Suspected Killers

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT/ESTAB. NEIBORHOOD- DAY

A middle-class suburban neiborhood. Quiet. Peaceful. RESIDENTS walk their dogs and water their gardens-- not a care in the world.

We DRIFT towards a house-- quaint. The COOPER RESIDENCE.

INT. COOPER RESIDENCE- DAY

A well-furnished, tidy home.

HEATHER COOPER(34), a dedicated single mom, WALKS towards the back door-- a transparent, sliding door.

CUT TO:

EXT. COOPER RESIDENCE- BACKYARD- CONTINUOUS

Heather steps into the yard. Spots her son--

JAKE COOPER(10), young and adventurous. He KICKS around a SOCCER BALL-- handling it well.

Heather watches him for a beat. A proud, motherly expression on her face. Then--

HEATHER

Okay, sweetie, come on inside and get some lunch. My little athlete needs to refuel.

JAKE

(distracted)

Just a little more, mom. I'm about to win.

Jake continues to play with the ball-- skillfully maneuvering around his imaginary opponents.

POV-- FROM JUST OVER THE FENCE ON THE LEFT we watch Jake as he plays. Then we look at Heather for a beat. Now back to Jake. Someone is watching them.

HEATHER

(clapping her hands)
Okay. That's enough. You won. The
other team didn't even score. Now come
on, champ. Lunchtime.

Jake gives the ball one more BIG kick-- it rolls o.s.

POV-- FROM JUST OVER THE FENCE ON THE LEFT we watch Jake walk into the house. Heather waits until he's in, then she follows.

CUT TO:

INT. COOPER RESIDENCE- KITCHEN- DAY

Jake SITS down at the table-- a plate of food and a drink await him. Heather STANDS at the entrance.

JAKE

Thanks, mom.

HEATHER

You're welcome, sweetie. Just make sure you eat all of it before you go back outside. And that includes the baby carrots. Gotta grow up big and strong, right?

JAKE

(forced agreement)

Right.

Heather smiles -- satisfied. Then she EXITS.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. COOPER RESIDENCE- DAY

Heather EMERGES from the laundry room-- a BASKET of clean, folded clothes in her arms. She makes her way to the stairwell.

But before she gets there she STOPS. Noticing-IN THE DISTANCE-- through the transparent back door--

The soccer ball(the same one Jake played with) slowly rolls into the frame. Comes to a gentle stop. Heather STARES for a beat. A cautious expression. Then--

She SIGHS. Puts the basket down. Begins walking towards the back door.

HEATHER

Jake?... You finished your lunch already? What did I tell about chewing your food--

CUT TO:

EXT. COOPER RESIDENCE- BACKYARD- CONTINUOUS

Heather takes a few steps out into the yard. Stands above the soccer ball. Looks around. The yard appears to be uninhabited.

A beat.

HEATHER

Jake?...

SUDDENLY a MAN ambushes Heather from behind. He FORCES one hand on her mouth— his other arm WRAPS around Heather's body— restricting her movement. We don't get a good look at his face.

Heather tries to scream-- its no good. She STRUGGLES-- kicking and gyrating. Thats also no good. The man is bigger and stronger.

THE MAN
(loud whisper)
Stop struggling!... I'm warning you!

Just then Heather notices --

In the hand of the arm that holds Heather's body, the Man has a long KITCHEN KNIFE. It looks sharp.

Heather STOPS struggling. The smart thing to do.

Off Heather -- terrified.

CUT TO:

INT. COOPER RESIDENCE- LIVING ROOM- DAY

Heather and Jake, on the couch. Held there against their will. The Man PACES around the room-- making a stop at each window-- looking outside briefly before closing the blinds. He's nervous. Uneasy.

Now we get a better look at him--

RYAN(30), short hair, nice facial features. Even with the crime he's committing he has genuinely honest eyes. Ryan CHECKS his WATCH.

CLOSE ON Ryan's DIGITAL WATCH-- 10:39

Heather holds her son close-- the same terrified look as before on her face. She carefully watches every move Ryan makes.

CLOSE ON the kitchen knife -- Ryan holds it tight.

HEATHER

(shaky)

Please. I-I don't keep cash in the house. But you can take whatever you want--

RYAN

(frustrated)

Shut-up, okay! Just...

(quietly)

Just don't speak.

Ryan SITS in a chair near the window. Rubs his forehead-- the sign of a growing headache. Heather holds Jake even tighter.

HEATHER

(whisper)

It's gonna be alright, honey. I'm not gonna let him hurt you. I promise.

A beat. Jake isn't listening to his mother. His eyes are glued to the television at the front of the room-- its muted.

JAKE

(pointing at the t.v.)

Mom. Look.

Heather looks. A SHOCKED expression shoots across her face.

HEATHER

Oh my gosh...

Ryan PERKS UP. He quickly moves to where he can see the t.v. Then the same shocked expression shoots across his face as well.

ON THE TELEVISION: It's the NEWS. A MUG SHOT of Ryan. The words that scroll across the screen read: Escaped convict. Wanted for the murder of wife and child. Believed to be in the area...

RYAN

No... No. No! No! That's wrong!

RYAN (CONT'D)

I didn't kill anyone! I'm innocent!
I'm... I'm innocent.

Off Ryan-- traumatized. BLACKOUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. CONVINIENT STORE- DAY

A small, unpopulated convenient store. The kind you would expect to find paired with a gas station.

NICOLE(27), cute in a modest way, slowly WALKS down the isles-- shopping. Or so it would appear. She STOPS. Cautiously looks towards the front counter. BEHIND THE COUNTER--

The CLERK(mid 20's), sits on a stool, reading the newspaper--not once does he look up. Nicole notices this. A beat. Then--

Nicole QUICKLY, and nervously, SHOVES a stick of deodorant into her pocket. Then a nail clipper. Then a couple more MISCELLANEOUS items.

She FUMBLES with one of the items-- almost dropping it. You can tell she's new at this.

Nicole looks back up at the Clerk-- he hasn't budged an inch. She picks out a CANDY BAR. Calmly walks to the front counter. Sets it down.

For the first time the Clerk looks up-- a bored, tiresome expression. He briefly looks at Nicole. Then the candy bar. Then back to his newspaper.

CLERK

That it?

NICOLE

Yea.

A beat. The Clerk tinkers with the cash register.

Nicole PULLS out two or three crumpled, ONE DOLLAR BILLS from her right-back pocket. Then reaches into her left-- but its empty. She's more than a little tight on money at the moment. Just then--

T.V VOICE(V.O.)

--Ryan Greene. Wanted for the murders of his wife and 8 year old son.

Nicole looks up-- a small T.V., hung up in the corner of the store.

ON THE T.V. SCREEN: The same mug shot of Ryan from the TEASER.

T.V VOICE(V.O.) (CONT'D)
The convicted felon escaped from Baxter
Maximum Security Prison a week ago and
is believed to be hiding out somewhere
in the central Los Angeles area.
Authorities are still investigating
his escape and suspect inside
tampering--

An inquisitive expression appears on Nicole's face. Then--

CLERK

A dollar twenty-five.

A beat. Nicole ignores him-- focused on the t.v. Now the Clerk looks up at the t.v.-- what's she looking at?

T.V VOICE(V.O.)

If you see or come into contact with him you're advised to call the police immediately. He's considered extremely dangerous.

Nicole SNAPS out of it. Gathers her money. But she SUDDENLY sees something else. Something that SHOCKS her.

ON THE NEWSPAPER IN THE CLERK'S HANDS-- a MUG SHOT of Nicole. She's on the front page. She looks distressed-- hair frizzed. Not the best photo they could've used.

Nicole is SUDDENLY very anxious. She QUICKLY tosses the money on the counter. Grabs another NEWSPAPER and a pair of SUNGLASSES. The Clerk, still focused on television, doesn't notice her movements.

