missing.

DUSTIN

So, what do I have to do with your supposed marital problems?

PEARCE

I never said we had problems.

That gets a skeptical look from Dustin.

EXT. SHIPPING YARD - CONTINUOUS

They emerge from the warehouse and meander through the shipping yard.

PEARCE

It's my understanding you and a rival gang are no longer in conflict, but have, instead, formed some type of alliance.

DUSTIN

And you would be so closed-minded as to label us: gangs?

PEARCE

We deal in the business of labels.

DUSTIN
I thought you just established it
wasn't 'we' anymore...

PEARCE
It's organized crime, no matter how
you slice it.

DUSTIN
We don't care for that label.

PEARCE
Forgive me, but I don't give a shit
what you care for.

Dustin puts his GUARDS at ease.

DUSTIN
I hope you were arriving at your
point soon.

They stop dead in their tracks.

PEARCE
I'd like to know what else happened
at this meeting.

DUSTIN
You expect me to believe you've
left the force, and are now asking
me about the intricate details of
my business transactions? I'm
afraid it doesn't work that way.

Pearce inches closer to Dustin.

PEARCE
I don't care how it works.

Dustin does not back down. He sizes him up.

DUSTIN
You've got a lot of nerve coming on
my territory, asking favors, and
making threats.

Pearce glances at the guards who side-eye each other, antsy.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
I would be very careful about what
you say to me next.

They stare each other down a beat.

PEARCE

I just want to find my wife, that's all.

DUSTIN

I have a hard time seeing that my newfound partnership has any interest in missing wives.

PEARCE

I aim to find out if it does.

Dustin concedes, as if to say, 'ask away.'

PEARCE (CONT'D)

Now, what was the purpose of this meeting? Besides making new friends.

DUSTIN

A functioning business must have allies to succeed.

PEARCE

These newly acquired allies may have my wife. You really want to associate yourself with people like that?

They proceed marching onward further on down the shipyard.

DUSTIN

How can you be so sure you're looking in the right places?

PEARCE

I'm not.

DUSTIN

I suppose that's the essence of detective work, isn't it?

PEARCE

Gotta start somewhere.

DUSTIN

Fair point, but I'm gonna go out on a limb and say that she's gone for a reason. Wives up and leave their husbands in search of a better life all the time! Who's to say your situation is different?

Pearce lunges at Dustin, but doesn't get far.

The Guards pin his arms behind his back, take aim at him.

Pearce relents. Dustin lifts a finger to him.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

You don't get to do that again.

They release their hold on him and continue pacing.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

So. Let me get this straight. You accuse me of human trafficking, you threaten me, and then you ask me for help?

(to his men)

The balls on this one!

PEARCE

I told you. I'm not a badge anymore. We can help each other.

DUSTIN

I think you're useless to me without your badge.

Pearce searches the depths of his mind for answers.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

So, let's say I do help you. Then what? Any incentive for me?

PEARCE

I can make sure there won't be any more heat on you.

Dustin thinks on that.

PEARCE (CONT'D)

But, we have to have an understanding here. No withholding of any information.

DUSTIN

Sounds a lot like empty promises to me.

Beat.

PEARCE

We both share a mutual friend on the force.

DUSTIN

And just who might that be?

PEARCE

Isaac McPherson. He's my partner.

DUSTIN

(laughs)

You should have just led with that.

Pearce scoffs, annoyed. Figures.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

So, I'm guessing Isaac wants to remind me I owe him a favor or is keeping tabs on me. Either way, you're just an errand boy, aren't you?

Ed stifles his inner urge to pounce.

PEARCE

This has nothing to do with him. I have no interest in what you've got going on here. I only mean to find out what happened to my wife.

Pearce fends off some tears creeping up on him.

PEARCE (CONT'D)

My wife is out there somewhere. She could be dead for all I know. So...You will tell me, and that will be it.

Dustin looks to his henchmen before he answers.

DUSTIN

I don't know his name. Only that people refer to him as 'The Conduit.' Any product smuggled through the city, it goes through him. Doesn't matter what it is. If you try to run your business under his nose without his knowing about it, and without cutting him in, you'd better make yourself scarce. And quick.

Dustin inches toward Pearce, who leans in.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

He controls it all. Everything.

PEARCE

How do I find him?

DUSTIN
You think that's a wise idea?

PEARCE
I never said it was wise.

Beat.

DUSTIN
You can't seek him out. If you make
enough noise, he'll follow the
echo.

PEARCE
Not good enough. Bring me to him.

DUSTIN
That seems a hopeless task.

PEARCE
What choice do I have?

DUSTIN
There's always a choice.

Beat.

PEARCE
Tell me what I have to do.

DUSTIN
(chuckles)
You have to understand, placing
trust in a cop is a big ask for me.

PEARCE
I no longer have any allegiance to
the force. They made sure of that
with their indifference.

Dustin has a moment of contemplation.

DUSTIN
These words-- they mean little to
me. When you make the actions in
your words come to life, that's
when we have an understanding.

Pearce nods. Dustin extends his hand. Pearce hesitates a
moment before meeting his hand, they interlock.

FADE INTO:

EXT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - DAY.

Pearce reflectively sits on the front door step of his house.

He scans the yard arbitrarily, hoping to find something of use. Pearce then lights up a cigarette he seemingly conjures from nowhere.

Pearce has an epiphany. He looks to the houses next to him.

The neighbors. They had to have seen something.

He puts out the cigarette and jumps to action.

EXT. NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER.

Pearce gives a timid knock on the door. He waits for the door to swing open. It does not. He gives it another go.

Finally, A CROTCHETY OLD MAN answers the door.

CROTCHETY OLD MAN

Can I help you?

PEARCE

Hello, sir. Uh-- My name's Detective Edwin Pearce. I actually live next door. Could I trouble you for a moment of your time?

The Old Man hesitates a brief moment.

CROTCHETY OLD MAN

What do you want?

PEARCE

My wife-- she, uh-- she went missing. I was hoping you might have seen something.

CROTCHETY OLD MAN

This comes as a surprise to you?

PEARCE

Excuse me?

CROTCHETY OLD MAN

I was wondering when she'd finally pull the trigger. A little late if you ask me, but always better than not at all.

PEARCE

Is there something I'm missing here, sir?

CROTCHETY OLD MAN

It was right in front of your face the whole time. But I saw it.

PEARCE

Um, what exactly are you saying?

CROTCHETY OLD MAN

Women don't tend to stick with shouters and wife beaters.

PEARCE

Wife beaters, huh?

CROTCHETY OLD MAN

I won't help the likes of you, bastard.

PEARCE

Okay, let's start over here--

CROTCHETY OLD MAN

Oh, I'd bet you'd like to, wouldn't you?

PEARCE

I-- I don't understand--

CROTCHETY OLD MAN

I heard you two. It was a screaming match. Thought about calling the cops myself.

Pearce's heart sinks.

CROTCHETY OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Couples fight, I know that. But this...this was something else.

(beat)

Well, I-- I suppose you would know better than anyone.

PEARCE

When did you hear this, shouting? As you say.

CROTCHETY OLD MAN

Couldn't have been more than three days ago. I remember it well.

PEARCE

I doubt you remember much of anything these days.

CROTCHETY OLD MAN

Ah, that would be mighty convenient for you, now wouldn't it?

Pearce's eyes narrow.

CROTCHETY OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Such a curious thing that she would turn up missing shortly after your little altercation. Perhaps she's safer now... far away from you.

Pearce looks like he could kill an old man right now. But the door is sealed shut before he can act on impulse.

EXT. OLD LADY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Pearce pensively knocks on the door of his next door neighbor on the other side of him. He impatiently waits as he tries to keep warm in the bitter cold.

The door squeaks open revealing a SHORT, NICE OLD LADY. Her faces lights up as soon as she sees it's Pearce.

OLD LADY

Good day to ya, dear!

Pearce returns the smile, half-assedly.

PEARCE

Hi there.

OLD LADY

Well, come on in. It's freezing out there!

