

A LIFE UNRAVELLED

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. MYERS FAMILY HOME - MORNING

It's overcast. A light fog hangs over a middle-class neighborhood.

The MYERS family gather in their driveway--

ETHAN MYERS, 11, glasses, an introvert, nerdy, wearing a shirt and tie under a sweatshirt(his "uniform"), his father JUSTIN MYERS, early 40's, his mother KATHY MYERS, late 30's, and GRANDPA AVRIL MYERS, 70's, looking spry for his age.

Ethan's uncle, JIMMY MYERS, 38, good looking with a smoothness and charm to match, stands a few feet away, camera in hand and a notebook tucked under his arm.

Kathy Myers wraps her arms around her son and whispers in his ear.

KATHY MYERS
Say cheese, sweetie.

Ethan lights up, and Jimmy snaps the photo.

JIMMY
Okay, let's get this show on the road.

As the family loads into their car, Jimmy jogs to his mint condition muscle-car.

Grandpa waves goodbye to them from the door as they pull away.

EXT. TWO LANE HIGHWAY - MORNING

A thick fog blankets the wreckage of a multi-car accident. Metal and glass scattered across the wet pavement.

Jimmy stumbles through the haze, bleeding from a head wound, face twisted in fear.

The Myers car is resting on its roof, belching smoke. Jimmy gets down on his hands and knees and looks through the drivers-side window. He recoils, his body racked with sobs--

Justin and Kathy are dead.

Jimmy looks into the back seat. He reaches in and pulls Ethan from the wreckage as flashing lights cut through the haze and rescue workers rush onto the scene--

TITLE CARD: THREE YEARS LATER

Int. Jimmy MYERS APARTMENT - day

Sunlight seeps in through drab, ratty curtains.

Jimmy is barely recognizable. No longer the highly polished ladies man, he's now scruffy, unshaven, in a grungy t-shirt and jeans.

His apartment is sparse. A yard-sale coffee table is cluttered with baggies of white powder, a scale, and a good sized mound of cocaine.

Books on "writing" are stacked everywhere, along with well worn notebooks full of Jimmy's scribbled handwriting.

Jimmy has a beer in one hand, a letter in the other, and a scowl on his face.

He slaps the letter onto the table and places his beer on top. He snorts a couple lines and picks up a video game controller, sinking back into the couch--

Condensation drips from the bottle onto the paper-- a rejection letter from a literary company. A stack of similar rejection letters are piled near-by.

INT. HIGH-SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

A teacher, Mr. CLARK, 50, completely unremarkable, is blissfully asleep in his chair, leaning back, mouth open, coffee cup held precariously in one hand as he softly snores.

Young faces are buried in their papers. Ethan, now 14 (still in his "uniform") is working his way through a math test with ease - he's focused.

EMILY, 14, snarky, bad reputation, a girl who makes a conscious effort to not fit in, reaches across the aisle and pokes Ethan in the arm with her pencil.

ETHAN

Ow.

EMILY

Don't wet your pants, nerd. I need an answer.

Ethan looks to the teacher for help, but he's still snoring. He moves his arm across his paper in an attempt to block her view.

EMILY

If you don't help me, I'm gonna stab you in the neck. You know I will--

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - FLASHBACK - DAY

Emily, surrounded by a ring of students, is straddling a boy twice her size, repeatedly beating him over the head with a garbage can lid--

INT. CLASSROOM - BACK TO PRESENT - DAY

Ethan adjusts his glasses, stalling the inevitable.

ETHAN

(resigned)
Which one?

Emily leans across the isle and slaps the test paper on his desk.

EMILY

All of 'em.

INT. JIMMY MYERS APARTMENT - DAY

Jimmy is playing video games and doing lines of coke, as sixties "Classic Rock" blasts from a CD player on the floor.

There's a knock on the door.

Jimmy scurries to the door and looks through the peep-hole.

JIMMY

Damn.

A voice calls out from the other side of the door.

DONNIE (O.S.)

Open up, Jimmy! I know your home,
and I'm not above kicking in your
door!

Jimmy opens the door a crack, security chain in place.

Outside his door stand two unsavory characters. The CLOMP brothers, RICKY, big, the muscle, and DONNIE, the self-proclaimed "brains" of the operation.

JIMMY

Hey, guys, not really a good time for me. Think you could come by tomorrow? Maybe give me a call beforehand?

DONNIE

Oh, jeez, Jimmy. So sorry to interrupt--

Ricky's foot makes contact with the door. The chain snaps and Jimmy is thrown back into the room, landing in a heap on the floor. The two men enter.

Ricky picks up the CD player and smashes it down on the ground. Pieces of plastic shrapnel go flying, and it's suddenly quiet.

JIMMY

Hey! Whoa, man!

DONNIE

Jimmy... I'm disappointed.

The contents of the table are incriminating.

DONNIE

It's the end of the month and you're in the hole. I leave you messages, but you don't return my calls - that hurts my feelings. It's the information era, Jimmy, the only way to avoid communication is if you're doing it on purpose.

JIMMY

I know, Donnie...

Jimmy gestures to the scale and packaged baggies.

JIMMY

I'm getting ready to make a sale. I just-I didn't want to call until I had the cash.

The evidence tells a different story.

Jimmy pulls himself up off the floor.

JIMMY

Yeah, okay, so I've been getting a little carried away.

DONNIE

How carried away, Jimmy?

Jimmy's sweating. He sits.

JIMMY

Half... maybe more.

DONNIE

Jesus, man.

RICKY

You're on the fast track to a deep hole, man.

Donnie sits next to Jimmy.

DONNIE

Look, Jimmy, you're a good guy, but this is business, and it's time to collect.

RICKY

Yeah, and you ain't got fuck-all in this place we can take in collateral, except...

Donnie holds up his hand to stop his brother.

DONNIE

We'll get there.

JIMMY

Okay, well, you did just smash my CD player. That's worth something.

Ricky pulls his jacket open to reveal a gun tucked into his waistband, but Donnie waves him off.

DONNIE

You've put me in a tough spot, Jimmy. I could let Ricky shoot you in the leg or break an appendage... maybe a phalange...

Donnie wiggles his fingers for effect.

DONNIE

But then you're not gonna be in any condition to make up the money you owe.

JIMMY

Right, I-uh, work better--

DONNIE

But then again...

Ricky cracks his fingers in anticipation.

JIMMY

Okay, okay, listen, I've got a some cash, maybe three-hundred, to hold you over. Just give me a couple weeks, I promise, I'll get it.

Jimmy digs into his pocket and pulls out a crumpled wad of cash.

JIMMY

Here, take it all. I'll make up the rest, I swear. I've never let you down, Donnie.

Donnie begins counting it.

DONNIE

What do you think, Ricky?

Ricky grabs a few baggies of coke off the table and stuffs them into his pocket.

JIMMY

Hey!

RICKY

I think Jimmy just bought himself another week.

DONNIE

One week, Jimmy. You don't pay up...

Donnie pauses for dramatic effect.

DONNIE

We take your car.

The color drains from Jimmy's face.

JIMMY

Donnie.

DONNIE

One week.

Donnie gets up, and both men walk to the front door.

JIMMY

What about my door?

Ricky flips him off as they turn the corner.

INT. HIGH-SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

A book falls off a kids desk and lands with a loud slap as it hits the floor--

Mr. Clark wakes with a start. The coffee mug drops from his hand and shatters on the ground, spraying his pant leg and floor with coffee.

MR. CLARK

Time!

He scans the room, groggy, as the students snicker.

MR. CLARK

(mumbles)

Damnit.

He shakes the coffee off his shoe.

MR. CLARK

Okay... everyone put down your pencils and pass your tests forward.

The bell rings and the entire class scrambles.

INT. HIGH-SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

Tables are filled with kids. Groups sit together; friends call out to one another over the racket.

Ethan sits alone, looking small, isolated.

Emily sits at a table behind him, her body language daring anyone to sit nearby. She watches Ethan as he eats his lunch and writes in his notebook.

EMILY
Hey... nerd!

Ethan stops eating but does not acknowledge her.

EMILY
Nerd!

Ethan continues to ignore her. Emily picks up her tray and moves to his table, sitting across from him.

EMILY
Fine... Ethan.

ETHAN
What do you want?

Emily reaches for his notebook.

EMILY
What's that, your diary?

Ethan snatches it up. He tucks it under his arm and hurries away without a word. Emily calls out to him--

EMILY
See, that's the kind of shit that gets you beat up!

INT. OFFICES OF LAMPTON PRESS - DAY

A small but quaint publishing company. One large room with two desks and a single office tucked into the corner.

JEANNE BILLSFORD, 36, reserved, collected, knocks on the closed office door and enters.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

LAMPTON FINCH, 58, heavyset, disheveled, worshiper of the written word, sits at his desk eating a large meat filled sandwich, a mustard stain on his shirt.

JEANNE
Mister Finch, I came across a new submission I think you need to take a look at... but... It's from Mister Myers.

LAMPTON FINCH

Oh, Jeanne, could you please just write the rejection letter for this one? I've honestly run out of ways to tell him no. I'm afraid my last letter was a little more terse than I had intended... although well warranted.

JEANNE

Mister Finch, you don't understand... this is actually quite exceptional.

LAMPTON FINCH

Don't toy with me, Jeanne.

Jeanne lays the manuscript on an uncluttered corner of his desk. Lampton picks it up and eyes it as if it's a bomb about to go off.

"A Life Unravalled by Jimmy Myers."

LAMPTON FINCH

Well, leave me to it then, leave me to it.

Jeanne eyes Lampton's unhealthy lunch scattered across his desk top.

LAMPTON FINCH

I know, I know.

JEANNE

Mister Finch, you promised.

LAMPTON FINCH

It'll be a salad for diner. I promise.

JEANNE

Okay... I'm going to hold you to that.

Jeanne smiles and walks out of the office, closing the door behind her.

EXT. HIGH-SCHOOL - DAY

A pristine gold Chevy Nova is parked across the street from the school.

INT. CHEVY NOVA - DAY

Jimmy sits behind the wheel of his pride and joy. His head bobs with the heavy music blasting from the stereo.

He stops to snort a line of coke off a plastic CD case, paying little attention to the stream of kids exiting the building.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Ethan walks home from school, notebook tucked under his arm.

EMILY (O.S.)

Psst.

Ethan turns to find Emily, inches from his face.

EMILY

Hey, nerd.

Startled, he drops his notebook and falls on his back-side.

ETHAN

What the hell?

She puts her hand out to help him up.

EMILY

You dropped your diary, princess.

Ethan gets to his feet without her help and retrieves his notebook.

ETHAN

It's not a diary.

He turns and continues walking, nervous. He takes a deep breath to calm his nerves--and perhaps willing her to turn back the other way. Emily follows.

Ethan looks over his shoulder and back again.

EMILY

Why're you so nervous?

ETHAN

Well, based on past experience--

EMILY

Don't be a bitch, Ethan.

Ethan continues on.

EMILY
Okay, look...

Emily struggles to apologize, it's not something she does.

EMILY
So, about poking you.

Ethan turns, causing Emily to stop short. She's close, and Ethan isn't used to being in close proximity to girls. He takes a few steps back.

ETHAN
(mumbles)
More like a stab.

He rubs his arm for effect, and Emily sighs, visibly stifling a sarcastic response.

EMILY
I'm failing English-lit. You're pretty smart, so...

There's an uncomfortable silence.

ETHAN
Are you asking for my help?

EMILY
Yeah... I just did.

Jimmy's gold Nova pulls up to the curb.

INT. JIMMY'S GOLD NOVA - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy rolls the window down and calls out to Ethan.

JIMMY
Having girl trouble, little man?

Ethan sighs. This is the last thing he needs right now. Jimmy reaches across the seat and pops open the passenger-side door.

JIMMY
Get in.

EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Ethan steps off the curb.

EMILY
Are you gonna help me?

Ethan turns.

ETHAN
Why would I do that?

Emily lets her guard down. She's resigned to failure.

EMILY
I don't know, Ethan... I won't stab
you anymore? I really don't have
anything to offer in return... I
just can't fail another class.

There's an underlying loneliness in her tone that Ethan can relate to. He's been there - he is there.

ETHAN
I'll think about it.

Ethan gets in the car.

INT. GOLD CHEVY NOVA - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy gives Emily a long hard stare and nudges Ethan with an elbow.

JIMMY
Nice.

EMILY
Gross.

Emily flips off Jimmy as he pulls away.

INT. GOLD CHEVY NOVA - DAY

Jimmy looks to Ethan.

JIMMY
Nice girlfriend you got there.

ETHAN
She's not my girlfriend.

JIMMY
Well, do you want her to be your
girlfriend?

Ethan stares out the window, silent.

JIMMY

I'm just saying, you might try losing the shirt and tie, throw on a band T-shirt. I know you're super smart, but it's like you wanna be alone. When I was your age--

Ethan reaches over and turns up the car stereo, drowning out his uncle. Jimmy turns it back down.

JIMMY

Hey, I'm just trying to look after you, you know?

ETHAN

If you don't want to pick me up from school just say so. I can take the bus home.

JIMMY

Oh, do you want to take the bus? Does your girlfriend--

ETHAN

No, I don't want to take the bus, that's not the point!

JIMMY

Oh... okay.

Jimmy's not getting it.

ETHAN

I'm tired of waiting around every day to see if you even show up. Half the time I end up walking home.

JIMMY

Well, a little exercise--

ETHAN

And you're always in a hurry to get away.

JIMMY

Yeah, well, I'm sorry about that, little dude. I've been working on some business deals lately and--

ETHAN

You don't have a job!

JIMMY
No... not at the moment...

The silence hangs between them as Jimmy turns into a driveway.

EXT. GRANDPA MYERS HOME - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy rolls to a stop and kills the engine.

INT. JIMMY'S GOLD NOVA - CONTINUOUS

Ethan unbuckles and slides out of the car, in a hurry to get away.

ETHAN
See-ya.

Ethan slams the door shut.

JIMMY
Hold on there, champ!

Ethan stops in his tracks.

ETHAN
What?

Jimmy unbuckles his seat belt.

JIMMY
I'm coming in.

ETHAN
Why?

JIMMY
I'm gonna stay for supper.

Ethan walks away, mumbling to himself.

ETHAN
Great.

INT. GRANDPA MYERS HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The furniture is well kept but dated. Ethan and Jimmy sit at the dinner table, eating in silence.

Grandpa Myers enters from the kitchen, carrying a glass of milk.

The last three years have not been kind to him. He's thin, with a scraggly beard and an unruly shock of grey hair. He now walks with a wooden cane.

Grandpa slides into his chair, joining in the awkward silence. Jimmy pushes the food around his plate.

JIMMY

So... this is nice.

GRANDPA

What's that?

JIMMY

This, dinner, together, you know?
We don't do this often enough.

GRANDPA

And who's fault is that?

JIMMY

Dad... c'mon.

With the tension and awkwardness intensifying, Ethan looks to escape.

ETHAN

Can I be excused?

GRANDPA

No, you may not.

Grandpa butters a piece of bread. He points the knife in Jimmy's direction in an accusatory manner.