CLERK

(looking at the t.v.)
Whoa... Double homicide. His wife and kid no less. This is one seriously messed up dude, am I right?

Now the Clerk turns his attention back to Nicole-- but she's gone. Vanished.

CLOSE ON the counter -- Nicole left the candy bar. Her

couple of dollars lie next to it.

A beat. Off the Clerk-- very confused.

CLERK (CONT'D)

Uh...come again.

CUT TO:

EXT. CONVINIENT STORE- DAY

Nicole QUICLY crosses the street. Turns the corner. Stops. A beat as she begins to read the newspaper that she took. Off Nicole-- a disturbed expression slowly forming. INT. DOWNTOWN CAFE- DAY

An upscale, coffee cafe. Two MEN occupy a booth near the back-they're wearing black suits.

AGENT BRANDON STONE(33), honest, hard-working and headstrong. He studies a CRIMINAL PROFILE.

CLOSE ON the file: At the top right is a PICTURE of Nicole. Above it reads: Nicole Reighs

ACROSS FROM STONE-- AGENT EVAN BOWMEN(35), a more lay-back kind of guy.

A cute WAITRESS approaches. Sets down a plate of FOOD in front of Bowmen.

WAITRESS

Here ya go. Enjoy.

BOWMEN

(charming)

I'm sure I will.

WAITRESS

(to Stone)

Sure you don't want anything, hun?

A beat. Stone doesn't respond-- he's completely preoccupied with the file. Bowmen KICKS Stone's ankle. It QUICKLY brings Stone back to reality.

STONE

(alert)

Huh-- what's that?

It's called food, partner. How about you order some.

STONE

Oh. No thank you. Not hungry.

(to the Waitress)

I'll be sure to leave a tip, though. Thanks.

The Waitress SHRUGS.

WAITRESS

Don't work too hard, kay?

A beat as Bowmen watches her leave. Then--

BOWMEN

Wanna tell me why you've been "ogling" that file all morning? They're convicts, not play-bunnies.

STONE

(still looking at the

file)

It just... doesn't make sense...

BOWMEN

(annoyed sigh)

What doesn't make sense?

Stone PUSHES the file towards his partner. A beat. Bowmen shoots him a tiresome look. Slides his food to the side. Takes the file. Looks over it.

BOWMEN (CONT'D)

Ohhh. I take it back. This girl could definitely pass for a play-bunny.

STONE

Not the point.

(then)

Tell me how someone like Nicole Reighs can commit a first degree murder like the one she was convicted of.

BOWMEN

"Someone like Nicole Reighs?" You mean someone this gorgeous?

STONE

No, I mean someone this clean.

Stone pulls out another FILE from a folder-- hands it to Bowmen.

STONE (CONT'D)

This is a list of her priors. All of her past offenses before her murder conviction.

A beat as Bowmen reads. Then--

BOWMEN

There's nothing here except a couple of traffic violations.

STONE

Exactly. Clean.

BOWMEN

Well, almost clean. Says here she got a ticket for doing 60 in a 45. She has a wild side for sure.

Stone rolls his eyes--

STONE

My point is, she has no prior violent offenses. So how does someone like that become a cold-blooded killer. 48 stab wounds, a slit throat, and a bashed-in skull.

Bowmen slowly pushes his food to the side-- he just lost his appetite.

STONE (CONT'D)

It just doesn't add up.

BOWMEN

Well hey, it wouldn't be the first time someone with no priors commits a murder.

STONE

True. But those other cases had motives or explanations. Money. Revenge. Mental disease. What's Nicole's motive? Whats her reason for murder? Prosecutors couldn't come up with one.

That's because they didn't have to. The evidence was stacked against her. No alibi, prints on the murder weapon. Not to mention the victim was her husband. Which means there's an endless list of motives and explanations.

(then)

C'mon Brandon, we've been through this. It was a cut n' dry case.

STONE

That's the thing. I'm starting to wonder if it's as cut n' dry as we thought. Evan, what if--

BOWMEN

Whoa. Whoa. Lemme stop you right there. Before you start getting into your crazy conspiracy theories. Look, the case is closed. And it's not our job to play "Sherlock" and re-open it. She's a convicted felon and our job is to catch her. That's it.

STONE

(on to something)
There. There. Right there. You just said it.

BOWMEN

Brandon--

STONE

Just hear me out. You said our job is to <u>catch</u> her, right? But that's only because she escaped. Now ask yourself, how did she escape?

BOWMEN

C'mon, Brandon. Don't do this. You know how she escaped. We were briefed on all this stuff.

STONE

Just humor me for a second, Evan. (reiterates)
How did she escape?

A beat. Bowmen SIGHS -- reluctant to play along.

Okay, fine. She escaped from the prison transport bus.

STONE

Details, Evan. How? How did she escape from the bus?

Bowmen SIGHS again --

BOWMEN

...well... According to the report, she faked-out one of the guards. Played dead. When the guy goes back to check on her she got a hold of his guy. Shot him in the head. Then she forced the driver to pull over before she shot him too.

STONE

So how does someone who's worst crime is doing 60 in a 45 mastermind something like that. Let alone get the jump on a guy twice her size while in cuffs and shackles.

BOWMEN

What are you saying? That it didn't happen?

STONE

You tell me. Someone with a seemingly clean history is convicted of a heinous murder. Then they somehow miraculously escape their imprisonment. It's more than a weird coincidence. It's a pattern.

Stone pulls out several more criminal files. Spreads them out across the table. We see several different names and faces. Amongst them-- Ryan Greene. CLOSE ON Ryan's file-- briefly.

STONE (CONT'D)

I've been looking at cases throughout the FBI's database. From all over the country. And it seems like the same scenario keeps reappearing. It's a pattern, Evan.

Jesus, Brandon. Is this how you've been spending your off-days? You seriously need to get a date.

STONE

(ignoring him)

Look, it's like you said, our job is to catch her. I'm not disagreeing with you on that. But once we do catch her, you gotta let me question her... Off the record.

BOWMEN

Why?

STONE

Cause I think there might be a little more to these cases than we're being told.

A beat. Bowmen STARES at Stone-- trying to level with his partners obsession. Then--

BOWMEN

Let's just take it one step at a time, alright? We gotta find the chick first. And we're not gonna do it on an empty stomach--

Bowmen prepares to eat, but just then--

BRRIINGG!! BRRIINGG!!-- The sound of a ringing phone. It's Stone's. He answers.

STONE

(into the phone)

This is Stone... What?... Where?... Okay, we're on our way.

Stone hangs up. Stands. Quickly begins gathering the files.

BOWMEN

Whoa whoa. Hey. What's going on?

STONE

That was the Chief of Police. There's a situation uptown. We gotta go.

BOWMEN

Wait a minute. A-a situation? What the hell is a situation? And what do we look like, field cops? Screw the Chief. I'm not going outa my way for some situation. We're FBI now. Get it?

(tosses his FBI badge on the table)

F-B-T.

STONE

First of all, we're both still rookies, so don't go gettin cocky. And second, don't forget everything the Chief has done for us. If anything, we owe him. So we're going.

Stone finishes gathering his things-- he's ready to go. Bowmen STARES at him for a beat-- arms folded. He's not budging. Stone SIGHS.

STONE (CONT'D)

Look, it's a hostage situation. There's a kid involved.

A beat. An empathetic look slowly forming on Bowmen's face.

BOWMEN

Dammit, Evan. You know how I feel about kids.

STONE

Yea, you're a total sucker for a sob story with a kid involved. Now come on.

Stone BOLTS for the door.

BOWMEN

Can I at least finish my food?

STONE (O.S.)

No time. And don't forget to leave a tip.

INT. COOPER RESIDENCE- LIVING ROOM- DAY

Ryan, PACING the room-- nervous. The knife still in hand. Heather and Jake, still on the couch. Ryan checks his watch-- CLOSE ON the watch-- 12:04

It's awkwardly silent. Until--

The sound of SIRENS. It starts quiet. Then gets louder and louder.