Pearce doesn't miss a beat.

PEARCE

(chuckles a bit)

Yeah, you're not kiddin'.

The Old Lady shuffles out of the way so Pearce can hop in. The door eases its way shut behind them.

INT. OLD LADY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS.

The Old Lady wobbles into the kitchen.

OLD LADY (O.S.)
You want some tea?

Pearce creeps into the living room and parks himself center.

PEARCE
Uh, no thank you.

He warms up his hands.

OLD LADY (O.S.)
Well, I've never known anyone to
pass on a warm beverage on a day
like today. I'm gonna whip some up
anyway, you tell me if you change
your mind.

PEARCE
I'm good, thanks.

Old Lady makes periodic noises as she prepares the tea from
the kitchen.

OLD LADY (O.S.)
I hoped you'd be here as a suitor
seeing as you're young and in your
prime. It's been ages.

Pearce is taken aback.

OLD LADY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'm afraid I'm not ripe for the
taking anymore. It's all for
naught.

She shuffles back in the room after the kettle was placed on
the stove.

OLD LADY (CONT'D)
I'd imagine there's something else
you're after, but you don't have to
humor me.

He stares blankly for a beat. She smiles.

OLD LADY (CONT'D)
Oh, dear. I'm only giving you the
business. I couldn't torture you
any longer. What is it you need, my
son?

PEARCE

I, uh-- heh. I'm here about my wife. She went missing just this week.

OLD LADY

Good heavens.

PEARCE

You wouldn't happen to know anything about that, would you?

OLD LADY

How dreadful, my dear. I am terribly sorry.

PEARCE

It's okay. Thank you.

She cranes her neck back to the tea pot. Still not ready.

OLD LADY

Please, have a seat. Make yourself at home.

Pearce nods and grabs a spot on the sofa. She parks herself in her chair.

PEARCE

So, I was hoping you may have seen something. Anything.

OLD LADY

Not that I can think of. Um, eh. My memory fails me more often than I'd like these days.

She fishes in the deep, dark depths of her memory.

OLD LADY (CONT'D)

Come to think of it, I did--

She's interrupted by the squealing of the tea pot.

OLD LADY (CONT'D)

Oh, please. Just one second.

The Old Lady raises herself with all her might and feebly scoots into the kitchen. She prepares her tea and takes her sweet old time planting herself back in her chair and gets situated.

PEARCE

You were saying?

OLD LADY

What was-- ah yes. So I did see something the other day. Didn't seem anything out of the ordinary.

PEARCE

What was it, exactly?

OLD LADY

She didn't seem to be in any sort of distress. Seemed like she knew the guy, as if they were familiar.

PEARCE

So, she seemed fine?

OLD LADY

Yes, she was speaking with the man she was leaving with. I didn't think anything of it. I figured it was you, if I'm being honest.

PEARCE

Did you get a good look at the man?

OLD LADY

No, not really. Unfortunately, my mind isn't the only thing that's starting to go.

PEARCE

What was his appearance like? Can you describe him for me?

OLD LADY

Oh, he was a non-distinct white man. I dunno.

She chuckles.

PEARCE

No, I mean, what was his stature? Was he a big man? Little? Young? Old?

OLD LADY

Well, he certainly wasn't older than me.

Pearce can't help but let a laugh slip through.

OLD LADY (CONT'D)

Coulda been in his 40s, but hell if I know.

(MORE)

OLD LADY (CONT'D)

Like I said, my eyes don't see like they used to no more. Age takes its toll.

PEARCE

I understand.

OLD LADY

Like I said, I thought he was you. I'm sorry I couldn't be of more help there, honey.

PEARCE

That's quite alright.

OLD LADY

I'm not one for detective work. I'll leave that to you. My observation skills are dwindling by the day.

PEARCE

Is there anything more you can tell me?

OLD LADY

Apologies, my dear. That's the only thing I saw that day. I just can't tell you how awful I feel.

PEARCE

I appreciate your concern.

OLD LADY

It just looked normal to me, so I didn't think anything of it. And to tell you the truth, she probably didn't suspect a thing either.

All we see is Pearce's cold, blank stare at the Old Lady.

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - MORNING

Pearce is a statue at his kitchen table. Suddenly, the phone ringing blasts through the silence. Pearce snatches it right up.

PEARCE

This is Edwin Pearce.

ISAAC (O.S.)

We need to meet.

PEARCE
What do you have for me?

ISAAC (V.O.)
Not over the phone.

PEARCE
Okay, then where?

SNAP TO:

INT. APARTMENTS - DAY.

Pearce paces into the Apartments where he and Isaac had their first bust. He then struts on down the hallway and past the crime scene tape into the room. Isaac is waiting for him.

PEARCE
Why here, of all places?

ISAAC
It's the one place I knew no one would think to look.

PEARCE
You really think they wouldn't expect us to come back here?

ISAAC
Why would we?

PEARCE
To meet in secret.

ISAAC
The last place Captain would expect is the scene of a crime.

PEARCE
Depends on the crime.
(beat)
So, brass tacks. What is it?

ISAAC
We've been looking into her father. Quentin Walsh.

PEARCE
I know who he is, Isaac. I've been married to his daughter eleven years for Chrissake.

ISAAC
I caught wind of his involvement in
this crime ring.

PEARCE
How do you know it's him?

ISAAC
We've been looking into him for
awhile now.

PEARCE
And you never thought to tell me?!

ISAAC
I didn't want to tell you. I know
how you get when--

PEARCE
What the hell is that supposed to
mean?!

ISAAC
You can get-- a bit-- defensive.

Pearce could pounce at any moment.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
You can't deny it, Ed. You know
it's true.

Pearce will not back down.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
My intent here is not to get you
all worked up. I knew that you
would want to defend your family,
which is fine. I get it.

Isaac slowly approaches him.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
I just wanted to let you know--
he's a suspect.

PEARCE
Everyone is a suspect.
(beat)
Why wait until now?

ISAAC
The time was right.

PEARCE

Where do you think Dustin fits in to all this?

ISAAC

I don't know, didn't you ask him?

PEARCE

He didn't give me much to go on.

ISAAC

Sounds like him.

PEARCE

That lying sack of shit-- if he's involved at all--

ISAAC

We don't know that for certain. That's why we're looking into it.

PEARCE

Let me talk to him again. I swear this time I won't be so--

ISAAC

I will talk to him.

Beat.

PEARCE

You know you could have told me this right from the start.

ISAAC

I know, I'm sorry.

PEARCE

If her father was-- was she caught up in any of this?

ISAAC

I thought you of all people would know that.

Pearce paces about the room.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Maybe she never knew, Ed.

Pearce sighs and shakes his head.

PEARCE
(whispering)
His own family.
(softly)
It doesn't make any sense.
What would drive him to do this?

ISAAC
I don't know, Pearce.

Pearce cannot stand still.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Sometimes it's those closest to you
whom you can't always trust.

PEARCE
You think he'd be dumb enough to
kidnap his own daughter?

ISAAC
Is there any reason he would hold
her over you like this?

PEARCE
One way to find out.

Pearce turns to bolt out the door when--

ISAAC
Pearce.

He freezes in the doorway.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
I urge you not to do anything
drastic.

Pearce darts out the door.

SLAM TO BLACK.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

Indistinct shouting over the darkness.

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - NIGHT.

Rachel and Pearce are shouting at one another...

RACHEL

I've given you everything! And in return, you've given me nothing!

PEARCE

What do you want me to do? Huh? You can do whatever the fuck you want! What do I care?

RACHEL

You married me.

PEARCE

Because you told me it was the one way we could be together!

RACHEL

I made that possible for you, and what have you done for me?!

PEARCE

I didn't ask you to do that, you said you were willing to make that sacrifice!

RACHEL

Marriage is supposed to be give and take. All you've done is take all that I've given you!

PEARCE

I don't know what you want from me! Just tell me what--

RACHEL

I don't know, Ed. Something!

PEARCE

You can't make demands from me if you don't even know what you want!

