

THE ANARCHIST'S PLAYGROUND

screenplay by

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FADE IN:

INT. DEREK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CLOSE ON A SMALL TV:

THREE MEN warm bar stools below A GIANT AMERICAN FLAG hung proudly on a cracked brick wall.

Each of them wear shirt collar microphones.

In a cheap yellow font "TRUTH AND JUSTICE" superimposed on the standard def screen. The title card of a no budget public broadcast talk show.

In the middle stool sits CARLIN KLEIN---40s, the shabby chic host of our program.

To Klein's right, a bald and camo tank-topped GUN NUT in open toed sandals.

To his left, A long haired HIPSTER in skinny jeans and fancy denim sport coat. He could be male or female. There is really no telling.

HIPSTER

You simply cannot battle violence with greater violence. What you are in fact doing is continuing this idea that violence is the answer. Which we all know has proven to be a very dangerous way of thinking.

In the bare bones audience, a real motley crew of non-paid locals BOO AND HISS.

HIPSTER (CONT'D)

Just look at the War in Iraq. Look at Vietnam. The Cold War. We've been instilled at a young age the idea that the world is an evil place full of evil people out to kill us. And all this does is perpetuate people's anxieties and fears and in many cases, paranoias about the world they live in.

Gun Nut ready for blood. He's so worked up, he can barely sit still.

HIPSTER (CONT'D)

And if you are somebody who is prone to mental illness, unable to decipher right from wrong, this can be fuel for the fire.

GUN NUT

(to Hipster)

My brother fought in Iraq and Afghanistan! Fighting for your sorry little ass! He kept you and your family safe...!

MAN IN CROWD (O.S.)

That's right!

The crowd CLAPS. The Hipster smugly grins.

HIPSTER

Safe from what exactly?

GUN NUT

Whatta you mean, from what?! Nine Eleven ring a bell?! Or were you even born yet?!

The audience jumps to their feet with APPLAUSE.

The Hipster just smiles and nods. He waits for the applause to subside.

HIPSTER

Last I checked, no one wants to crash a plane into my house. They don't have a problem with me. They have a problem with your government.

Some more ANGRY BOOS from the crowd. This just fuels his fire.

HIPSTER (CONT'D)

Precisely my point. People love to fight. It's easier to yell and curse than discuss.

Even louder BOOS. Klein holds up a calming hand, quiets down his audience.

KLEIN

Okay, okay. So violence isn't the answer. What is the answer? There are people in this country, from all walks of life.

(MORE)

KLEIN (CONT'D)

Different colors, sexual orientations, religious backgrounds, being killed in numbers greater than we've ever experienced before. Unprovoked, cold-blooded mass murders. How do you just clap your hands, make a few speeches about peace and equality and make this problem disappear?

HIPSTER

We have to make serious changes. In our thinking. In how we view the world and the people around us. Find out what it is that makes us so angry and discuss our problems as opposed to acting out our every impulse. Until we do that, things will only get worse.

GUN NUT

Other words, he don't know!

The crowd LAUGHS.

GIRL IN CROWD (O.S.)

You tell him!

The Hipster sighs, totally frustrated.

KLEIN

(to Gun Nut)

So what do you think is the answer?

GUN NUT

I'll tell you right now. I don't care if it's ISIS, Al-Qaeda or the damn cookie monster. You come at me or my family with any of that Allah, Hoo-Hah or whatever, you're gonna die, buddy!

The audience EXPLODES. It's a madhouse of epic proportions. And without warning --

The TV SHUTS OFF.

Somewhere across this same living room...

A MAN sits alone in his well worn recliner. This is --

DEREK TAYLOR---30s, thin, pale, a once handsome young man damaged by life. He holds a silver-plated THIRTY EIGHT in one hand and bullet in the other.

In his lap rests an old FAMILY PHOTO of him, wife DENISE and young son AARON.

He loads the final shell. A moment of reflection before he closes the cylinder.

Derek's eyes well with tears as he presses the muzzle against his right temple, cocks the hammer.

His eyes squeeze shut as he works up the nerve.

BUZZ-BUZZ-BUZZ!

Derek opens his eyes, checks his phone rested on an end table: "Denise"

Derek slowly lets back on the gun's hammer, sets the weapon in his lap. A tired sigh. He grabs the phone, dials.

DENISE (V.O.)

Derek? Are you there?

Derek stays quiet at first. Not in the mood.

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

Derek, please.

DEREK

Yeah. I'm here. What is it?

DENISE (V.O.)

Look. I...I don't wanna get into it with you right now. I just need your help. I need you to get over here right away.

Derek stares at his gun.

DEREK

Gee. I don't know. I'm kind of busy here.

DENISE (V.O.)

Look, I wouldn't be calling if I had another choice. So just get here! Okay?!

She HANGS UP.

Derek stares at the thirty eight pistol and then to the phone. His eyes dance between them as he ponders this difficult decision.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DENISE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

An angry DENISE---30s, unkempt, strung out, storms out the front door of her equally battered home with faded chipped paint and rusted chain-link fence.

DOGS BARK as she races up the sidewalk.

DENISE
 (to dogs)
 Oh, shut up!
 (quietly to herself)
 Fuckin dogs.

DEREK'S CAR

Parked at a corner curb. Engine running with exhaust fumes spilling from the tailpipe.

Following behind Denise, out the front door, stumbles a very drunk WADE WILLIS---20s, white thug, silk robe.

WADE
 Yo, where you goin?! You know you can't go no where! You know I'll find you!

INT. DEREK'S CAR - NIGHT

Derek watches Denise make for the passenger door as Wade creeps up the sidewalk after her.

Denise opens, crawls in.

DENISE
 Alright, just shut up and drive.

DEREK
 Wild stab. He hit you.

DENISE
 Congratulations, Inspector Gadget.
 Now drive.

Denise watches Wade stumble and drop his can of beer.

WADE
 Shit.

He snags it up before it pours out.

DEREK

You're gonna have to come back sooner or later.

DENISE

Later, he'll be passed out. Look, it's his routine, okay. He ties one on, gets physical, then sobers up. The next morning he throws some cash at me to shut me up and keep the cops off his back.

DEREK

I'd hate to see you ruin a good thing. Sounds like you got yourself a real lucrative business going here.

DENISE

Spare me your lectures, Derek. It's not that simple.

Denise spots Wade strutting towards them. All gangster and false bravado.

WADE

Yo, don't go away angry! Let's hug it out!

Derek watches Denise shake. She rubs her hands up and down her cold arms. In dire need of a fix.

DEREK

You're hurting. You're using again.

No denying on her end.

DEREK (CONT'D)

You haven't been to any meetings in weeks. You don't think I hear things?

DENISE

Look, he will seriously shoot you if we don't step on it. You need to drive.

Derek smirks in contempt as he drives off.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NIGHT

Wade grabs at his crotch, curses them out as he chases after the car, throws his beer.

WADE
Bitch ass!

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Derek's car pulls in the far end of the lot, away from the other cars, finds an empty space, pulls in and leaves the engine running.

INT. DEREK'S CAR - NIGHT

Derek throws it in park. All out of patience.

DEREK
Okay, so what're we doing here?

DENISE
I told you. I'm meeting a friend.
You don't have to stay if you don't want.

DEREK
And why couldn't this friend pick you up at your place?

DENISE
Because she can't, alright?!

Derek watches as she rubs her arms and shakes.

DEREK
You're not meeting anyone here.
You're hooking.

Denise looks away.

DEREK (CONT'D)
You're hooking and you're using.

DENISE
Yeah, well, maybe I'm doing what I gotta do to survive. Maybe I ain't got nothing else.

DEREK
Or maybe you're just looking for the quickest way out.

Derek sighs with disgust. He gives her a good look, reads her eyes, sizes her up.

DEREK (CONT'D)

What're you and Wade fighting about? For real this time.
No BS.

Denise looks down. Ashamed.

DENISE

I'm pregnant.

Derek leans in closer. His disgust turns to an instant burning resentment.

DEREK

Last I heard you weren't having another kid. Never again. I mean, isn't that what you told me right before you walked out?

DENISE

It wasn't exactly a planned thing. Okay? So save it.

DEREK

You know who the father is?

DENISE

(angry)

I might be an addict. And I might be a streetwalker but I'm no whore.

Derek laughs.

DEREK

Yeah, you're a real lady. You're all class, Denise.

DENISE

God, you love this, don't you? Every second of it.

DEREK

What're you talking about?

DENISE

I bet you sit up at night just waiting for Wade to finish the job. Maybe one night he'll hit me just right or even pull a gun in my face. And you'll finally be rid of the woman who stole your son away.

Derek is quiet. A painful truth.

DENISE (CONT'D)

You don't think I stay up every night wishing it was me who died in that accident?!

(beat)

Your son is gone! He's not coming back! You're stuck with me and you hate me for it! Just say it!

And before Derek can answer --

A GUNMAN sticks a pistol to her head. His name is SLICK. A real white trash creep.

SLICK

How's the action tonight, Denise?

Derek reaches in his car door console for his thirty eight when another GUNMAN presses a pistol to his head. His name is TOAD

TOAD

Keep your hands where I can see them, lover boy.

Derek grips the wheel.

SLICK

Is this the new guy, Denise? This where you gettin' all that extra cash?

DENISE

He's nobody, alright. Just let him go.

TOAD

So, on top of stealing from Wade you're gonna lie to my face? I thought you was smarter than that.

DEREK

Hey, man. I'm just helping out a friend.

SLICK

Yeah, Denise has lots of friends. She's been filling her pockets real good. And she ain't been paying her fair share.

DEREK

Who the hell are you? Obama?

Toad presses his gun to Derek's head.

TOAD

Shut up!

DENISE

You guys gonna hurt your best girl?
Not real smart.

TOAD

Nah. We ain't gonna hurt you. But
your new boyfriend here. That's a
whole other story.

DENISE

Look. He's got nothing to do with
this. I told Wade I'd pay him back.
Let's just talk this out.

SLICK

Relax, baby. We're just gonna take
ourselves a little ride.

TOAD

(to Derek)

Okay, tough guy. Out of the car.
Real slow. You even twitch and I'll
re-decorate the dash.

Derek nods.

Toad opens the door, yanks him out by the collar.

Denise also jerked out of her seat.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Derek, hands raised, walks two feet in front of Slick who
holds a gun to his back.

Denise has one arm wrapped around her waist and another
around her neck. Tears drip down her face and onto
Toad's tatted up arm.

A DEEP HOLE dug in the ground.

DENISE

Oh my God.

Slick throws Derek in the pit.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Don't do it!

Slick stuffs his pistol in the back of his pants and grabs Derek's silver thirty eight from his belt.

The gun is shiny, pretty, never been shot.

SLICK

What's this for? You gonna plug Wade? You a badass, boy?

Derek is surprisingly numb. No sign of fear. He simply stares into his captor's eyes.

TOAD

Look at him. Still thinks he's hard or something.

(to Derek)

Stupid ass is gonna die hard, bitch.

DEREK

(to Toad)

I'm not afraid of dying. Are you?

SLICK

(laughs)

Oh, yeah. You really are a hard case, aren't you?

Derek and Denise share one last look. Their eyes locked. Denise scared and Derek completely calm. He turns his attention to Slick.

DEREK

Why so far away? You gonna shoot me? Be a man, get down here and look me in the eye when you pull the trigger.

DENISE

Are you crazy?!

TOAD

(to Slick)

Do it, man! Get in there and blow that bitch's head off!

Slick can hardly believe it. He seems unsure, reluctant.

TOAD (CONT'D)

(to Slick)

What're you waitin on, man?! Do it!

DEREK
Yeah. Do it.

Slick jumps in the pit, steps to Derek.

DENISE
Derek...

DEREK
It's okay, Denise. I'm ready.

Denise cries her eyes out. Slick slowly points the silver thirty eight at Derek's head.

SLICK
Any last words?

DEREK
Yeah. Fuck you. And quit stalling.

SLICK
Whatever you say, bro.

He points and squeezes. But the trigger is locked.

SLICK (CONT'D)
What the...

As Slick stares at the gun, confused --

Derek quickly grabs his wrist.

DENISE
Derek!

They wrestle for control of the weapon.

Toad throws Denise to the ground, runs to the ditch and aims his weapon --

Derek and Slick indecipherable as they roll in the dirt and wrestle for the gun.

Toad can't get a clear shot.

TOAD
(to Slick)
Get out of the way!

Still out of it, Denise attempts to stand.

DENISE
Derek!!!