Ryan STOPS pacing -- rushes to the window. Looks outside.

Ryan POV-- The streets of the neighborhood are vacant. But the sound of sirens gets louder.

Ryan gets anxious. He APPROACHES Heather and Jake with the knife.

RYAN

Did you call them?! Huh?! Did you!?

Heather pulls her son away-- she's almost in tears.

HEATHER

No! I-I didn't! I couldn't!

Now the sirens engulf the room-- Ryan rushes back to the window. Looks. A beat. Then--

Ryan POV-- An AMBULANCE races past the Cooper residence-- on their way to completely different destination. It disappears into the distance. The sound of sirens slowly fades into nothing.

Ryan lets out a BIG sigh of relief. A beat. He turns back to Heather and Jake. They're terrified. Only now does Ryan realize what he's done.

He looks at his knife-- remorseful.

RYAN

(calming)

...I'm sorry. I just... Look, I'm not a bad guy, okay.

(a beat)

I'm not gonna hurt you--

HEATHER

Like you hurt your wife and son.

A beat. Ryan is astonished by Heather's bold accusation. But the astonishment quickly turns into anger.

RYAN

(aggressive)

You don't know what the hell you're talking about, lady. I would never hurt my family.

HEATHER

Oh, I'm sure. Let me guess, it was just an accident. You just got mad and blacked out, right? Next thing you know you're standing over their corpses--

RYAN

Shut your mouth! That's not what happened--

HEATHER

Oh, right, cause you're so innocent. That's why you're holding us hostage with a knife. You're crazy--

RYAN

Hey, I'm only doing what I have to do--

HEATHER

Oh that's so typical of people like you. You've got an excuse for everything. When are you gonna start taking responsibility for your actions!

RYAN

(snapping)

For what actions, huh?! Do you really think I'd kill my own family?! You don't know anything! I <u>loved my family!</u> I'm innocent!

A beat.

HEATHER

(nodding to the t.v.)
Yea? Well that's not what the news
says--

RYAN

I don't give a damn what the news says!

Ryan APPROACHES the t.v. In act of pure RAGE, he THROWS it over. The t.v. hits the floor with a CRASH!!! Sparks fly.

Heather GASP before becoming deathly silent. Jake covers his ears in fear.

A beat. Ryan stands over the smashed t.v.-- breathing hard. He once again gets a remorseful expression.

Ryan STUMBLES back to the chair near the window. PLOPS down. He looks defeated.

Heather just stares -- unsure of what to do or say. Then --

RYAN (CONT'D)

I was framed. Somebody... Somebody set me up... And killed my family...

We PAN IN on Ryan. As we PAN, we begin to hear the sound of a RINGING PHONE. But the sound isn't coming from anywhere in the house. It's inside of Ryan's head--

FLASH TO:

INT. SMALL OFFICE- DAY(FLASHBACK)

Ryan SITS behind a desk in this neatly-organized, one-man office. A variety of PAPERWORK and OFFICE SUPPLIES are scattered in front of him.

His cell phone is ringing. He looks. Then answers.

RYAN

(into the phone)

Hey, beautiful.

INTERCUT CALL WITH:

INT. GREENE RESIDENCE- DAY(FLASHBACK)

You're typical middle-class home.

JULIA(28), beautiful, kind and caring.

JULIA

(into phone)

JULIA (CONT'D)

Hey yourself. How's work?

RYAN

(a tired SIGH)

Work is...work. Enough said.

JULIA

(sympathetic)

Awwww. That's too bad. But I think I know what might cheer you up.

RYAN

(dirty thoughts)

Oh, is that so? What'd you have in mind?

JULIA

Down boy. That's not what I meant. I'm making your favorite. Chicken and--

RYAN

Chicken and mozzarella spaghetti?

JULIA

(laughing)

The one and only.

RYAN

That sounds great, baby. I can't wait.

(a beat)

Just... make sure you keep it warm.

A long beat. Julia -- depression slowly forming on her face.

JULIA

You're staying late again, aren't you?

RYAN

(a hard SIGH)

I'm sorry. It's just— things have been getting pretty hectic around here. What with all the new clients we've been getting...

(fiddling with

paperwork)

The guys upstairs have been driving me crazy. And you know I can't disappoint them. Not with this promotion I'm trying to get.

RYAN (CONT'D)

(a beat with no response)

Julia?--

JULIA

I understand. It's just... you haven't been home as much lately...

RYAN

Baby, I know. I know. But trust me, I'm gonna make it up to you--

JULIA

It's not just me you should be thinking about. What about Tyler?

A beat. Ryan LEANS back in his chair -- soul searching. Then --

RYAN

Just be patient with me a little bit longer. I'm gonna get this promotion. And then I'm gonna make it up to you and Tyler. I promised.

A beat.

JULIA

(comic relief)

Sure. Just like you promised to buy me a Bentley.

RYAN

Yea... Still working on that.

They both laugh. Then--

DING DONG!!!-- The sound of a doorbell. It's on Julia's end. Ryan hears it as well.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Who's that?

JULIA

Not sure. But if I were to guess, I'd say it was the neighbors complaining about Tyler's toys in their yard again.

RYAN

Geez, those people seriously need to get a hobby.

JULIA

(giggling)

I think we are their hobby.

(then)

Anyway, I better let you get back to work. Otherwise I might not see you at all tonight.

RYAN

Nothing in this world could keep me from coming home to you and Tyler tonight. ... Except for maybe floor seats to a Lakers game.

JULIA

(sarcastic)

Congratulations. You're father and husband of the year.

A beat.

RYAN

(getting serious)

I love you.

JULIA

And I love you--

DING DONG!!! -- The doorbell rings again.

JULIA (CONT'D)

(sarcastic)

And I love our doorbell.

(then)

See ya soon, baby.

CLICK! -- She hangs up.

Ryan sets the phone down. A beat as he reflects on the conversation. Then-- something in the corner of his desk catches his eye.

CLOSE ON a PICTURE of Ryan, Julia, and their son TYLER(9). They all have HUGE smiles. A small, but happy family. Ryan SIGHS. Then--

He STANDS. Gathers his paperwork into one folder. Throws it into his briefcase. Now he's out the door.

EXT. GREENE RESIDENCE- DAY (FLASHBACK)

Ryan PULLS into the driveway of his home-- driving

your average SUDAN. He emerges from the car. In one hand is a BOUQUET OF FLOWERS. In the other, a boxed up TOY-- some kind of RACE CAR SET.

He approaches the door but suddenly STOPS. A confused expression.

REVEAL the front door -- wide open.

CUT TO:

INT. GREENE RESIDENCE- CONTINUOUS(FLASHBACK)

Ryan ENTERS the house. Slow. Cautious.

RYAN

Julia!... Hey, Julia, I decided come home early! Where are you?!

Ryan turns the corner-- now he's IN THE LIVING ROOM. Still no sign of his family.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Hey, Tyler?! I got ya something, buddy! Come on out!

He turns the corner again -- IN THE KITCHEN. He SUDDENLY stops -- dead in his tracks. A look of pure SHOCK on his face. He drops everything in his hands.

CLOSE ON the floor where the bouquet of flowers and the toy land with impact.

Now REVEAL Julia -- lying on the kitchen floor. Face-up. Eyes closed. Motionless. Her head lies in a POOL OF BLOOD.

A beat. Ryan is FROZEN. Is it fear? Is it disbelief? Then-He SNAPS.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Julia!!

Ryan RUSHES to her aid-- kneeling down beside her. He hesitates to touch her at first-- unaware of her condition. But he soon finds himself embracing her lifeless body. That's right, she's dead. And Ryan knows it.

A beat as Ryan holds his dead wife-- now he's in tears.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Dammit!... Dammit! Julia...No!