RACHEL

I never expected to fall in love with you!

It's almost as if time freezes for a moment...

PEARCE

You what?

Pearce takes in this revelation a beat.

RACHEL
 (calmly)
 Yes. I love you.

Pearce struggles with the words to say for a moment.

PEARCE
 I'm sorry, I didn't know.

Rachel could break down at any moment. He can't face her.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
 But I can't--

RACHEL
 Ed, you can! Please! I can't do
 this anymore. What about me? I--

PEARCE
 You knew what you were getting
 into!! You're not the only one in
 love, you know!!

RACHEL
 (terse)
 I did that for you, in case you
 haven't forgotten.

PEARCE
 (pointing at her)
 You chose this for us. This was
 your doing!
 (sharply)
 You did this!

RACHEL
 You two would be nothing without
 me.

PEARCE
 We don't need you to be anything--

Rachel swiftly SMACKS him across the face. As she storms
 away, she bumps him into the wall. Pearce's head snaps back
 and collides with the wall behind him.

Rachel stands in the doorway, bundling herself with her coat.

RACHEL
 I'll tell everyone.

Rachel swings the door open lunges out and slams it behind
 her. Pearce stands in the doorway, furious. He can only watch
 her as she goes...

END FLASHBACK.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. QUENTIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Pearce stands on the door step of Rachel's father's house. He is hesitant to knock on the door, but does so. Timidly.

After a beat, QUENTIN WALSH (50's) answers the door. Quentin is a large, tall, powerful man. His presence is domineering. He is red in the face, grey of hair, and utterly terrifying.

QUENTIN
What do you want?

PEARCE
It's nice to see you too.

Quentin is a brick wall. Pearce gets nothing from him.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
May I come in?

QUENTIN
You know she's gone, don't you?

PEARCE
That's why I'm here.

Beat.

QUENTIN
I always knew she never should've
married you.

PEARCE
We can argue over this, or we can
find her.

Quentin grunts as he begrudgingly allows him entry.

INT. QUENTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS.

Quentin grabs a seat at their kitchen table. Pearce apprehensively joins him.

PEARCE
You know a man named Dustin?

QUENTIN
What's it to you?

PEARCE

Just think he might have a hand in all this.

Quentin mulls this over a beat.

QUENTIN

Do you know why she married you?

PEARCE

What does that have to do with anything?

QUENTIN

You really have no idea, do you?

PEARCE

You don't know why she married me. All that matters is that I do.

QUENTIN

You're oblivious. That's exactly why she's gone. And you can't help her.

PEARCE

I know why she married me, and you don't know a thing about it.

QUENTIN

I ought to kill you for losing her.

An uncomfortable air fills the room.

PEARCE

You know, I didn't want to believe it. But I'm not writing you off as a suspect.

QUENTIN

You really think that's your best course of action?

Pearce lifts himself from his seat.

PEARCE

We'll see about that now, won't we?

Pearce limbers toward the door. Quentin watches him all the way.

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - LATER THAT NIGHT.

Pearce shuffles through the doorway, hangs his coat, and mopes over to his kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce opens his fridge and scours through until he fishes out a beer bottle for himself.

Once he closes the fridge door, he's startled by a SHADOWY FIGURE in his living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS.

A Silhouette of a Man sits on a love seat with his legs crossed, also lifting a beer to his mouth.

It's Isaac McPherson.

ISAAC
Sorry if I startled you, didn't mean to.

PEARCE
What-- what are you-- why--

ISAAC
I let myself in.

PEARCE
Yeah, I got that.

Pearce switches on the light.

PEARCE (CONT.) (CONT'D)
You know you can just ask.

He plops down in a seat next to him. Flicks open a beer.

ISAAC
Can't take any risks right now. Not even over the phone.

PEARCE
You're gonna make me waste a lot of underwear if you keep this up.

Isaac chuckles a bit to himself.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
What do you want?

ISAAC
Who says I have to want something?
Just paying you a visit, partner.

PEARCE
I don't need visitors.

ISAAC
Sure you do. This house became a
whole lot lonelier recently.

Pearce throws him a look.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. That was low.

PEARCE
Shouldn't you be searching for my
wife right now?

Isaac takes a swig of his beer.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
And not stealing my beer.

ISAAC
Sorry about that too.

PEARCE
Tell me something of value or your
ass is out on the street.

ISAAC
Alright, Jesus. Can't your partner
just come over and console you?

PEARCE
I don't need your sympathy.

ISAAC
(sarcastically)
Please.

Isaac takes another drink.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
How was your marriage before she
left?

PEARCE
Next question.

ISAAC

Don't you realize this could help
us find her?

PEARCE

It doesn't explain anything--

ISAAC

It explains everything!

Both sit in silence a moment in a staring contest. Pearce finally loses and drinks.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

You and Rach were on the rocks.
It's all right. Happens to
everyone. Maybe she--

PEARCE

I think I know how my own marriage
was.

ISAAC

I'm just saying it could explain
her timeline. Help us to find out
where she went.

PEARCE

So then, where do you think she
would go? Huh?

ISAAC

Where do you think?

Pearce mulls this over.

PEARCE

I'm sure it's not that simple.

ISAAC

Hiding in plain sight is not so out
of the realm of possibility.

PEARCE

That's a massive oversight on our
part.

ISAAC

It's part of the job. Even the best
detectives miss the simplest--

PEARCE

You don't have to tell me how to do
my own job.

ISAAC
I'm only trying to help.

Pearce looks down into his beer, as if it has answers.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
All I'm saying is if you can
retrace her steps, it could lead
you right to her.

PEARCE
Don't you think that's what I've
been doing?

ISAAC
You have to explore every
possibility. No matter how
unlikely.
(beat)
Pearce. I know how badly you want
to find her. Just promise me you'll
be careful.

Pearce does his best not to show Isaac the tears in his eyes.

EXT. OLD WALSH RESIDENCE - MORNING.

Pearce cautiously approaches the front door. He searches his
surroundings for on-lookers. No one in sight.

He hesitantly knocks on the door. Nothing.

PEARCE
Hello? Ms. Walsh?

Pearce waits before he tries again. Still no one.

His beats become louder this time. Not a soul around. He
peeks in the window. It's pitch dark in there.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
It's me, Ed.

Pearce glances through the window, as if someone will appear.

He tries the door, it cracks open. He allows himself entry.

INT. OLD WALSH RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce carefully creeps through the house, pistol trained.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS.

He checks his corners. It's bare. Erie.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS.

He scans the room. Not a soul to be found. His eyes frantic.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce desperately search for something. He finds nothing.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS.

An awful stench fills his nostrils, brushed backward by the waft.

AN ELDERLY WOMAN is sprawled out on the bed. Blood spatter is thrown from her head up the bedspread and onto the wall.

The Elderly Woman is MIRIAM WALSH, Rachel's mother. She's a frail, old woman. Only made worse by the rotting.

Pearce covers his nose with his shirt as he searches her body for anything of use. In her hand lays a .38 Special revolver.

He sees it, but is unconvinced. He can't look anymore.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - LATER.

Pearce stands alone in a phone booth, inserts quarters, and waits for the line to pick up through the dial-tone. It finally does.

ISAAC (O.S.)
(voice-over through phone)
McPherson.

PEARCE
It's me.

ISAAC (O.S.)
Yeah? What did you find? Anything?

PEARCE
She's dead.

Isaac sighs.

ISAAC (O.S.)
Ed, I am so sorry. I-- I don't know
what to say.

Pearce shifts positions in the booth.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Where did you find her? Was she--

PEARCE
She was at her place. On her bed,
with a gun. Not convinced it was a
suicide though. Not with the way
the gun sat in her hand.

ISAAC (O.S.)
My God, that's awful.

PEARCE
No sign of Rachel there, though.

ISAAC (O.S.)
Wait, what?

PEARCE
Yeah, I didn't find her there. May
be at her dad's place, but she
didn't seem to be there when I paid
him a visit.

ISAAC (O.S.)
You mean, she--

PEARCE
What?