Before Toad can pop one off --

Derek grabs Slick's gun hand, wrestles the pistol in Toad's direction: POW!

Toad is hit in the chest and falls face first into the shallow grave. Deader than hell.

Slick gets the best of Derek, shoves him to the ground.

SLICK
So long, badass!

He aims the silver snub, ready to finish this thing.

DENISE (O.S.)
Derek!

Denise's voice stops him. Slick looks back.

DEREK
Get out of here, Denise!

Slick walks to the edge of the pit, points at Denise and fires --

POW!

Denise struck in the stomach. Down she goes.

Before Slick can turn around --

Derek grabs him from behind, throws him into the pit and punches him with unrelenting menace.

THE SILVER SNUB in the nearby dirt.

Derek picks it up. Holds it on a helpless Slick. His hands raised.

SLICK
Come on, man. I wanna see how badass you really are. Do it.

DEREK
Whatever you say.

DENISE

drags herself across the dirt, bleeds out, quickly dying as she hears THREE GUNSHOTS from inside the grave.

The rapid gunfire LIGHTS UP THE NIGHT.

DENISE
(whispers)
Help. Der...Derek...

Denise watches Derek climb out of the pit, silver snub in hand. He slowly approaches her.

DENISE (CONT'D)
Help me.

Derek stares down at his ex wife: prostitute, provocatively dressed, pitiful, bleeding. He seems unmoved by her slowly dying before him.

DENISE (CONT'D)
Please. Derek.

Derek's look turns slightly evil as he pulls a wallet sized photograph of son Aaron from his pocket.

He places it in the dirt before Denise. The last sight she will ever see on this planet.

DENISE (CONT'D)
You...son of a...bitch.

She gives him an ugly, hateful look. Blood in her mouth. On her gums. One more smile before collapsing.

Dead.

Derek takes a moment. Stares at the carnage left behind.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Derek walks in, out of the darkness, back to his car still parked with the engine running.

He reaches in the driver's side, shuts it down. He grabs the rear view mirror and jerks it his direction. His face a filthy and bloody mess.

INT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Derek enters the store in a zombie-like stupor. Everyone inside takes notice.

He makes for the men's room.

INT. GAS STATION MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Derek washes up in the sink. His hands, face, all cleaned up, just like new. And then...a look of panic comes over him.

He quickly steps into a --

BATHROOM STALL

and locks the door. He grabs the SILVER THIRTY EIGHT from his pants, gives it a good look. He puts it in his belt, zips up his coat.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Derek steps outside, holds both hands in his pockets, tries to conceal his weapon as he walks to his car. He is distracted by --

A BLACK MAN WITH A BIBLE going pump to pump and car to car, preaching, spreading the gospel.

Lots of annoyed faces who want nothing of it.

BLACK PROPHET

Oh, how I look at the many faces
around me! All I see is the
sadness! I see the regret, and the
bitterness! You're not happy!
You're not living! You've forgotten
how to live! You've given up!
You're holding onto the things of
the past, unable to let go! Unable
to forgive yourself! My brothers
and sisters, God has already
forgiven you!

Derek is entranced by this strange figure. As if he's being directly spoken to.

BLACK PROPHET (CONT'D)

He's forgotten those sins of the
past! And he's ready to change your
life! To begin a new! The Bible
tells us that God formed us from
the womb and He has great plans for
our lives! But first you must
believe! You must be re born before
God! You must accept His plan for
your life!

Derek ponders his words. A new gleam in his eye. As if he's had a life-changing revelation.

The Black Prophet finds Derek by the door, approaches him and aims directly at his face.

BLACK PROPHET (CONT'D)
I see the light in you, my son!

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - NIGHT

Derek steps inside the all night confessional.

A lone YOUNG MAN sits a few rows from the pulpit. His head down, praying. He quietly whispers to himself as --

Derek walks his way to the front, his eyes on THE VIRGIN MARY and the CRUCIFIX.

The Young Man spots Derek approach the pulpit.

Derek stops before the large stage, takes in all of the most impressive religious imagery before him.

INT. DEREK'S APARTMENT - DUSK (FLASHBACK)

Derek holds the silver snub to his head. His eyes closed. His CELL PHONE BUZZES from a nightstand. His eyes shoot open as he lowers the gun.

EXT. WOODS - SHALLOW GRAVE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Slick pulls the trigger on the silver snub. It doesn't fire. The safety still on.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

Derek quietly pulls the silver snub from his belt loop and opens the cylinder chamber.

The Young Man jumps to his feet. Nervous. Scared.

Derek sees that a SINGLE BULLET REMAINS. He spins the chamber and shuts it. He slowly places the gun to his temple as --

The Young Man watches on.

Derek once again slides back the hammer. He squeezes his eyes shut, ready to pull the trigger. And then --

YOUNG MAN (O.S.)
Excuse me! Bro!

Derek quickly opens his eyes, lowers the gun and turns to the young man.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)
What're you doing, man? This is a church, dude.

Derek just stares at him. No emotion. He gives him nothing.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)
You okay?

Derek slowly lets the hammer back on his gun. His blank stare turns to an ear to ear smile.

DEREK
Sure. Never been better.

Derek stuffs the snub in his pants and heads out. The Young Man watches as he makes for the door.

INT. DENISE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Wade, our white thug from earlier, paces on a filthy carpet, phone to his ear, impatient. Between him and Denise, the place is a real dump.

Unpaid bills here and there, a few bowls and a bong on the scratched up coffee table.

A couple half eaten sandwiches. Busted up corn chips ground into the carpet and couch.

WADE
(into phone)
Come on, bitch. Answer the phone!
What the hell, dog?!

Wade is oblivious to --

DEREK

sneaking in through the rear screen door. Silver snub in hand, aimed and ready to rock.

WADE (CONT'D)
Where ya'll at, man?!

DEREK
What's the matter, Wade?

Wade almost jumps out of his shoes as he spins around and spots Derek. A gun aimed at his chest.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Your friends not picking up?

WADE

Whatchu doin' here, dog? Gonna pull a gun on me in my own crib?

DEREK

You look scared, Wade. Never been on the receiving end of a gun before? First time?

WADE

Man, if you gonna shoot me, you would've done it when my back was turned.

DEREK

Or maybe I just wanted to see your face. See that look in your eyes when I pull the trigger. Let you see what it's like to be a victim like Denise.

WADE

Alright. Let's not do nothin stupid here, man.

DEREK

Tell me something, Wade. You ever think about dying? I mean...really think about it?

WADE

Nah, man. Not really.

DEREK

I have. I've been close. Real close. Let me tell you, it changes your perspective.

WADE

How's that?

DEREK

In that moment. That very last moment, you think about all the things you would do differently. If only you had to do it all over again.

(MORE)

DEREK (CONT'D)

Only you know that you can't. You
can't go backwards.
But then something crazy happens.

WADE

What, man?

DEREK

You don't die. You live to see
another day. You find a whole new
appreciation for life you never had
before. Because you've been dead
once already.

Wade seems genuinely scared as he stares down the barrel of
the gun in Derek's unstable hand.

WADE

Hell you talkin' about, man?

DEREK

I'm still here, asshole. And you
know what I'm thinking? I'm
thinking there must be a reason.

WADE

You're crazy.

DEREK

You know what else I was thinking?

(beat)

I was thinking...maybe it just
wasn't my time to go.

Wade eyeballs a sawed off shotgun rested on the edge of a
card table.

DEREK (CONT'D)

I guess there's only one way to
find out.

Derek also spots the shotgun.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Tell you what. I got one round left
in this gun. You got a real good
chance of snagging that shotgun and
blowing me all to hell by the time
I squeeze off a shot.

Wade once again eyes the shotgun. All but drooling at it.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Then again, maybe you don't. But you know what I think, Wade?

WADE

Nah, man.

DEREK

Three people are dead because of you. God only knows how many other lives you've ruined.

(angry)

I'm thinking it's your time.

Wade's anger is palpable. He's itching to grab that shotgun.

WADE

Like you said, man. Only one way to find out.

Wade jumps for the shotgun. Pumps.

Derek fires: POW!

Wade is flung onto the poker table and into a cheap folding chair on the other side.

Dead.

Derek stares at his handy work a sec before retreating out the rear screen door.

EXT. DENISE'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

An UNMARKED SEDAN, a PATROL CRUISER with LIGHTS FLASHING and a CORONER'S VAN are parked at the curb and blocking this section of the street.

INT. DENISE'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

A MEDICAL EXAMINER with thick bifocals hovers over Wade's limp body, torso in the chair and legs on the table. His dead, lifeless eyes gaze up at nothing.

M.E.

He's deader than shit.

He turns to DETECTIVE MIKE DIETZ---50s, gray, tall, world weary but tough as nails. He jots down some collected evidence into a small notepad.

DIETZ
Thanks, Doc.

M.E.
Say. What time did the neighbors
say they called 911 again?

Dietz refers to his notes.

DIETZ
Call came in at exactly Two Thirty
Five AM.

M.E.
(unconvinced)
Exactly?

Dietz grins.

DIETZ
Exactly.

His partner LYLE KATZ---40s, curly red hair, beard, goofy
coat and tie, steps out of Wade's bedroom.

KATZ
Okay, so check this out.

Dietz looks up from his notes.

KATZ (CONT'D)
Our dead guy had one racked and
ready to go.

Katz stands near the table, snags the shotgun from the table
and aims at his partner.

KATZ (CONT'D)
Boom. Now check out where I'm
standing. What am I doing?

DIETZ
Pointing a shotgun at your partner
and making him very nervous.

KATZ
I'm blocking the door. Which means
whoever shot me, I didn't want them
to leave.

Katz lays the weapon down. Dietz thinks it through.

DIETZ

You said this guy was a pimp,
right?

KATZ

Yeah. A real nasty one too. My guy
in vice says once you're in with
Willis there's no getting out.

Dietz points at an end table next to the couch.

DIETZ

He probably had the Winchester on
the night stand, maybe the table.
All the while...

Dietz points to the bedroom.

KATZ

His old lady was packing her shit
in the bedroom.

DIETZ

Meanwhile, he's out here with the
shotgun...waiting...

KATZ

Only she's got a little surprise
for him he didn't see coming.

DIETZ

So who was his regular?

KATZ

Denise Cole. Formerly Denise
Taylor. Name ring a bell?

DIETZ

Yeah. Heroin addict who flipped her
car last year. Killed her own kid.

KATZ

That's the one. Vice says she's
Wade's bottom bitch.

A FEMALE CSI dusting for prints on the screen door gives him
a nasty look.

KATZ (CONT'D)

(to CSI)

Pardon me.

(to Dietz)

(MORE)

KATZ (CONT'D)

According to her sheet, she's held no legal residence since her divorce six months ago. Busted for prostitution last month and listed Wade's place here as last known address.

Dietz grimaces with disgust.

DIETZ

Dead kid, dead marriage. A nasty addiction. She was a time bomb waiting to go off.

INT. DEREK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Derek has both palms down on the kitchen counter as he stares at the silver snub and a tall bottle of bourbon. As if making a most difficult decision.

He pours himself a tall one, picks up the glass...reluctant to take his first drink.

Stares at the gun.

Derek gives up, pours the bourbon down the sink and turns on a small TV rested on this same counter top.

A NEWS BROADCAST already in progress.

FIELD REPORTER

And we're just moments away from the jury's verdict. Today, marking day seventeen in a trial which attorney John Gessner describes as the most painstaking of his career.

The footage cuts to JOHN GESSNER---50s, slick and handsome trial attorney, modest but pricey suit. He stands at a podium, speaks to a crowd of cameras.

GESSNER

This is not, as they claim, a simple matter of he said she said. It is not a matter of one angry and lonely student's plan of revenge against a well respected teacher. This is a matter of two very different young people, from very different crowds, coming forward with a very similar claim.

Derek drawn in by the report.

GESSNER (CONT'D)

This case is not about Gary O'Dell's reputation and record as an all-star, championship winning varsity coach...

Derek steps closer to the TV.

GESSNER (CONT'D)

Or his years as head deacon at First Family Church.

(beat)

It's about the disgusting rape of two students. And using one's reputation and status within the community to cross the line...

Derek fixates his hate on a new target.

GESSNER (CONT'D)

Mister O'Dell believes that he is above the law. My friends, none of us are above the law. And we must not allow status and one's reputation to blind us from the truth...

DEREK

Lousy sonofabitch.

Derek turns the channel.

A FIELD REPORTER shoves a mic in an AVERAGE JOE's face.