GRANDPA

Ethan and I are here every night,
eating at this table. God only
knows where the hell you are, or
what you're doing... Used to be
this family ate together damn near
every night.

Ethan has heard enough. He grabs his plate and is gone.

GRANDPA

Ethan!

Ethan ignores Grandpa and turns into the hallway.

GRANDPA

Now, see what you've done?

JIMMY

How is that my fault?

Grandpa places the knife and bread on his plate.

GRANDPA

If you think that occasionally
picking the boy up from school is
enough--

JIMMY

Okay, okay. I really can't deal
with this right now. I'll never be
able to replace his father.

GRANDPA

And nobody said you could.

This stings. Jimmy tosses his napkin onto the table in
frustration.

JIMMY

Fine, I'll talk to him.

Jimmy's on the move.

HALLWAY

Jimmy walks down the hallway. He pauses in Ethan's doorway.

Ethan is at his desk reading, his back to the door. Jimmy
keeps moving and turns into the next doorway.

grandpa's room

Jimmy moves to a dresser and pulls out a small key. He gets
down on his hands and knees and pulls a metal strong-box out
from under the bed.

Inside the box are dozens of plastic sleeves with silver and
gold coins tucked inside.

Jimmy hastily grabs a few gold coins and shoves them into his
pocket. He replaces the box and key and is out the door.

HALLWAY

Jimmy slinks down the hall and peeks into the dining room.

The coast is clear. He carefully extracts his keys from the
coffee table and heads out the front door.

KITCHEN

Grandpa washes the dishes. The sound of the front door closing gives him pause. He listens--

The Nova's engine fires up and tires screech as the car peels away.

GRANDPA
Goddamned fool.

INT. GRANDPA MYERS HOME - LATER

Ethan sits on the couch watching TV with an open box of cereal in his lap. A door slams.

ETHAN
Shoot.

Ethan scrambles for the TV remote but it's nowhere to be found as Grandpa walks into the room, carrying the stuffed head of a possum. He looks to the TV and frowns.

GRANDPA MYERS
Son, if you got time to waste watching that machine, then you've got time to come help out in the shop.

Ethan stares back at him.

TV (V.O.)
"Resistance is futile."

INT. GRANDPA'S WORKSHOP - NIGHT

The workshop is a taxidermy Heaven, or Hell, depending on your point of view. For Ethan, it's the latter.

Grandpa works at his desk stuffing a bird's head as Ethan unenthusiastically sweeps the floor. He bumps into a shelving unit and knocks over a jar full of glass eyeballs. They spill out onto the floor--

GRANDPA MYERS
Goddamnit son, watch what you're doing!

ETHAN
Sorry...

Ethan gathers up the mess, but Grandpa shoos him out of the way.

GRANDPA MYERS

Just leave it to me, son... I don't know why all this is too much for you. When your daddy was a boy, he'd be out here helpin' me without even being asked. Weren't clumsy neither.

Grandpa sweeps up the last of the mess.

GRANDPA MYERS

Could have learned a thing or two from him is all I'm saying..

Grandpa immediately regrets the comment. He turns to find Ethan gone, door open and broom lying on the floor.

GRANDPA MYERS

Yer a Goddamned fool, Avril.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Jimmy's gold Nova pulls down the alley and stops in front of a row of separate garages. He presses a remote clipped to the visor and pulls into the garage as the door slides open.

INT. JIMMY'S NOVA - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy's parked, music blasting. He holds the coins in his hand, counting them. he's not happy with his take.

JIMMY

damn.

He turns the car off and the music dies with the engine.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS - NIGHT

Ethan pedals his bike through the neighborhood and turns down a deserted street, finally veering into an overgrown path and emerging in the parking lot of a long abandoned three-story warehouse.

The building is being devoured by the woods that surround it.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Ethan steps through a door and straps on a head-lamp, switching it on.

It's light cuts through the darkness. He steps around a pile of rubble on the ground, made from a large hole in the ceiling above.

Ethan sits next to a bank of dirty windows and pulls a notebooks out of his backpack. He begins writing.

From somewhere in the bowels of the warehouse the sound of aluminum cans clattering against cement floors echo through the building.

Ethan freezes, listening, and again a metallic clatter echoes through the warehouse. He pulls his head-lamp off and cautiously makes his way into the darkness.

SECOND FLOOR

Ethan steps out of the stairwell and peers into the darkness. A faint light is burning deeper in the ruins. He makes his way around the hole in the floor and steps over the lip of a partially collapsed wall.

INT. MURAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A large room lit by a battery powered camping light. A chalk mural covers most of one wall.

-A picture of a woman in a hospital bed, sickly, eyes closed. Her ghost is rising from her body as a beautiful, happy, healthy version of the woman with a pair of magnificent wings.

-Standing next to the bed, a man with no face stands next to a young girl, their hands close, but not touching.

In the center of the room a girl sits on the floor with her back to Ethan, surrounded by candy wrappers and empty soda cans.

Unsure of what to do, Ethan turns to slink away.

GIRL

Hey!

Ethan turns, startled - it's Emily.

EMILY
What the hell?! Are you following
me?

ETHAN
No, I--

Emily pushes him back against the wall, and he drops his notebook.

EMILY
Then what are you doing here?

ETHAN
I come here to be alone. I didn't
know anyone was here, honest.

Emily, still wary, takes a step back. Ethan picks up his notebook and brushes it off.

EMILY
What are you always writing in that
stupid book?

She snatches it out of his hand, and a photograph slips out.

ETHAN
Hey!

Emily picks up the photo. It's the picture of Ethan with his parents, his mother's arms wrapped around him.

EMILY
Yeah, I figured you for a mama's
boy.

Ethan snatches the picture out of her hand. He glances at the photo before tucking it into his shirt pocket.

EMILY
Shit... sorry.

There's an awkward moment. Ethan looks past her to the mural.

EMILY
What?

ETHAN
I don't know, nothing... it's good.

EMILY
So, I'm not a completer fuck-up.

ETHAN
I didn't say you were.

EMILY
I didn't say you did.

Ethan doesn't know how to respond.

EMILY
You better not tell anyone about
this.

ETHAN
Who would I tell?

Emily pushes the notebook into his chest.

EMILY
You should go.

Ethan hesitates, unsure.

EMILY
Just go home, Ethan.

He turns and disappears into the darkness.

EXT. LIQUOR WORLD - DAY

Jimmy's Nova is parked behind the store with the engine
running.

INT. GOLD CHEVY NOVA - DAY

Jimmy anxiously watches the side entrance of the store, a
plastic gun and black ski mask lying on the seat next to him.
He nervously taps on the steering wheel.

JIMMY
Stupid, stupid, stupid. This is so
fucking stupid.

He snorts a line of coke off a CD case and pulls the ski mask
down, over his face.

JIMMY
But, better than a bullet in the
head.

EXT. ROYALE LIQUOR STORE - DAY

Jimmy gets out of the car, fake gun in hand. He's halfway to the side-door when his cellphone rings.

Annoyed, he pulls the phone out and checks the caller ID - "caller unknown." He shoves it back into his pocket.

A few more steps and the phone rings again. He pulls his ski mask off in frustration and shoves the gun into his waistband. He answers.

JIMMY

What?

A young couple walks out of the liquor store, eyeing him suspiciously as they move to their car. Jimmy turns away.

JIMMY

Yeah, this is Jimmy... oh... wait, wait, wait, seriously?

Jimmy walks back to his car, pushing the ski mask into his back pocket.

JIMMY

Yes, I can do that... Okay.

He shoves the phone back in his pocket.

A black sedan pulls into the lot and nearly hits him as it turns into the parking space next to his.

Jimmy jumps back.

JIMMY

What the hell, asshole?!

JASPER HUTCHINS, a giant of a man, wearing a suit and tie, steps out of the sedan. Jasper stops and stares him down without a word, and Jimmy wilts like a flower.

JIMMY

Oh, wow-uh, my bad. Wasn't paying attention.

Jimmy backs up to his driver's side door.

JASPER HUTCHINS

Uh-huh.

Jasper heads to the liquor store.

JASPER HUTCHINS

Idiot.

Jimmy gets back in his car and starts the engine.

INT. LAMPTON PUBLISHING - DAY

Jimmy sit across from lampton and Jeanne in his office. It's cramped, and Jimmy is sweating.

Jeanne and Lampton share a concerned look at the state of their guest.

LAMPTON FINCH

So that advance is based on the condition that you sign a deal for the publishing rights, of course..

JIMMY

Yes... yeah, of course. And how soon could we get that advance in the works?

LAMPTON FINCH

Yes, as I was saying...

Lampton pushes a small stack of papers across the table to Jimmy. He pulls a pen out of his shirt pocket and places it on top of the pile.

LAMPTON FINCH

You'll need to meet the deadlines outlined in the contract, of course... page requirements, due dates, rewrites, and so on.

Jimmy skims through the top few pages as if it all makes perfect sense.

JIMMY

Of course, of course...

Jimmy flips to the last page and scribbles his signature.

JIMMY

To be honest with you, mister Finch, I'd just about given up on my dream... I mean, my god, the amount of rejection is just... well, you know, I mean... jesus, it's just...

LAMPTON FINCH

Yes, well, it's all very subjective
isn't it, this business? It is a
hard--

JIMMY

Shit, it's just, it's staggering,
it really sends you down a dark
fucking road, you know? I mean, I
used to be an engineer, but I
always dreamed of this,
this...creative life. My father,
well, he wanted me to get a degree
in something monetarily viable--as
he likes to put it, but it was my
brother who encouraged me...

Jimmy slaps the stack of papers and Lampton and Jeanne
flinch.

JIMMY

But, goddamnit, here we are...
signing up for a brighter tomorrow.

Jeanne let's out a nervous laugh.

JEANNE

A positive outlook is important.

Jimmy reaches over and lightly touches Jeanne's elbow.

JIMMY

Your laugh is very endearing... has
anyone ever told you that.

Jeanne blushes.

JEANNE

No, I don't believe I've heard that
before.

JIMMY

Well, that's a shame.

Lampton looks from Jeanne to Jimmy, a concerned look on his
face.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Ethan is walking home, shoulders slumped, head down and
studying the pavement in front of him.

Jimmy's gold Nova comes flying up the street behind him and skids to a stop next to the curb.

Ethan is startled, and annoyed. The passenger door swings open.

JIMMY
Hop in, Champ!

Ethan turns away and continues walking. Jimmy follows, the car inching after him.

JIMMY
Okay, I'm sorry I'm late but I have
a good excuse...

Ethan keeps walking.

JIMMY
C'mon, buddy, get in, I've got some
great news!

EXT. EMILY'S HOUSE - DUSK

Emily walks up the driveway of a small two-story house in a middle-class neighborhood.

INT. EMILY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Emily walks in and tosses her backpack onto a chair by the door. A light burns in the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

CAMILLA, 38, pretty, Emily's step-mother, is standing at the counter covering a plate of food with clear plastic wrap.

EMILY
Hey.

Camilla gestures towards the dining room table.

CAMILLA
I fixed you a plate.

EMILY
You cooked?

CAMILLA
I did.

Emily registers the two bottles of red wine on the counter, one empty, the other freshly opened.

EMILY
Where's my dad?

CAMILLA
Working... late.

Camilla turns to face Emily with a forced smile on her face.

EMILY
You'll get used to it.

Emily walks out of the kitchen.

INT. JIMMY'S NOVA - DUSK

Jimmy is all smiles, on the verge of manic. Ethan has himself plastered against the passenger door.

JIMMY
I mean, this is great news, right?
Your Uncle's a bona-fide writer.

ETHAN
You wrote a book?

JIMMY
Well, not technically, I wrote an
outline and the publishing company
is paying me to write the book.

Ethan looks skeptical.

ETHAN
Like, a real book?

JIMMY
Yes.

ETHAN
What's it about?

JIMMY
I can't really talk about it, you
know, now that I'm under contract.
But I'm a bona-fide writer now...
You know what bona-fide means,
right?

Ethan reaches for the dashboard and cranks up the radio.

Jimmy turns it back down.

JIMMY

Okay, yeah, of course you do.
Listen, little man, this is gonna
be great for us. I'm gonna-okay,
don't tell your Grandpa, cuz he'll
just make me pay back all the money
I've borrowed, but listen... We're
gonna open a joint account, you and
me, and I'll put money in it every
month and you can use it for
whatever, you know...

Ethan gives him a skeptical look.

JIMMY

Like comic books, and... uh... you
could take your girlfriend to the
movies....um...

Jimmy clearly knows nothing about his nephew's interests.

Ethan gives him a WTF look.

ETHAN

Jesus.

JIMMY

You can save for college... you
want to go to college, right?

ETHAN

Yeah.

Jimmy turns down a two-lane tree lines street.

JIMMY

There you go. You can save for your
future, and you can have a little
spending money... under One
condition though.

ETHAN

What?

JIMMY

You can't tell Grandpa about any of
this...

(mumbling)

He would definitely make me pay
back all the money I've borrowed.

Ethan's starting to warm up to the idea.

ETHAN

Okay.

JIMMY

Now that I don't have to stress about money we can spend more time together.

ETHAN

Cool.

JIMMY

Yeah, yeah, yeah, I've just got to work out a writing schedule and we'll definitely make plans... this is just, man, this is just gonna be great.

Jimmy turns down a wooded street and approaches a stop sign.

ETHAN

Hey... I'm just gonna get out here.

Jimmy stops at the stop sign.

JIMMY

What? There's nothing out here, you can't...

Ethan pops the door handle and is half way out of the car.

ETHAN

It's cool... I'm meeting a friend.

Jimmy scans the surroundings. The abandoned warehouse is just visible through the foliage.

JIMMY

Oh, hey, you shouldn't be hangin' around there. That place isn't safe.

ETHAN

It's fine.

JIMMY

Shit, your Grandpa used to skin my ass for hanging out there, of course we were drinking and having sss... hey, you're not-like...

Ethan starts backing away.

ETHAN

Oh god...

Ethan turns and walks away.

ETHAN

I'm just meeting with friends...
don't tell Grandpa!

Jimmy watches him disappear into the woods. When he's out of sight he pulls a baggie out of his pocket and pours a sizable pile of coke on the back of his hand.

JIMMY

No way that kid has friends... or
is having sex.

He snorts the line.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Ethan makes his through the dark, up to the second floor. He moves around the hole in the floor and stops.

There's no light coming from the mural room. He moves closer and peers through the doorway, but the room is empty.

Dejected, Ethan walks away.

EXT. MAIN STREET - MORNING

Ethan walks to school with his backpack slung over his shoulder.

He stares at his reflection in the shop windows as he passes and stops in front of DUPERS GENERAL STORE. He stares back at himself and straightens his tie.

The front door opens and MR. DUPERS, 85, a curmudgeon with beady eyes, stares disapprovingly at him from the doorway.

MR. DUPERS

What are you doing there?

ETHAN

I'm sorry, sir, I was just looking.

MR. DUPERS

Just looking-looking at what? You goddamn kids--

Emily appears out of nowhere. She grabs Ethan's arm and drags him away, giving Mr. Dupers the "finger."

EMILY

Look at this you crusty old bird!