ISAAC (O.S.)
Oh.

PEARCE
Isaac. Out with it. What is it?

ISAAC (O.S.)
You meant her old lady was dead.

PEARCE
Yeah, what'd you--?

ISAAC (O.S.)
Oh, thank God. She could still be
alive.

PEARCE
Of course--

ISAAC (O.S.)
Jesus, man. You had me goin--

PEARCE
Oh! You thought--

ISAAC (O.S.)
Right. Awh, man. Don't do that!

PEARCE
(laughs)
I'm sorry! Oh my god. My mistake.

ISAAC (O.S.)
You bet your sadistic ass, yeah!
Wow.

PEARCE
I didn't even realize--

ISAAC (O.S.)
Christ on a cross, Pearce!

PEARCE
Sorry. God, I'm sorry. I didn't
even--

ISAAC (O.S.)
It's all right-- it's fine. I mean--
- well... I'm still sorry for your
loss, I mean-- my condolences for
your--

PEARCE
Yeah, no, it's okay. Just,
considering--

ISAAC (O.S.)
I know. It's good. I mean, it's
terrible. Still sucks about
your...you know. But--

PEARCE
A bit of a relief.

ISAAC (O.S.)
Exactly. Oh man.

PEARCE
Yeah.

ISAAC (O.S.)
Fuck.

ISAAC (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Well, okay. All right. I'll keep
lookin' on my end.

PEARCE
Yeah. Me too.

ISAAC (O.S.)
So, just-- you know. Let me know.

PEARCE
Yes, of course. Same to you.

ISAAC (O.S.)
Oh, hey. I forgot to mention.

PEARCE
Yeah?

ISAAC (O.S.)
That friend you mentioned...I got a
name. Chelsea Robinson. Said you
didn't know she had any friends,
well...turns out she does. Guess I
know more about your wife than you
do.

PEARCE
Fuck off.

ISAAC (O.S.)
Yeah, you too, buddy. She lives in
the apartments, off the highway,
sorta by the Airport.

PEARCE
I know 'em.

ISAAC
Something to look into. Apartment
329.

PEARCE
Thanks for checking on that for me.

ISAAC (O.S.)
Okay. Yeah. Good luck.

PEARCE
You too.

Pearce hangs the phone on the hook. He lets out a deep sigh.

PEARCE (CONT'D)

Jesus.

He scoffs and shakes his head as he leaves.

EXT. APARTMENT LOFTS - DAY

DOOR FACE: #329

BANG BANG BANG! Pearce knocks heavily on the door. A moment later, a shade is pulled down, then yanked back up.

The door opens revealing CHELSEA ROBINSON (Early 30's). She has a symmetrical face, dark hair, and dark eyes. A beauty in her prime, maybe.

She pulls her hair behind her ear. She does not open the door too much, just enough to see her.

CHELSEA

You've got some nerve.

PEARCE

I need your help.

CHELSEA

And why would I help you, exactly?

PEARCE

You'd be helping her, too, you know.

(beat)

You do want to help her, don't you?

CHELSEA

Of course I do. I would do anything for her.

PEARCE

You know I would t--

CHELSEA

Don't you dare.

Pearce is bitten by a sting of shame.

PEARCE

Chels-- Please.

Chelsea looks like she could murder someone. Probably him.

PEARCE (CONT'D)

When was the last time you saw her?

CHELSEA

She came to see me. After your fight. Sobbing.

Pearce snuffles. Nods.

PEARCE

What do you want me to say?

CHELSEA

You could start with, I don't know...sorry?

PEARCE

You know I would if I knew where she was.

(beat)

Do you know where she went after that?

CHELSEA

She probably went to apologize. To you. As if you deserved an apology.

PEARCE

Okay, I get it. I fucked up, all right?

She scoffs.

CHELSEA

That doesn't even begin to--

PEARCE

I know! I'm trying to make it right.

(beat)

The only way I can do right by her is to find her. And I can't do that without your help.

She contemplates this a moment, then gives a reluctant nod for him to squeeze through the door.

INT. CHELSEA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS.

Chelsea stomps to the kitchen to grab herself something to drink, but doesn't offer anything to Pearce. He understands.

Pouring liquid can be heard from the kitchen. Pearce does not take a seat. He's kind of afraid to.

CHELSEA (O.S.)

Sit.

He obeys right away. She finds a seat across from him.

PEARCE

Okay... Chelsea, I can explain everything if you just--

CHELSEA

I don't even wanna hear it.

Beat.

PEARCE

Is there anything else you can tell me that you think would be helpful?

CHELSEA

She frequented a bar whenever you were on your long nights. When cases kept you late.

PEARCE

What was-- what's the name of the bar?

CHELSEA

Wait. You don't-- I can't believe you didn't know this.

PEARCE

Can we please just--not do this?

Short beat.

CHELSEA

Catty-Corner's.

PEARCE

Ca-- Catty Corner's?

CHELSEA

Did she seriously never take you there?

Pearce's expression is blank. No one's home.

CHELSEA (CONT'D)

You honestly never went there together...?

PEARCE

I-- No.

She shakes her head. He shrugs.

CHELSEA
Oh my god. Seriously, you guys are
the worst couple--

Pearce bounces up from his seat.

PEARCE
Thanks, Chels.

He kisses her on the cheek, and is out the door before she even knew what hit her.

EXT. CATTY-CORNERS BAR - LATER.

Pearce nervously approaches the front door. He bumps it open and pushes inside.

INT. CATTY-CORNERS BAR - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce slowly inches his way to the bar. The crowd is geriatric as all get-out, and they're all staring at Pearce.

A BARTENDER resides behind the bar, drying a pint glass. His stare never breaks away from Pearce.

Pearce manages to find an open seat, and plops down in it. All the BAR PATRONS still have not let their collective stare die down. Pearce cannot stand the limelight. The Bartender's gaze remains unwavering.

BARTENDER
What can I do ya for, young man?

PEARCE
What's your strongest cocktail?

BARTENDER
Everclear. Neat.

Nice one, old man.

PEARCE
Just make it an Old-Fashioned.

BARTENDER
How do ya want it?

PEARCE
On the rocks, if you would. Thanks.

Bartender throws a side-glare as he prepares his drink.

BARTENDER
Never seen you around before.

PEARCE
I don't drink much.

The Bartender tries to process this.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
In public.

OTHER BAR PATRONS sitting next to Pearce at the bar are also staring at him as if he had just been beamed down there from an alien drop-ship.

BARTENDER
So, what do you want?

PEARCE
I'm sorry, what?

BARTENDER
Outsiders don't just show up here for a drink. There's always an ulterior motive. So, what is it?

PEARCE
I came to ask about my wife.

This flips a switch with the Bartender.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
She's gone missing. I fear she's been kidnapped.

The Bartender grumbles.

BARTENDER
Fear? Or know?

PEARCE
Call it a hunch.

BARTENDER
Hmm.

Bartender slides the Old Fashioned down to him.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
(nodding to him)
Gonna need that.

Pearce clasps his hand around it, nods, and takes a swig. The Bartender looks inquisitively at him.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
So, who's the lady in question?
The ole ball-in-chain?

PEARCE
Rachel Pearce.

Nearly everyone in the bar turns to face him once again. Indistinct murmurs throughout the bar.

BARTENDER
Hmm. She's had a lot to say about
you. There was always something.

PEARCE
What? What do you mean?

BARTENDER
Didn't take much. Just a couple
glasses of wine down the shoot. And
off she went.

PEARCE
I don't understand.

BARTENDER
No, you wouldn't, would you?

Pearce can feel it. Something's not right here...

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
You never appreciated her.

The Bar Patrons have yet to take their eyes off him.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
(stern)
Why she would marry something like
you, I will never know.

The Bartender is holding a sawed-off shotgun low behind the bar, out of Pearce's sight. If not for the bar, it'd be pointed right at him.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Now--

Dread overcomes Pearce. It might be time to leave.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Get the fuck out of my fucking bar.