AVERAGE JOE

Yeah, I can't imagine if it were my kid. Being violated, her life ruined. The fact that I didn't know about it. I wasn't there, able to stop it...

Joe is almost in tears.

Derek is affected by the man's words. He quickly pours himself another drink.

AVERAGE JOE (CONT'D)

Yeah, if anything ever happened to my kids. I mean anything...God forbid...

(beat)

I'd put a gun to my head. Silver bullet time. Blow my f***in mind out.

Derek angrily chucks the bottle against a wall. A real self hatred burning in his eyes. He grabs the silver thirty eight and heads for his bedroom.

INT. DEREK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Derek sits on the carpet, a box of shells spilled out before him. He loads the gun. One bullet at a time.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

A huge crowd of REPORTERS, PROTESTORS and PICKETERS, COPS and SUITS spill down the steps as CAMERAS FLASH.

The star defendant and recently acquitted GARY O'DELL---50s grins ear to ear with his crack TEAM OF ATTORNEYS.

REPORTER #1

Tell us, Gary! Was justice served today?

GARY

(smug)

You tell me. You guys are the expert.

REPORTER #2

Looking forward to going back to work, Gary?

GARY

You know what I'm looking forward to the most? Not talking to you people. Excuse me.

Gary pushes through the crowd.

ATTORNEY

Alright, that's it. Give him some room. No more questions.

Police and court officials keep a distance between the pestering mob and Gary's legal team.

INT. COURTHOUSE PARKING GARAGE - LEVEL THREE - DAY

Derek stares down at Gary and his legal crew as they move away from the mob and toward the garage.

He puts a black ski mask on, heads into a stairwell.

INT. GARAGE STAIRWELL - DAY

Gary and three of his legal team in tow.

GARY

I just want a steak and a beer and
be left the hell alone.

(beat)

That means you guys.

They share a laugh.

ATTORNEY #1

No problem.

ATTORNEY #2

Did I hear something about a beer?

But just before they reach the top of the steps --

A MASKED DEREK

turns a corner and greets them. SILVER SNUB aimed.

Gary looks up, spots him.

GARY

Holy shhh...

Masked Man aims low...fires TWO SHOTS.

Gary hit IN THE LEG and KNEECAP. He drops like wet cement.

The three lawyers all raise their hands.

MASKED MAN

(to legal team)

Get lost!

The three lawyers run like three blind mice. Down the steps
and out of sight.

Derek hovers over Gary, ready to finish him.

GARY

Lousy sonofabitch!

DEREK

Sarah Dobbs father sends his
regards. Bad news, Gary. We're down
to the five yard line and you're
out of time outs.

(beat)

Any last words of wisdom?

Gary spits at him.

GARY

Yeah. Tell him they taste even better than they look. I'll see him and that cock teasing whore of his in hell.

(angry)

You TELL HIM THAT!!!

DEREK

I won't have to. You just did.

GARY

Hell are you talking about?

DEREK

Smile, Gary. You're on camera.

Derek points to a GOPRO CAMERA strapped to his chest. Hidden by his dark sweater.

Gary laughs, collapses on the cement, gives up.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - ELECTRONICS - NIGHT

Some SHOPPERS browse the flat screens, go about their business when suddenly --

The image of GARY O'DELL appears on EVERY BIG SCREEN in the department. The sound of his big mouth grabs everyone's focus and attention.

GARY

Tell him they taste even better than they look. I'll see him and that c*** teasing wh*re of his in hell!

Other random SHOPPERS stop and watch the edited video.

GARY (CONT'D)

You TELL HIM THAT!!!

And the video PLAYS ON A LOOP.

GARY (CONT'D)

I'll see him and that c*** teasing wh*re of his in hell! You TELL HIM THAT!!!

A MOTHER covers her child's ears. The SALESMAN standing with her tries to conceal his giant grin.

MOTHER
 (to Salesman)
 Oh-my-God. Is that who I think it
 is?

SALESMAN
 I think so.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLS - DAY

A large CROWD OF STUDENTS gather around a single phone as they laugh and gasp in shock.

MALE STUDENT
 You're busted, Coach.

A couple other students high five, laugh their asses off.

MALE STUDENT #2
 That-is-classic!

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

THE MAYOR---60s, distinguished, no nonsense, watches a large FLAT SCREEN TV mounted on the wall.

The Gary O'Dell video plays in the upper left corner as anchorwoman ANNE CONNORS---30s, blonde bombshell, starts the news.

ANNE
 This, of course, is Gary O'Dell,
 just minutes after his surprise
 acquittal Tuesday morning, gunned
 down in a parking garage by a man
 in a ski mask, and according to
 Gary O'Dell, facing eminent death.

THE MAYOR
 Here we go.

ANNE
 In a desperate bid for his life,
 O'Dell makes a very shocking
 confession. One that he's now
 claiming "isn't true". At least
 that's his story and he's sticking
 to it. But the people clearly hold
 a different opinion.

The upper left footage now cuts to a YOUTUBE video page. The number of views enlarged and circled in red.

ANNE (CONT'D)

With nearly one million downloads in less than four days and over six thousand comments, the people have spoken. And Gary O'Dell is found "guilty as charged".

THE MAYOR

Shit!

The Mayor aims his clicker, shuts off the TV.

INT. THE TRUTH AND JUSTICE SHOW - TV STUDIO - NIGHT

Our Hipster from before, in his usual seat, joins our latest guest: Derek Taylor. An every man with an average joe's opinion.

The subject of the hour: Gary O'Dell

HIPSTER

Everyone thinks this guy got what he deserved. But did he really? Those people on the jury obviously felt otherwise. Are we just gonna ignore the justice system for now on? Get a conviction, great. If not, don't worry. The people will take care of it.

The usual BOOS from the motley crowd.

HIPSTER (CONT'D)

Seriously. Where does it end? Who decides who gets punished and who doesn't? Some people are calling this guy a hero. But you have to understand, there are a lot of us out there who don't like this. At all. The cops are all taking their time finding this guy because it's taking the attention away from them for a change.

KLEIN

Let me stop you there.

Some FAINT APPLAUSE but mostly BOOS.

KLEIN (CONT'D)

Joining us tonight is Derek Taylor. Derek is the owner and operator of Big City Liquors.

(MORE)

KLEIN (CONT'D)

And he's been robbed a shocking...
(to Derek)
How many times has it been?

DEREK

At least twenty five that I can count.

KLEIN

Twenty five times. My God. And you're still here.

DEREK

By the grace of God, I'm here.

KLEIN

Okay, so, what do you think about this guy? If the police just decide...the hell with it. He's too popular. The people have spoken. He didn't kill this guy and no harm no foul. Would it be the responsible thing to just...let this guy go? Don't pursue him?

DEREK

I think, like you said, the people have spoken. They're tired of the quote... "bad guy"...getting away with it. Those that commit the most crimes, who are the most prone to committing criminal acts or engaging in criminal activity, are getting away with it. It might be due to a crack in the legal system. Maybe it's our own fault. Juries all but ignore the evidence and end up acquitting these people. We literally have killers and serial murderers being set free on a daily basis. We have terrorists on known FBI watch lists buying automatic weapons and mowing down hundreds of people.

HIPSTER

(to Derek)
Guns. It all comes back to guns.
(to crowd)
This guy's no different!

KLEIN

Let him finish.

DEREK

We're finding it harder and harder these days to feel sorry for anyone who engages in these activities. Look what's going on with the police in this country. People feel like they have no one else but themselves to turn to. If the system can't protect them or their families, who will?

KLEIN

Sounds to me like you're siding with this guy.

HIPSTER

What he's saying is we should just start shooting anyone we feel like "could be" a bad person?

DEREK

What I'm saying is...there's good and there's bad. We all have a choice. Do good things, do what you're supposed to be doing and you won't get yourself dead. If you choose to be a bad person and do bad things and you end up nose to barrel with my shotgun, I got no sympathy for you when I pull the trigger and blow your head off.

The crowd goes nuts.

HIPSTER

That's it. Keep encouraging the violence.

Derek sports a sly grin, stares directly into the camera. As if winking at America itself. The gritty standard def image suddenly FREEZES.

INT. HOME OF DETECTIVE MIKE DIETZ - NIGHT

The face of Derek Taylor frozen on a television.

Dietz leans forward on his couch and studies the all too familiar face.

DIETZ

Mister Taylor. Nice to make your acquaintance, sir.

EXT. DINGY BAR - LATE NIGHT

A real DRUNKARD---50s, tired eyes, gray, weak, stumbles his way to the door as other CUSTOMERS pour out.

CUSTOMER #1

You alright there, buddy?

He can barely put one foot in front of the other. One of the customers holds open the door for him.

INT. DINGY BAR - LATE NIGHT

The Drunkard makes a b-line for the bar. He smacks his hand on the marble slab, ready for a drink.

THE BARTENDER is less than enthused to see him. He pours a quick beer, greets him with a stern look.

BARTENDER

Ya know, some might call running over a kid then showing up in a bar less than two weeks after the fact bad taste. I call it just plain stupid.

DRUNKARD

I didn't come here for your opinion. I came for a drink. Is this a bar or not?

BARTENDER

We're closed.

DRUNKARD

Since when?

BARTENDER

Since now.

Everyone in the room: POOL PLAYERS, DRINKERS, a COUPLE throwing darts, all turn and show their disapproval. Nothing but hate in this room.

POOL PLAYER #1

(to Drunkard)

You need help finding the door?

DRUNKARD

I'm not sure we know each other, friend?

POOL PLAYER #1
I'm not your friend, ass wipe.

BARTENDER
Take it easy.

DRUNKARD
(to all)
What? Isn't anyone gonna ask me what happened out there? Or better yet. Ask that kid's parents how he's riding around on a bike with no reflectors at nine o'clock.

BARTENDER
This ain't a courtroom. Save it.

The Drunkard stumbles back and forth as he aims his boney finger at the hostile crowd.

DRUNKARD
It could've happened to any one of you. All of you.

They're having none of it. Falling on deaf ears.

DRUNKARD (CONT'D)
Fine. Guess I'll see all you in about seven or eight years. Thanks for letting a man drown his sorrows. Appreciate it.

The Drunkard stumbles his way back out.

EXT. DINGY BAR - LATE NIGHT

The Drunkard spots his car in the rear lot, points his key ring and unlocks:

BEEP BEEP and a RED GLOW from his tail lights.

DEREK (O.S.)
Excuse me, partner.

As the Drunkard turns, he is hit with --

A BRIGHT WHITE BEAM from A FLASHLIGHT. We can barely make out this figure from behind the white mist.

DEREK (CONT'D)
Had a few this evening?

The Drunkard laughs.

DRUNKARD
No, sir, officer. Not me.

DEREK
Keep your hands where I can see
them, please.

The Drunkard squints. Blinded.

DRUNKARD
No problem.

DEREK
Drop the keys.

DRUNKARD
What?

DEREK
I said drop-the-keys.

DRUNKARD
Whatever you say, officer.

He drops them on the asphalt.

DEREK
That your green Cherokee?

Derek SHINES THE LIGHT directly in The Drunkard's face. His
look turns nervous. This is no cop.

DRUNKARD
How about showing me that badge,
partner.

DEREK
Sure. Got it right here.

Derek pulls a TASER from his coat pocket: BUZZZZZZ!

The WHITE SPARK of an electric current shoots through the
drunkard's body and --

Down he goes.

INT. ABANDONED HOME - NIGHT

The Drunkard wakes up in a pile of OLD NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS.
The BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT of Derek's flashlight still pointed
at his head.

The room is otherwise dark. An unknown place.

DRUNKARD

What is this?

The Drunkard attempts to grab his aching head but notices both HANDS are WRAPPED IN WHITE BANDAGES.

He spots some BLOOD dripped on the newspaper.

Derek AIMS THE FLASHLIGHT at a headline:

"BOY KILLED IN HIT AND RUN"

The Drunkard crawls toward it, attempts to pick it up but has no thumbs to do it.

DRUNKARD (CONT'D)

Who are you???

Derek AIMS THE FLASHLIGHT at a ZIPLOC BAG FULL OF ICE just feet away from the Drunkard.

The Drunkard crawls toward it. He stares into the bag and spots what looks like TWO THUMBS.

DEREK

Sorry, Bill. Survey says --

(beat)

Two thumbs down.

The Drunkard SCREAMS OUT.

Derek KICKS HIM DEAD IN THE FACE. Out cold. Good night.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The Mayor, POLICE CHIEF and the MAYOR'S AIDE, a real pencil neck, watch the latest vigilante video.

ON THE TV:

The Drunkard crawls across the newspapers. Whimpering, desperate and in pain.