Then it hits him--

RYAN (CONT'D)

(whisper)

Tyler...?

(then)

Tyler!!!

Ryan BOLTS through the house. UP THE STAIRS. DOWN THE HALLWAY--

CUT TO:

INT. GREENE RESIDENCE- TYLER'S ROOM- CONTINUOUS(FLASHBACK)

Ryan BARRELS into the room. But once again he is STOPPED-- an even more intense look of shock on his face.

REVEAL Tyler -- lying on the ground. Face-up. He's also dead.

Ryan slowly STUMBLES to his son-- its as if he's forgotten how to use his legs. He DROPS to his knees. SCOOPS Tyler up into his arms. BURIES his head into Tyler's chest-- sobbing.

RYAN

Tyler... Tyler!! Dammit, Who did this?! Who did this?!!

A beat as Ryan CRIES uncontrollably. Then we hear--

SIRENS. Getting louder and louder. They eventually tune out the sound of Ryan's cries before--

BLACKOUT.

ACT TWO

EXT. SAINT ROSA HOTEL- DAY

The immediate surrounding entrance to this lavish, 25-story hotel building is BORDERED OFF by the LAPD. Blue flashing LIGHTS and armed COPS in every direction.

JUST OUTSIDE OF THE BORDER-- a LARGE crowd of people. Spectators. But what are they spectating?

IN THE DISTANCE--

A BLACK sudan pulls up. Stone and Bowmen EMERGE.

STONE

Geez, look at these people. It's ridicules. This is a hostage situation, not a concert.

BOWMEN

(sarcastic)

Hey, why go to the movies when you can watch hostage negotiations live, right?

Stone ignores his partners jokes. BOLTS to the Hotel--

STONE

C'mon.

Bowmen FOLLOWS.

Stone and Bowmen arrive at the LAPD's border. One quick FLASH of their badges and they're allowed in. They're immediately confronted by--

AGENT HOLLY GATES(36), attractive, but she's all work and no play.

GATES

Gentlemen. Do I know you?

Stone and Bowmen RAISE they're badges -- simultaneously.

STONE

I'm special agent Stone. And this is special agent Bowmen.

Bowmen holds out his hand--

BOWMEN

(flirting)

(MORE)

BOWMEN (CONT'D)

Hey, how's it going? I'm Bowmen.

<u>Special agent</u>, like he said. But you can call me Evan.

An awkward beat. Gates STARES at Bowmen's hand until Bowmen eventually LOWERS it-- getting the message. Then--

GATES

...Okay agent Stone and... Evan. What the hell are you doing here?

STONE

The Chief of Police called us. He knew we were in the area and thought we might be able to--

GATES

Might be able to what? Help? Awwww, how sweet of him. But I'm afraid he just wasted your time.

Gates pulls out an FBI BADGE. RAISES it.

GATES (CONT'D)

Special agent Holly Gates. I'm in charge of this operation.

BOWMEN

Wait, you're FBI?

GATES

(sassy)

I was about to ask you the same thing.

STONE

But why is an FBI agent handling a standard hostage situation. Shouldn't someone from the LAPD be in charge?

GATES

Yes, they would. That is, if this \underline{was} in fact a standard hostage situation. But it's not.

Gates WALKS to a SQUAD CAR-- lays out a couple of documents on the HOOD. Stone and Bowmen are right behind her.

CLOSE ON the document -- its a CRIMINAL PROFILE. A picture of a MAN-- JUAN SANDERS(27), rugged features -- along with his information. We recognize the profile.

We've seen it somewhere before.

GATES (CONT'D)

Juan Sanders.

Stone's eyes WIDEN upon hearing the name.

GATES (CONT'D)

Four months ago he was convicted of the murder of his crippled mother. Got himself a cozy, little life sentence. But he escaped from his prison in Nevada shortly after arriving there. I got stuck chasing the bastard ever since. It hasn't been easy, but I finally tracked him to here in L.A. He's been staying in this hotel for the past couple of days. But I guess he knew I was closing in on him. The maniac got his hands on some security guard's gun and started grabbing hostages.

(pointing up)
He's there. On the 18th floor.

We get a clear view of the window on the 18th floor. It's open-- curtains flowing outward. But we see no one.

A beat. Stone, an inquisitive look.

STONE

Agent Gates, I'm sure there was an investigation of Sander's escape at the prison. Did they ever find out how he did it?

GATES

(thinking)

... Now that you mention it, I don't think they did... But I'm sure it'd just come down to the staff's incompetence.

(then)

But what's that got to do with anything--?

Before Stone can say another word Bowmen steps in--

BOWMEN

Uh-- Nothing. It's got nothing to do with anything. Just making sure we got all the facts.

Gates lets out an annoyed GRUNT. Gathers her files.

GATES

Anyway, as you can see I have everything under control. I've been tracking this guy for a long time. I know all his moves. I know how he thinks. I'll have this situation resolved in no time. But you can tell the Chief that I appreciate his concern.

STONE

Agent Gates, let us help. I have experience in hostage negotiation--

GATES

Yea, thats what every cop, detective, and agent says. It's not until they talk someone off a ledge that they realize they're not as good as they thought they were. Thanks, but no thanks.

Stone looks defeated. Now it's Bowmen to the rescue--

BOWMEN

(sensitive)

Look, my partner and I heard that there might be a kid up there. See, I've got this thing about kids and if anything happened to little one I'd get nightmares, ya know? So if there's anything we can do... Anything...

A beat. Gates softens up.

GATES

I've got a kid of my own, okay. A girl. I know what's at stake. I'm not gonna let anything happen to any of the hostages--

STONE

But agent Gates --

GATES

Look, if you really wanna help--

Gates NODS towards something in the distance.

REVEAL a COFFEE SHOP across the street.

GATES (CONT'D)

Then how about a coffee. Black. And a bagel while you're at it. I missed breakfast.

Stone and Bowmen STARE at the Coffee Shop for a beat. And just as they turn back--

GATES (CONT'D)

Now if you'll excuse me, I have lives to save.

Gates LEAVES. A beat. Stone and Bowmen just stand there--what just happened? Stone looks up towards the 18th floor of hotel-- the hostage window. Nothings' changed.

STONE

Evan, I have to get up there. I have to talk to Juan Sanders.

BOWMEN

You've gotta be kidding me. This isn't a game, Brandon. This guy is armed and dangerous. He's not just gonna sit back and answer your questions.

STONE

But I can get this guy to talk. I know I can. I just need--

Bowmen begins walking. Towards the Coffee Shop.

STONE (CONT'D)

Hey, where ya going?

BOWMEN

I'm gonna go get Gates her bagel. If it'll really help then I'm down.

STONE

But--

BOWMEN

C'mon, Brandon. Get a grip on reality, will ya? You're not gonna go up there, start bumbling around, and get some kid shot. I won't let you. Now come on.

A beat. Bowmen disappears into the crowd. Stone, stubborn but reasonable.

STONE

(to himself)

Yea... but a bagel? Seriously?

Stone FOLLOWS his partner. Amongst the many faces in the crowd that he passes, we STOP on one-- It's Nicole! She wears sunglasses to hide her face.

Off Nicole -- an unreadable expression.

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM- DAY(FLASHBACK)

Ryan SITS at small table in this darkly-lit interrogation room.

DETECTIVE BARNES(42), sits across from Ryan. Some files lay before him. Another detective, DETECTIVE LEDGER(40), PACES the room—restless. The classic "good cop, bad cop" routine.

A beat.

Ryan -- tired. It looks like he hasn't slept in weeks.

BARNES

So let's go through this one more time. Just so we're clear. You came home, the door was wide open, your family was dead. Sound about right?

RYAN

(hesitant)

Y-yes...

BARNES

Okay. And during the time of the murders, you claim you were...

RYAN

At work, like I already told you.

BARNES

Right. Right. But nobody can vouch for you because...