Emily runs away, dragging Ethan after her.

MR. DUPERS

I'll call the police!

He watches them disappear around a corner.

MR. DUPERS

Goddamn kids.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - CONTINUOUS

Ethan pulls free of Emily's grasp and stops.

ETHAN

Why did you do that?

EMILY

Man, you've got to lighten up.

Emily reaches for his tie, but Ethan pulls back.

EMILY

Relax, I'm just gonna fix something.

She loosens his tie and unbuttons the top button of his shirt. Ethan fidgets, nervous about being in such close proximity to a female.

EMILY

There, you look more relaxed.

Emily takes a step back and looks him up and down. She grabs his shirt and tries to untuck it, but Ethan moves away.

ETHAN

What are you doing?!

EMILY

Wow, you're really uptight, dude.

An awkward silence. Ethan smooths out his rumpled shirt.

EMILY

So, you gonna help me, or what?

ETHAN

I'll do it, if you're really serious about this.

EMILY

Cool.

There's another awkward pause.

EMILY

Okay, well, I'm gonna work on my wall tonight.

Ethan isn't taking the hint.

EMILY

If you want to hang out?

ETHAN

Oh... Oh-okay.

Emily picks up her backpack and slings it over her shoulder. They walk together.

EMILY

If you wear that tie I'll fucking strangle you with it.

EXT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT - STAIRWELL - DAY

Donnie and Ricky stand in the shadows watching as Jimmy pulls up in his Nova and gets out of the car carrying a plastic grocery bag.

Jimmy walk up, strutting like a proud bird. He spots the Clomp brothers by his door.

JIMMY

Oh, hey there, gentlemen. Lovely day, isn't it?

His jovial attitude is not what they were expecting.

DONNIE

You know why we're here, right?

JIMMY

Of course. I'd invite you gentlemen in, but I can't afford to have any more of my things broken.

RICKY

Don't get smart, Jimmy, or it'll be your teeth that get broken next.

JIMMY

No need to get ugly.

Jimmy pulls a roll of cash from his pocket and counts out the appropriate amount of bills. He slaps them down into Donnie's open palm.

JIMMY

Paid in full. No need for a receipt gentlemen, if we can't trust each other then who can we trust?

RICKY

Wise-ass.

DONNIE

Where'd you get the cash, Jimmy?

Jimmy takes out his key and slides it into the lock.

JIMMY

Look, guys, I don't ask you about your business, and I'd appreciate the same professional courtesy if you don't mind.

Jimmy opens his door, ignoring the fact that it almost comes off its hinges, and walks inside, closing the door behind him. The deadbolt clicks into place.

Donnie and Ricky share a look.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Ethan sits on the floor-wearing only his white shirt-no tie, watching Emily draw on the wall. He writes a few lines in his notebook, then closes it.

ETHAN

That's your mom?

EMILY

Yeah.

ETHAN

When did she...

Emily turns to Ethan with a sigh.

ETHAN

Sorry.

Ethan studies his soda can. He wants to ask another question.

EMILY

What?

ETHAN

You live with your dad?

EMILY

Yeah. He has a new wife who tries too hard.

ETHAN

Is that good or bad?

EMILY

It's bad, Ethan.... If it was good I'd have said he has a new wife, she's great.

ETHAN

Okay... sorry.

EMILY

Stop fucking apologizing for everything. It's really annoying.

Emily's stinging comment hangs in the air.

EMILY

Okay... that was mean...

Ethan looks away, but they both laugh. Emily starts drawing.

EMILY

You live with your weird grandfather, right?

Ethan gives her a quizzical look.

EMILY

I hear people talking... kids are assholes. Could be worse though, you could be living with your creepy uncle.

ETHAN

He tries.

EMILY

Does he?

Ethan's phone alarm beeps. He looks at the time.

ETHAN

I should get going soon.

He gathers up his notebook that's lying on the floor next to him.

EMILY

What are you always writing in that notebook?

Ethan shrugs.

ETHAN

I don't know... stories mostly... poems, whatever comes to mind.

Emily sits across from him.

EMILY

Can I see?

Ethan hesitates. Before he can make a decision, Emily takes it from him and opens it to a random page.

She reads aloud--

EMILY

... "I faded in and out of consciousness, the seatbelt partially wrapped around my neck. Darkness pinched at the edges of my vision and I willed it to consume me. I could see the rain lightly patting the wet cement strewn with broken glass, and each drop seemed to be falling in slow motion. My own grating breath was deafening in my ears. I could see the back of my parents heads as they hung upside down in the front seat, but I didn't need to see their faces to know that..."

Emily looks up at Ethan.

EMILY

Jesus.

She turns to the last page Ethan was working on. At the top of the page is a crude drawing of Emily at work on her mural.

EMILY

"Spirit rises from her broken form,
renewed, joyous, fully aware of the
love left behind..."

Emily closes the notebook and sits with it for a beat.

She hands it back to Ethan.

ETHAN

I hope it's alright.

EMILY

It's nice... you're really good.

Emily picks up her chalk and goes back to her wall. With her
back to Ethan, she allows the tears to well up in her eyes.

TITLE CARD: ONE MONTH LATER

EXT. HIGH-SCHOOL - DAY

Ethan climbs into Jimmy's gold Nova and they pull away from
the curb. He rounds the corner fast, tires screeching.

INT. JIMMY'S NOVA - CONTINUOUS

Ethan throws Jimmy a "what the hell?" look.

JIMMY

Sorry, little man, I'm just in a
good mood. This money is
liberating.

Ethan staring out the window.

JIMMY

Hey, I've got an idea. Tomorrow,
after I pick you up from school,
what do you say you and I go
bowling? You still like bowling,
right?

Ethan looks his way but doesn't say anything, his guard is
up.

JIMMY

And after bowling we can go back to
my place and order a pizza, maybe
play some video games. What do you
think, little man?

ETHAN

Really?

JIMMY

Yeah, totally, just you and me.
I'll work it out with Gramps...
What do you say?

Ethan is reservedly excited.

ETHAN

Okay, cool.

JIMMY

Great, we're gonna have a blast!

Jimmy turns up the radio and hits the gas.

INT. OFFICES OF LAMPTON PRESS - DAY

Lampton sits at his desk, sleeves rolled, tie and collar loose. A half-eaten sandwich adding to the clutter.

He rummages through a drawer and pulls out a bottle of aspirin. There's a knock at the door and Jeanne steps into the office as he downs the pills with a diet soda.

JEANNE

Mr. Finch, are you feeling okay?

Lampton wipes a light sheen of sweat off his forehead.

LAMPTON FINCH

Yes, yes, I'm fine, dear.

JEANNE

You don't look good at all. You're working too hard.

Lampton is distracted.

LAMPTON FINCH

Jeanne, I'm worried.

JEANNE

Oh no, do you want me to phone doctor Preston?

Lampton waves the thought away.

LAMPTON FINCH

No, no, not that, I'm worried about Mister Myers.

(MORE)

LAMPTON FINCH (CONT'D)

He's turned in a total of ten very sub-par pages and—as you know, he's stopped returning my calls. It's very troublesome.

JEANNE

Hmm, do you think we should have a another meeting with him? Go over the schedule face to face and make sure he understands? I'd be happy to stop by his place on my way home tonight and get a verbal confirmation.

LAMPTON FINCH

I can't ask you to do that.

JEANNE

Nonsense, I don't mind at all, and it'll speed up the process.

LAMPTON FINCH

Well, thank you, Jeanne, I honestly don't know what I'd do without you.

Lampton begins to clean off his desk.

JEANNE

It's my pleasure.

LAMPTON FINCH

Why don't we close things up here and you can get a head start.

JEANNE

Okay, but tomorrow I'm making you an appointment with Doctor Preston.

LAMPTON FINCH

Very well, very well.

EXT. GRANDPA MYERS HOUSE - DUSK

Ethan and Emily stand on the sidewalk staring at the dark house. Emily is hesitant.

EMILY

You sure he's home?

ETHAN

He never goes anywhere.

EMILY

You sure he's okay with me coming over?

ETHAN

I left him a note, he knows.

EMILY

That doesn't mean he's okay with it.

ETHAN

C'mon.

Ethan heads to the door.

INT. GRANDPA MYERS HOME - CONTINUOUS

Ethan and Emily enter. They dump their backpacks on the floor and move through the dark house.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ethan flips the light switch.

ETHAN

I think he forgot about dinner.

A light is burning in Grandpa's workshop out back.

ETHAN

You might as well see this.

EMILY

Don't take this the wrong way, dude, but this is kinda the main reason I came over.

Ethan opens the back door for her.

INT. GRANDPA'S WORKSHOP - DUSK

Grandpa is working on a stuffed cat when Ethan and Emily enter. He doesn't look up from his work.

Emily checks out the bizarre workshop.

GRANDPA

You're late.

EMILY
It was my fault, sorry.

Grandpa looks up.

GRANDPA
Who the hell are you?

ETHAN
I told you I was bringing a friend
over to study.

EMILY
I'm Emily.

Grandpa doesn't respond, just eyes her suspiciously.

GRANDPA
She's a girl.

EMILY
Yeah, so?

Grandpa looks at Ethan over his glasses.

GRANDPA
Didn't think you knew any girls.
Thought maybe you were queer.

ETHAN
Grandpa.

EMILY
Hey, there's nothing wrong with
that.

GRANDPA
Why, you a queer too?

EMILY
No, and neither is Ethan. He's
always got his hand up my shirt.

ETHAN
What? Hey...

Emily slaps his arm. Grandpa gives Emily a look—bordering on respect. He turns to Ethan.

GRANDPA
I like her. She's got spirit.
Reminds me of your grandmother.

Grandpa gets up from his workbench.

GRANDPA
I'll order Chinese, and you kids
can get to...

Grandpa winks at Ethan.

GRANDPA
Studying.

He walks out the door.

ETHAN
God.

Emily is fascinated by the bizarre collection of stuffed creatures and shelves of unusual supplies.

EMILY
This place is awesome. Does he get
paid to do this?

ETHAN
I guess.

A framed photo on the wall catches her eye - Grandpa, much younger, standing in front of a warehouse wearing a uniform shirt. In the background, other employees mill about.

EMILY
Hey, isn't that the warehouse?

ETHAN
Yeah.

GRANDPA (O.S.)
Nineteen-seventy-nine.

Emily and Ethan nearly jump out of their skin.

EMILY
Shit!

GRANDPA
Closed their doors in nineteen-
seventy-nine. Friday, October
twenty-eighth. They handed all of
us an envelope and told us they
were shutting down. And it's not a
warehouse, it was a factory. We
made sneakers.

EMILY
Okay.

GRANDPA

Thirty-two years of service and
they hand me a God-damned envelope
with two-thousand dollars inside.

Emily looks to Ethan. She's not sure what to say, if
anything. Ethan shrugs.

EMILY

That sucks.

Grandpa realizes they're too young to "get it."

GRANDPA

Yeah, that sucks.

(Pause)

How do you know about the factory?

Ethan and Emily share nervous looks.

ETHAN

We don't, I mean...

GRANDPA

I don't want you goin' near that
place, you understand? It's falling
apart, should have been torn down
years ago.

ETHAN

Fine, I get it.

Grandpa stares them down.

GRANDPA

Come on, let's go wash up. Food'll
be here soon.

Grandpa walks out of the workshop. Emily turns to Ethan.

EMILY

(mouths)

Wow.

INT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jimmy's apartment has changed. One entire wall has been taken
over by a massive new TV, sound system and gaming consoles.
The couch is new, with a matching recliner.

Jimmy plays video games, high, surrounded by the usual
clutter of drug paraphernalia, as machine-gun fire and bomb
blasts rumble from the speakers.

There are two fat lines of coke laid out on the cover of a book titled "Unlocking Your Creativity Through Meditation."

Jimmy hits the pause button and snorts the two lines of cocaine.

He studies the books cover and tosses it aside.

JIMMY

It's all bullshit, this is the real pathway to awareness.

Jimmy begins cutting another line--

There's a knock at the door. Jimmy freezes. Another knock.

JEANNE (O.S.)

Hello? Jimmy?

He grabs a beer off the table and opens the door a crack to find Jeanne on the other side.

JIMMY

Hello, Miss Billsford.

JEANNE

Please, call me Jeanne.

JIMMY

Okay, Jeanne.

Awkward silence.

JEANNE

Yes, well, I just wanted to stop by and make sure everything was alright?

JIMMY

Yeah, everything's great, why wouldn't it be?

Jeanne tries to peek around him and see into the apartment.

JEANNE

Did I come at a bad time? If you have guests...

JIMMY

No, not at all. It's just a bit, well...

Jimmy awkwardly squeezes himself through the small opening and closes the door behind him.

JIMMY

I'd ask you in, but the place is a mess.

(shrugs)

Bachelor.

JEANNE

Okay... uh-what happened to your door?

JIMMY

Oh, yeah, that's uh...

Jimmy leans back against the door, and it makes a cracking sound. He moves away from it.

JIMMY

Yeah, I need to fix that.

Jimmy holds the beer out to her.

JIMMY

Would you like a beer?

JEANNE

Uh, no thank you.

JIMMY

It's Japanese.

JEANNE

What's Japanese?

JIMMY

The beer.

Jeanne stares into his eyes. He's clearly high.

JEANNE

Yes well, to get back on point and the reason I'm here. Mister Finch has left several messages and you've not responded. Your first deadline was met with a considerably short page count and you have completely missed the most recent deadline.

Jimmy takes a swig of beer, completely unaffected by the conversation.

JEANNE

I just wanted to come by and make sure you were on track, maybe you forgot about the last deadline?

JIMMY

You can't rush creativity, Jeanne. Trust me, the ideas are flowing, I just haven't got them all sorted... or down on paper yet. But rest assured, it's good... really good.

JEANNE

Do you have any pages ready?

JIMMY

Not in the physical sense. I've been using meditation and... other methods, of unlocking my deepest creative self.

JEANNE

Okay, well Mister Finch would very much like to have a meeting with you about the book. Could you make it into the office Friday afternoon?

JIMMY

Friday... yeah, I think that works for me.

JEANNE

I'm afraid I need a firm commitment, Mister Myers. This is very important.

JIMMY

Sure thing, doll. I'll be there Friday. You can count on me.

Jeanne's face sours at being called "doll."

JEANNE

Do you think you'll be able to get some of those ideas down on physical paper by Friday?

JIMMY

Of course. I'll make it a priority.

Jimmy sways and braces himself against the door jam.

JIMMY

You can count on me, Jeanne.

Jimmy shakes her hand and clocks part of a tattoo peeking out from under her sleeve. He gives her a sly smile, but she's all business.

JEANNE

Good night, Mister Myers.

As she turns to leave, Jimmy follows her with a leering stare.

JIMMY

Nice.

He steps back inside.

A BLACK SCREEN

Voices fade in and out, rolling like a wave. Muffled voices.

DONNIE (V.O.)

Jimmy... hey Jimmy.
C'mon Jimmy, get up!

INT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jimmy wakes on the couch with a start to find Donnie and Ricky standing over him. He leaps up, staggers, and drops back down.

JIMMY

Jesus! How did you get in here?