Pearce's eyes dart around the room. He slowly slips out of the bar stool. The Bartender has not taken his finger off the trigger.

The Bar Patrons follow his every move. Pearce slowly paces his way through the tables. Finally reaching the door. He turns back. No one has lifted their gaze. You could hear a pin drop.

The tension is palpable.

The Bartender maintains his fierce stare. Pearce slowly backs out the door.

EXT. CATTY-CORNERS - PEARCE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce swiftly makes for his car, swings the door open and slides in.

INT. PEARCE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce shudders as he grips the wheel tight. He lets out a sharp breath.

He poorly attempts to calm himself after that mini panic attack.

EXT. SHIPPING YARD - DOCKS - LATER

Pearce meanders his way down to Dustin who puffs a cigar at the end of the pier.

Dustin lets the smoke be caught in the frigid air and taken away by a brief, but sharp howl of the wind.

Pearce looms over him, but Dustin knows he's there.

DUSTIN

Back again, detective?

He glances over his shoulder up at Pearce.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

Or, no. Wait. That's right. Not anymore. So what should I call you now?

PEARCE

Doesn't matter.

DUSTIN
I suppose not.

PEARCE
You have anything for me?

DUSTIN
In time, my friend.

PEARCE
Who said anything about friends?

DUSTIN
You certainly wouldn't want to be
my enemy.

PEARCE
We can debate the merits of our
friendship another time.

Beat.

DUSTIN
I know a place.

PEARCE
Who's place? Where?

DUSTIN
It's closer than you think.

PEARCE
Who owns it?

DUSTIN
Who owns everything?

He throws Pearce a shit eating grin.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
Did you not learn a thing from me?

Dustin flicks up a folded note with his fingers, open for the taking. Pearce snatches it right up and marches off.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
Not to worry, you don't have to
thank me.

Pearce is practically gone before he can. Dustin chuckles to himself, amused. He stares off into the horizon, lighting up.

EXT. BROKEN DOWN RANCH - LATER

Pearce slows his vehicle to a halt across the street.

He stalks the house, pressing forward to the front door. He peeks in, spying nothing.

Pearce, paranoid, checks for onlookers...

Softly, he pushes the door forward. He slowly raises his pistol from his holster.

INT. BROKEN DOWN RANCH - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce aims his six-shooter at the abandoned surroundings. The place feels haunted.

INT. BROKEN DOWN RANCH - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS.

He slowly, carefully pans the room. Still bare. He tiptoes towards a door to the basement.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS.

A LARGE GROUP OF GANG MEMBERS wearing FILTERED MASKS are working tediously on packaging some sort of PRODUCT.

They all have their own individual work station. Soft footsteps are heard above. The Gang Members all look up in unison. They begin working more frantically. Cleanup time?

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce creeps forward with extreme caution. His expression is that of curiosity. Fear. What was that sound? A ghost?

He extends his hand for the doorknob when--

ISAAC (O.S.)
(whispering)

Ed.

PEARCE
(whispering sharply)
Jesus!

Isaac shows himself, brandishing a pistol.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
(whispering)
You can't fuckin' do that to me!

Isaac motions his hands downward so as to tell Pearce to "keep it down."

ISAAC
(softly)
Apologies. Had to come and help
once I knew.

Pearce gestures for him to follow. They approach the door with trepidation...

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS.

The door drifts open. The basement is dark, save for the natural light showing through the few windows. Pearce creeps down the stairs. Isaac follows close behind.

Pearce peeks through the opening between the railing on the stairs and the wall separating. Empty tables and chairs are scattered about the room. Shelves full of various packages line the walls.

He and Isaac spread out. A light dusting of powder is left behind, visible on the tables. Pearce leans in closer to examine this. He rubs the powder on his fingers. Sniffs.

Isaac shuffles through some of the packages on the shelves. Most are empty.

Pearce approaches a steel double-door cabinet against the wall. He struggles with it, the doors don't budge.

Isaac glances at a mystery substance on the wall. Touches it. Grimaces.

Pearce eyes a sledge hammer in the corner of the room.

Isaac spies a BULLETIN BOARD. He gives it a closer look.

Pearce gives a mighty swing and WHAM! Knocks off the locked handle.

Isaac is startled by the sudden noise.

The Cabinet door squeaks open. A tunnel...It leads outside.

Isaac unpins a SHIPPING MANIFEST from the bulletin board.

Pearce inspects the inside of the cabinet.

PEARCE

Hmm.

Isaac shoves it in his pocket.

ISAAC

What?

PEARCE

Somebody was just here.

ISAAC

How do you figure?

Pearce points to what he's looking at. Isaac glides over to join him. He looks into the cabinet-sized hole leading outside.

PEARCE

We may have just missed 'em.

(beat)

Call it in. It has to be you.

Pearce makes like the wind. Isaac looks inquisitively at the makeshift exit.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER

Pearce trots back to his car and peels off.

A LONE VEHICLE sits several houses down.

A squad of COP CARS flood the neighborhood.

Pearce scoots away and slips right past the fleet of Cops.

The cop cars pass on by the OTHER VEHICLE as they make their way to the broken down ranch, where Isaac emerges.

The LONE VEHICLE comes alive and edges past the Cop Cars, after PEARCE.

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Pearce sits alone at his table, barely picking at his dinner.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - FLASHBACK

Ed and Rachel share dinner together in the dining room. Both are eating, chatting, laughing.

Rachel is elated. Ed leans back in his chair, fork in hand with food on it, mouth full, laughing. They chat indistinctly, but are ecstatic. The chemistry is euphoric.

INTERCUT:

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - PRESENT.

Pearce, elbows on the table, face in hands.

He flings aside the PLATE against the WALL, shattering it.

Fists clenched, he is shaking, fuming. He could destroy the table.

INTERCUT:

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - FAMILY ROOM - FLASHBACK.

Rachel and Ed are playfully shoving each other on the couch.

The TV is on in the background, but they pay it no mind.

Rachel is on the edge of the couch kicking at Ed.

He laughs as he returns the playful kicking back.

They wrap one another in each other's arms.

INT. DINING ROOM - PRESENT.

Pearce buries his face in his hands then lets them slip...

He pounds his fists on the table. The tears flow from him.

EXT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS.

We see the faint glow of light from the dining room and hear only the angered yelling of Pearce as we...

TRANSITION TO:

INT. POLICE BALL - FLASHBACK.

We enter an elegant, proper gala from the chandelier...

COPS and their DATES are dancing, gathered around food, sitting at tables, and mingling.

Rachel and Pearce share in a warm embrace, slow-dancing.

Pearce's gazes at Jason across the room who is pecking at some hors-d'oeuvres.

Rachel redirects his gaze...

RACHEL

Ed, how much do you love me?

PEARCE

Is this some sort of test?

RACHEL

(chuckles)

Do you love me with all your heart?

(now eyeing Jason)

Or just part of it?

Pearce's smile fades.

PEARCE

Rachel, you've always had my heart.
All of it.

Rachel pulls him closer. Tighter.

RACHEL

Ed, you don't have to hide anything
from me anymore.

(beat)

Honey, I know.

Pearce has now seen a ghost.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I see the way you look at each
other.

He reluctantly moves with her.

PEARCE

(scoffs)

Don't be ridiculous.

Rachel stares deep into his eyes.

RACHEL
 You have nothing to worry about. I
 fully support you.
 (beat)
 Ask me to marry you.

PEARCE
 What?

RACHEL
 You can continue to see each other
 as if nothing's changed.

She is beaming. He's not.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 Your secret is safe with me. I
 swear on my life.

Pearce matches her gaze, then looks to Jason. Jason smirks at
 him, raises his glass. Pearce smiles and nods to him.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 I want you to be happy.

He looks back to Rachel. She mirrors his gaze and smile,
 until its wiped from his face.

PEARCE
 But what about you?

Rachel somehow smiles even larger.

RACHEL
 Don't worry about me. This is what
 I want. For you. And for him.

Tears of joy overcome her. She battles them as her smile
 perseveres through it all...