RYAN

(impatient)

Because I was working late! I was the only person left at the office, okay.

BARNES

Sure. Okay. Very convinient.

BARNES (CONT'D)

Then how about the door. There were no signs of forced entry. Which means that perp was either let in, or maybe... Maybe they had a key.

(leaning in)

You have a key to your house, don't you?

RYAN

(snapping)

What are you trying to say!? That I had something to do with this!? What the hell's wrong with you!?

Just then--Someone ENTERS the room.

Brady(33), intelligent and confident. And a long-time friend of Ryan.

Ryan -- relieved.

BRADY

Tisk tisk tisk, boys. You wouldn't, by any chance, be questioning my client without his legal representation, would you?

BARNES

He didn't ask for any legal representation. And he doesn't need it. We haven't placed him under arrest.

BRADY

Not yet anyway. You're just waiting for him to say what you wanna hear, am I right?

Barnes begins to speak. Brady doesn't give him the chance--

BRADY (CONT'D)

You know what, I think my client, you, and your partner have said enough. Why don't you go ahead and give me the room.

(smug)

That is, if you don't mind.

A beat. Barnes and Ledger exchange stares. Then--

Barnes STANDS. Gathers his files.

BARNES

(insincere)

Of course. Whatever you want.

Both MEN make their way to the exit.

BRADY

Oh, hey, and if you could bring us some coffee that'd be great.

LEDGER

Screw you.

They EXIT.

A beat. Brady STARES at Ryan. Ryan is reluctant to stare back.

BRADY

(sighs)

Dammit, Ryan. What have you gotten yourself into this time.

Off Ryan-- agreed.

FLASH TO:

INT. COOPER RESIDENCE- LIVING ROOM- DAY

Jake's fidgety hands. His feet TAPPING-- one after another. He is ROCKING back and forth in his seat.

Ryan notices.

RYAN

(to Jake)

Hey... What's wrong with you?

JAKE

I gotta use the bathroom.

RYAN

That's too bad. Hold it.

JAKE

I can't.

A beat. Ryan STARES Jake down.

RYAN

How old are you, five?

JAKE

I'm nine.

RYAN

Then you're old enough to hold your piss.

Jake POUTS-- he ROCKS even faster.

HEATHER

Please, Jake. Try to hold it.

JAKE

I can't, mom.

(whisper)

I'm gonna pee myself.

Heather SIGHS. She looks to Ryan.

HEATHER

Please. Can't you just take him?

RYAN

And leave you here by yourself? I don't think so.

(to Jake)

You really wanna pee? Be my guest.

SUDDENLY--

DING DONG!! -- The sound of the doorbell. Ryan FLINCHES.

RYAN (CONT'D)

(frantic)

Who is that?

HEATHER

I-I don't know.

RYAN

C'mon, don't lie to me. Who are you expecting?

HEATHER

No one. I'm not expecting anyone.

Ryan RUSHES to the window. Looks. It's a clear view of the front porch.

RYAN POV-- A MAN stands on the porch. TRAVIS(42), the over curious neighbor.

Ryan WAVES over Heather.

RYAN

(whisper)

Come here.

A beat. Heather doesn't budge.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Come here!

Heather hesitates -- then obeys. She STANDS by Ryan's side-cautious of the knife.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Who is that?

Heather LOOKS.

HEATHER

(quietly)

Dammit.

(then)

That's my neighbor. Travis.

RYAN

What's he doing here?

HEATHER

I'm... not sure. He comes by all the time. It's always something different. I think he's got a thing for me.

A beat-- Ryan shoots her an awkward expression.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

What? It's true.

Ryan shakes his head. Then--

RYAN

Go si'down. And don't say a word.

Ryan TUCKS the knife into the back of his pants-- neatly covers it with his shirt. Then fixes his hair.

HEATHER

Oh...no... You're not seriously going to talk to him, are you?

RYAN

I don't have much of a choice, now do I? Can't let you do it. You'll find some way to rat me out.

HEATHER

And just what do you plan on saying?

RYAN

It's simple. You're gone. I'm the babysitter.

JAKE

That's stupid.

RYAN

Excuse me?

JAKE

Stacy is my babysitter. And she's nice. Unlike you--

HEATHER

And Travis knows this. Also, he'll know that I'm not really gone.

RYAN

And how's that?

CUT TO:

EXT. COOPER RESIDENCE- DAY

Travis grows impatient. He PEERS around the corner.

We see Heather's white SUDAN sitting in it's normal spot in the drive-way.

Travis once again RINGS the doorbell.

CUT TO:

INT. COOPER RESIDENCE- LIVING ROOM- DAY

DING DONG-- The door bell rings again.

HEATHER

Trust me, he always knows when I'm here or not.

RYAN

(taking a seat)

Fine. Then I'll just wait him out. He'll get the message eventually.

HEATHER

Not so sure that's a good idea either.

RYAN

And why's that?

HEATHER

Cause the last time I tried to "wait him out" he came this close to calling the police.

A disturbed look on Ryan's face.

RYAN

What's wrong with this guy?

Heather SHRUGS-- who knows? SUDDENLY--

DING DONG-- The doorbell for the third time. Followed by--

KNOCK KNOCK -- Travis is KNOCKING on the door.

TRAVIS(O.S.)

Hey, Heather? Heather?

Ryan PEERS out of the window-- anxious. He's exhausted all of his options. All but one. That's when it hits him.

He looks at Jake. Jake looks back-- uneasy.

RYAN

Hey, kid. Still need to use the bathroom?

Off Jake-- curious and reluctant.

CUT TO:

EXT. COOPER RESIDENCE- DAY

Travis KNOCKS on the door again.

TRAVIS

Heather? Is everything alright in there?...

A beat. No response from the other side.

Travis TURNS-- PULLS out his PHONE. Is he really about to call the police? But JUST THEN-- $\,$

The front door OPENS. Travis turns back around.

REVEAL Jake. Standing in the doorway. Looking up at Travis.

A beat. It's not who Travis was expecting-- and you can see it on his face.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

Oh... Well hey there little guy. Where's your mom?

JAKE

(monotone)

She's in the shower, Mr. Furman.

Travis can't help but smile at the thought of that. But he quickly hides it.

TRAVIS

Oh. Well that's too bad. I was hoping to talk to her about something. Hey, I know. How bout I just come in there and wait for her to get out.

JAKE

I don't think that's a good idea, Mr. Furman. My mom told me not to answer the door when she's in the shower.

TRAVIS

That so? But I mean... It's just me. Your good ole neighbor, Mr. Furman--

JAKE

Sorry. But no.

A beat. Jake holds his ground. Travis tries his hardest to hide his frustration. But he's determined.

TRAVIS

Well how about this --

JAKE

How about this, Mr. Furman. Just tell me what you were gonna talk to my mom about and I'll let her know when she gets out of the shower. Okay?

Travis is BAFFLED by Jake's intuitiveness. There's no

way around this kid.

TRAVIS

Well I don't think--

JAKE

Look, Mr. Furman, my favorite cartoon is on and I'm missing it. So is there anything else you need?

Travis tries to PEER into the house-- it's no good. Jake has the door at the perfect angle.

TRAVIS

(getting serious)

Look, kid, cut me a break, will ya?

JAKE

(closing the door)

Good-bye, Mr. Furman.

TRAVIS

Hey, wait a second ya little--

CUT TO:

INT. COOPER RESIDENCE- CONTINUOUS

SLAM-- Jake SHUTS the door.

TRAVIS(O.S.)

Dammit!

Ryan is STANDING right behind the door-- he holds onto Jake for a beat-- waits for Travis to leave.

CUT TO:

INT. COOPER RESIDENCE- LIVING ROOM- DAY

Jake ENTERS -- followed by Ryan.

Heather QUICKLY recovers her son.

HEATHER

Jake, are you alright?

JAKE

I'm fine mom.

HEATHER

(to Ryan)

(MORE)

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Did he really leave?