He peeks around them. The door's clearly been forced open again.

JIMMY

Oh, come on!

RICKY

Answer your door next time,
asshole.

He knows there's no sense in arguing with these guys.

JIMMY

What do you want?

RICKY

What the fuck do you think we want?

JIMMY

Whoah, I'm not due yet. It's the middle of the month.

DONNIE

Times are changing, Jimmy. Prices go up, new fees are added.

RICKY

It's commerce, asshole.

JIMMY

Price increase, fees? What are you talking about?

RICKY

Double.

JIMMY

Double? Double? That's... extortion! You're extorting me?

Donnie sits next to Jimmy.

DONNIE

Listen, Jimmy. The economy sucks, the cost of doing business and the cost of protecting our interests has gone up. It's inflation, man.

RICKY

Protection ain't cheap, you know.

JIMMY

I don't need protection!

DONNIE

I disagree, Jimmy. You've got yourself some nice new electronics, your monthly order has gone up, and you're spending money like it ain't never gonna run out.

RICKY

We know. We've been watching you.

JIMMY

What?... This, this is bullshit, Donnie. The way I make my money is none of your business.

DONNIE

You're absolutely right, Jimmy. As I said, we're here to keep you and our interests safe.

JIMMY

Are you messing with me?

RICKY

Not so full of yourself now, are you, Jimmy?

Ricky kneels down and snorts a line of coke.

JIMMY

Hey!

RICKY

What's it gonna be, Jimmy? You can pay us now, or I can start breaking stuff.

Jimmy's frustration level is peaking, he's on the verge of tears.

JIMMY

I've got no fucking choice is what you're saying.

DONNIE

You've always got a choice, Jimmy. It's just that one way involves hospital bills... You got health insurance, Jimmy?

Jimmy buries his head in his hands.

JIMMY

This is fucking extortion.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

The busses and kids are long gone. A janitor picks up trash in the yard.

Ethan stands at the curb with his bowling shoes tucked under his arm, utterly dejected. He checks his watch and has had enough.

He shoves the bowling shoes into his backpack and walks away.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Ethan walks with his phone to his ear, a sour look on his face. He turns into a convenience store parking lot.

JIMMY (V.O.)
Hey, you've reached Jimmy's
phone... I'm probably too busy
writing to answer your call so--

Ethan hangs up and shoves the phone into his pocket.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

Ethan stands at the register with a bag of chips and some red vines.

The STORE CLERK, a skinny, tattooed teenager, rings up his purchases. Ethan hands him his debit card, and the clerk swipes it across the reader, then slaps the card down on the counter.

STORE CLERK
No good, kid.

ETHAN
What do you mean?

STORE CLERK
I mean, your card ain't good... you
know, declined.

ETHAN
That can't be. Can you try it
again?

STORE CLERK
Look kid, I can run it a hundred
times and it's gonna tell me the
same thing. I see this shit all the
time. Now, you got another way to
pay for this stuff?

Ethan digs through his empty pockets.

ETHAN
There's no way... there's money.

He snatches the card off the counter and runs out of the store.

EXT. OFFICES OF LAMPTON PRESS - DAY

Jimmy's gold Nova pulls up, radio blasting.

INT. LAMPTON PRESS - OFFICE - DAY

Jeanne works at her desk. She looks up to find Jimmy standing over her. He's high, agitated and looks like hell.

JEANNE

Oh gosh, you startled me!

JIMMY

Sorry, sweetheart. Didn't mean to put you out.

JEANNE

Oh... Please don't call me that.

His face darkens.

JIMMY

Jesus, excuse me, it's a complement, you know? I mean, everyone's so goddamn uptight these days.

JEANNE

Mister Myers, I'm not speaking to society as a whole, I simply don't find it a compliment to be referred to as sweetheart or doll, as you've done on several occasions.

JIMMY

Wow, I didn't think you were so rigid, I mean, I've seen the tattoo you try so hard to keep hidden, I thought...

JEANNE

Rigid! Mister Myers, we barely know each other. I'll thank you to keep your nose--

Lampton's door swings open and he pokes his head out into the office.

LAMPTON FINCH

Jimmy! Perfect, perfect. Come on in and grab a seat.

He can see the tension between them.

LAMPTON FINCH
Everything okay out here?

Jimmy stares back at Jeanne, then switches on the charm.

JIMMY
Everything's great.

Jimmy blows past her desk and follows Lampton into the office as Jeanne gathers some papers and steps in after them, silently fuming.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy nervously drums his fingers on the table top.

LAMPTON FINCH
So, Jeanne tells me that you were going to bring some pages with you... but you appear to have come empty handed.

JIMMY
Yes, well it's a process.

JEANNE
You promised me you would have something.

JIMMY
And that process takes time. But rest assured Mister Finch...

Jimmy taps the side of his head, ignoring Jeanne and her comment.

JIMMY
While the ideas are furiously swirling around in my grey matter, it's only a matter of time before they're ready to be put down on paper... figuratively speaking. I recently purchased a laptop, so...

Lampton and Jeanne share a concerned look.

LAMPTON FINCH
So you're saying you've written nothing in more than two months?

JIMMY
That's what I'm saying... but also, not to worry... trust the process.

LAMPTON FINCH

Jimmy, I'd like to remind you that we have a contract.

JIMMY

Yeah, that reminds me... can you and I talk a little business?

JEANNE

I thought that's what we were doing?

Jimmy turns to Jeanne.

JIMMY

Jeanne, I was wondering if I could talk to Lampton about something in private... If you don't mind?

Jeanne stands abruptly.

JEANNE

Fine.

Jeanne gathers up her papers, steaming, trying not to show it.

JEANNE

I have work to do.

She slams the door behind her.

JIMMNY

Women, right?

Lampton bristles.

LAMPTON FINCH

Jimmy, that girl is like a daughter to me...

JIMMNY

Yeah, yeah, she's great. Listen... I was wondering if I could get an advance on the next payment? I'm seriously strapped right now.

Lampton is losing his patience.

LAMPTON FINCH

Mister Myers, we have laid out a very specific payment plan based on your participation and performance in this business venture--and that's exactly what this is. A business venture. I'd appreciate it if you'd treat it as such.

JIMMNY

I wouldn't have it any other way.

LAMPTON FINCH

And I am not a bank. Based on your participation so far, I'd say that you have quite a bit of work to do before we can talk about money again.

Jimmy stares back at him, a blank stare.

LAMPTON FINCH

I'm saying no.

JIMMY

Look, I'm under a lot of pressure, you know? Bills. Taking care of my nephew, who's the most important person in my life...

Jimmy's phone buzzes. He pulls it out of his pocket and checks the screen-- "Ethan"

He hits decline and places it on the table.

JIMMY

Did I tell you I'm going to pay for his college?

LAMPTON FINCH

That's very commendable of you.

JIMMY

And it's expensive. He wants to be a writer too... So?

LAMPTON FINCH

I'm sorry, it's still no. Once you've turned in the required page count we can revisit this. Until then, I'm afraid I'll have to suspend any further payments.

Jimmy is agitated, sweaty. He pulls at the collar of his t-shirt.

JIMMY

Okay, well, maybe I can't turn in any pages until I'm able to relieve myself of the financial burdens that are keeping me from concentrating on my creative work. I have my own business to take care of, which you clearly don't care about, and now I'll have to do twice the work just to get caught up...

LAMPTON FINCH

And who's fault is that? Certainly not mine.

Lampton is in distress. He wipes his forehead with a handkerchief, and pours himself some water.

JIMMY

I just feel like I have to be compensated for the extra work, if I'm gonna make these deadlines... in fact, I insist.

LAMPTON FINCH

Are you attempting to strong-arm me, Mister Myers?

JIMMY

Did I say that?

LAMPTON FINCH

You've implied it.

Lampton downs half the glass of water.

Jimmy's phone buzzes again and Ethan's name appears on the screen. He shoves the phone in his pocket.

JIMMY

Call it what you want, but time is money. I call it good business. I think a five-thousand-dollar advance should cover me.

LAMPTON FINCH

Five Thou-absolutely not! This conversation is over Mister Myers!

(MORE)

LAMPTON FINCH (CONT'D)

And might I remind you that you signed a legal contract stating that you must pay back any advances you've received if you fail to meet the requirements of that contract.

Jimmy bolts upright, knocking his chair over.

JIMMY

You don't understand--

The door flies open and Jeanne appears in the doorway.

JEANNE

What's going on? Is everything okay Mister Finch?

Jimmy smolders.

JIMMY

Yeah, everything's great!

Jimmy turns and storms out of the office, forcing Jeanne to move out of the way.

Lampton struggles to breath, dabbing his forehead with a handkerchief.

LAMPTON FINCH

That was most unpleasant.

EXT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Ethan runs through the parking lot and up the stairs.

He hesitates, scrutinizing Jimmy's damaged door. Muffled voices are coming from within. He pushes the door open and steps inside to find--

Donnie and Ricky are loading Jimmy's drugs and paraphernalia into a duffle bag.

Ricky pulls out his gun, but Donnie waves him away.

DONNIE

Jesus, it's just a kid, relax.

Ethan is frozen in place.

DONNIE

What's up kid?

RICKY
You looking for some weed?

Ricky moves around Ethan, blocking his exit.

ETHAN
Weed? No, What's going on?

DONNIE
If you're not trying to score, then
what are you doing here?

ETHAN
He's my uncle.

Donnie's face lights up.

DONNIE
You hear that, Ricky? We got
Jimmy's nephew here.

Ethan is confused.

RICKY
Your uncle's a dealer, kid, and he
owes us money.

Donnie puts a hand on Ethan's shoulder.

DONNIE
What's your name, kid?

ETHAN
Ethan.

DONNIE
Well, Ethan, when's the last time
you talked to your uncle?

ETHAN
Few days ago.

DONNIE
Alright, don't move, kid.

Ricky pulls Donnie closer to the door and they converse in hushed tones.

RICKY
So, you think we should hold on to
the kid, till Jimmy pays up?

DONNIE

No. I don't want to drag this fucking kid around for days. Are you crazy?

RICKY

You want me to get rid of him? I could snap his neck, throw him down the stairs... make it look like an accident.

DONNIE

Jesus, we're not gonna kill a kid. You know, when you say shit like that it makes me seriously question your mental state.

Ricky's feelings are hurt.

RICKY

Alright, fine. What then?

Donnie peels off, and moves in close to Ethan.

DONNIE

Give me your phone, kid.

ETHAN

Why?

Donnie takes a step closer.

ETHAN

Okay, okay.

Donnie snatches the phone out of his hand and adds his name and number to the contacts.

DONNIE

My name is Donnie, and this here is my brother, Ricky. Now, I'm gonna need you to do me a favor. The minute you see or hear from your uncle, I want you to call me at the number I put in your phone. You don't tell Jimmy, you just call me and tell me where he is. You do that for me, and I promise you we won't hurt him. We just want the money he owes us.

Donnie hands the phone back to Ethan.

DONNIE

Think you can do that for me,
Ethan? Otherwise, I can't guarantee
Jimmy's safety... or yours. What do
you say, kid?

Before he can answer, Donnie punches Ethan in the stomach and
he crumbles to the ground, gasping.

DONNIE

I need you to understand just how
serious I am about this.

Donnie extends his hand, offering to help him up.

DONNIE

Now, do we have a deal?

ETHAN

(weakly)
Deal.

Ethan ignores Donnie's outstretched hand. He gets back on his
feet and Donnie punches him in the face. Ethan hits the
ground hard, blood seeping from a cut on his cheek.

DONNIE

Now get the fuck out of here.

Ethan scrambles to his feet and runs out the door holding his
face.

DONNIE

Let's finish up here.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

An old man washes his hands at the sink. Jimmy steps out of a
stall, wiping at his nose. He tucks a small bag of coke into
his pocket and stares down the old man.

JIMMY

What?

The old man nervously goes back to drying his hands. Jimmy
walks out the door.

INT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

And old fashioned diner.

Jimmy returns to a seat at the counter, where he already has a plate of food waiting. The waitress steps up to fill his coffee cup.

Jimmy rests his head in his hands. He's agitated, high. He starts pulling at his hair and moaning, drawing attention from those around him. Without warning, he slams his fists down on the countertop.

JIMMY

Dammit!

Plates bounce into the air, his coffee cup spills its contents, and everyone in the Diner is startled. Jimmy slides off his stool--

A customer at the far end of the counter gets to his feet - Jasper Hutchins.

JIMMY

(to the room)

Sorry, sorry, I apologize.
Everything's fine.

Jimmy pulls out some crumpled bills and throws them on the counter as Jasper walks towards him.

JIMMY

Just a momentary lapse on my part.

Jimmy backs away, continuing to apologize.

JIMMY

Again, very sorry...

A few more steps and he blots out the door.

EXT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

Jasper steps out of the front door, but there's no sign of Jimmy.

INT. GOLD CHEVY NOVA - DAY

Jimmy drives past his apartment building and pulls into the alley behind the complex. He pulls into his garage.

GARAGE

A rope hangs from the door to his storage space above. He stares at it, transfixed - a plan is formulating.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Emily steps through the opening in the wall and turns on her lantern. She faces her mural.

ETHAN (O.S.)

Hey.

Emily jumps, startled. Ethan is sitting on the ground.

EMILY

Jesus Christ! You scared the shit
outta me!

(pause)

What the hell happened to your
face?

Emily moves to Ethan's side. He turns his head, embarrassed.

EMILY

Ethan, look at me.

He turns back to her, revealing a black-and-blue eye and a raw cut on his cheek.

EMILY

What the fuck, dude?

EXT. LAMPTON PRESS - NIGHT

Lampton steps out of a side door into the parking lot.

INT. GOLD CHEVY NOVA - NIGHT

Jimmy watches Lampton drive away. He pours a ragged line of coke into the palm of his hand and inhales it with a dollar bill. He pulls out his cellphone.

INT. LAMPTON PRESS - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jeanne steps out of the office and locks the door. Her cellphone rings - "Jimmy Myers."

With a sigh, she answers, her voice flat, void of emotion.

INTERCUT BETWEEN JEANNE AND JIMMY.

JEANNE

Hello.

JIMMY

Jeanne, I'm glad I reached you...
I wanted to apologize for my
behavior earlier.

JEANNE

I don't think it's me you need to
apologize to.

STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Jeanne walks down the stairs.

JIMMY (V.O.)

I've already talked to Lampton and
we're all good, but I feel like I
need to make it up to you as well.

JEANNE

You talked to Mr. Finch?

JIMMY (V.O.)

Yeah, I just got off the phone with
him.

PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Jeanne steps out of the side door and into the parking lot.

JEANNE

How exactly did you speak with him?
Mr. Finch doesn't own a cellphone.

Jeanne reaches her car and pulls out her keys.

JIMMY (V.O.)

Do you think you could meet me for
a cup of coffee... so we could
talk?

Jeanne scans the parking lot. She spots Jimmy's car across
the street.

She fumbles with her keys and jams them into the lock,
catching her finger underneath the key--

She pulls her hand back and drops the keys as she brings the
finger to her mouth.

JEANNE

Damn.