The GoPro camera zooms in on A ZIPLOC BAG OF ICE.

The Mayor pauses the image.

They all stare at the bag with confusion.

MAYOR'S AIDE

Is that what I think it is?

THE MAYOR

Cut this poor prick's thumbs off.

The Mayor's Aide sighs in relief.

MAYOR'S AIDE

Oh, thank God.

POLICE CHIEF

You should read some of these message boards.

The Police Chief reads off his smart phone.

POLICE CHIEF (CONT'D)

If I could only hit thumbs up twice.

The Mayor rolls his eyes. The Mayor's Aide also checks his phone, reads the latest comment...

MAYOR'S AIDE

This goes to show you. Don't go thumbing your nose in someone else's business.

THE MAYOR

The Video Vigilante they're calling him. The People's Champion. They love this asshole.

(to Police Chief)

You know what that means?

(beat)

It's only a matter of time before we got a copycat on our hands. Please tell me you have some sort of substantial lead on this sick freak.

POLICE CHIEF

Well. We do know that he never uploads these videos himself. Smart enough to know we can track him online.

(beat)

In each case, he's mailed them to the press. No fuss, no muss. Any attempts at tracking his movement on the web would be futile.

THE MAYOR

Is that it?

The Police Chief stalls. He comes around.

POLICE CHIEF

We have someone we're looking at as a possibility. Might be something. Maybe nothing.

THE MAYOR

What does that mean? Don't play coy, Douglas. Speak up.

POLICE CHIEF

I only learned of it this morning, sir. One of our guys called it in. From homicide. He's thinking our vigilante may be connected to an unrelated case.

THE MAYOR

Who is he? The cop?

POLICE CHIEF

Dietz. Mike Dietz. Been around a long time. Good cop. If he says it's worth looking into then it's worth looking into.

THE MAYOR

Okay. Good to know. So... according to Dietz, who the hell is this guy?

INT. DEREK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Derek does some crunches on his living room floor. A hard rock classic blasts from his stereo.

His cell phone BUZZES: "Ray"

Derek stops a moment, picks it up, contemplates answering but lets it ring. It goes to voice mail.

He turns down his stereo and listens:

RAY (V.O.)

Derek. Look, man, I know you're head's not right with this Denise thing but I need you to come to work. You're not the only one with problems, bro.

Derek squints, confused.

RAY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 April called. Fuckin asshole hit her again. I need a night off so I can help her pack her shit and get her the hell out of there. You know. In case she has another...fall. Anyways, let me know if you got this and call me back.

A beap. Derek hangs up. A long and tired sigh.

INT. APRIL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

APRIL---20s, a badly bruised and repeatedly battered young woman sits on a couch, arms folded.

Her boyfriend CODY, strung out eyes, all tats, wife beater shirt, struts in with a bowl of popcorn.

CODY
 Here. I made it on the stove with that garlic salt you like. Get it while it's hot.

April halfheartedly snags the bowl, rests it in her lap. She just gawks at the TV and doesn't touch the popcorn.

CODY (CONT'D)
 You can't still be mad at me.

APRIL
 I can't?

CODY
 I told you. It's not me. It's that cheap shit you been bringing me. You know what that shit does to me when I'm drinking. Besides. I already told you not to fuck with me when I'm high. So why do you keep pushing me?

APRIL
 So it's my fault as usual.

CODY
 Hey. The day you check into rehab, then come talk to me. So stop with the mouth. You're killing me over here.

APRIL

Yeah. I'm the one with the problem, Cody. I'm the one with the mouth. Not you.

CODY

HEY!

Cody raises his hand to her. He stops himself.

CODY (CONT'D)

I think you should quit while you're ahead. I really do.

April rolls her eyes. Cody smirks at the ungrateful bitch.

A cell phone RINGS. Cody snags it from his pocket.

"Unknown caller".

He answers.

CODY (CONT'D)

Yeah?

DEREK (V.O.)

I'm looking for the pussy douche bag in 4B who's mistaken himself for a man.

Cody's eyes almost bulge from his head.

CODY

Oh yeah? Who's asking?

DEREK (V.O.)

You like slapping around little girls, tough guy? Why don't you do that shit to me.

CODY

Maybe I will if you tell me who you are and stop hiding behind a phone call, tough guy.

DEREK (V.O.)

I know what you been doing to her, Cody. I've been watching you.

CODY

What're you gonna do about it, badass? Make idle threats over the fuckin phone? Why don't we take this downstairs.

DEREK (V.O.)
 Are you sure you're not too tired
 from slapping the shit out of
 April.

Cody stares down at April, who hangs on every word.

CODY
 Oh, I get it. You're a friend of
 hers or something like that.

Cody walks to April, looms over her like a dark presence
 eclipsing her entire world.

CODY (CONT'D)
 Okay. Well let's talk about this
 friend. How about outside in five
 minutes?

DEREK (V.O.)
 Make it two. And don't you bitch
 out.

Derek hangs up. An angry as hell Cody tosses his phone on
 the couch.

CODY
 Cocksucker!

He charges the door.

APRIL
 Hell are you going?!

INT. APRIL'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Cody slams the door shut behind him and curses under his
 breath as he makes for a nearby staircase.

Hiding behind a corner wall and IN THE SHADOWS stands Derek
 disguised in his black ski mask.

He swiftly KICKS CODY IN THE BACK as he falls face first onto
 the steps of a tall staircase...

...and tumbles all the way to the bottom. His left leg
 twisted in the opposite direction.

Cody SCREAMS IN AGONY.

Ski masked Derek moves slowly and methodically down the steps
 and hovers over a helpless Cody.

CODY
Don't do it, man!

Cody raises his hands. Derek stomps one of them.
Specifically his left hand.

LATER THAT NIGHT

A UNIFORM COP and the building's LANDLORD stand at the top of
the stairs and watch...

TWO PARAMEDICS load the badly damaged Cody onto a stretcher
and roll him out.

CODY (CONT'D)
Careful, man!

UNIFORM COP
(to Landlord)
That's twice this month someone
took a dive down these steps,
Mister Cappella. You really outta
think about replacing that hallway
light before someone gets killed.

The tired Landlord gives him the stink eye.

UNIFORM COP (CONT'D)
Just a thought.

The Uniform Cop heads down the steps, done for the night.

INT. DOWNTOWN POLICE PLAZA - DAY

Derek sits at Dietz's modest desk. Dietz across from him
while Katz looms over both.

Uniform cops roam about the room escorting prisoners and
exchanging paperwork.

Derek looks a bit uncomfortable in this room full of badges
and bounces his knee.

Katz notices.

KATZ
You okay, Taylor? Need to take a
quick leak?

Immediately stopping his knee from bouncing, Derek glances
over his shoulder.

DEREK

No. Not really.

(to Dietz)

I filed a missing person's over a week ago, Detective. Until your phone call this morning, I've yet to hear from anyone concerning my wife's case.

DIETZ

Our apologies. Gets a little busy around here. To be honest, I was a little shocked when we first spoke on the phone.

DEREK

How's that?

DIETZ

Like you said, it's been over a week since Denise disappeared. Imagine my surprise that when I asked you down here to talk, you didn't once mention her name.

DEREK

Well. I guess you could say when I heard what happened to Wade Willis, I put two and two together.

KATZ

So you knew they were an item?

Derek nods appropriately.

DEREK

I heard something like that.

KATZ

Sounds like you two still stayed in regular contact.

DEREK

Not really. Only when she needs money or someplace to crash for the night.

DIETZ

How about the night Wade Willis was shot? She looking for a place to crash?

KATZ

You were obviously expecting some company that night. You reported her missing, yeah?

Derek slowly cracks a grin.

DEREK

This sounds suspiciously like an interrogation.

DIETZ

Not trying to make you feel uncomfortable, Mister Taylor. Just trying to get a fix on where Denise is laying her head these days.

Derek fidgets in his chair, sighs with annoyance.

DEREK

She called me the night Willis was killed. Said she might need me to pick her up.

DIETZ

She might need you? So you didn't actually pick her up?

DEREK

I showed up. Waited in my car. For about an hour. Knocked on the door. Just about knocked it clear off the hinges. No answer.

KATZ

You went up to the door?

DEREK

No. I knocked on the door from the comfort of my car.

(smiles)

Yes, Detective. I went to the door.

Katz gives him a nasty stare.

Dietz cues his partner to back off.

DIETZ

(to Derek)

And nothing?

DEREK

Nothing.

KATZ

You remember what time you got there, Mister Taylor?

Derek smiles.

DEREK

This is an interrogation. I guess I should've seen this coming.

He stares up at Katz.

DEREK (CONT'D)

It was around Ten thirty. Left around Eleven Fifteen, maybe Eleven Thirty. I don't remember the exact time.

DIETZ

And you have no idea where Denise might be? That it?

DEREK

No. I don't. Then again, it's not really my job anymore. It's your job.

Derek stands to leave.

DEREK (CONT'D)

So do me a favor, okay, guys? Do your jobs and find her. Before she does something stupid. Like hurts herself.

KATZ

(smug)

Yeah. You seem overwhelmed with concern.

DEREK

If you'll excuse me, gentlemen. I gotta get back to work.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

A NUDE MAN---20s, blindfolded, arms and legs tied to an old school metal children's merry-go-round, cries out as the mechanism slowly spins.

NUDE MAN

Help me! Somebody!

POW-POW!

A couple of stray bullets ricochet off the metal bars as SPARKS fly in the darkness.

Derek stands some fifteen feet or so away from the merry-go-round, pistol in hand.

DEREK

They say you picked your victims at random. No real rhyme or reason. Well maybe one of these bullets won't randomly end up in your skull. Guess there's one way to find out.

Derek gives the metal ride another good spin. And around he goes--once again.

NUDE MAN

Stop it! Please!

DEREK

Sorry! Can't hear you over all these gunshots!

Derek unloads another three shots. POW-POW-POW! The ride begins to slow down a bit.

Derek gets right in his face.

The Nude Man in the middle of urinating on himself and all over the grassy playground.

He cries like a scared child.

NUDE MAN

I'm sorry.

DEREK

Whatcha say?

NUDE MAN

Please. Let's just talk about this.

DEREK

Talk about what? About what you did? Yeah. Let's talk about that.

The Nude Man shakes his head.

NUDE MAN

No.

DEREK

No? You don't wanna talk about that? Well what else is there to talk about?

NUDE MAN

I got a family.

DEREK

Yeah. So did those kids. They have families too. What's your point?

NUDE MAN

Just please. Don't do it.

DEREK

Don't do what? We're just playing here. It's play time. This is all just a game.

Derek sexually rubs his pistol up and down the Nude Man's stomach and private areas.

NUDE MAN

Oh, God, man! Don't do it!

DEREK

Remember now. This is gonna be our little secret.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

A full court game featuring some real hard case neighborhood heavies from the wrong side of the tracks.

A car careens around a corner behind the court's chain link fence and grabs the players attention.

PLAYER #1

Hold up.

PLAYER #2

What's this?

The car CRASHES THROUGH THE FENCE and comes to a sudden halt on the other side of the court.

PLAYER #3

Yo, man! We help you with somethin?!

INT. DEREK'S CAR - NIGHT

The Nude Man behind the wheel. Derek in the back seat with a gun pressed against his head.

DEREK
Now get out.

NUDE MAN
What?

Derek shoves the gun into his neck.

NUDE MAN (CONT'D)
Okay, okay!

DEREK
Now!

The Nude Man swings open his door.

The Players all quietly watch.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

The Nude Man gets out. His hands bound with zip ties and eyes welled with tears.

PLAYER #4
Yo, this dude's crazy, man!

Derek pops out of the back seat, disguised in his black ski mask and a gun still in hand.

DEREK
(to Players)
What's up, y'all?!

He hurries into the driver's seat, slams the door shut and throws a handful of RANDOM PAPERS out the window.

All printed internet articles.

Some of them blow away in the wind while some land face up on the court: *Teacher Charged In Pedophile Ring. Child Porn Ring linked to Elementary School.*

The Players pick them up at random. The Nude Man's picture featured on several front pages.

Derek leaves some tire behind as he speeds off. Like a ghost. Into the night.

The Players quickly turn angry and circle the Nude Man like hungry sharks about to devour their dinner.

PLAYER #5

You're not in Kansas anymore,
Dorothy.

They all have a laugh.

INT. BIG CITY LIQUORS - NIGHT

Derek steps inside as a loud DOOR BELL RINGS and grabs the attention of business partner RAY---30s, tall, thin, and nothing but tats.