RYAN

He did. You should've heard him. He's a natural. In fact, I have a feeling you won't have to worry about that guy anymore.

JAKE

Can I go to the bathroom now?

A beat. Ryan looks deep into Jake's eyes-- reading his soul. Then--

RYAN

(trusting)

Sure. Go on.

INT. HOSPITAL- MAIN LOBBY- DAY (FLASHBACK)

We FOLLOW Juan(from the criminal file) -- he walks through this semi-busy hospital lobby. Now we get a better look at him. Tall. Muscular build.

He arrives at the FRONT COUNTER.

JUAN

Hey.

CLERK

Hello. How can I help you?

JUAN

I'm here to see Elana Sanders.

CLERK

(searching records)

Okay, sure... She's gonna be in room... 208. Second floor. To the right.

Juan NODS.

JUAN

Thank you.

INT. HOSPITAL- SECOND FLOOR- DAY(FLASHBACK)

Juan ARIVES at room 208. PAUSES at the door. Takes a deep breath. Then ENTERS.

INT. ROOM 208- CONTINUOUS(FLASHBACK)

A small, quaint patient room. Fitting one bed. On the bed--ELANA SANDERS(69), humble. Aging gracefully.

She LOOKS up to see Juan enter-- slow and steady. A breathing device attached at her nose. She's definitely seen better days.

Juan STOPS at the edge of her bed.

A beat of silence. Then--

JUAN

Mama!

ELANA

My son!

They EMBRACE.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. ROOM 208- DAY (FLASHBACK)

Juan SITS at his mother's bedside-- his hands gently caressing hers.

JUAN

Mama, guess what?

(a beat)

I got the job.

Elana's face LIGHTS UP.

ELANA

Oh my! My has finally become a man.

JUAN

(laughing)

Mama, I'm 27. I've been a man for a long time.

(then)

But this new job pays twice what my old one did. I can finally start getting you the medication you need.

A beat. The shine in Elana face dissipates.

ELANA

Oh Juan. Don't waste your money on an old, sick woman like me. You should be using that money to find yourself a wife.

JUAN

Mama, we've already talked about this. I'm gonna get you healthy first.

Juan SQUEEZES his mother's hand tighter.

JUAN (CONT'D)

It's gonna be alright, mama. I promise.

CLOSE ON Juan -- He's confident. Reassuring.

Now the b.g. slowly begins to change-- shaping into the b.g. of--

FLASH TO:

INT. SAINT ROSA HOTEL- ROOM 1812- DAY

CLOSE ON Juan -- now he's panicked. A desperate look in his eyes. WIDEN TO reveal -- Juan holding a gun -- shakily. He has it aimed at --

A HOSTAGE NEGOTIATOR(late 20's).

NEGOTIATOR

Look, just take it easy, okay? I'm trying to help you.

JUAN

Help me?... No. That's a lie. You and the rest of those cops. You're all liars!

IN THE CORNER-- a young GIRL(7) and her MOTHER(29)-- terrified.

NEGOTIATOR

C'mon, just put the gun down so we can talk about this.

A beat. It almost looks like Juan is considering it. But--

JUAN

I've been talking this whole time... I've talked to the detectives, the judges, the lawyers... But nobody seems to be listening.

(a beat)

I'm innocent!!

(a beat)

But since they won't listen to that...
Maybe they'll listen to this...

Juan RAISES the gun-- a crazy look in his eye.

NEGOTIATOR

No-- wait! Hold on!--

BANG!!!-- Juan fires the gun.

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. SAINT ROSA HOTEL- DAY

An AMBULANCE comes to a SCREECHING stop in front of the hotel-- within the LAPD's border.

The back doors FLY open. Two men emerge with a STRETCHER.

Stone and Bowmen fight their way through the crowd-- finally arriving at the scene. Bowmen has the BAGEL and COFFEE in hand.

SUDDENLY the men from the ambulance EMERGE from the hotel. Pushing the stretcher. Now it's occupied with a body.

It's the Negotiator from the previous Act. And he's grimacing in pain. Just under the Negotiator's right shoulder is a large red stain. It's blood.

Gates STANDS off to the side. She watches as they LOAD the injured man into the ambulance and drive away-- sirens BLASTING.

Seconds later -- Stone and Bowmen APPROACH her.

STONE

Agent Gates, what the hell happened?!

GATES

That bastard Sanders shot my negotiator. Close range. Right in the chest. Would've killed the guy if not for the fact that his heart's on the Left side instead of the right.

(jokingly)

That's definitely a story for the grandkids.

STONE

(upset)

Dammit Gates, I thought you said you weren't gonna rely on negotiators!

GATES

No. I said I wasn't going to rely on you. And I hope you don't think I regret that decision.

STONE

Were any of the hostages hurt?

GATES

Of course not. I'm pretty sure I made it clear to you from the start that their would be no casualties. Don't confuse my capabilities with your own, agent.

(reaching for her food)
Now gimme that. I'm starving.

Before Gates can get to it -- Stone SLAPS the bagel out of Bowmen's hand. It hits the ground.

STONE

As far as I'm concerned, your capabilities aren't worth a damn!

Gates STEPS to Stone. They're almost nose to nose.

GATES

Do I need to have you removed from the premises?

STONE

You just lost your negotiator. So send me in. I can end this.

GATES

No.

STONE

Why not?!

GATES

My case. My fugitive. My decision. And I say no!

A beat. The two STARE at each other with intense eyes. Then--

BRIINGG! BRIING! -- Gates CELL PHONE rings. She answers.

GATES (CONT'D)

This is Gates... Yes... Good... Good. Okay. Thanks chief. Bye.

She hangs up.

BOWMEN

That was the chief? What'd he say?

GATES

He said my team is ready.

STONE

Team? Wait... you don't mean--

GATES

That's right. SWAT. I'm gonna end this my way. Quick and clean.

Gates turns. Walks. Stone and Bowmen follow.

STONE

You've gotta be kidding me. Quick and clean is the opposite of what this is gonna be. You saw what Sanders did to that negotiator. He's not just desperate, he's unstable. You send in a bunch of guns and tear gas in there and there's no telling what he'll do.

GATES

(sarcastic)

Thanks for your analysis on the situation. I'll be sure to tell the SWAT team no guns or tear gas--

STONE

Gates!

Gates STOPS walking. Turns.

GATES

You just won't take no for answer, will you?

STONE

Please. Just give me five minutes. That's all. Five minutes. And if I fail... Or get shot, then your SWAT guys can have a field day.

A beat. Gates thinks. Sighs. Then--

GATES

Make it four minutes.

INT. COOPER RESIDENCE- LIVING ROOM- DAY

Ryan SITS in his usual spot-- the chair near the window. He checks his watch. 2:15.

Heather and Jake still occupy the couch. Until--Heather SUDDENLY stands.

Ryan PERKS up-- raises the knife.

RYAN

Hey--

HEATHER

Relax. I'm just stretching my legs.

RYAN

I don't remember giving you permission to do that.

HEATHER

(sassy)

I don't remember asking.

Jake CHUCKLES.

Ryan is completely caught off guard by the comment. He SIGHS. Lowers the knife.
Heather walks to the FIRE PLACE.

ON THE SHELF-- a picture of Heather, Jake, and a MAN. He's young. Good looking. But who is he?

Heather STARES at the photo for a beat. Then--

She is SUDDENLY joined by Ryan.

RYAN

That must be your husband.

Heather NODS.

HEATHER

He was a good man.

RYAN

Was?

A beat.

HEATHER

He died. A few years ago. Cancer. This was one of the last photos we took before he started the chemotherapy.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

After that, he wasn't too fond of getting his picture taken.

A beat. Heather looks like she's reliving the past.

RYAN

I'm sorry.

Heather SHAKES her head.

HEATHER

I don't really like talking about it. Not in front of...

She LOOKS to Jake.