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 This is the best thing I could've
 ever given you.

Pearce has momentarily become a mute.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 Ed. Propose. And no one will
 suspect a thing.

We are focused on Ed processing this information as we...

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. DUSTIN BOWMAN'S RESIDENCE - MORNING.

Isaac, Detective BLACKMON, and two other OFFICERS sneak up to the front door, safe from the view of the window.

They stack up outside the door to breach. Isaac nods to give the go-ahead.

His teammates prepare to breach, Isaac blasts the door hinges off with **TWO BANGS** of his shotgun.

Blackmon ***smacks*** the door in with a mighty kick.

INT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS.

The door ***flies*** off the hinges and ***pin-balls*** across the room.

Isaac's Men ***BURST*** into the room.

THREE of Dustin's GOONS are frozen on the couch.

Dustin ***leaps*** up and ***scurries*** to the far corner of the room.

The officers spread out as they clear the room.

Isaac barges in, shaking his head at Dustin.

ISAAC

Don't--

Dustin reaches for his pistol on a coffee table.

BOOM! Isaac lets loose a warning blast of his shotgun above the weapon.

BANG!!! A STARTLED OFFICER accidentally pops off a round immediately following Isaac's warning shot.

The round paints the wall red behind the other GOONS.

AN UNFORTUNATE GOON slumps lifeless to the floor.

SURPRISED GOON

What the fu--

FRIGHTENED GOON

Jesus!

Dustin freezes in his tracks. He slowly raises his hands in surrender.

Isaac gives the Startled Officer a soul-piercing glare.

The Startled Officer is shocked more than anyone in the room.
Dustin is quite dumbfounded himself.

DUSTIN
That was hardly necessary. He
wasn't--

Isaac racks in another load, directed at him.

ISAAC
Not another word. I warned you.

Isaac confronts the Startled Officer who winces in preparation...

ISAAC (CONT'D)
(softly)
Why don't you get rid of that body
and wait outside, huh?

Scared shitless, he nods and obeys.

Isaac watches him drag the body all the way past him.

He pays him no mind once he's out of the house.

The OTHER OFFICERS, still on edge, do not lower their pistols.

Isaac turns his attention to the officers. He motions to the GOONS, then to the door.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Bring them out, too. All of you!

The officers nod, grab the GOONS and shove them outside.

Blackmon doesn't move an inch.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
(to Blackmon)
Park yourself outside, jagg off!

Blackmon glares as he reluctantly shuffles out the doorway.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, Dustin. He didn't need
to die.

Dustin looks to the blood spatter on his wall. So does Isaac.

DUSTIN

Do the fine gentlemen of East Harbor PD offer a free cleanup service just for taxpayers, or...?

Isaac lets a smile creep through. He shakes his head.

ISAAC

Best not to hold out hope for government efficiency.

Dustin can't help but smile too, but it's quickly wiped away.

DUSTIN

What do you want?

Isaac *rushes* Dustin.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

What the fuck, Isaac?

Dustin braces for impact. Isaac clutches his throat and **slams** him against the wall.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

What are you--

Isaac digs into his pocket for the SHIPPING MANIFEST.

ISAAC

What is this? Huh?

Dustin eyes it. He knows damn well what it is, but conceals it best he can on his face.

DUSTIN

Where did you find that? Captain Ahab's asshole?

Isaac cocks a fist, but holds back.

ISAAC

Don't fucking jack me around, Dustin!

Dustin desperately gasps for breath.

DUSTIN

Come on. You know who it belongs to.

ISAAC

No, I don't. That's why I'm asking you!

Dustin pleads the fifth.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Okay. Wanna play smart?

Isaac muscles him just shy of:

A POINTED SHARD OF GLASS. He holds Dustin just above it.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Come on Dustin. I can feel you slipping.

Dustin jerks away from the shard of glass.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Where is she??

A push and pull, up and above the glass.

DUSTIN
All right all right all right all right! Okay!!! I'll tell you!

Isaac lifts him up.

ISAAC
Tell me what I need to know, and nothing will come of this. I swear it.

DUSTIN
He's in your outfit.

ISAAC
What? No, that's--

DUSTIN
He's blue and he's close to the Conduit. That's all I know.

Isaac is seething until he realizes...

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - LATER.

Pearce mopes alone in his kitchen, sipping on some coffee.

BAM! BAM! BAM! A knock on the door is heard.

Pearce's head jolts towards the door.

EXT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS.

Barry stands outside the door waiting impatiently with OFFICERS flanking him on either side.

Barry has his hands on his hips. He raises his fist to pound on the door again.

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce lifts himself from his seat and slowly scoots down the hallway.

BANG! BANG! BANG! The knocks become louder and more ferocious.

Pearce attempts to look through the hole, but it's no use. He swings the door open.

Barry looks up to him, feigning a pleasantness. Pearce only looks to him, pays no mind to the OFFICERS.

PEARCE

Captain.

BARRY

Pearce.

Pearce's eyes dart to the other Officers.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Sadly, I didn't come here for pleasantries. Nor did I come here to reinstate your badge.

PEARCE

Well then, what did you come here for?

BARRY

(takes a deep breath)
I gotta take you in. For questioning.

PEARCE

Wha-- I-- I don't understand.

BARRY

(sighs)
We're pursuing all possible avenues. I never wanted it to come to this, but...

Barry steps aside to reveal...

BARRY (CONT'D)
We have to look into everyone.

The Crotchety Old Man propping himself up behind Barry.

BARRY (CONT'D)
And he has a lot to say about you.

Pearce's soul slips from his body...

The Officers reach, grab at Pearce.

Pearce quickly **slams** the door shut, **crushing** the Officer's hand, he **yelps** in pain. Pearce **jets** from the door.

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce **bolts** down the hallway to the back door. The Officers **BLAST** through the front door, hot on his tail...

EXT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce **dashes** across the yard and swiftly hops the fence--

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce **ZOOMS** through the backyard and **vaults** over another fence.

He then **darts** through an alleyway towards--

EXT. NEXT NEIGHBORHOOD OVER - CONTINUOUS

PEARCE does not break stride as he comes upon a NEIGHBOR'S CAR--

The NEIGHBOR shoves his key in the ignition when--

Pearce rapidly taps on the driver's side window with his handgun. The Neighbor's head snaps to Pearce in horror.

He motions for the Neighbor to roll his window down. He hesitates, but finally abides.

PEARCE
East Harbor P.D. Get the fuck out
of the car!

Pearce is frantic, trembling. So is the Neighbor.

NEIGHBOR

I will not. I don't see no badge--

Pearce vehemently **SLAMS** his head against the steering wheel.

PEARCE

Out of the fucking car. Now!

He shoves the gun in the Neighbor's face who is frozen in his seat.

Pearce flicks the door open, forces him from his seat to the ground. He climbs in the car, jams the key in, and peels off.

The Neighbor lifts himself off the ground, throws his arms in the air, and scoffs in disgust.

INT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - LATER.

Dustin lounges out on his couch watching TV. He scours the table for a cigarette to light and enjoy. He relaxes.

EXT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS.

A LARGE, BROODING MAN slithers to the house, brandishing a shotgun.

His approach is slow, methodical, calculated. We follow him from behind.

INT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS.

Dustin lights up and blows out a puff of smoke.

The Large, Brooding Man hovers through the doorway, where a door used to be...

Dustin flinches and shudders as he notices his entry.

DUSTIN

Jesus fuck!

We are only focused on Dustin's petrified face as he slowly approaches. He knows exactly who it is.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

I gave him nothing. They know nothing. I swear to you, I--

THE CONDUIT

It's always been difficult for you
to separate the truth from lies.

The Conduit slowly creeps up to him. His voice is deep,
guttural, booming.

THE CONDUIT (CONT'D)

I suppose I could teach you the
difference--

The Conduit looms over him, domineering.

THE CONDUIT (CONT'D)

But none of that matters where
you're going...

We see Dustin's horrified face as The Conduit racks in a load
of his shotgun.