Ray finishes with a CUSTOMER at the register, rushes to Derek with honest concern in his eyes.

RAY

Okay, so I don't have to start
checking car trunks for your
corpse. Good news.

Derek nudges his way past Ray, toward the back stock room and main office.

DEREK

I know you've been covering some
shifts. I'm dealing with some shit
right now. Denise is missing.

RAY

Yeah, I know. Everyone knows. I saw
it on the news over a week ago. And
you haven't mentioned it once. Like
it's not happening. And it's
bugging me out.

Derek steps into --

THE OFFICE

and grabs a soda from a mini fridge. He pops it open, chugs it down as Ray leans on the door.

RAY (CONT'D)

What's going on? I'm your best
friend. You're leaving here in the
middle of the night and not coming
back until after closing. Not
telling me shit.

Derek shoots him the look to back off.

DEREK

I'm sorry. Last I checked I own
this place and you work for me.

Ray raises his hands. A defensive stance.

RAY

Oh, well, gee wiz, sir. I'm so
sorry for stepping out of line.
Forgive me. But you don't think I
got a life outside of this place?

Derek calms himself. A tired sigh.

DEREK

You're right. I'm sorry.

Ray cracks a smile.

RAY

By the way. It seems our friend
Cody took a spill last night.

Derek plays surprised.

RAY (CONT'D)

And I don't mean a fake spill. I
mean for real. Right down the
stairs. Found his leg twisted up
like a cartoon. Guess who's gonna
be laid up in a hospital bed for
the next five to six.

DEREK

That's great news, Ray. Very happy
for you. Really. Send April my
best.

RAY

Thank you. I will.

Ray ducks out but quickly stops himself.

RAY (CONT'D)

Oh yeah. Almost forgot. Some kid
keeps coming by here, asking about
you. She says it's super important.
Needs to talk to you right away.

DEREK

A kid? What kid?

RAY

Oh, I'd say nineteen at best.
Black. Kind of pretty.
(unsure)
She looked kind of worried. Kind of
nervous almost.

Ray smiles.

RAY (CONT'D)

Anything I need to be concerned
with?

DEREK

Such as?

RAY

Oh, I don't know. Like maybe you
getting some girl half your age
pregnant. Stuff like that.

DEREK

In that case...no.

RAY

So you're not running from the
cops. Good. Here's her number.

Ray digs a paper out of his pocket, hands it to Derek.

RAY (CONT'D)

Said to call her as soon as you got
here.

He sports a sly grin.

RAY (CONT'D)

I know you're a stickler for
checking IDs. You sure there's
nothing I need to worry about?

DEREK

It's not like that.

RAY

Yes, sir. Whatever you say.

DEREK

Look. Do me a favor and cover me
for a few more minutes. I'm gonna
check this out.

RAY

Gotcha. See you up front.

Ray ducks out.

Derek dials the number on the paper. He waits a few moments for the other end. And all of the sudden --

A BLACK GIRL

dressed like a streetwalker appears in the doorway.

DEREK
Can I help you?

She is frantic, out of breath. A RINGING smart phone in hand.

Derek puts two and two together.

This is CHANDRA SWAIN---18, curly hair, light-skinned black girl, wide and pretty eyes.

DEREK (CONT'D)
Where the hell did you come from?

CHANDRA
You're Derek?

DEREK
Yeah. All my life. Who the hell are you?

CHANDRA
We need to talk. It's about Denise.

EXT. BIG CITY LIQUORS - BACK DOOR - NIGHT

Chandra paces in a frenetic circle as Derek shuts the back door and sparks up a smoke.

CHANDRA
Where the hell you been? I've been here like ten times in the last three days.

Derek holds up his hand, calms her down a bit.

DEREK
Whoa whoa. First off, who are you again?

Chandra stares in every direction. Paranoid. Scared.

CHANDRA

Look. This shit is real. Okay? It's very real. And we don't have much time. They could be watching us right now.

DEREK

Just slow down and pull yourself together. What's this all about?

CHANDRA

I'm a friend of Denise. We sort of work together.

Derek gives her a good once over.

DEREK

I would've never guessed.

CHANDRA

I was supposed to meet her the night she disappeared.

DEREK

At the gas station.

CHANDRA

She said it was important. Like life and death important.

(beat)

Then, out of the blue she brushes me off. A no show. Next thing I know, Wade's dead and cops are everywhere asking questions.

DEREK

Yeah, I know. I heard. So you're one of Wade's girls?

CHANDRA

Sonofabitch got what he deserved. Not saying Denise shot him. I don't know. I hope she did. All I know is she's not answering her phone. And if she's not answering it means one of two people are responsible. And one of them is dead so that kind of narrows it down a bit.

Derek plays offended, steps closer to Chandra.

DEREK

You think I had something to do with her disappearing? Is that why you're here?

Chandra laughs and spins in a circle.

CHANDRA

Wow. You really don't have any idea what's going on. Do you? Denise never told you shit.

DEREK

No. She didn't. Denise never told me shit about anything. So why don't you tell me.

CHANDRA

For the last few weeks...Denise has been helping me out.

(beat)

A lot.

Derek nods.

DEREK

Okay. And?

CHANDRA

Throwing me some extra cash. Acting all concerned and shit. Telling me I need to get out of the life before it's too late. Kept talking about this clinic she wanted to check me into. Get me cleaned up.

DEREK

She said all that? Doesn't sound like her.

CHANDRA

She said it's not just about you anymore. You gotta choice to make. Be a good mother or kill myself and my kid. Don't do like I did and be selfish.

Chandra cries. Derek also looks sad.

DEREK

You're pregnant.

CHANDRA

I kept asking her where she's getting all this extra cash. She wouldn't tell me at first. Said I didn't need to know. And that I should be making plans to leave town. Real soon she said.

Chandra checks over her shoulder, still scared.

CHANDRA (CONT'D)

Look, we should be inside.

DEREK

Get to it already. Where did she get the money?

Chandra fights telling him. She finally caves.

CHANDRA

I can show you if you want.

INT. POLICE PLAZA - NIGHT

Dietz and Katz wait patiently at a couple of random desks while they watch CAPTAIN O'FALLON---50s, talk on the phone through a large office window.

On a computer screen, Dietz watches Derek's latest internet video sensation:

The Nude Man on the basketball court desperately using his zip tied hands to cover his privates.

His private areas as well as the faces of the players have all been fogged out. As if edited for television.

In giant RED FONT...the word GUILTY covers the freeze framed image of our nude pedophile.

DIETZ

Our guy's really getting a kick out of this.

KATZ

It's gonna be a shame to bust this guy.

O'Fallon hangs up. He moves lazily for the door and into the outer room. Dietz and Katz perk up.

O'FALLON

The two slugs they pulled from
O'Dell's leg were thirty twos.
H and R mags. Specifically cut for
a Smith and Wesson.

Dietz and Katz are shocked. Speechless.

KATZ

Bullshit.

O'FALLON

Look. If you ask me, the writing's
on the wall. Taylor's old lady is
the shooter. She had motive,
opportunity and more importantly,
she shagged ass out of town. These
are the facts.

(beat)

If she didn't do it, where the hell
is she?

DIETZ

She may not be innocent but that
doesn't mean Taylor had nothing to
do with Willis getting hit.

O'FALLON

The report's in, fellas.
Ballistics don't lie. Why are you
still fighting this?

KATZ

So he used two different guns. One
for Willis and one on O'Dell. So
he's not a complete idiot. Not
being stupid doesn't make you
innocent, Captain.

DIETZ

He was the last person to talk to
Denise before she disappeared.
Then reports her missing and
doesn't call to check on her case
in almost a week.

O'FALLON

And what am I supposed to do about
it, Dietz? The guy's got a cleaner
record than all three of us.

KATZ

I don't like him.

O'FALLON

Hey. I'm sorry he smarted off at you guys and hurt your feelings. But Derek Taylor is no more the vigilante than I am.

DIETZ

His last three victims were two sex offenders and a drunk driver.

(beat)

His ex wife is a user and a prostitute and his kid died in an alcohol related car accident.

O'FALLON

So what?

Katz throws his hands on his head and paces in defeat. Dietz smiles and shakes his head.

O'FALLON (CONT'D)

You think he handpicked these people for personal reasons? These were front page stories. Anyone could've read about it in the papers and pulled this off. I don't know if you noticed or not but the world's gone nuts.

Dietz and Katz give up as they stare at each other with pitiful looks of defeat.

O'FALLON (CONT'D)

Look. You still like Taylor, then do yourself a favor and find this broad. Last I checked, that was the case I assigned the two of you. Was it not?

Dietz and Katz both nod.

O'FALLON (CONT'D)

If Taylor's bat shit crazy, she'll know better than anybody. So if I were you, I'd stop standing around before she dies of old age.

O'Fallon storms off. CLAPS his hands.

O'FALLON (CONT'D)

Get to it!

EXT. HOTEL BALCONY - NIGHT

Derek uses high-powered binoculars as both he and a sweatshirt hooded Chandra stare down at --

A PUBLIC PARK

Across the street. PEOPLE and DOGS stroll the sidewalks.

Birds and squirrels play in the trees. A COUPLE on a bench eat ice cream cones and laugh.

DEREK'S POV:

As he watches a WORKING GIRL in a mini-skirt SHINE THE SMALL WHITE LIGHT from her smart phone at passing cars.

DEREK (O.S.)
I see one of your girls. Looks
like she's stirring up some
business.

Derek shifts focus and watches a car pull to the curb about fifty yards from the working girl.

DEREK (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I think she's got a bite.

The working girl heads for the car.

CHANDRA (O.S.)
It's them.

Derek lowers the binoculars.

DEREK
Who's them?

CHANDRA
Them. The Cops. Taking their cut.
Every hour, on the hour, like
clockwork.
(sighs)
That's how Denise knew.

DEREK
Knew what?

CHANDRA
She knew names. Badge numbers.
License tags. She studied their
operation. Right down to which cop
would be here at what time.

Chandra keeps a close eye on the parked car. The working girl hangs her head in the window.

CHANDRA (CONT'D)

That's when she came up with a plan. Catch them all on camera. Get all of it. The whole operation down to the smallest detail.

DEREK

What did she do?

CHANDRA

She showed them what she had. And what she had was them by the balls.

DEREK

Pretty dangerous. Not to mention stupid.

CHANDRA

Now, instead of her paying them, they were paying her.

The wheels spin in Derek's eyes.

CHANDRA (CONT'D)

She played it safe. Didn't ask for it all up front. Just a little bit here, a little bit there. Just like they do to us. Like she was fuckin with them or something. Rubbing it in.

Derek thinks it all over. He's hit with a sudden and most shocking revelation.

DEREK

Wait a minute. How much money are we talking about here?

CHANDRA

This place is crawling with cops. At least six that I know of are creeps. Taking favors. Kickbacks. Those are just the ones I know about.

DEREK

A little bit here and there times six equals a lot of cash. Enough to kill for.

CHANDRA

You starting to get the picture now?

DEREK

Her computer. All her discs, videos, files. All of it back at Wade's house. Most likely taken by the cops. So let's just assume for now they took everything.

CHANDRA

They did.

Derek looks surprised.

CHANDRA (CONT'D)

I already checked. Three days ago. They even grabbed all of Wade's shit just in case.

Derek squints, thinking back.

DEREK

Wade.

CHANDRA

What is it?

DEREK

There's no way she was keeping all that stuff at Wade's place. Not with him snooping around.

CHANDRA

If it's not at Wade's place, where else would it be?

DEREK

I have a pretty good idea.

INT. DEREK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Enter a super frantic and jacked up Derek. Chandra follows behind and watches as Derek heads straight for his corner bedroom.

CHANDRA

That's as quick as I ever watched a guy move for the bedroom. I'm fast, Taylor, but not that fast.

DEREK (O.S.)
Just humor me a second.

INT. DEREK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Derek opens a closet and starts throwing dirty laundry here and there, rummages through cardboard boxes of junk, sets them on the carpet.

CHANDRA
What're you doing?

DEREK
She's been here. Slept in this room more times than I can count.

Derek keeps tearing the closet apart, checking in old boxes and shopping bags.

CHANDRA
I thought you two were --

DEREK
We are. I let her crash here whenever Wade was beating on her or starting shit.

Derek quickly grows frustrated as he comes up with nothing but random junk.

Out of frustration, he reaches for a fresh smoke, sparks one up and rubs his aching nose.

DEREK (CONT'D)
It's gotta be here.

CHANDRA
Try to think. Where else would it be?