Jake, sitting quietly on the couch. watching the muted television.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Your wife. And your son. What were they like?

A beat. Ryan takes a BIG, DEEP breath. Then slowly lets it all out.

RYAN

My wife was... beautiful. We met in high school. I was shy. And nerdy. She was a cheerleader. Popular. Smart. Outgoing. ... Never in a million years would I have thought back then that we'd end up together.

(a beat)

One day I'm in my car. On my way out of the student parking lot when Bam! She backed out right into me. She was so shook-up. She said she didn't have insurance. And that her parents were gonna kill her. So I told I knew a guy that could fix up both our cars. No cops. No insurance people.

(laughing)

She was ecstatic. She kept saying "I owe you, I owe you". Even when I told her it wasn't a big deal, she insisted repaying me. So finally I said "let me take you to movie."

Heather LAUGHS.

HEATHER

You actually said that? That's cute... in a slightly pathetic way.

RYAN

I know. Corny, right? Anyway, long story short, she had a great time. We both did. ... I can't help but think that our meeting in the parking lot was fate.

A long beat. Ryan is off in space-- reminiscing. Heather smiles at him warmly.

HEATHER

And your son?

Ryan looks at Jake.

RYAN

My son Tyler was about the same age as your son. Real smart kid. Straight A's, ya know.

A beat. Ryan's face begins to WRINKLE in pain and anger.

An IMAGE of Tyler FLASHES across the screen.

RYAN (CONT'D)

It's not fair.

Then an IMAGE of Julia.

RYAN (CONT'D)

It's just not fair!

A MONTAGE of IMAGES-- Ryan, Julia, and Tyler at the park. Ryan pushes Tyler on the SWINGS. Now we see the family in a car-- Ryan drives. CLOSE ON Julia. CLOSE ON Tyler.

Ryan uses the fire place shelf to hold himself up-- as if he's lost the strength in his legs.

A beat.

HEATHER

...are you okay?

Ryan CHECKS his watch. Then--

RYAN

I will be. ... Soon.

INT. SAINT ROSA HOTEL- HALLWAY (18TH FLOOR) - DAY

We FOLLOW Stone, Gates, and and two other OFFICERS as they briskly WALK towards the end of the hall.

Now Stone is wearing a BULLET PROOF VEST.

GATES

Alright, Stone, my team is less than 10 minutes out. So if you're not oughta there before that then you're on your own. Got it?

STONE

Trust me, I'm not gonna stay in there any longer than I have to.

GATES

Smart man. Get in, do what you do, and if you can't calm him down, get out--

BOWMEN(O.S.)

Brandon!

Gates and Stone stop. Turn.

REVEAL Bowmen--rushing towards them. He approaches.

GATES

Who the hell let you through? Somebody escort him back downstairs--

BOWMEN

Wait, I need to talk to my partner. ... Brandon.

A beat. Bowmen, staring at his partner with a look that can easily be interpreted. Then--

GATES

Dammit, we don't have time for this--

STONE

Gates, this won't take long.

GATES

Hey, by all means, take your time.

GATES (CONT'D)

But every second you waste is your own.

Stone and Bowmen take a few steps to the side-- out of Gates' hearing range.

BOWMEN

Brandon, what the hell are you doing?

STONE

What's it look like. I'm saving the hostages--

BOWMEN

Bull. You're not <u>saving</u> anyone. You're chasing that stupid conspiracy theory. This has got to stop--

STONE

It's more than a theory, Evan. And I'm about to prove it. This guy can tell me everything I need to know.

BOWMEN

That's assuming he knows anything. Have you ever considered that maybe you're wrong about him. That maybe you're wrong about everyone. These are dangerous convicts.

STONE

That may be. But I'm willing to take that risk.

BOWMEN

But you said it yourself, he's unstable. Dammit Brandon, are you trying to get yourself killed?

STONE

Look, either way, somebody's gotta get in there and do something. Would you rather it be me or the SWAT team?

BOWMEN

The SWAT team. Cause at least it's there honest intention to help.

A beat. Stone has no comeback.

GATES

Agent! Let's go!

STONE

...I have to do this Brandon. And besides, it's too late to turn back now.

Stone returns to Gates and her entourage. They continue walking.

Off Bowmen-- damn.

INT. SAINT ROSA HOTEL- ROOM 1812- DAY

Juan PEERS out of the window.

JUAN

Look at all of them. They're all here to see a show. ...Well if that's what they want then I'll give it to em! (out of the window)
Ya here that?! I'll give ya show you'll never forget!!

The girl and her mother HUDDLE together in the corner near the bathroom. They don't make a sound. SUDDENLY--

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK!!!-- Pounding at he door.

CUT TO:

INT. SAINT ROSA HOTEL- HALLWAY (18TH FLOOR) - DAY

Stone STANDS on the other side of the door-- Gates a couple steps behind him.

STONE

Juan Sanders. I'm agent Brandon Stone. FBI. ...Listen, why don't you let me in for a sec so we can talk.

CUT TO:

INT. SAINT ROSA HOTEL- ROOM 1812- DAY

Juan, a slight look of fear. But only for a second. Then--

JUAN

(pretend courage)

Geez, another negotiator! You'd think you people would learn from your mistakes!

STONE (O.S.)

I'm not a negotiator, Juan.

JUAN

Oh yea?... Then what the hell do ya want?!

STONE (O.S.)

I already told you. I just wanna talk.

JUAN

Yea? Well you can forget it! I've been talking this whole time to all you filthy cops. But none of you would listen. What makes you any different?

CUT TO:

INT. SAINT ROSA HOTEL- HALLWAY (18TH FLOOR) - DAY

Stone, stuck. A beat. He looks at Gates. She doesn't know how to react. Then--

STONE

Because I know you're innocent.

Gates, confused.

CUT TO:

INT. SAINT ROSA HOTEL- ROOM 1812- DAY

Juan is speechless. A beat. He looks at his hostages. Then back at the door.

STONE (O.S.)

You didn't kill your mother, Juan. Trust me, I know.

A beat. Juan slightly LOWERS his gun-- a positive sign.

STONE(O.S.)

Here's how we're gonna do this, Juan. I've got the keys to the door right here in my hand.

STONE(O.S.) (CONT'D)

So I'm gonna go ahead and let myself in. But I'm by myself and I'm <u>unarmed</u>. So I'd really appreciate it if you didn't shoot me. Okay?

JUAN

N-now just wait a second-- H-hold on!-

STONE (O.S.)

Sorry Juan, but I just don't have that kind of time. Here I come.

A slight SHIFT of the door nob. The door begins to open.

Juan -- is this guy serious? He RAISES the gun. Alert. Anxious. Scared.

In comes Stone. Slow and cautious. He closes the door behind him before slowly raising his hands. A beat. The two STARE at each other-- like they were long lost brothers now reunited. Then--

STONE (CONT'D)

Hi there, Juan. You and me have a lot to talk about.

Off Juan, confused.

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. COOPER RESIDENCE- LIVING ROOM- DAY

Heather and Jake, on the couch.

Ryan, standing near the window. He checks his watch-- 3:00.

Ryan lets out a small sigh of relief. Heather notices.

HEATHER

You haven't stopped checking that watch of yours since you showed up this morning. ... Are you... waiting for something?

A beat. Ryan STARES out of the window. Then--

RYAN

Yea... As a matter of fact, I am. (he stands-- faces heather)

Look, I know what the news says. And I know you have every right to believe them. Especially since I haven't exactly done much to prove them wrong.
...But I didn't kill my family. I was set up. By one of the most sophisticated organizations in the country.

Heather, a spark of interest.

RYAN (CONT'D)

And since then I've been forced to do a lot of things that I'm not proud of. But only because I can't just sit by while the death of family goes unjustified. I'm taking the fight to them.

Heather STANDS--

HEATHER

Wait a second. Tell me what's going on? What's this organization you're talking about? And what's any of it have to do with holding me and Jake hostage?