She turns to pick up the keys to find Jimmy behind her.

JEANNE

Oh my God! What are you doing here?

JIMMY

Is there any chance you would have met me for coffee?

JEANNE

Look, Jimmy--

JIMMY

I didn't think so.

Jimmy pulls his shirt up to reveal the (fake) gun tucked into his waistband.

JIMMY

I don't feel like talking anymore.
Let's take a drive.

Jimmy grabs her arm and steers her away from her car.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Emily sits next to Ethan, who holds a can of soda against his swollen eye.

EMILY

So, these shit-heads want your uncle bad enough to beat up a kid?

ETHAN

He cleaned out our bank account... that was my college money.

EMILY

Well, your uncle's a douche-bag.

ETHAN

I should call the police.

EMILY

No. No police. He may be a fuck-up but do you really want to get your uncle arrested, or shot?

Ethan's phone rings. The caller ID says - "Gramps."

ETHAN

It's my grandpa. I'm late for dinner... I've gotta go.

Emily puts a hand on Ethan's arm.

EMILY

Okay, meet me at the park on
Crestwood at midnight. You can
sneak out of your house, can't you?

ETHAN

I guess, why?

EMILY

Because we're gonna find your
Uncle.

INT. GOLD NOVA - NIGHT

Jimmy drives, frantic.

JEANNE

Jimmy, pull over and let me out,
please. We'll forget this ever
happened. It's not too late.

Jimmy is frazzled. His eyes dart between the street, rearview
mirror, and Jeanne.

JIMMY

Please stop talking. I'm gonna lose
my shit. You have no idea how thin
I'm stretched.

They pull up to a traffic light and Jeanne's hand creeps up
towards the door handle.

JIMMY

Please don't make me do something
I'll regret.

Jeanne pulls her hand down.

JIMMY

Put your seatbelt on.

She does as she's told.

JEANNE

You're making a mistake, Jimmy. A
life-changing mistake.

Jimmy's cellphone rings. He fishes it out of his pocket and
looks at the caller ID - "Ethan." He shoves it back into his
pocket.

JIMMY

Lampton's the one who made a mistake. I wasn't asking for anything we hadn't already agreed on.

JEANNE

Jimmy, you've already been paid a good deal of money and you've done none of the work. What about Ethan?

His cellphone rings again. He pulls it out - "Ethan." In frustration, he tosses the phone into the back seat.

JIMMY

I spent his money too.

JEANNE

Jimmy! How could you?

JIMMY

I'm in serious fucking trouble here, that's how!

Jeanne withdraws at Jimmy's outburst.

JIMMY

Tomorrow we're going to the bank, and you'll get me that advance. Then I can make things right.

JEANNE

Jimmy, I don't have access to that money. Only Lampton can make a withdrawal from that account. He set it up that way on purpose... And he has the bank book.

JIMMY

You're lying!

JEANNE

I'm not.

JIMMY

Shit, shit, shit!

Jimmy hits the gas and skids around a corner.

INT. ETHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ethan lies in bed staring at the ceiling. The clock on his nightstand glows "11:30PM." A knock on the window startles him.

He pulls the curtains back to reveal, Emily. Her face inches from the glass, startling Ethan again.

ETHAN

Ah!

Emily laughs from the other side.

EMILY

Oh god, your face.

Ethan pushes the window open.

EMILY

It's almost midnight.

ETHAN

I thought we were gonna meet at the park?

Ethan grabs his backpack and climbs out the window.

EXT. GRANDPA MYERS HOME - CONTINUOUS

EMILY

I didn't think you'd show up.

Ethan's wearing jeans, a hooded sweatshirt and a beanie.

ETHAN

You have trust issues.

EMILY

Shut up.

They start to creep away.

ETHAN

I brought sandwiches, in case we get hungry.

EMILY

Okay Martha Stewart.

(pause)

You look good... like a normal kid, not a car salesman.

ETHAN

Shut up.

Ethan's starting to loosen up.

As they slink through the shadows and head down the street.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A black SUV pulls up with it's lights off and parks across from Grandpa Myers home.

INT. JIMMY'S GARAGE - NIGHT

Jimmy pulls the cord on the attic door. The panel opens and the stairs drop down.

JEANNE

Jimmy, what are you doing?

JIMMY

Well, I can't take you to my apartment, I've got people looking for me. I'll talk to Lampton in the morning, and we'll get this all worked out.

Jeanne stares back at Jimmy.

JEANNE

Jimmy.

JIMMY

(pointing)
Up.

JEANNE

Seriously?

Jimmy stares back at her, and Jeanne reluctantly climbs.

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Jeanne is horrified. An old sleeping bag is rolled out next to a ratty lamp and a small refrigerator.

JEANNE

This is disgusting... You can't be serious.

JIMMY
It's not that bad.

JEANNE
Jimmy, this is kidnapping. You understand that, right? You're going to go to jail.

JIMMY
You can't kidnap your friends.

JEANNE
We're not friends.

JIMMY
Hurtful, but you don't understand.

Jimmy sits on the floor.

JIMMY
I'm in trouble, and I need money to make it go away. A lot of money.

JEANNE
And you think committing a felony is the answer?

Jeanne pulls off her jacket and places it on the floor. She sits on top of it. Jimmy buries his head in his hands.

JIMMY
God, everything's such a mess.

JEANNE
It's not too late to make things right. Take me back to my car right now, and I'll talk to Mister Finch with you.

JIMMY
You'd do that?

Jimmy scoots closer to Jeanne.

JIMMY
I knew there was something...

He leans closer, too close, and puts his hand on hers. Jeanne pulls her hand away.

JEANNE
What are you doing?

JIMMY

What?

JEANNE

Are you hitting on me?

JIMMY

Under different circumstances, I think you and I--

Jeanne slaps him in the face. Jimmy let's out a yelp and falls back.

JIMMY

What the hell?!

JEANNE

You kidnap me, and then you hit on me? What is wrong with you?!

Jimmy stands.

JIMMY

I thought you liked me!

JEANNE

Can you not even grasp the scope of your actions?

He has no answer, frustration mounting, he turns on his heels and starts to head back down the ladder.

JIMMY

I'll be downstairs. Please don't try to escape or I'll have to lock you in the trunk of my car.

He's gone with a slam of the trap door.

INT. GRANDPA MYERS HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Grandpa shuffles across the room in his PJ's and slippers. He pulls the garbage bag from the can and ties it off.

GRANDPA

I've got to do every god-damned thing around here.

EXT. GRANDPA MYERS HOME - CONTINUOUS

Ricky and Donnie climb out of the SUV. Ricky slams the car door shut.

Donnie bristles at the noise.

DONNIE
 Seriously?

INT. GRANDPA MYERS HOME - CONTINUOUS

Grandpa puts the garbage bag down and moves to the front window. He peeks through the curtains.

EXT. GRANDPA MYERS HOME - CONTINUOUS

Ricky and Donnie slink across the street, guns drawn.

Donnie
 You sure this is the right address?

RICKY
 That's what my phone says.

They move to the side of the house.

DONNIE
 Christ, If you fucked this up...

A noise causes them to stop.

Grandpa is behind them. He smashes his cane down on Donnie's wrist and the gun flies out of his hand, then slams the cane into the side of Ricky's head.

With a grace that defies his age, Grandpa drops his cane and grabs Ricky's wrist. He twists the gun out of his hand and turns it on the brothers.

Donnie is on one knee whimpering. Ricky rubs a growing welt on the side of his head.

RICKY
 Okay, just relax old man, nobody has to get hurt here.

GRANDPA
 You two clowns are the only ones getting hurt. You picked the wrong house to rob, you morons. I was a goddamn Marine.

DONNIE
 Man, I think you broke my wrist, old man!

GRANDPA

Suck it up, you pansy. You can cry to the police.

RICKY

We didn't come here to rob you, we're looking for Jimmy.

GRANDPA

Bull-shit! You wouldn't have come here with your dicks out if you weren't up to something. Now, I'm gonna call the police. If you make a move, I will not hesitate to--

Grandpa takes a step back. His foot lands on the cane and he falls backwards, hitting the ground hard.

Ricky grabs Donnie and drags him to his feet. They make a run for it.

Grandpa shoots from his prone position.

Ricky is hit in the calf and he nearly topples, but manages to right himself.

They run to the SUV and climb in. Two more shots hit the vehicle as they speed away.

GRANDPA

(to himself)
God-damned fool.

Grandpa retrieves his cane and pulls himself to his feet.

EXT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ethan and Emily hide in a row of bushes at the edge of the parking lot, with a clear view of Jimmy's stairwell.

ETHAN

So, what do we do now?

EMILY

We wait.

ETHAN

This doesn't seem like much of a plan.

EMILY

What do you mean? We Wait, he shows up, we grab him. Simple. That's the plan.

Off Ethan's skeptical look--

EXT. DRUGSTORE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Donnie and Ricky's SUV is parked behind the building.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Both men huddle in the back seat. Donnie's wrist is wrapped in a bandage and Ricky is applying a salve to his bullet wound; his leg and sock are soaked in blood. He hands his brother the roll of gauze.

RICKY

Here, wrap my leg up.

DONNIE

Hey man, I've got one hand here. Seriously, I think it's broken.

RICKY

I was shot!

Ricky snatches a roll of gauze from his hand.

DONNIE

Fine, you big baby! It's not even a gunshot, it's a flesh wound.

RICKY

It was made by a bullet!

Ricky starts wrapping.

DONNIE

I can't believe you let that old man snatch the gun out of your hand.

RICKY

Screw you, man! He knocked the gun out of your hand too!

DONNIE

Yeah, but he had the element of surprise. You've got no excuse.

RICKY
Shut the fuck up.

DONNIE
Guy's got to be in his eighties.

Ricky tapes off the end of the bandage.

DONNIE
Alright, let's go.

RICKY
Where we going?

DONNIE
To get new guns.

Ricky climbs into the front seat.

EXT. LAMPTON PUBLISHING - PARKING LOT - MORNING

Lampton stands next to Jeanne's car with her keys in his hand. He inspects a drop of blood on the door, just above the lock.

He uses the sleeve of his jacket to pull on the open car door and look inside, but nothing seems to be amiss.

He puts the door back in the position he found it and hurries into the building.

INT. LAMPTON PUBLISHING - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Lampton pulls on the door handle to his office, but it's locked. He uses Jeanne's keys to open it.

LAMPTON FINCH
Jeanne?

He stands in the empty office. Something's wrong. He picks up the phone.

INT. JIMMY'S GARAGE - ATTIC - MORNING

Jeanne is asleep, curled up on the sleeping bag. She's awakened by the sound of the garage door. Half asleep, she pulls something from her hair - a potato chip. She throws it away in disgust.

The lock rattles and the attic door drops down. Jimmy's head pops up from below. He places a grease-stained bag and cup of coffee on the floor.

He looks like he's been run through a cement mixer.

JIMMY

Morning. I got you some breakfast.

JEANNE

Go to hell, Jimmy.

He stares at her for a beat, dejected, then disappears down below. The attic door slams shut.

JEANNE

Idiot.

INT. LAMPTON PRESS - MORNING

Lampton is rummaging through Jeanne's desk when there's a knock at the door. He opens it to find Jasper Hutchins.

JASPER HUTCHINS

Lampton Finch?

LAMPTON FINCH

Yes.

JASPER HUTCHINS

May I come in?

EXT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT - LATE MORNING

Ethan and Emily are huddled in the bushes, wrapped in blankets, both asleep.

Ethan's eyes snap open. He looks around, disorientated, then gets his bearings.

ETHAN

Shit!

Emily stirs.

EMILY

What... what happened?

ETHAN

We fell asleep... If my grandfather finds out I've been out all night, I'm gonna be grounded till I'm eighteen.

EMILY

Is that all?

INT. LAMPTON PRESS - LATE MORNING

Lampton sits at his desk, nervously drumming his fingers. From the outer office the door knob rattles, then comes the sound of the door opening and closing.

Lampton jumps to his feet.

LAMPTON FINCH

Jeanne?

Jimmy appears in the doorway.

LAMPTON FINCH

Jimmy, good lord, what have you done?

Jimmy steps into the room.

JIMMY

I haven't done anything.

LAMPTON FINCH

This is not going to end well for you, Jimmy. I've phoned the police.

JIMMY

Why would you do that? This is business... our business!

Lampton walks around the desk to stand in front of Jimmy.

LAMPTON FINCH

This is not business! If you've done anything to harm that girl... she's like a daughter to me.

JIMMY

I told you--

LAMPTON FINCH

If you've hurt her...

Lampton steps closer, but Jimmy pushes him away.

JIMMY

This is all your fault! If you'd
have just been reasonable...

Lampton clutches his chest and stumbles back into his desk.

JIMMY

What are you doing?

Lampton's eyes plead for help as he sinks to his knees.

JIMMY

Stop fucking around-if this...

Lampton falls to the ground clutching his chest.

JIMMY

Oh god.

Jimmy rushes out the door in a panic.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy closes the door behind him, then stops. Some small
thread of morality still tugs at his conscious.

JIMMY

Dammit.

He steps back into the office.

OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy grabs a phone off the desk and dials.

9-1-1 OPERATOR (V.O.)

Nine-one-one, what's your
emergency?

JIMMY

Yeah-I-uh--I need an ambulance at
the Lampton Press office on Chester
avenue... 3rd floor, there's
been... I think-I think he's having
a heart attack.

9-1-1 OPERATOR (V.O.)

Okay sir, who's having a heart--

Jimmy slams the phone down. He makes a bee-line for the door
but hesitates with his hand on the doorknob.

Jimmy sidesteps Lampton on the floor.

LAMPTON FINCH
Jimmy... please...

He rummages through his desk. In the top drawer he finds a bankbook. He opens it to find Lampton and Jeanne's names are both listed on the account.

JIMMY
Son of a bitch.

Jimmy runs out of the office to the sound of a siren growing louder.

EXT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT - BACK ALLEY - DAY

Jimmy pulls into the alley and parks in front of his garage door. He scales a low cinder-block wall that separates the alley and apartment building.

He climbs up his neighbor's balcony railing and pulls himself up to the ledge above him.

INT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy stands on his balcony. He slides the glass door open and steps inside. He freezes.

The stereo and gaming system are gone. His television has been ripped off the wall; only a tangle of wires remain.

JIMMY
Oh, come on.

The coffee table has been cleaned off; his drugs and paraphernalia gone.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
No, no, no...

He runs to the refrigerator and pulls the freezer door open. Empty.

EXT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ethan and Emily are still huddled in the bushes.

ETHAN
I can't take this anymore.

EMILY

Screw it, let's take a look around.

Ethan gets up, but Emily grabs his arm and pulls him back as a dark sedan pulls into the parking lot.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Hold on.

The car parks and Jasper Hutchins steps out.

EMILY (CONT'D)

What the hell?

INT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jimmy grabs a vase filled with artificial flowers. He tosses the flowers aside and smashes the vessel against the wall. Lying in the shards of pottery are two baggies of cocaine.

There's a knock at the door--

Jimmy rushes to the door and looks through the peephole.

JIMMY

What the hell?