DEREK
I don't know. I can't think.

CHANDRA
Well try.

DEREK
I can't think because I need a drink.

CHANDRA
Denise said you quit.

DEREK

Yeah, well, I also quit smoking.

Derek rushes out. Chandra follows behind.

CHANDRA

Where are you going?

KITCHEN

Derek grabs his bourbon and a glass. Pours a healthy one as Chandra impatiently walks in a circle.

CHANDRA (CONT'D)

We're wasting time.

Derek stares at the tall drink, unsure. His attention drawn to something strange on the carpet.

DEREK

What is that?

Chandra follows his look to something in the far corner of the room.

An AIR VENT nearby.

Derek walks to it, picks it up. A SMALL SCREW.

CHANDRA

I don't really see how that helps us right now.

Derek stares at the air vent. A screw is missing.

He quickly bends down, tries to look through the grooves and inside the vent.

DEREK

Do me a favor. Grab a screwdriver from the kitchen drawer. Phillips head.

CHANDRA

Which drawer.

DEREK

Beats the hell out of me.

Chandra quickly heads for the kitchen. Rummages through a few drawers until she finds a screwdriver.

She runs back to Derek.

DEREK (CONT'D)
Come on, Denise. Don't let me
down.

Derek unscrews one at a time. Hands each one to Chandra.

He slowly removes the face of the air vent and reaches
inside. He pulls out a

STACK OF DVDS and AN ENVELOPE OF MONEY.

CHANDRA
Oh my God.

Derek inspects each disc and their labels. The names of each
police officer and a long number on each disc cover. Just
below them are dates.

DEREK
It can't be that easy.

CHANDRA
What's in the envelope?

Derek reaches inside, pulls out a fat wad of bills.

DEREK
There's at least nine grand here.
She was hiding it here the whole
time. Right under my nose.

CHANDRA
Sounds like she really trusted you.

DEREK
Yeah. Yeah, she did.

CHANDRA
So what do we do now?

DEREK
I have an idea.

CHANDRA
You do? What?

Derek is quiet.

DEREK
I lied. I have no idea.

Chandra laughs.

CHANDRA
Neither do I.

DEREK
Come on. Let's go.

Derek heads for the door. Chandra drags along.

CHANDRA
Go where?

EXT. BUS STATION - NIGHT

Derek and Chandra pull into a parking lot just outside the busy depot. People waiting in line just as their bus pulls to the curb.

CHANDRA
Whoa. What is this? You're not gonna ditch me here. You think I'm just splittin' town, you're nuts.

DEREK
Not forever. Just a day or two. At most. Just until I know it's safe to come back.

CHANDRA
I suppose you're keeping the money too?

Derek hands it to her. She can't believe it.

DEREK
No. Denise wanted you to have it so it's yours.

Chandra snags it up without argument. She stares at Derek, unsure, worried.

CHANDRA
You know, you're gonna get yourself killed without me?

DEREK
You're probably right.

CHANDRA
So what's the plan?

DEREK
Do something that will probably get me killed.

Derek jots his number down on a scratch piece of paper.
Gives it to Chandra.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Just in case I'm still alive in the
morning, give me a call. If things
go as planned, we have a lot to
talk about.

Chandra smiles.

CHANDRA

And where am I going again?

DEREK

Pick a place. Enjoy your money.
Take a day off. Get some room
service or something.

Chandra laughs.

CHANDRA

Room service. Yeah, right.

DEREK

Get a pedicure. Get your hair did.
Whatever.

CHANDRA

My hair did?

DEREK

Yeah. Your hair did. You're a
pretty girl. You should take care
of yourself.

Chandra laughs, shakes her head.

CHANDRA

Alright, man. Good luck to you.
Nail those bastards for me, okay?

DEREK

I'll try. Get out of here.

Chandra smiles, steps out. Heads inside the depot.

INT. BIG CITY LIQUORS - DEREK'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Derek loads the DVDs into a large SAFE and shuts the heavy
door. A punch code on the front.

Ray leans on the door frame.

RAY
You gonna tell me what that is?

Derek thinks about it.

DEREK
No.

Derek ignores Ray, nudges him out of the way as he heads back to the sales floor.

RAY
Good to know.

SALES FLOOR

Derek steps behind the counter, pulls a BLACK THIRTY TWO from his pants, his second gun, and places it back under the register where it belongs.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Ray exits Big City Liquors, done for the night.

A suspicious car sits in a handicapped space with engine still running.

The engine SHUTS OFF. Out steps a very ANGRY MAN dressed in all black. He puts on a dark mask.

INT. BIG CITY LIQUORS - NIGHT

Derek taps a roll of quarters on the edge of the cash drawer as coins fly everywhere.

DEREK
Shit.

Derek kneels down, picks them up. A few at a time.

The ANGRY MAN runs in, gun aimed and ready to shoot Derek behind the counter.

ANGRY MAN
Heads up, asshole!

He slaps his hand on the counter. Derek peeks his head up. A gun in his face.

ANGRY MAN (CONT'D)
I said open sesame, bitch! Unless you wanna eat a bullet!

DEREK
Not really.

ANGRY MAN
Real funny, twat lips! Now do
it!!!

DEREK
Fine. Since you asked nicely.

Derek grabs the THIRTY TWO.

And before you can blink --

POW!

The bullet grazes the Angry Man's ear as he knocks over a
sales display.

ANGRY MAN
FUCK!

Derek leaps over the counter.

The Angry Man drops and twists like a wiggly worm.

ANGRY MAN (CONT'D)
I'll kill you!

DEREK
Now that's not very nice.

Derek stares at a stream of BLOOD SPATTER. His attention
then drawn to --

A BOX OF CIGAR CUTTERS at the register.

He snags one of them, removes the plastic wrap, smiles back
at the Angry Man.

ANGRY MAN'S POV:

A swift KICK to the face. Out cold.

BACK TO SCENE

Derek heads for the door. Flips the OPEN sign to CLOSED and
locks up for the night.

With quick proficiency, he drags the limp body toward the
back of the store.

STOCKROOM

Derek reaches in the man's pocket, yanks out his wallet and finds a BADGE. OFFICER BRIAN TOMPKINS.

DEREK

Well well.

Derek notices Tompkins start to come around. He dials a number on his phone.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

911. What's the nature of your emergency?

DEREK

Yeah. I'm gonna need an ambulance at Three Fifty Six Market Street, Suite Twenty Seven. There's a man here. Hurt pretty bad.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Yes, sir. And is this a business you're calling from?

DEREK

You better hurry. He's bleeding out.

Derek hangs up. Dials a new number. Tompkins is almost fully awake now.

TOMPKINS

Bastard.

Derek KICKS HIM IN THE FACE. Back to bed.

DIETZ (V.O.)

Dietz here.

DEREK

You're looking for me.

DIETZ (V.O.)

Any reason I should be looking for you, Mister Taylor?

Derek pokes his head in the sales floor, checks the front door. A few people outside pass. Laughing, joking, acting up.

DEREK

Let's just cut the shit. You know who I am. I know who you are. Let's just get this over with.

DIETZ (V.O.)

Hey. If you're ready to talk, I'm ready to listen. Anything you wanna talk about. You wanna tell me about Denise, we can do that too.

DEREK

Good. But we do it on my terms.

A sigh from Dietz.

DIETZ (V.O.)

I'm listening.

DEREK

As it turns out, I ran into one of your boys in blue. He's bleeding pretty good.

DIETZ (V.O.)

Fuck are you talking about, Taylor?

DEREK

I'm talking about him sticking a gun in my face. As it turns out wasn't such a grand idea.

DIETZ (V.O.)

Don't go doing anything stupid. You kill a cop... all deals are off.

DEREK

Yeah, yeah. Shut up and listen. I'll talk. I'll tell you everything. But I only talk to you. I see anyone else, and I mean, anyone, I'll plug him right between the eyes.

DIETZ (V.O.)

Fine. Where are you?

DEREK

You know where I am.

Derek hangs up. He stares down at Tompkins with pure and utter hatred.

He grabs Tompkins right hand, wraps the cigar cutter around his right index.

INT. POLICE PLAZA VIEWING ROOM - NIGHT

Dietz and O'Fallon stare through a one way mirror at Derek sitting at a folding table in a cold white room.

Katz walks in.

KATZ

Lab just confirmed that the thirty two taken from the liquor store was the same gun used to shoot Gary O'Dell.

DIETZ

Bingo.

KATZ

H and R mag thirty twos. It's a light load used a lot in self defense. Like a guy behind the counter at a liquor store.

DIETZ

The thirty eight special is still MIA. We flipped Taylor's apartment but nothing yet. Might be holding it someplace else.

O'FALLON

Okay, so I was wrong. We got him. Congratulations.

KATZ

Not sure what Officer Tompkins was doing there. Could've been following up a lead. Don't know yet. The doctors haven't let me in to see him yet.

DIETZ

Bastard took off his finger with a cigar cutter. Found it in Taylor's office. Tells the paramedics he blew it off with his gun.

Katz thinks back.

KATZ

Which finger was it again?

Dietz thinks back. A light goes off in his head.

DIETZ
Right index.

Dietz smiles.

DIETZ (CONT'D)
So he shoots the sex criminal in
the crotch. At least he tries to.
Only he misses.

Katz smiles as he also figures it out.

KATZ
Hits him in the knee instead.

DIETZ
Takes the drunk driver's thumbs so
he can't drive...

O'FALLON
And now a cop's finger. His
trigger finger.

O'Fallon watches Derek through the glass.

O'FALLON (CONT'D)
Check out the security cameras at
the liquor store. I wanna know
just what in the hell Tompkins was
doing there.

KATZ
Got it.

Katz ducks out.

INT. POLICE PLAZA - HOLDING ROOM - NIGHT

And in walks Dietz. Derek patiently awaits his arrival.

DEREK
Detective Katz.

DIETZ
Dietz.

DEREK
Right. Dietz. You look all worn
out. Tough day at your desk?

Dietz throws him a hard stare, takes a seat before him with a thick file of papers.

DIETZ
Something like that.

DEREK
You know, it's ironic.

DIETZ
What is?

DEREK
You expel all that time and energy looking for me and I turn myself in.

DIETZ
First things first. Tell me about the liquor store?

DEREK
Nothing to concern yourself with. Just another guy with a gun in his face.
(smiles)
But what do you care, right?

Dietz is confused, offended.

DEREK (CONT'D)
You're just the clean up guy. Waiting comfortably by the phone for your next toe tag.

DIETZ
You have a pretty cynical view of the police force, Mister Taylor.

DEREK
Maybe.

DIETZ
Is that what this is all about? You still mad about your kid? That they didn't punish your wife enough for that accident?
(beat)
Enlighten me.

Derek keeps quiet. Not so cocky. Dietz hit a nerve.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

Sounds to me like you're having a hard time letting go of some things. You got it all balled up like a knot in your stomach. Only you don't know what to do with it. With all that anger stirring around inside.

Derek looks sick to his stomach. He's moments from losing his temper and it shows.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

Your kid's gone and your old lady gets a slap on the wrist. Your angry, frustrated with the system. I get it.

Derek looks away, unwilling to listen.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

But take a look at it from another perspective, Mister Taylor.

Derek stubbornly stares at the table.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

Let's say this poor prick who's finger you cut off tonight has a wife and three baby kids at home. Been with the same company for fifteen years and gets laid off. Desperate, he robs a couple stores just to put food on the table and keep his kids fed.

(beat)

Not only did you stop him from feeding his kids, you disable him in the process.

Derek sighs. He doesn't wanna hear it.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

Sometimes good people do very very bad things, Mister Taylor. Things they might not otherwise do. Which makes people like you very very dangerous. Because you're too blind to see the truth. Or accept what is.

DEREK

And what am I supposed to accept, Dietz?

DIETZ

The fact that there is no perfect answer. For any of it. All we can do sometimes is play along. Try to make it through the day the best we can.

Dietz stands, looms over the proceedings with an assured and intimidating swagger.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

You're looking at some serious time, my friend. Everyone downtown is just itching to make an example out of you.

Derek smiles as if strangelly proud.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

But I know you're not a bad man, Mister Taylor. You've just done some bad things. And I know deep down, you wish you could take it all back.

Derek's smile says otherwise.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

You plead guilty right now, sign a confession. I'll see to it you're out in a year. At the most two. Otherwise, you're easily looking at ten to fifteen hard time.

Derek now worried. For the first time.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

For me, and it's just me speaking, the choice is pretty clear. If you want, I'll give you a minute alone to think it all over.