RYAN

I wish I could explain it to you. That is, I wish I had the time.

(MORE)

RYAN (CONT'D)

But I don't. And even if I did, I doubt you'd believe me.

(a beat)

But I will say this. Coming to this home never had anything to do with you or Jake. It was simply the location that was chosen.

HEATHER

(very confused)

...Chosen?...

Just then--

DING DONG!!-- Someone's at the door.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Dammit, Travis again. This guy never learns--

RYAN

That's not your neighbor. ... Heather, I need to ask you for just one more favor. And if you do it, I promise I'll leave you and your son in peace.

A beat. Off Heather -- agreed.

CUT TO:

EXT. COOPER RESIDENCE- DAY

A MAILMAN(30's) stands on the PORCH. A PACKAGE in one hand, a CLIPBOARD in the other.

CLOSE ON the Package-- it's average size. The kind you'd use to pack up a DVD PLAYER. The front door SUDDENLY opens.

REVEAL Heather. She's surprised to see the mailman.

MAILMAN

(reading the clipboard)
I got a package here for... Mrs.

Cooper?

A beat. Heather is lost in thought. But she quickly recovers-

HEATHER

Um--yea. Of course. That's me.

The Mailman hands her the clipboard.

MAILMAN

Sign here, please.

Heather signs -- hands it back to him in exchange for the package.

MAILMAN (CONT'D)

Have a nice day, ma'am.

HEATHER

(staring at the package)

Yea... You too.

CUT TO:

INT. COOPER RESIDENCE- DAY

Heather ENTERS -- package in hand. She STOPS. Turns to Ryan.

HEATHER

So this is why you came here. This whole time you were waiting for the mail to show up. ... For this.

RYAN

Had it just been a letter, I could've waited to raid your mailbox and been done with it. But since I knew the package would have to be delivered to your door, my only option was to be on the inside when it came.

Ryan takes the package from Heather-- carefully sets it on the ground. He uses the knife to open it. Heather and Jake STARE in anticipation.

Ryan begins DIGGING through the contents of the package. The first thing he pulls out is a hand-written LETTER. A beat as he reads-- silently. Then--

He FOLDS the letter. Shoves it in his pocket. The next thing he pulls out of the package is a VHS TAPE.

Heather STEPS in closer --

HEATHER

...What is it?

RYAN

(smiling hard)

Just a little something that's gonna help prove my innocence. I just have to get it in the right hands.

HEATHER

This is unbelievable. You're innocent, aren't you? You really are innocent.

RYAN

That's what I've been trying to tell you. If you had bothered to listen--

Ryan continues to DIG through the package until he finds something that surprises him. He slowly pulls out a PHOTO. We recognize it as the same photo that was on Ryan's desk-of him, Julia, and Tyler.

A beat. Ryan slowly stands. Looks deeply into the photo-- as if he's reliving the memory.

Heather notices. She PLACES her hand on his shoulder.

HEATHER

Ryan--

RYAN

I'm fine...

Ryan puts the photo in his back pocket. Then CLOSES the package. Picks it up.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Well then... I guess it's time for me to get going.

A beat. Ryan looks at Jake. Then Heather. They're silent. But what would you say in this situation?

RYAN (CONT'D)

And I guess I owe you both an apolo--

DING DONG!!-- Someone else at the door. Who could it be this time?

Ryan FREEZES-- surprised. He looks to Heather. She's equally surprised.

Again -- DING DONG!! Off Ryan, what now?

CUT TO:

EXT. COOPER RESIDENCE- DAY

A MAN in a BLACK SUIT stands on the porch. He is--

AGENT DAN HARRISON(36), cold and calculating. He has a very sophisticated demeanor.

He straitens his tie, then straitens his jacket. Just in time for--

The front door OPENS. REVEAL Heather. This time she's really surprised to see the cop standing at her door.

HEATHER

C-can I help you?

Harrison pulls out an FBI BADGE-- raises it.

HARRISON

Hi there. I'm special agent Harrison. F-B-I.

HEATHER

...F-B-I?--

HARRISON

Yes ma'am, that's what I said. Anyway, as much as I'd hate to alarm you, I happen to be in the area searching for an escaped convict.

Harrison HOLDS UP a PICTURE of Ryan -- a mug shot to be exact.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Ryan Greene. Maybe you've heard about him from the news.

A beat. Heather is speechless. She just STARES at the mug shot with a blank expression. Harrison notices her dismay.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

...Ma'am?

HEATHER

--yes. Yes. Sorry...um. No I haven't... I haven't seen him. I'm...sorry--

A beat. Harrison grows suspicious.

HARRISON

(suspicious)

Are you alright? You seem a little bit... distracted.

HEATHER

I'm sorry. I just... have a lot going on right now-- look, sorry I couldn't help you but if I see anything--

HARRISON

Yes ma'am. Of course. Don't mean to hold you up.

Heather attempts to close the door. But--

HARRISON (CONT'D)

--Ya know, most of people around here that I've talked to seem pretty interested in the situation. I mean, an escaped convict in the area. Doesn't happen too often in this neiborhood. At the very least, they're concerned about their families safety...

A beat. Heather is FROZEN. Harrison STARES her down. Then--

HARRISON (CONT'D)

But hey, if you're busy, you're busy. Have a good day ma'am.

Heather once again attempts to close the door-- a little faster this time. But before she can--

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Oh-- just one more thing ma'am. ... See I've also been informing the other civilians in the area of Greene's M.O. I thought it might help raise awareness. Maybe even prevent a tragedy.

Heather, listening. Harrison STEPS in closer -- just as his words step closer into Heather's head.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

You see, Ryan Greene is somewhat of a sociopath. He usually starts out by invading the home, holding the family hostage.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

But he's only one man, so he avoids invading a home with more than two people. ... In fact, a mother and a child is his preference. Psychologist believe that it relates to his own wife and child that he murdered.

Heather, growing interest. And growing fear.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

But once he's in he doesn't begin killing. Oh no. He waits. In some cases, it's hours. In other unfortunate cases, it can be days. See, the wait builds the anticipation in the family. And that's exactly what Greene wants.

A beat. Harrison takes another STEP closer. By now he has Heather's full attention.

HEATHER

T-then what? ...What's he do after the wait.

HARRISON

Ahhhh, that's when he starts getting maniacal. He starts filling your head with ideas. And lies. Lies like... he didn't kill his family. And he's being set-up. He's just trying to gain your trust. He wants you to trust him. Just like his own family trusted him.

HEATHER

(falling apart)

... And then? What happens after that?

HARRISON

Well... Just when the victims start to trust. Right when he sees that you let down your guard...

(a long, anticipating beat)

That's when he does it. First the adult... Then the child. And believe me when I say... it gets gruesome!

Heather's heart STOPS. She turns. DASHES back into the house.

CUT TO:

INT. COOPER RESIDENCE- LIVING ROOM- CONTINUOUS

HEATHER(O.S.)

Jake!!

Heather BOLTS into the room-- frantic. Only to find--

Jake. Sitting quietly on the couch. Unharmed. Heather is both relieved and confused. Then--

In comes Harrison-- WIELDING his gun. It's loaded and ready. He briefly surveys the living room. It's clear.

HARRISON

(to Jake)

Where did he go? Tell me now.

Jake hesitates. Looks to his mother. She NODS. Then Jake points to the hallway.

Harrison readies his weapon. Slowly walks to the HALLWAY. Looks.

REVEAL the transparent back door-- wide open. No trace of Ryan. He's long gone.

Harrison RE-ENTERS the living room. Puts his gun away.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Now... I'm sure you and your son have had a very long day.

(a beat -- he sighs)

But I'm afraid neither of you are getting any rest until you tell me every...single...detail of your encounter with Greene. ...Let's get started.

Off Heather, is this really happening? BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT FOUR