Jimmy grabs the baggies and shoves them under the couch cushions. He takes a deep breath to calm himself and opens the door.

JASPER HUTCHINS

Oh, brother.

Jimmy plays dumb.

JIMMY

Sorry, have we met?

JASPER HUTCHINS

I'm detective Hutchins. You're, Jimmy Myers?

JIMMY

Uh, yeah... I'm trying to place you.

Jasper eyes him up and down.

JASPER HUTCHINS

Royale liquors parking lot. The dinner.

JIMMY

The dinner, yeah that was...

JASPER HUTCHINS

Quite a scene.

JIMMY

Oh, is that why you're here?

JASPER HUTCHINS

No. May I come in? I'd like to ask you a few questions about Jeanne Billsford.

Reluctantly, he let's the Detective in.

JIMMY

Okay.

INT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jasper looks around the room as Jimmy pulls two bottles of water out of the fridge and offers him one, which he waves off.

JIMMY

What's this about Jeanne?

JASPER HUTCHINS

When was the last time you saw Miss Billsford?

JIMMY

Huh... I think it was a couple of days ago. At my publisher's office.

JASPER HUTCHINS

Mr. Finch said you had a meeting yesterday afternoon.

JIMMY

Oh, wow, was it yesterday? Man, you know, sometimes the days just run one into the other. You lose track of time, you know? Does that ever happen to you?

Jasper studies Jimmy for a beat.

JASPER HUTCHINS

Are you high, Mister Myers?

JIMMY

What? No, no, absolutely not.

Jasper scowls.

JASPER HUTCHINS

So... Mister Finch said that you two had a rather unpleasant exchange.

JIMMY

(nervous laughter)

Yeah, you know... artists and business. Like oil and water.

JASPER HUTCHINS

Uh-huh.

JIMMY

Really... It was nothing.

JASPER HUTCHINS

He also said there was a heated conversation between you and Miss Billsford.

JIMMY

Heated? No. I, I think we were having a conversation about literature. Heated, no, passionate, yes.

Jasper eyes Jimmy. He's not buying his story.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

What's this all about, Detective?

JASPER HUTCHINS

Miss Billsford was reported missing under suspicious circumstances.

JIMMY

Oh no. That's terrible. She's a lovely woman... What do you mean, suspicious circumstances?

JASPER HUTCHINS

Where were you last night, Mr. Myers? Say, around ten or eleven o'clock?

Jimmy scratches his head.

JIMMY

I was here... working on my book.
Gotta pay the bills, you know?

Jasper eyes the tangle of wires sticking out of the wall, the broken TV mount, and the pottery shards on the floor.

JASPER HUTCHINS

Mister Myers, were you robbed?

JIMMY

No, no. I just sold some stuff to a friend... out with the old, in with the new, right? Trying to decide between Xbox or PS5...

Jasper's cellphone rings. He pulls it out and looks at the screen, then slips it back into his pocket.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Any thoughts?

JASPER HUTCHINS

What?

JIMMY

Xbox or Play Station?

JASPER HUTCHINS

We found her keys by her car and a few spots of blood on the door. You have any idea who might want to harm her?

JIMMY

Wow, no. She's just so nice.

(pause)

She's very pretty, you know, in an understated sort of way.

The Detective's cellphone rings, again. He pulls it from his pocket.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

I've often thought that given the right--

JASPER HUTCHINS

Excuse me.

He steps away from Jimmy and answers the phone.

JASPER HUTCHINS (CONT'D)
 Hon, I'm working. Can I call you...
 (pause)
 Okay, okay, I'll be there as soon
 as possible.

Jasper pulls out a business card and hands it to Jimmy.

JASPER HUTCHINS
 I'll be back in touch. In the
 meantime, if you think of anything
 that might actually help, call me.

Jimmy's relief is palpable.

JIMMY
 Yes, I will. Very nice meeting you,
 Detective. You have a great
 afternoon.

His response in contrast to the severity of the visit. Jasper
 hesitates, at a loss for words, then walks out shaking his
 head.

EXT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT - BUSHES - DAY

Ethan and Emily watch the building.

ETHAN
 This is weird, right? He must be
 inside. Should we call the police?

EMILY
 You want to call the police on the
 police?

ETHAN
 How do you know that guy's a cop?

EMILY
 I know a cop when I see one.

Emily grabs Ethan's arm as Jasper appears on the ground floor
 and walks to his car.

INT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jimmy retrieves his drugs from under the couch cushions and
 pours out the contents of the first baggy onto the coffee
 table.

JIMMY
Goddamned keys.

Jimmy snorts several lines, stuffing the other baggie in his pocket. He moves to the front window and peaks out--

Ethan and Emily are walking towards the building.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
No, no, no.

Jimmy quickly moves to the sliding glass door and slips over the balcony.

EXT. HALLWAY - DAY

Ethan tries the door, but it's locked. He pulls a key from his pocket. The door pops and cracks as it swings open.

INT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Ethan and Emily step inside, taking in the room.

EMILY
Jeez, nice place.

They both spot the two water bottles on the kitchen counter, one half empty-or half full.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Why are there two bottles? Was your
uncle hear the whole time?

Ethan moves to the coffee table where there are remnants of cocaine left on the glass. Emily steps over to him.

EMILY (CONT'D)
You're not surprised, are you?
(pause)
Sorry.

Emily flips through one of Jimmy's notebooks.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Uh-this is not very good.

She tosses it aside and grabs another one.

EMILY (CONT'D)
This is crap. You sure he's a
writer?

ETHAN

Well, he used to be an engineer.

Emily tosses the second notebook aside.

EMILY

Your stuff was way better.

ETHAN

Oh... thanks.

Jimmy's home phone rings, startling them both.

Ethan moves to the pick it up--

EMILY

Uh-what are you doing?

ETHAN

I'm gonna answer it.

EMILY

Don't do that. We don't want anyone knowing we're here.

ETHAN

Why?

EMILY

Well... I don't know.

Ethan picks up the phone.

ETHAN

Hello... no, this is his nephew,
Ethan.

EMILY

Who is it?

Ethan's face darkens.

ETHAN

Okay... thank you.

EMILY

Well?

He hangs up.

ETHAN

We have to go.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Jasper's dark sedan screeches to a halt in front of a two-story house in a middle-class neighborhood - Emily's house.

He climbs out and heads across the front lawn where Camilla is waiting to greet him. They embrace.

INT. EMILY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Camilla and Jasper walk through the front door.

CAMILLA

I checked her room this morning and her bed was made, so I know she didn't come home last night. That girl never makes her bed.

JASPER HUTCHINS

You called the school?

CAMILLA

She never showed up, and she's not answering her cell.

JASPER HUTCHINS

Okay, what about her computer? You know, like social media stuff?

CAMILLA

I didn't check that.

JASPER HUTCHINS

I'll check the computer, why don't you try the school again, just in case she showed up late.

Jasper climbs the stairs.

EMILY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Heavy Metal band posters and some of Emily's own artwork hang on the walls. Jasper pushes a pile of drawings off the desk to reveal a laptop. He opens the computer and is asked to put in a password.

JASPER HUTCHINS

Damn.

He calls out to his wife.

JASPER HUTCHINS (CONT'D)
Hey hon, do you know Emily's
password?

Camilla appears in the doorway.

CAMILLA
I have no idea. You know how
secretive she is. And she still
hasn't shown up at school.

Jasper rummages through the papers and drawings on the desk.

JASPER HUTCHINS
Maybe she wrote it down somewhere.

CAMILLA
Good luck finding it in that mess.

Jasper leafs through a drawing pad and several loose sheets
of paper with rough sketches on them.

Camilla pulls a lose piece of paper off a stack of drawings.

She studies Ethan's poem and drawing.

CAMILLA (CONT'D)
Who's Ethan Myers?

She hands it to Jasper.

JASPER HUTCHINS
What the hell?

INT. JIMMY'S GARAGE - ATTIC - DAY

Jeanne lies on a sleeping bag, thumbing through a muscle car
magazine. She's startled by the rattling lock.

The door drops down and Jimmy climbs up, frazzled, desperate,
and angry.

Jeanne beats him to the punch--

JEANNE
You son of a bitch! You leave me
locked up here for hours!

She stabs her finger at a white plastic paint-bucket in the
corner.

JEANNE (CONT'D)
I had to pee in a bucket!

Jimmy's anger is somewhat abated by Jeannie's outburst. He holds up the bank book with slightly less authority than he had originally mustered.

JIMMY
You lied to me!

Jeanne is taken aback.

JEANNE
How did you get that?

JIMMY
I got it from your boss, and guess what? Your name is on the account!

JEANNE
Lampton would never give you that!

JIMMY
I went to the office and took it.
He wasn't there.

JEANNE
You're lying!

Jimmy grabs her arm and pulls her to her feet.

JIMMY
C'mon!

JEANNE
Where are we going?

JIMMY
To the Bank!

He guides her down the stairs.

INT. EMILY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jasper pulls out his cellphone and types in a search - "Ethan Myers." He clicks on one of the many links that appear.

A photo of Ethan pops up with the headline of a local paper - "Young Boy Survives Terrible Crash, Parents Dead."

CAMILLA
That's awful... is he a friend of
Emily's?

JASPER HUTCHINS

I don't know, but I'm going to find out.

EXT. COUNTY HOSPITAL - LATE AFTERNOON

Ethan and Emily ride up on their bikes and leave them by the Emergency room entrance.

EMILY

This isn't helping us find your uncle, you know?

ETHAN

He's my uncles publisher, maybe he knows something.

Ethan steps through the sliding doors.

EXT. GRANDPA MYERS HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Jasper's car is parked on the street. He walks up the driveway and rings the front doorbell.

GRANDPA (O.S.)

Hey!

He turns to find Grandpa holding a shotgun to his face.

JASPER HUTCHINS

Whoa, whoa! Easy now... I'm a detective!

GRANDPA

Prove it.

JASPER HUTCHINS

Okay, relax, I'm just going to pull my jacket back.

He shows Grandpa his badge.

EXT. BANK - LATE AFTERNOON

The gold Nova turns into the lot and parks. Jimmy jumps out and moves around the car to pull Jeanne out.

JIMMY

Don't try anything stupid. We go in, get the money, and everything gets settled without anyone getting hurt.

Jimmy tries to put on his best "tough guy" act, as he pats the jacket pocket where his (fake) gun is concealed.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Don't make me do anything I'm going to regret.

Jeanne pulls her arm out of Jimmy's grasp. She's not afraid.

JEANNE

I'm only doing this so nobody else gets hurt, but when this is done--

JIMMY

Hey, It's not my fault, it's your bosses--

Jeanne slaps him in the face. Jimmy, in his ignorance, is truly shocked.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

What the hell?

JEANNE

This is one-hundred percent your fault! And, it's because you're not man enough to face your problems that you've gotten yourself into this mess with your... friends!

JIMMY

Well, technically...

JEANNE

And you kidnapped me!

JIMMY

They're not my friends, per-se. They're business associates.

JEANNE

Oh, shut up, Jimmy! Let's get this over with, so I don't have to see you ever again.

Jeanne turns and walks to the Bank without him. Jimmy follows, his feeling hurt. He catches up to her outside the back entrance.

JIMMY

I'm sorry, Jeanne, I really... I had really hoped that you and I could--

Jeanne turns on him.

JEANNE

Don't you dare! Just... don't.

Jimmy is truly dejected. His shoulders sag.

INT. COUNTY HOSPITAL - LAMPTON'S ROOM - DUSK

Lampton is connected to tubes and wires, looking tired but relatively healthy.

Ethan stands at his bedside while Emily paces around the room, anxious to get out of the hospital and escape too many bad memories.

Lampton leafs through Ethan's notebook.

LAMPTON FINCH

Ethan, this is exceptional. Can you send me a copy of this?

ETHAN

I can't believe he would do that?

LAMPTON FINCH

I hesitate to mention this, because he's family, but this is a situation that could warrant legal action... Outside the obvious ramifications of a possible kidnapping.

He hands the notebook back to Ethan.

ETHAN

I think he's lost.

Lampton studies Ethan.

LAMPTON FINCH

You're a fine young man, Ethan. You must really care about your Uncle.

ETHAN

He wasn't always like this.

Emily stops pacing long enough to throw in her two-cents.

EMILY
He's a dick.

She goes back to pacing.

LAMPTON FINCH
Your friend doesn't want to be
here.

Emily stops, self conscious.

EMILY
Yeah, I'm not really a fan of
hospitals.

It dawns on Ethan - her mother.

ETHAN
Oh god, I'm sorry.

EMILY
I'm gonna wait outside.

She turns and high-tails it out of there. Ethan hesitates.

ETHAN
I should go.

Before lampton can protest he's out the door.

INT. BANK - DUSK

Jimmy and Jeanne sit at the Bank manager's desk. Mister THOMAS POTTS, middle-aged, balding, a man who has been nursing a crush on Jeanne for some time, and it shows.

MR. POTTS
Jeanne, you look lovely as ever.

JEANNE
Thank you, it's always a pleasure
to see you, Mr. Potts.

He turns to Jimmy.

MR. POTTS
And Mister Myers... You're a business
associate of Jeanne's?

Jimmy checks his watch.

JIMMY

Yeah, look, we have an important meeting to get to, so, if we could just...

MR. POTTS

Oh yes, of course. I apologize.

Mister Potts punches some keys on his computer and Jeanne throws Jimmy a reproachful look.

MR. POTTS (CONT'D)

Mister Finch couldn't make it?

JEANNE

No... he had a prior engagement.

MR. POTTS

Well, that's a shame... This is a rather large sum of money so I'll have to print out the applicable forms and then we'll get you out of here.

The tension between Jeanne and Jimmy is palpable, and It's making mister Potts nervous.

MR. POTTS (CONT'D)

Okay, well, I'll just go and collect your withdrawal... excuse me.

Mister Potts walks away and Jimmy turns to Jeanne.

JIMMY

Now, this is just a loan mind you... an advance on the next deadline.

JEANNE

No, Jimmy, this is theft. And you certainly haven't earned any kind of advance-in fact, the first ten pages you turned in were hardly worthy of...

Jimmy can't make eye contact. He inspects his cuticles.

JEANNE (CONT'D)

Oh my god.

Jimmy cranes his neck, looking for Mister Potts.

JIMMY

What is taking that idiot so long.

JEANNE

Oh my god!

This draws some unwanted attention.

JIMMY

Would you keep your voice down please.

JEANNE

Your pitch, your outline, everything you originally submitted to us... it had so much depth and heart. It had such a fresh, youthful voice...

JIMMY

You know what, I was an engineer, I made good money, and despite the long hours I had to work, I went to school at night because I wanted to do something more, something creative, and I don't appreciate you crapping all over my efforts.

Jeanne hasn't heard a word he's said. The wheels are turning.

JEANNE

You know what you are? You're just... I mean, you are...

Jeanne takes a breath, trying to compose herself. She chooses her words carefully.

JEANNE (CONT'D)

You're a... fucker.

Jimmy is momentarily stymied... this woman doesn't curse.

JIMMY

My brother died.

JEANNE

That's no excuse!

JIMMY

But, he was my brother.