Derek is about to speak but stops. He slumps down in defeat, elbows on the table. He shakes his head, grabs a smoke from a nearby pack.

DEREK

No. No, I don't think that's gonna be necessary.

Dietz cracks a grin.

DIETZ

Good.

DEREK

Well then. I guess there's just one thing we need to discuss.

DIETZ

What's that?

DEREK

Nothing you need to concern yourself with, Dietz. But I thought you should know. Just in case you were interested in passing it on to the proper authorities.

DIETZ

Hell are you talking about?

Derek shrugs his shoulders.

DEREK

Oh, nothing. Just the names and badge numbers of over a dozen cops who've sexually molested and abused Chandra Swain. The said abuse going on now for two years which would've made her underage at the time.

Dietz slowly cracks a grin. He tries to get a read on Derek.

DIETZ

Bullshit.

DEREK

I kind of figured you would say that. Good thing I have video of said cops slipping hush money to my ex wife Denise.

Dietz takes a seat. Not quite done here.

DIETZ

Denise. You've seen her.

DEREK

You see, she was on to these cops for awhile. Knew all their dirty secrets. All the way from getting favors in the back seat, shooting up little girls and taking kickbacks from every streetwalker and pro on the block.

Dietz looks sick to his stomach.

DEREK (CONT'D)

I know I'm good press, but how's that for a headline?

DIETZ

What do you want?

DEREK

You know as well as I do that your department can't handle another press scandal. Those videos hit the web, you'll have riots in the street by tomorrow night.

DIETZ

Sounds like a threat to me, Mister Taylor.

DEREK

More like a warning. So now you know. What you do now is up to you.

Dietz stands, paces the room, thinks it all over. He stops, stares down at Derek, unsure.

DIETZ

So you're suggesting we handle this...internally? Take it straight to internal affairs. No press.

DEREK

I'll make sure you get the copies you need. See all the evidence first hand. But I keep the originals. As a bargaining chip.

Dietz grins ear to ear.

DIETZ

We forget all about you. Just like you never existed.

(beat)

Something like that?

DEREK

As far as the department is concerned, the vigilante left town. Retired.

DIETZ

Anything else?

DEREK

Yeah. If I even think I'm being followed, I'll go public with everything I got. That includes our little talk here tonight.

Dietz nods in agreement.

DEREK (CONT'D)

This is just me, Detective, but I'm thinking the decision is pretty clear.

EXT. POLICE PLAZA - EARLY MORNING

Derek exits the building as the bright morning sun crackles over the horizon and blasts his tired face.

BLACK PROPHET (V.O.)

I see the light in you!

Derek smiles.

He shuffles his way down some steps and keeps a careful eye on the UNIFORM COPS coming and going.

INT. DINER - MORNING

Derek enters, walks to the lunch counter, drops a wrinkled dollar next to the salt and pepper.

A WAITRESS greets him.

DEREK

Coffee please. And some aspirins if you have them.

WAITRESS

I'll see what I can do.

A NEWS REPORT

Plays from a mounted TV. The VOLUME TURNED DOWN.

Anne Connors, our local anchor, is in mid story. The VIDEO FOOTAGE of Gary O'Dell and his admission of guilt plays to the left of her.

News bumper: NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN O'DELL SHOOTING

DEREK

Hey! Can we turn this up?

The news story ends and cuts to commercial.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Shit.

A CUSTOMER in a corner booth turns to Derek.

CUSTOMER

You haven't heard the latest?

DEREK

No.

CUSTOMER

O'Dell is suing the girl's father
for damages.

Derek is instantly sick by this.

DEREK

Hell are you talking about?

CUSTOMER

The Dobbs girl. Her father.
(beat)

O'Dell's claiming he's the one who
hired this guy to shoot him.

DEREK

Who said?

CUSTOMER

O'Dell said. He says the guy told
him it was Dobbs right after he
shot him.

(beat)

If you believe anything O'Dell
says. Which I do not. But, in this
case, it does make sense.

DEREK

Why does it make sense?

CUSTOMER

Think about it. There were two
kids involved. Not just the Dobbs
girl. Why would O'Dell place blame
on this girl's father and not the
other?

Derek thinks it over.

DEREK

I don't know.

CUSTOMER

Charlie Dobbs has a few bucks.
Wealthy guy like that. Has a bit
of power and influence.

(beat)

I can see him doing something like
that.

A second Customer turns in his seat.

CUSTOMER #2

Just cause the man has some money
and influence doesn't mean he goes
around having people shot.

The Waitress joins in.

WAITRESS

This isn't just anybody. It's his
little girl you're talking about.

Another joins in from across the dining room.

CUSTOMER #4

What I've been reading about
Charlie Dobbs, I'm thinking his
precious baby girl's story is a bit
on the ripe side.

CUSTOMER #3

How's that?

CUSTOMER #4

A guy like that. All that money.
Obsessed with his job. Been
married three times. The third
being about half his age. I can
easily see those kids of his acting
out.

WAITRESS

Since when is being raped by your
teacher acting out?

CUSTOMER #4

How do you know she was raped?
Could've made the whole thing up.
Last I remember, there a few other
people who thought the same.

DEREK

Why would she do that? Why would she lie?

CUSTOMER #4

For the attention. Which she obviously never got at home. Daddy was a little too busy at the office. Too focused on the job and not enough on what's going on with his kids. Happens all the time. Kids don't get enough hugs, they end up going crazy and shooting up the school...

And the argument gets muffled by multiple voices as Derek quietly ducks out.

EXT. BRIDGE - MORNING

Derek stands in the middle of the short bridge and stares down at the calm morning water.

He pulls the SILVER SNUB from his pants, stares at it, then back to the water.

He reaches his hand back, ready to toss the gun --

STONER (O.S.)

Excuse me, bro.

Derek stops, stuffs the gun away, turns to the Stoner, a joint in his mouth.

STONER (CONT'D)

You got a light, man?

Derek just blankly stares back at him.

STONER (CONT'D)

Yes? No?

Derek stares at the ground, thinks it all over. He gawks down at the smooth water below.

STONER (CONT'D)

Damn, dude. You look like you got some serious shit on your mind, bro.

Derek smiles and walks off.

INT. BIG CITY LIQUORS - DEREK'S OFFICE - DAY

Derek types in a punch code on his safe, opens the door and is shocked to find nothing.

DEREK

Ray!!!

Ray ducks his head in.

RAY

What is it?

DEREK

Has anyone been here since last night?

RAY

Yeah, man. That one chick. She came back. Said you were holding a package for her.

DEREK

What kind of package?

RAY

She didn't say. She just said you'd know what she was talking about.

Ray stares into the empty safe.

RAY (CONT'D)

Wait. That wasn't it?

DEREK

You gave her those discs that were in the safe?

RAY

Well...

(beat)

Yeah, man.

Derek shuts his eyes in defeat.

RAY (CONT'D)

I tried calling you, but as usual, you didn't answer!

Derek storms out.

RAY (CONT'D)

Now where are you doing?

The door SLAMS behind him.

RAY (CONT'D)
Fine, don't tell me!

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Derek sits at the bar. Stares down at a double scotch rocks and his very shaky right hand.

He squeezes his palm shut. Fingers still twitch. His nerves get the best of him.

Derek stares at the drink. As if contemplating whether or not he should chug it. He picks up the glass about to put it to his lips. He stops himself. Lays down a ten spot and sets his drink on top.

He heads for the door.

A BARTENDER squints, confused as he spots the untouched scotch and rocks.

EXT. NIGHT CLUB - BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Derek exits a back door and immediately hears an ongoing fist fight nearby. He turns --

-- spots TWO GUYS punching it out in the alley.

A THIRD GUY holds a CLUB GIRL by her flailing arms as she fights to break free of his grip.

CLUB GIRL
Leave him alone!

One of our fighters is getting his butt handed to him as he's slammed against a wall.

The other guy KICKS him in the chest and stomach.

GUY #1
Come on, man, he's had enough.

Guy #2 ignores this. Another two kicks to the stomach and then grabs his left arm, twists it backward.

GUY #2
Gonna snap his arm for him.

Derek approaches.

DEREK

You heard him. He's had enough.

GUY #2

Mind your fuckin' business!

The guy on the ground attempts to stand. Guy #2 knees him in the groin. And down he goes.

Guy #1 laughs.

GUY #1

Well come on. Stand up.

DEREK

You got your hands on a female.
And you're kicking a guy while he's
down.

(beat)

I'm making this my business.

GUY #1

Sounds like he wants some, Bodie.

GUY #2

Okay, badass. So why don't you
come over here and stop me.

Guy #2 kicks his guy in the stomach, curling him into a helpless fetal position.

Derek pulls his SILVER SNUB.

CLUB GIRL

Oh my God.

(to all)

Stop it! All of you!

Guy #1 loses his cocky grin.

GUY #1

Come on, bro. Let's get out of
here.

GUY #2

No, man. Guy thinks he's tough
carrying a gun around. Got his
permit so he can pull a piece on
anyone he wants. Gets his rocks
off like this.

(to Derek)

Well come on then, tough guy.
Shoot me.

Guy #2 beats his chest.

GUY #2 (CONT'D)
 You got a clear shot. Right here.
 Show me how tough you are.

GUY #1
 Shut up, dude. He's got a gun!

GUY #2
 Yeah, I see it. If he was a real
 man, he'd put it away.
 (beat)
 But he's a scared little bitch.

The guy on the ground stands.

VICTIM
 (to Derek)
 Let it go, man.
 (to Guy #2)
 Listen to your friend. He's trying
 to save you, asshole.

GUY #2
 Shut up!

Guy #2 slowly walks toward Derek. An ugly grin on his face
 and hands in the air.

GUY #2 (CONT'D)
 Well what're you waiting on?

Derek stands his ground.

GUY #2 (CONT'D)
 Do it, man. Show us all how tough
 you are.

Derek lowers his weapon.

DEREK
 (to Guy #1)
 Let her go.

GUY #1
 Yeah, man. No problem.

Guy #1 lets go of the woman. She runs to her boyfriend who
 still gasps for air.

GUY #1 (CONT'D)
 Be cool, man.

DEREK
Take a hike.

GUY #1
Anything you say, partner.

Guy #1 runs off.

Guy #2 smiles, licks his lips at Derek.

Derek slowly turns, walks away.

GUY #2
Yeah. I seen you now. Better
watch your back, mother fucker.

Derek quickly turns back --

POW!

The bullet strikes Guy #2 in the shoulder. He falls into a
slew of trash bins.

The Club Girl and her boyfriend tear off into the night.

Derek walks to the wounded thug, squirming in the pile of
trash bins.

GUY #2 (CONT'D)
What the fuck, man!!

Derek hovers over him, gun aimed.

GUY #2 (CONT'D)
Damn, man! Are you crazy or
something, man???

Guy #2 grabs at his aching shoulder, curls up like a scared
child face to face with the boogeyman.

Derek thinks this over. A sad, broken look about him.
Lowers his gun and retreats.

EXT. KIDS PLAYGROUND - GRASSY FIELD - NIGHT

Derek pukes his guts out and stares into the clear night sky.
A full moon and a crisp breeze in the air.

POLICE SIRENS in the near distance.

Derek spots the RED AND BLUE FLASH OF LIGHTS between some
trees and other shrubbery.

He stares at the asphalt beneath him.

The giant "A" for anarchy symbol is drawn out in bright purple and pink chalk.

EXT. DEREK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Derek's car pulls to a curb near the front entrance.

INT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR - NIGHT

A couple of plain-clothes COPS named HURSCH and WALLACE sit up front. A wounded Officer Tompkins and Chandra in the back seat.

All eyes on Derek as he heads for the front door of his apartment building.

HURSCH

You did real good, Chandra. Real good. We're almost home.

Chandra has guilt written all over her. A truly sad look on her broken mug.

WALLACE

Just don't go doin nothin stupid like signaling your new friend Taylor.

CHANDRA

Like I said. You give me what I asked for and you'll never hear from me again.

HURSCH

Of course. I like you, Chandra. Unlike Denise, you know your limitations.

Hursch gives the heads up to his partner. They all crawl out except Tompkins.

TOMPKINS

Tell Taylor I said hello.

EXT. DEREK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Wallace grabs Chandra her by the arm, escorts her toward the apartment complex. She jerks away.

WALLACE

Whoa whoa. Easy does it.

CHANDRA

Just keep your hands off me!

Hursch gets in her face.

HURSCH

Like I said. Don't go doing
nothing stupid.

Chandra fights the nerve, swallows her pride.