INT. NEIGHBOR'S CAR - LATER.

Pearce pulls up close to Dustin's house, but far enough away
so as to not raise any suspicion.

EXT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS.

He pulls the keys from the ignition and raises himself from
the vehicle.

Pearce apprehensively approaches the damaged front door. He
lifts his pistol and crosses the threshold.

INT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce tiptoes inside and scans the room to discover:

Dustin's limp body with his blood and brains scattered about
the floor, couch and walls.

Pearce, flabbergasted, practically pounces on his body.

He searches his body for any sort of clues, finding nothing
of interest. He then leans back, covers his eyes with a hand.

Pearce's eyes dart about the room. He spies Dustin's PHONE.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES - LATER.

Isaac sifting through paperwork, occasionally writing things down.

The PHONE RINGING BLASTS through the monotony. He snatches it right up.

ISAAC
McPherson.

INTERCUT:

INT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Pearce's terrified eyes are locked on Dustin.

PEARCE
Isaac, Dustin's dead.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

Isaac leans in closer to his phone, baffled.

ISAAC
What?

PEARCE (V.O.)
Yeah, I'm at his place. I just found his body.

ISAAC
Fucking Christ, I was just there. What happened?

INT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Pearce frantically searches his mind, the wheels are turning...

PEARCE
That's what I aim to find out.

ISAAC (V.O.)
What were you doing at his place, anyway? Is he a suspect?

PEARCE
You know how I feel about suspects.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

Isaac raises his eyes to the ceiling.

ISAAC

Captain agrees with you on that.
Yourself among them.

PEARCE (V.O.)

I know, he paid me a visit.

ISAAC

And?

INT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Pearce narrows his focus to the phone...

PEARCE

Our conversation wouldn't be over
the phone, it'd be between bars had
I gone with him.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

Isaac leans away from his cohorts.

ISAAC

Speaking of that, I don't think we
should be talking on the phone
about this.

PEARCE

Don't worry, I'm going to make this
quick. I'm bringing him in.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

ISAAC

What?? Are you actually fucking
insane?

Isaac spots a SUSPICIOUS DETECTIVE side-glancing him as he
glides on by.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

(softer now)

With no evidence? No badge??

PEARCE (V.O.)
 Citizen's arrest. I don't give a
 fuck.

ISAAC
 You've gone outside your mind.

PEARCE (V.O.)
 I know he did it, Isaac.

Isaac has a realization. He knows what he must do.

ISAAC
 Pearce. Listen. Before you do
 anything stupid-- There's something
 I have to tell you.

PEARCE
 This can't wait? You know I'm in
 the middle of the most important
 investigation of my li--

ISAAC
 No no no. I know. Listen to me.
 This couldn't be more important to
 the case!

PEARCE
 What is it? Can you come down here?

ISAAC
 Pearce. I don't think there's
 enough time, so just listen to me.
 In the drug house, I found a
 shipping manifest.

CLOSE ON: SHIPPING MANIFEST.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
 There's a section of the ship which
 shows that the cargo is either
 missing or un-logged.

CLOSE ON: CARGO DETAILS. COMPARTMENT 124 EMPTY. CREW
 QUARTERS: UN-LOGGED.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
 I think they meant to put Rachel on
 this cargo freighter and ship her
 off to--

Isaac looks up to see BLACKMON holding a PHONE LINE.

He looks to his phone line connecting to the phone on his desk.

Blackmon holds Isaac's.

END INTERCUTTING:

INT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

BACK TO PEARCE:

Pearce's interest raised--

PEARCE

Isaac. What else? Isaac? You there?

He looks at the phone. The line is dead.

PEARCE (CONT'D)

Shit!

Pearce furiously slams the phone.

EXT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce swings open the Neighbor's car door and throws himself in. He fires up the engine and squeals off.

The Conduit's car is back at a safe distance...

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - LATER.

Pearce dials up Jason.

JASON (O.S.)

Jason Kincade speaking.

PEARCE

Jason! I just got off the line with Isaac. He was telling me something important but the line went dead. Do you know where he is?

JASON (O.S.)

No, I have no idea. What's wrong?

Short beat.

PEARCE

He said something about Rachel being shipped off at the docks.

(MORE)

PEARCE (CONT'D)
 Something about a shipment
 manifest? I don't know, we got cut
 off. I guess that prick Dustin did
 have something to do with it, after
 all.

JASON (O.S.)
 Oh, well that's great news! I mean,
 not-- you know. Narrowing the
 search, that's big.

Pearce is in a trance.

PEARCE
 Yeah, yeah. That's what I'm
 thinking. Can you get down here?

JASON (O.S.)
 Where are you now? I'll meet you.
 We can go together.

PEARCE
 I'm a few blocks from the docks.

JASON (O.S.)
 You're actually pretty close then.

Short beat as Pearce mulls this over. His heart is pounding.

PEARCE
 We can't call for backup. They're
 after me. Just you and me, okay?

JASON (O.S.)
 I know. I'll come alone.

PEARCE
 Make it quick.

Pearce gently sets the phone on the receiver. He takes it all
 in.

INT. LARGE OPEN ROOM - SEWER TUNNELS - DARK.

We return to Pearce, his PARTNER, the Shadowy Figures, and
 Rachel from the beginning...

RACHEL
 Ed. Please. You need to know, it's-
 -

SHADOWY FIGURE
 Would you shut her mouth?!

The Shadowy Figure raises his fist to **backhand** her.

PEARCE

Don't you fucking touch her!!

Pearce raises his pistol to shoot when--

BANG! The shot came from Pearce and his partner's side of the room. The flash illuminates his partner's face for a brief moment.

It's **Jason Kincade!**

Pearce is transfixed, but comes to. He raises his pistol to--

BANG! BANG! With two swift shots of his pistol, he takes out the TWO SHADOWY FIGURES flanking Rachel.

Rachel slumps in her chair. The two men topple to the floor.

One man is whimpering. He's not quite dead yet.

BANG! Pearce sees to that right away.

Pearce slowly approaches Rachel who sits lifeless, still bound to the chair.

PEARCE (CONT'D)

What have you done?

Jason shuffles to his side.

JASON

Isn't this what you wanted?

PEARCE

You're a fool if you believe I wanted her dead. I loved her!

JASON

I thought there was only one you loved.

Beat.

PEARCE

Her's was a different sort of love. You have no idea what she did for me. For us!!

JASON

I know exactly what she did for you, but this was the only way we could be together!

Pearce's stare pierces through his soul.

PEARCE
Tell me this wasn't your doing.

Jason can't bear to face him.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
Tell me it isn't true.

JASON
It wasn't in the plan for her to die.

Pearce's eyes ignite.

EXT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - FLASHBACK

Jason guides Rachel out of her house towards his car.

JASON (V.O.)
I asked her to lunch. Said we could talk it over.

INT. OLD LADY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The Old Lady looks out her window at the walkway leading from Pearce's house to the street. She senses movement.

Old Lady POV:

Jason escorts Rachel to the car, guides her in the shotgun seat.

JASON (V.O.)
See if we could work it out.

End Old Lady POV.

The Old Lady adjusts her glasses and closes the shade.

INT. JASON'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

A MASKED MAN raises himself in the backseat and swiftly shoves a BLACK BAG over Rachel's head.

She desperately tries to rip it off, to no avail.

JASON (V.O.)
It was the only way, Ed. She would tell everyone.

Jason zip ties the bag around her neck to secure it in place. She is still frantic in her attempts. It's no use.

JASON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I decided to do something about it.

The Masked Man bashes the back of her head with his pistol. Rachel slumps in her seat motionless.

Jason nods to the Masked Man who transfers her to the trunk.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LARGE OPEN SEWAGE ROOM - PRESENT.

Pearce is beside himself.

JASON
I mean it when I say I didn't want for her to die. I only meant to take her somewhere safe so we could be--

PEARCE
How could you be so reckless?!

JASON
I did what I had to do! I thought this was what you wanted!