JEANNE

Are you serious? You're so wrapped up in your own miserable life, you can't even see what a despicable thing you've done? Are you trying to justify this?

Jimmy is struggling to keep it together.

JIMMY

You don't understand. After my brother died...

JEANNE

You should be ashamed of yourself. And you need to take a good hard look... You need to decide what kind of man you really are.

This hits Jimmy hard. He is momentarily at a loss for words.

JIMMY

Fine... I didn't write it... are you happy?

JEANNE

You are the most self-centered, selfish--

Jimmy is saved by Mister Potts return. Jeanne tries to put on a happy face, and fails.

Mister Potts places as a small duffle bag on the table.

MR. POTTS

Okay, folks. Just need a few signatures.

He pulls some documents from the printer and lays them in front of Jeanne.

EXT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT - PARKING LOT - DUSK

A dark SUV is parked in the far corner of the parking lot.

INT. DARK SUV - DUSK

Donnie and Ricky watch the front of the building, eating fast-food out of a greasy bag.

RICKY

This is a waste of time. That fucking kid tipped him off. Jimmy's probably lying on a beach in Mexico, laughing his ass off right now.

DONNIE

You're giving that imbecile way too much credit. He gets his drugs from us. He'll pay... he has to.

INT. JIMMY'S GOLD NOVA - NIGHT

Jimmy pats his front pockets as he drives. Jeanne stares out the window, smoldering.

JIMMY

Where the hell's my cellphone?

Jimmy glances at Jeanne who's ignoring him. He slows the car and pulls a U-turn in the middle of the street.

JEANNE

What are you doing?

JIMMY

I need to go back to my apartment and call... the guys.

JEANNE

You mean your dealers?

Jimmy hesitates. He takes a deep breath.

JIMMY

I wasn't always like this.

JEANNE

What, a drug addict, plagiarizer, and a kidnapper?

JIMMY

I worked for my brother... he was my best friend. Since we were kids, he was the leader, and I followed.

(pause)

After the accident... I got lost.

Jeanne softens.

JEANNE

I'm sorry.

JIMMY

He always encouraged me to follow my dream of writing, I just... I could never get all these scrambled thoughts and ideas down on paper. It just never transfers the right way... I've been so goddamn numb for years.

Jimmy is lost in thought; as close to coherent as he's been in weeks.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Ethan reminds me so much of my brother... sometimes it hurts to even look at him.

This strikes a chord with Jeanne, and, although her eyes begin to well up--

JEANNE

That's still no excuse for what you did!

Jeanne wipes a tear away.

EXT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The Nova pulls into the parking lot and parks.

JEANNE

You know, this money doesn't solve your problems... and it won't fix what you did. That has to come from you, and frankly, I don't think you're ever going to take responsibility for the things you do.

This hits Jimmy hard. He gets out of the car with the duffle bag, looking very much like a man defeated.

INT. DARK SUV - NIGHT

Donnie's drinking from a BigGulp. Ricky reaches for the door handle--

RICKY

Bingo. Let's do this.

DONNIE

Hold up...

They watch Jimmy help Jeanne out of the car.

RICKY
Who the hell's this broad?

EXT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jimmy leads Jeanne to the stairs.

ETHAN (O.S.)
Uncle Jimmy!

They turn to find--

Ethan and Emily ride up fast and dump their bikes. Jimmy let's go of Jeanne's arm, trying to play it cool.

JIMMY
Hey little man, uh, what are you doing out here?

Ethan looks from Jimmy to Jeanne.

ETHAN
You're Jeanne?

JEANNE
You must be Ethan.

ETHAN
The police are looking for you.

JIMMY
Oh, man, I can explain this-hey, what happened to your face?

EMILY
Your friends did that!

JIMMY
Oh Jesus, I'm sorry, Ethan. Although they're not technically my friends--

ETHAN
How could you do this!?

JIMMY
(deep breath)
Okay, it's not what it looks like.

EMILY
It's exactly what it looks
like!

JEANNE
It's exactly what it looks
like!

ETHAN
Did you know Mister Finch is in the
hospital?

JIMMY
That's not my fault!

JEANNE
What?!

ETHAN (CONT'D)
He had a heart attack.

JEANNE
Oh my God! Jimmy, what did you do?

JIMMY
He collapsed... and I panicked.
But, I called an ambulance... and
ran.

JEANNE
But not before you stole the bank
book!

Without warning, Emily steps between them.

EMILY
Oh my God, you're such a fucking
loser!

Emily kicks Jimmy in the balls and snatches the duffle bag
out of his hand. Jimmy crumples to the ground with a groan,
dropping his keys.

INT. DARK SUV - NIGHT

Donnie slams his BigGulp down in the cup holder.

DONNIE
Okay, that's our cue.

Ricky and Donnie get out of the car.

EXT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Emily kicks the keys over to Jeanne.

EMILY

I'd get as far away from this idiot
as possible.

Emily drags Ethan away. She jumps on her bike.

ETHAN

What are you doing?

EMILY

C'mon!

Emily pedals away, with Ethan following.

Jimmy painfully gets to his feet, one hand clutching his
manhood. He snatches the keys from Jeanne's hand.

JIMMY

We've gotta get the money back!

Jimmy grabs Jeanne's arm and tries to drag her to the car,
but Jeanne yanks her arm free.

JEANNE

I'm not going anywhere with you!

Jimmy spots Donnie and Ricky approaching fast.

JIMMY

Son of a bitch.

Jimmy slides into the car and tears out of the parking lot.

JEANNE

Idiot!

Jeanne turns to find Donnie and Ricky standing behind her.

DONNIE

Hey sweetheart, what's your name?

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Emily is in the lead, pedaling hard. She looks back to make
sure Ethan is following.

EMILY

Keep up, Ethan!

ETHAN

What are we doing?

EMILY

Your uncle is a fuck-up, and he's gonna get someone killed!

ETAN

And, how is this helping?

EMILY

You have the drug dealers number. We'll call and make the drop-off, end of story!

ETHAN

What about the cops?

EMILY

No cops!

Emily hits the brakes, and Ethan nearly runs into her.

ETHAN

What the hell?

EMILY

Ethan, think about it. The cops get involved and your uncle goes to prison. I know he's a dick-head, but is that what you really want?

ETHAN

No.

EMILY

Shit, they could even try and implicate us in this.

ETHAN

But, we're not involved!

Emily holds up the money.

EMILY

We are now.

Emily pedals away. Ethan reluctantly follows.

INT. JIMMY'S GOLD NOVA - NIGHT

Jimmy is frantic as he turns a corner.

A long stretch of suburban landscape lies before him. A quiet neighborhood, porch lights glowing. He slows to a crawl and turns the headlights off. All seems quiet.

He slaps the steering wheel and stewes in his anger.

JIMMY

Shit.

Jimmy throws the car in gear and tears off down the street.

INT. GRANDPA'S WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Jasper places Emily's drawing pad on Grandpa's worktable and looks around the shop. Grandpa leafs through it.

JASPER HUTCHINS

You should have reported the assault to the police.

GRANDPA

Didn't need to. I was a Goddamned Marine, and I can take care of myself.

JASPER HUTCHINS

That's not the point. Those men came to your home with guns drawn. A home you share with your grandson.

GRANDPA

Fine... point made. Now, I know my son is a Goddamned fool, but how are the kids involved in this?

JASPER HUTCHINS

I wish I knew. What I do know is that Jimmy signed a book deal with Lampton Finch, and now everyone associated with--

GRANDPA

Jimmy signed a book deal?

JASPER HUTCHINS

Yeah.

GRANDPA

That don't sound right.

JASPER HUTCHINS

Tell me about it.

Something catches the Detective's eye.

JASPER HUTCHINS (CONT'D)

Hang on...

Jasper grabs Emily's drawing pad and thumbs through it. He rips out a drawing of the abandoned factory and holds it up next to the photo of Grandpa in front of the same building.

GRANDPA

I knew those kids were lyin.'

INT. JIMMY'S CHEVY NOVA - NIGHT

Jimmy drives fast with the lights off, tires screeching as he turns down a pitch black street. His cellphone rings from somewhere in the backseat of the car, startling him.

JIMMY

Jesus!

Jimmy tries to reach into the backseat for the phone. He blows through a stop sign, and the car veers off the road--

Jimmy loses control and crashes into a tree. He smacks his face on the steering wheel, opening a gash across his nose.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Of god...

The front end of his car is crumpled, wrapped around the tree, spewing smoke - his baby.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

No, no, no...

He climbs out of the car.

EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy inspects the damage. He's devastated. He crawls back into the car and grabs his phone from the back seat. He slams the door and catches his reflection in the car window--

EXT. CRASH SITE - FLASHBACK

Rapid images flashing from the day of the crash-- his brother and sister-in-law dead, pulling Ethan from the wreckage--

Hugging Ethan to him as paramedics rush in--

Sitting next to Ethan's hospital bed--

Jimmy standing next to Ethan at the funeral--

EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - BACK TO PRESENT - NIGHT

Jimmy stares at his reflection in the window - the man he once was, clean cut, handsome, well dressed in a suit and tie. The image morphs into--

Jimmy as he is now--

This is not the man he knows. Jimmy sinks to the ground beside his car, weeping.

JIMMY

Oh god.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Emily creeps through the dark warehouse with Ethan trailing behind. She steps through the opening in the wall, into the mural room.

ETHAN

Okay, we're here. Now what?

EMILY

Let me see your phone.

Ethan reluctantly pulls it out of his pocket.

Emily snatches the phone from his hand.

INT. DARK SUV - NIGHT

Jeanne is in the back seat with her hands tied behind her back as the SUV barrels down a dark road.

JEANNE

These are incredibly tight, could you please loosen them?

DONNIE

Sure, sweetheart, soon as you tell us where the hell those kids went with my money.

JEANNE

I told you, I haven't any idea where they went. And that money most certainly does not belong to you.

DONNIE

That's the money that Jimmy owes me, so it is my money! I don't care where it came from, sweetheart.

Jeanne throws daggers with her eyes.

Ricky drives through an intersection and slams on the brakes. Jeanne is launched into the seat-back in front of her, and crumples onto the floor with a yelp.

DONNIE (CONT'D)

Son of a bitch!

Ricky throws the car in reverse and hits the brakes, stopping in the middle of the intersection.

DONNIE (CONT'D)

What the hell's wrong with you?!

Ricky points to Jimmy's gold Nova wrapped around a tree.

DONNIE (CONT'D)

Well pull the fuck over!

Ricky pulls up behind the car.

RICKY

I hope that idiot's dead.

Jeanne pulls herself up off the floor.

JEANNE

What? Who's dead?

Donnie's phone rings. The caller ID reads - "Ethan."

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN DONNIE AND EMILY.

DONNIE

Ethan, you little fucker, I don't know what kind of game you're playing, but I want that fucking money!

EMILY

This isn't Ethan, but you must be the asshole who beats up kids.

DONNIE

And you must be the little bitch that took my money.

Ethan moves in close to try and hear.

DONNIE (CONT'D)
Stop fucking around! I want my
money. And, just in case you're
planning something stupid, I have
your friend, Jeanne.

EMILY
(to Ethan)
They've got Jeanne.
(she covers the phone)
Do we care about her?

ETHAN
Oh my god, yes!

Emily uncovers the phone.

ETHAN (CONT'D)
That's it, I'm calling the police.

Emily tries to cover the phone again, but it's too late.

DONNIE
You tell that little shit if he
calls the police, she dies! You
understand me? You kids are playing
a dangerous fucking game, and it's
not gonna go the way you think.

EMILY
Fine-fine. No police. You know
where the abandoned factory is?

INT. RANGE ROVER - CONTINUOUS

Donnie turns off his phone and honks the horn at Ricky who's
outside, checking on the car wreck. He waves Ricky back to
the car.

DONNIE
I fucking hate kids.

Ricky climbs back into the SUV.

RICKY
Jimmy ain't there.

They pull away.

INT. ABANDONED FACTORY - NIGHT

Emily hands the phone back to Ethan.

ETHAN

I'm calling the police, this is way
out of control.

EMILY

Go ahead, and when they kill
Jeanne, it'll be your fault. Is
that what you want?

ETHAN

No...

Emily puts her hand on his arm.

EMILY

Ethan, I know how to handle scum-
bags like this... trust me.

EXT. DARK ROAD - NIGHT

Jimmy walks close to the tree line. Behind him, headlights
appear, approaching fast.

He jumps into a clump of trees as the SUV speeds past.

JIMMY

Shit.

Jimmy runs.

EXT. DARK ROAD - NIGHT

Jasper and Grandpa inspect Jimmy's crash site. Grandpa is
shaken.

GRANDPA

There's very little blood... That's
a good sign, right?

JASPER HUTCHINS

And there's no body. So, yeah.

GRANDPA

That Goddamned fool.

INT. ABANDON WAREHOUSE - WEST SIDE DOOR - NIGHT

Ethan and Emily watch from the shadows as a door swings open and Donnie steps inside, followed by Ricky and Jeanne. Both men carry their guns in plain sight.

DONNIE

Okay you little fuckers, I'm here!

Ricky taps his shoulder.

RICKY

We're here.

DONNIE

Shut up, Ricky! Semantics.

RICKY

What?

JEANNE

You're both idiots.

Ethan and Emily step out of the shadows. Emily carries the duffle bag tucked under her arm. They stop twenty feet from Donnie's party.

DONNIE

Where's Jimmy?

EMILY

How the hell should we know?

RICKY

You're lying.

EMILY

I'm not, and you're an asshole.

Donnie stares down Ethan.

DONNIE

How's your face, kid?

Ethan glares back at him.

RICKY

Consider yourself lucky. Donnie's got some restraint. I'd of beat the snot outta you.

INT. WAREHOUSE - EAST-SIDE DOOR - NIGHT

The door slowly opens and Jimmy quietly slips inside. He creeps towards the sound of voices.

INTERCUT WITH JIMMY WATCHING FROM THE SHADOWS.

DONNIE

Your Uncle's a loser, kid. You might want to rethink the company you keep.

EMILY

Maybe his Uncle needs to stop hanging out with douche-bags.

Donnie laughs. He cocks his head and stares at Emily; like he's trying to figure out a difficult math equation.

DONNIE

You've got guts, kid... but I can't figure out if it's because you're fearless, or incredibly fucking dumb.

EMILY

I'm sure there are a lot of things you can't figure out.

(Regarding their injuries)

What happened to you guys? You get hurt beating up another kid?

Ricky's impatient.

RICKY

Can we get on with this?

DONNIE

As you can see, my brother's not one for idle chit-chat.

He waves to a spot on the floor in front of him.

DONNIE (CONT'D)

Put the money there.

EMILY

Let the old lady go.

JEANNE

Hey!

RICKY

Can I just shoot this little bitch?

DONNIE

Ethan! Take the money from your girlfriend and put it on the ground, or Ricky's gonna put a bullet in her leg.

Ethan puts his hand out, but Emily doesn't move.

ETHAN

Please, give me the bag. I don't want anyone to get hurt. This is my fault, I should never have let you get involved.

Emily reluctantly hands him the bag.

EMILY

None of this is your fault, Ethan.

Jimmy stands with his back to a pillar, the weight of his actions digging deeper, but too afraid and ashamed to move.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Your uncle's a real dick-head, you know that? He doesn't even have the balls to fight his own fight.

Ethan places the bag on the floor, and Donnie grabs it.

DONNIE

Your girlfriend's right, kid. He's probably off somewhere getting high while you risk your neck for him. He's a real class-act.

EMILY

Fuck off, you're no better than him! You got your money, now let her go.

Jimmy moves to get a better view and inadvertently kicks an empty beer bottle. The sound echoes off the cement walls--

Ricky turns. He fires blindly in the direction of the noise and drags Jeanne along for a closer look--

Emily uses the distraction to her advantage. She kicks Donnie in the balls--

Donnie doubles over, dropping the money bag, and Emily snatches it up. She runs into the warehouse with Ethan following close behind.

Jeanne rakes her fingernails across Ricky's eyes. He screams and let's go. As he stumbles back, Jimmy steps out of his hiding place and smashes the beer bottle across the back of Ricky's head. Ricky falls to the ground.

JIMMY

Let's go!

Jimmy grabs at Jeanne, but she pushes him away and runs off without him.

Jimmy stumbles and falls to the ground. Ricky reaches for him, but Jimmy scrambles to his feet and disappears in the opposite direction.

Ricky fires a few random shots in Jimmy's direction, one of them coming close to Donnie-who's lying on his side with his hands between his legs, moaning.

DONNIE

Knock it off, you asshole! You're gonna shoot me!

Ricky gets to his feet and storms off.

RICKY

I'm gonna kill every fucking one of these assholes.

Donnie yells after him--

DONNIE

Get the money first!

INT. ABANDON WAREHOUSE - SECOND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Ethan follows Emily into the mural room.

ETHAN

You're gonna get us killed!

EMILY

Keep your voice down.

ETHAN

We need to give them the money, they have Jeanne!

EMILY

They're not gonna hurt her. They need her to get the money.

ETHAN

But, you have the money!

Emily puts her hand up to silence Ethan.

EMILY

Shh...

She motions for him to follow her, when--

JEANNE (O.S.)

Ethan.

Jeanne steps out of the shadows.

EXT. ABANDON WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Jasper's sedan pulls off the road and parks, within sight of the abandoned factory.

JASPER HUTCHINS

You stay here. I don't know what I'm gonna find in there.

GRANDPA

The hell I will. I was a Goddamned Marine!

JASPER HUTCHINS

I can't take a chance of you getting hurt. You shouldn't even be here. Stay put!

Jasper gets out of the car. He turns to look back through the window at Grandpa, pointing a finger as if telling a disobedient dog to stay put. Grandpa scowls back.

INT. ABANDONED FACTORY - SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

Ethan, Emily, and Jeanne slowly creep through the darkness, whispering.

JEANNE

Jimmy's here.

Ethan stops.

ETHAN

Where?

JEANNE

Downstairs. Well, he was. He may have been trying to help me but I don't trust him, so I ran... I'm sorry.

ETHAN

It's okay... I don't blame you. I'm really sorry about him, you know...

EMILY

Kidnapping her?

ETHAN

Yeah.

JEANNE

Ethan, there's something you need to know...

Ethan pulls out his cellphone.

EMILY

What are you doing?

ETHAN

I'm calling the police before we all get killed.

Emily snatches Ethan's phone out of his hand.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Hey.

EMILY

Okay, Ethan... don't lose your shit, but that cop that was at your Uncle's apartment... He's my father.

ETHAN

What!

EMILY

Shh.

JEANNE

Shh.

Ethan lowers his voice.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Your dad is a cop?

EMILY
Yes-well, a detective.

ETHAN
This whole time...

Emily holds a hand up to stop him.

EMILY
Can you have a breakdown after I
make this call?

She pulls out her own phone.

FIRST FLOOR - EAST SIDE

Jasper moves through the darkness.

DONNIE (O.S.)
(moans)
My fucking balls.

Jasper stops short. Donnie is on one knee, gun in one hand,
the other firmly gripping his crotch.

Jasper's cellphone rings--

Donnie fires into the darkness, forcing Jasper to duck behind
a pillar as he fumbles for his phone. It falls out of his
hand and clatters onto the floor; it's light shining like a
beacon in the dark.

FIRST FLOOR - WEST SIDE

Ricky stands frozen, listening in the darkness.

RICKY
You better come out, Jimmy! I'm
over this shit!

There's movement, and Ricky fires. The muzzle flashes light
up the dark like a strobe-light as Jimmy darts behind one
pillar and then another.

FIRST FLOOR - EAST SIDE

Jasper steps out of the shadows behind Donnie. He pushes his
gun into Donnie's back and grabs his bandaged wrist. Donnie
screams, involuntarily firing two rounds into the ceiling.

Jasper twists the gun from Donnie's hand as another bone in his wrist snaps. He passes out and crumples to the ground.

JASPER HUTCHINS

Pussy.

SECOND FLOOR

Ricky stands frozen, listening.

RICKY

Donnie?

He moves to the hole in the floor and peers into the darkness below, then slinks back into the shadows.

Ethan, Emily, and Jeanne step out of the shadows and nearly collide with Ricky.

He grabs Jeanne and roughly pulls her to him.

RICKY (CONT'D)

Give me the money, now!

EMILY

Let her go.

He points the gun at Emily.

ETHAN

Emily, please.

RICKY

Now!

Emily is losing her resolve.

EMILY

And you'll let her go?

Ricky points the gun at Ethan.

RICKY

I'm not gonna ask again.

JIMMY (O.S.)

Whoa, whoa, hold on!

Jimmy steps out of the shadows, hands held high. Ricky's gun moves to him.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
 Ricky, this is my fault. Please,
 It's me you want.

He walks to Emily and takes the bag of money out of her hand.

EMILY
 You're an asshole.

JIMMY
 I know... I deserved that.

EMILY
 I know, that's why I said it.

Jimmy turns to Ricky.

JIMMY
 Take the money and let them go. You
 can do whatever you want to me, but
 don't hurt them. They just got
 caught up in my bullshit.

Jimmy stands in front of Ricky.

RICKY
 Jimmy, you're a fuck-up. An hour
 ago I'd have walked outta here with
 the money, maybe try and squeeze
 another ten grand out of you. But,
 honestly man... it's not fuckin
 worth the hassle. You're a cancer
 and I don't trust you to keep your
 mouth shut... I'm just gonna shoot
 all of you.

EMILY	JIMMY
All of us? Why all of us?	I'm not a cancer.
It's all his fault!	

He points the gun at Ethan.

RICKY (CONT'D)
 You're first kid

Jimmy throws the money bag, smashing Ricky in the face.

Ricky stumbles backward and falls to the ground, dragging
 Jeanne with him. The gun clatters to the floor and the money
 bag lands at the edge of the hole in the floor.

Jeanne scrambles away, and Ricky hesitates - the money or the
 gun?

He goes for the gun.

Emily makes a dash for the bag and tosses it to Ethan.

EMILY

Ethan, run!

Ricky's gun follows the money and he fires.

Jimmy dives on top of Ethan and they fall to the ground.

Ricky swings the weapon in Emily's direction--

Two shots rings out. Ricky hesitates. He stumbles back and falls through the hole in the floor--

Jasper steps out of the shadows.

JASPER HUTCHINS

Emy!

Emily suddenly looks vulnerable, like the fourteen-year-old girl she is. She rushes into her father's arms.

Jeanne pulls Jimmy off of Ethan. He sits back down.

Emily runs over and pulls Ethan off the ground.

EMILY

Are you alright?

ETHAN

I'm okay.

A spot of blood appears on Jimmy's t-shirt and rapidly spreads... he's been shot.

JIMMY

Oh God... it hurts.

JASPER HUTCHINS

I'm gonna need someone to explain all this to me?

JIMMY

I deserved this...

DETECTIVE HUTCHINS

I don't doubt it.

JEANNE

Yes, you did!

Everyone except Jimmy moves to the hole in the floor and look down. Ricky is lying on his back, gun by his side. He appears to be dead.

FIRST FLOOR

Ricky's eyes snap open. He grabs the gun and fires--

Everyone on the second floor hits the deck.

A cane smashes into Ricky's wrist with a sickening crunch. The shot goes wide and the gun clatters to the floor.

Grandpa Myers slams the heavy wooden cane into Ricky's skull, knocking him out.

SECOND FLOOR

Everyone picks themselves up off the floor.

GRANDPA (O.S.)
You can come out now!

	ETHAN		UNCLE JIMMY
Grandpa?		Dad?	

As a group, they peer over the edge.

Grandpa is standing over Ricky's body looking up at them. He kicks Ricky's weapon away from him.

GRANDPA (CONT'D)
I was a Goddamn Marine!
(pause)
Well, you gonna stand around
gawking, or are you gonna come down
here and take care of this?

JASPER HUTCHINS
Let's go.

Jasper grabs the money bag.

EMILY
Wait.

JASPER HUTCHINS
What?

EMILY
The money's not in the bag.

JIMMY
Well, where the hell is it?!

They all turn on him.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Sorry.

EMILY
Calm down. I'll get it.

Emily steps into the mural room--

MURAL ROOM

Emily pulls a few loose bricks from the wall when a flashlight illuminates the room behind her.

Jasper takes in her mural, deeply moved. Ethan steps in behind him and turns on the lamp.

JASPER HUTCHINS
You did this?
(pause)
It's, beautiful. It's...

EMILY
Mom.

JASPER HUTCHINS
Yeah.

It's not lost on the detective that the image of father and daughter are standing apart in the mural. He puts his arm around Emily and pulls her close.

The moment is shattered when Jimmy leans into the room--

JIMMY
I hate to break this up, but I could really use some medical attention... feels like I'm losing a lot of blood here.

As they all walk away, Jeanne puts one hand around Jimmy's arm to help support him. He looks at her and smiles.

JEANNE
Don't get any ideas. I still hate you.

FIRST FLOOR

As the gang approaches, Grandpa sees the blood on Jimmy's arm.

GRANDPA
Son, what the hell did you get
yourself into?

ETHAN
He took a bullet for me!

GRANDPA
That so?

Grandpa takes over for Jeanne.

GRANDPA (CONT'D)
Maybe there's hope for you yet.

Grandpa motions for Ethan to follow and puts his free arm around him.

GRANDPA (CONT'D)
Now, what's this about a book deal?

Jimmy makes eye contact with Jeanne and visibly wilts. He stops.

JIMMY
It's not my book deal... it should
be Ethan's... I ah... I...

GRANDPA
What?

EMILY
Oh my god! You stole Ethan's book
idea.

Ethan is too shocked to speak.

JIMMY
Yeah. What she said... I'm sorry
Ethan, I can't... I'm so sorry.

EMILY
I'm glad you got shot.

Emily storms off dragging Ethan with her.

EXT. ABANDONED FACTORY - LATER

Two police cars and an ambulance are parked outside, colored lights flashing. Jimmy lies on a gurney, bandaged and loopy from pain medication. Grandpa, Ethan, and Jasper by his side.

Emily stands apart from them.

JIMMY

Ethan... little man... I've been a real shit. A real son-of-a-bitch... I really want to apologize for my fucking behavior. And I want you to know that I'm gonna take full fucking respom... ressss... responsimil...

GRANDPA

Okay, maybe we should get him to the hospital.

JIMMY

Man... I have learned some valuable lessons throughout this whole ordeal...

(chuckles)

Jeanne! Thank you for beings such a good friend, Jeanne...

JEANNE

Good Lord.

Jeanne turns and walks away.

JASPER HUTCHINS

Jimmy, you realize that you're under arrest, right? You're going to jail.

JIMMY

Crap.

Jasper signals for the EMT's to load him into the ambulance. He pulls Emily aside.

JASPER HUTCHINS

So, maybe before we go to the hospital, you could show me your wall again?

EMILY

Really?

JASPER HUTCHINS

Yeah... I'd really like to see it again. Just the two of us.

EMILY

Okay, let me just say bye to Ethan.

Emily walks to Ethan, who's standing at the back of the ambulance. Jimmy waves to her.

JIMMY

Emily!

She gives him a fake smile.

EMILY

Dip-shit.

An EMT closes the door.

ETHAN

Are you coming?

EMILY

Not yet... my dad wants to go back and look at my wall.

ETHAN

That's cool... right?

EMILY

Yeah. It is.

There's an awkward pause.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I probably should have called my dad from the start.

Ethan shrugs.

ETHAN

It all worked out okay... sort of.

EMT's wheel Donnie past on a gurney and load him into a second ambulance. Emily flips him off.

EMILY

Anyway, I should go.

ETHAN

Okay. See you later.

EMILY

Bye.

There's another awkward pause. As Emily turns to leave--

ETHAN

Emily.

She turns back, and Ethan kisses her on the lips--his first kiss. He blushes.

EMILY

I knew you wanted me to be your girlfriend.

As she walks away, Ethan turns to find Grandpa, Jeanne, and the police officer all staring at him, smiling.

GRANDPA

I like that girl.

TITLE CARD: TWENTY-FOUR MONTHS LATER

EXT. STATE PRISON - DAY

Jimmy walks out of the front gate carrying an envelope and a hard cover book under one arm. He looks happy and healthy.

The book is titled --"A Life Unravelled by Ethan Myers."

Jimmy turns his face to the sky, soaking in the sunlight.

The car door opens, and Jeanne steps out of a four-door sedan - not what he was expecting.

JIMMY

Hey.

JEANNE

You look different.

JIMMY

Yeah?

JEANNE

Better... healthy.

JIMMY

Thanks.

An awkward beat.

JIMMY

I have to admit, you're the last person I expected to see here.

JEANNE

Yes, well, Ethan's too young to drive and your father really shouldn't be driving... and nobody else likes you enough to come all the way out here.

JIMMY

But you do?

JEANNE

I did it for Ethan.

Jimmy smiles.

JIMMY

I have a lot to make up for.

The back doors of the car opens and Ethan and Emily climb out. Jimmy hugs his nephew who is now a lot more hip than we've seen him. Emily stands back at the car.

JIMMY

Hi, Emy.

EMILY

Jimmy... you look good. Less pervy.

(beat)

And don't call me Emy.

JIMMY

Copy that.

They all pile into the car.

INT. JEANNE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy turns to the back seat to find Ethan and Emily holding hands. He smiles.

JEANNE

Where to?

JIMMY

I'm gonna stay with Ethan and my dad for a little while. Till I get my feet back on the ground.

JEANNE

Then what?

Jeanne starts the car.

Jimmy smiles and pulls a thick manuscript out of the Manila folder on his lap - "MAKING IT RIGHT by ETHAN MYERS & JIMMY MYERS."

JIMMY

It's follow-up to Ethan's book.

ETHAN

It's really good.

Jeanne pulls onto the two-lane highway.

JIMMY

You think Lampton will ever forgive me?

EXT. TWO LANE HIGHWAY - DAY

JEANNE (V.O.)

No... But he loves Ethan, so...

The car speeds through the desert, heat waves shimmering off parched earth.

JIMMY (V.O.)

Can I turn the radio on?

THE END.