PEARCE
You have no idea what I want!

Jason is on the verge of tears.

JASON
Then enlighten me, what do you want?!
(beat)
People like us, Ed--

Pearce eyes him over his shoulder, but keeps his back to him.

JASON (CONT'D)
You know they would never let us be together.

Jason tries to embrace him from behind, but Pearce shrugs him off.

PEARCE
Do you realize what kind of shit you've left us in?

JASON

Don't you realize I did this for us? You have to understand, my intention was never to--

PEARCE

It doesn't matter what your intention was! We'll never stop running from this.

JASON

So we'll run.

Pearce furiously shakes his head. He paces with uncertainty.

JASON (CONT'D)

Don't be so cynical. We've made it through far worse than this.

He then swiftly grabs Jason by the collar.

PEARCE

Nothing we've endured can possibly be worse than this.

Pearce **shoves** him aside as he stomps away.

JASON

How can you be so sure we won't escape this?

PEARCE

We've reached the point of no return. You've left us with no choice but to escape.

Jason ponders that a moment.

JASON

I don't suppose you have a plan.

PEARCE

Clearly you're the mastermind. I'll leave that to you.

Beat.

JASON

I know you're upset--

PEARCE

Upset?!

Pearce **storms** Jason and **forces** himself right in his face.

PEARCE (CONT'D)

You couldn't possibly know how I feel right now. You've taken the best thing that's ever happened to us away from me.

(struggles not to sob)
My best-- my only...

JASON

And what does that make me?

(beat)
Give me a chance to make it right.

Pearce **clutches** his throat, but not enough to be lethal...

PEARCE

There is nothing in this world that will undo what you've just done. It will never be right again.

JASON

You said it yourself. The point of no return. We have to continue on.

Finally... he reluctantly, but **sharply** loosens his grip.

PEARCE

Let's go, then.

Jason struggles to regain his breath.

JASON

(surprised)
Where?

PEARCE

Anywhere. As long as it's away from here.

Pearce **storms** away, towards the docks. Jason lets the moment sink in before he follows suit.

EXT. PIER - MORNING.

It's bitter cold, dreary, overcast. The wind blows softly, but it's an unforgiving chill.

Pearce and Jason glide on down the boardwalk towards Jason's SAILBOAT.

Jason prepares the boat for cast-off.

Pearce unholsters his pistol and aims it right at the back of Jason's head.

It takes a beat before Jason finally notices...

JASON

Wha-- what are you doing?

PEARCE

I told you, no matter what you do,
I'll never be able to forgive you.

Jason is on the verge of tears...

JASON

Please-- please Ed. I just-- I--

He's overcome with emotion as he breaks down...

JASON (CONT'D)

I love--

BANG! Pearce lets loose a round that **rips** through his skull. Jason topples over the edge of the pier and into the sea.

Pearce, satisfied enough, holsters his weapon. He wipes away a tear. Sniffles. Turns to strut on back down the boardwalk when--

Quentin Walsh, The Conduit, is **charging** down the boardwalk right at him. He is wearing a flawless tailored suit.

He fishes out a six-shooter from his breast pocket and takes aim--

Pearce desperately **swipes** for his holster, but his pistol doesn't pull up. His hand slips...

Quentin **POPS** off a round that **pounds** Pearce in his left shoulder.

Pearce **staggers** backwards as he **fumbles** for his pistol.

Quentin lets off TWO MORE rounds into Pearce's chest.

Pearce falls to his knees. He swoops his pistol from his holster and extends his arm to take aim--

Quentin **kicks** the gun from his hand-- it's **thrown** into the sea...

He towers over Pearce. His pistol remains at his side, for now.

PEARCE
They warned me about you...I never
listened.

QUENTIN
Rachel and I had to keep you close.

Pearce chuckles through the pain.

PEARCE
Enemies closer, right?

QUENTIN
You could say that.

Beat.

PEARCE
(weakly)
Quentin, I--

Pearce checks his wounds. They're probably fatal.

QUENTIN
How could you let this happen to
her?

PEARCE
I-- I never meant for any of this
to happen.

QUENTIN
You call yourself a good husband? A
defender of the law??

PEARCE
(shaking his head)
I'm sorry, I didn't know--

QUENTIN
Is it worse that you didn't know or
that you failed to protect her?

PEARCE
I loved her. I truly did. I--
(fighting back tears)
I couldn't save her.

Pearce breaks down.

QUENTIN
She never loved you.

PEARCE
You don't know what our love was.

QUENTIN
She was lying to you.

PEARCE
Her actions said otherwise.

Quentin raises his pistol. It's aimed right at his forehead. Pearce props himself to his knees.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
Go on, send me there. I'm ready
to be with her again.

Confusion washes over Quentin's face.

A bullet **zips** through Quentin's neck.

CRACK! A shot is heard from a distance.

A startled Pearce searches for the source of the gunshot.

Quentin barely has time to clutch at his neck and gurgle before he trips and topples into the water.

EXT. HILL OVERLOOKING PIER - CONTINUOUS.

Isaac, bearing a scoped, high caliber rifle smoking at the barrel, raises his eye from the scope.

He pulls the bolt back and locks in another round.

Isaac rapidly lifts himself from the ground, swings the rifle over his shoulder and **rushes** to the pier.

EXT. PIER - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce clutches his gut and slumps over. Isaac is slowly coming into view as he makes up ground. He finally becomes lifesized as he races to Pearce.

Isaac presses his rifle against the ground to prop himself up as he takes a knee before Pearce.

ISAAC
Pearce!

He lifts Pearce off the ground. Pearce weakly looks up to him.

PEARCE
You couldn't have shot the bastard
just a few seconds earlier, huh?

ISAAC
I had to line up my shot.

PEARCE
I was always the better shot.

ISAAC
No, you were the brains.

PEARCE
You're delusional.

ISAAC
You're delirious.

He's right. It's sobering.

PEARCE
Right.

Pearce forces a smile through the pain. It disappears as quickly as it came.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
Captain's not gonna believe this
shit-storm, huh?

ISAAC
Doesn't matter what he believes.

Beat.

PEARCE
I can't go to prison.

ISAAC
It's not up to me, you know that.

PEARCE
I just-- I couldn't allow myself to
live in a world that would keep us
apart.

ISAAC
I know, Pearce. I'm sorry, I-- I
don't know what to say.

PEARCE
I miss her, Isaac.

ISAAC

I know.

Isaac tries to console him before he looks back at the distant whine of police sirens.

PEARCE

I have to see her.

Pearce **snatches** Isaac's rifle out from under him, **rips** it backwards, and **pulls** the barrel under his chin.

ISAAC

Wha-- Pearce! Stop!

Isaac desperately **swipes** for the rifle back. It's no use.

Pearce **squeezes** the trigger. The round **pierces** through his head and **rockets** out the back of his skull.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

No!!

Pearce's lifeless body slumps backward. Isaac **lunges** after his corpse.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Fucking shit.

(sighs)

Jesus.

Isaac examines Pearce's peaceful rest, in mourning.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Pearce, you stubborn prick.

The cries of the police sirens close in from the distance.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Go find her.

Isaac apprehensively approaches Barry down the boardwalk.

EXT. DOCKS - MOMENTS LATER

Isaac marches down the boardwalk, confronts Barry.

ISAAC

You're not gonna believe this one,
sir.

BARRY

I'm not sure I want to hear it.

(beat)

How bad is it?

ISAAC

If I may speak frankly.

BARRY

That's encouraged.

ISAAC

We're gonna want to spin this. Or
bury it.

Barry mulls it over.

BARRY

Well, can we spin it?

Isaac wants to shrug, but shakes his head instead.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Then bury it.

Barry squeezes on by Isaac, then marches with haste down the boardwalk.

Isaac ponders this-- What he has done, what he must do.

We rise above the pier as Barry approaches Pearce and as Isaac mopes away.

The flashes of police lights fade from view...

Our focus is on the boardwalk with Pearce's dead body and the endless horizon of the Ocean as we...

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.