CHANDRA

(smug)

Yes, sir, Officer.

INT. DEREK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Derek sits in his recliner. Opens the silver gun's cylinder,
empties the shells, replaces one. A single bullet.

DEREK

God forgive me. For everything.
And what I'm about to do.

He shuts the chamber.

CHANDRA (O.S.)

Don't touch me!!!

Derek hears a familiar voice coming from the street below.
He stands, walks to a kitchen window.

He spots Chandra and the two cops arguing in the street.

Chandra spots him. Hursch and Wallace grab her by the arms
and head for the building.

Derek backs away from the window.

He opens the gun's cylinder and reloads the remaining five
bullets.

DEREK

Okay, God. I hear you. I'm
starting to get the picture.

INT. DEREK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - STAIRS - NIGHT

Chandra is being used as a shield by Hursch while Wallace stays two steps behind. Shotgun racked and ready.

All three turn a sharp corner on the steps, begin up the third floor stairs.

Derek's place awaits at the top. His door CREAKS OPEN.

Chandra and the two cops stop.

HURSCH

I see you, Taylor!

Derek hides just behind his door. He's quiet but nervous. Keeps his head pressed against the frame, out of the line of fire.

HURSCH (CONT'D)

Your new girlfriend is here too.

Wallace laughs.

HURSCH (CONT'D)

Why don't you come out and say Hi?
She misses you.

DEREK

No thanks!

HURSCH

In case you were wondering, we got the discs! All of them! You got your girl here to thank for that!

Chandra looks apologetic.

CHANDRA

Hey, man, I'm sorry, okay?

Hursch has a good laugh.

HURSCH

I don't know, Taylor! Don't sound so genuine to me! What can I say? You just can't trust anyone these days!

DEREK

Let her go and I'll come out!

Wallace gives his partner the heads up and moves around him, toward the next set of steps.

HURSCH

Sorry, Taylor, but we can't make it that easy for you.

Wallace quietly begins up the stairs. One step at a time.

WALLACE

You piss me off, Taylor! You were supposed to die two weeks ago with your old lady! But then you fuck around and lived! Well that's not gonna happen twice!

HURSCH

You hear that, Taylor? You pissed off my partner! Not something you wanna do, my friend!

WALLACE

Tell you what we're gonna do! We're gonna give you to the count of three! If you don't toss that piece of yours out the door, your girlfriend here is dead!

HURSCH

That's right! We can do you or the both of you! Either way, you're coming with us!

(beat)

You decide how this goes down!

APARTMENT DOOR

Derek shuts his eyes.

DEREK

Oh, Father Who Art in Heaven.
Hallowed Be Thy Name.

HURSCH (O.S.)

Okay! Here we go! One!

Derek trembles with fear.

STAIRCASE

Wallace is almost to the top. Hursch and Chandra still wait at the bottom.

HURSCH (CONT'D)

Two!

POW!

The sound of a GUNSHOT.

Wallace rushes up the steps. The others follow his lead.

INT. DEREK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Wallace is the first inside. He stares down at Derek's limp, motionless body on the carpet.

Hursch and Chandra rush in. Chandra horrified.

HURSCH

Well, whadd'ya know? It worked.
The sonofabitch did himself.

Derek jumps up, gun aimed:

The two bad cops RIDDLED WITH BULLETS.

Both of them desperately return fire.

POW-POW!

Derek struck in the LEFT ARM and upper shoulder.

The two cops fall to the carpet. Dead.

Chandra can't believe it.

CHANDRA

Holy shit! You did it! You killed
them!

She makes for the door. Derek takes aim. She stops dead in her tracks.

DEREK

Going somewhere?

CHANDRA

Look, man. They were gonna kill
me. Just like they did to Denise.
Like they tried with you.

DEREK

Shut...your mouth.

Chandra trembles with fear. She stares at Derek's perfectly still gun hand. He's cold as ice.

CHANDRA

Yeah. Okay. Good idea.

After a few tense moments, Derek slowly lowers his gun.

DEREK
Get out of here.

Chandra sighs in relief.

CHANDRA
Thanks.

She rushes out the door.

DEREK
Hey!

Chandra ducks her head in.

CHANDRA
Yeah?

DEREK
Be good to that kid. You got a
second chance. Don't make me
come find you.

CHANDRA
Got it.

DEREK
Good. Now get lost.

CHANDRA
Thank you.

She heads out.

Derek grimaces in terrible pain from his fresh gunshot wounds. He drips with blood.

DEREK
Yeah. Don't mention it.

EXT. DEREK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Derek's bloody, bullet ridden body stumbles out the front door, gun still in hand.

Across the street, a rear car door opens. Out steps Tompkins with his gun hand wrapped in white bandage.

He has a SAWED OFF SHOTGUN in his left.

TOMPKINS
Where you going, Taylor?!

Derek spots him. Aims and fires --

POW-POW-POW!

Tompkins hit with all three shots. He hits the side of the car and slides to the ground.

With no hesitation, Derek crawls in the car.

INT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Derek opens the glove box and finds a large STACK OF DVDS. He smiles, shuts it.

He cranks the engine and leaves some tire behind. Down the street and gone.

EXT. ALL NITE KINKOS - NIGHT

Derek and the unmarked car come to a screeching halt near the front of the print store.

He crawls out, now bleeding like a stuck pig with blood all down his arm and hand.

The silver snub still out and ready. And in the other hand are the stack of discs.

INT. ALL NITE KINKOS - NIGHT

Derek bursts through the door like he owns the place.

The evening staff are here and there.

TWO CHUBBY BLACK GUYS behind the counter.

A NERDY TYPE in the internet room. Bored. Surfing the net.

All three stare back at Derek in a genuine stupor.

NERD
Welcome to Kinkos.

DEREK
Good evening.

Derek points his gun at the Nerd.

DEREK (CONT'D)
Do me a favor. Come on out here
with your friends a sec.

The Nerd raises his hands, walks to the front counter in front of the register.

One of the two black guys behind the counter suspiciously keeps his hand in his pocket. Derek spots him.

DEREK (CONT'D)
You. Hands out of your pocket
where I can see them.

He puts both hands up. A smart phone in one.

DEREK (CONT'D)
You dial 911?

CHUBBY #1
Nah, man.

DEREK
(to Chubby #2)
You too, Sinbad. Hands up.

The other raises his hands.

CHUBBY #1
Yo. I never heard of nobody
robbing a Kinkos before.

DEREK
Everybody out here in front. Let
me get a good look at you.

The two chubbies step out from behind the counter and join their nerdy co-worker. All with their hands raised.

DEREK (CONT'D)
Is this everybody?

NERD
It's just us.

DEREK
Okay. Great. So...
(unsure)
How's everyone doing tonight?
Good?

CHUBBY #2
Up until a minute ago we were doin'
alright.

Derek smiles.

DEREK

Yeah, well. I'm not gonna shoot you. Not if you don't make me.

CHUBBY #1

That's good to know.

Derek laughs.

DEREK

As you can see...

(beat)

I've been shot. So I got myself a serious dilemma.

CHUBBY #2

What's that?

DEREK

These discs in my hand. It's proof of some very bad people doing very very bad things.

The three employees share a look. Their fear quickly turns to intrigue.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Tonight the whole world's gonna see what they did. And you guy's are gonna be the ones that helped me do it.

All three confused but excited just the same.

NERD

Yeah. Okay.

CHUBBY #1

Cool.

Derek smiles. Points his gun at the Nerd.

DEREK

You. I'm gonna need you to grab my wallet out of my back pocket.

(beat)

Very slowly and very carefully.

The Nerd carefully moves for Derek, reaches into the rear of his pants and grabs the wallet.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Inside you'll find a number of credit cards. Pick one and get me set up on one of those computers.

NERD

You got it.

The Nerd heads for the internet room. Derek grabs a nearby swivel chair, takes a seat but keeps his gun aimed at the other two clerks.

DEREK

How we doing over there?

NERD

Yeah, you're on. So what are we doing again?

Derek thinks it over.

DEREK

Any of you guys ever upload videos online?

The two chubby friends laugh.

CHUBBY #1

Are you serious?

DEREK

So that's a yes. And how long does it usually take?

CHUBBY #1

Depends.

DEREK

On what?

The Nerd ducks his head in.

NERD

How long your video is. And what format.

DEREK

And do you gotta make some kind of account to do that?

NERD

Yeah.

Derek seems put off by this. His shoulder is in bad shape as he winces in pain.

CHUBBY #1

Yo, you better get to a hospital, man.

DEREK

I'm not going anywhere yet. Not until this is done.

NERD

I mean, if you're in a hurry, which you obviously are, you could use our accounts.

Derek thinks about it.

NERD (CONT'D)

If all you care about is getting it online.

Derek spins in his chair, faces the chubbies.

DEREK

How about it, boys? You guys ready to make some history?

CHUBBY #2

Do we have a choice?

DEREK

Not really.

CHUBBY #2

Yeah, okay.

CHUBBY #1

Sure.

Chubby #2 grabs the discs out of Derek's hand and heads for the internet room.

CHUBBY #1 (CONT'D)

So what's this all about, man? Who put that bullet in you?

DEREK

Tell you what. You get this done for me I'll tell you all about it. Every detail. Right now, we don't have a lot of time.

CHUBBY #1

Yo, this isn't nothing nasty or nothing, is it? If my Moms sees this...

CHUBBY #2

Shut up, man.

CHUBBY #1

Man, I'd rather have a gun in my face than deal with that shit.

Derek laughs.

DEREK

It's a little dark. But believe me. All you guys are gonna be heroes when this is over with.

(beat)

I promise.

Derek sees the flash of someone rushing towards the front door. A shotgun in tow.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Excuse me, boys. I'll be right back.

Derek pushes his swivel chair away from the internet room and into the main lobby.

The armed GUNMAN rushes the front door.

Derek aims and fires --

POW-POW-POW!

and down goes another one. Into a tall sales display that tumbles and spills printer paper everywhere. The shotgun drops to the carpet.

Before Derek can inspect his handy work --

POW-POW-POW!

Three more GUNSHOTS tear THROUGH THE FRONT WINDOW as specs of GLASS cover the sales floor.

Derek dives for cover.

The three co-workers duck under desks.

CHUBBY #1

It wasn't me! I didn't call shit!

Derek crawls back to the internet room. He stays low with the others.

DEREK

Yeah, I know you didn't. Everybody be cool.

CHUBBY #2

Cool?!

(panicked)

We gonna be picking bullets out each other's asses!

CHUBBY #1

Shut up! They're here to save us, stupid!

DEREK

No they're not. They're gonna kill all four of us.

Chubby #1 seems unsure.

CHUBBY #1

Word?

Derek nods with assurance.

DEREK

Word.

The Nerd is frozen with fear and covers his ears.

NERD

I think it's time you told us what's going on!

Derek peaks out the window. Spots several SQUAD CARS with RED AND BLUES FLASHING.

DEREK

Okay. New plan.

CHUBBY #2

Good. I don't like this plan.

DEREK

(to Chubby #1)

Get on the phone and ask for Detective Sergeant Mike Dietz. He's in homicide.

CHUBBY #1

Yo, you kill somebody, man?

Derek stalls.

DEREK
Just a couple of cops.

NERD
Holy shhhhhit.

DEREK
Those bad people I told you
about...

CHUBBY #1
Yeah?

DEREK
Well they're outside right now.
And they got badges and guns. A
very dangerous mix.

CHUBBY #2
Oh, shhhhhit.

Chubby #2 beats his head against the desk.

CHUBBY #1
If the cops want us dead, why the
hell you wanna call the cops?

DEREK
It's a long story. All I can tell
you now is he's one of the good
guys.

NERD
Are you guys like friends or
something?

DEREK
We have an understanding.

EXT. ALL NITE KINKOS - NIGHT

Dietz arrives on the scene. His partner Katz hidden behind a
squad car, shotgun in hand.

Five other PATROL CARS at the scene. UNIFORM COPS have
handguns, shotguns aimed at the door.

Dietz joins Katz. Holds up behind the car.

KATZ

Bad news. They found two more of our guys back at Taylor's apartment. One more badge inside all shot to shit.

Dietz shuts his eyes in defeat. He rubs the bridge of his sore nose.

KATZ (CONT'D)

And now he's asking for you.

Dietz shakes his head. Frustrated.

KATZ (CONT'D)

We fucked up.

Dietz takes a careful look at the on scene officers. Some of them not looking so friendly.

DIETZ

You do a roll call on our boys in blue?

KATZ

What am I supposed to do? Start asking for everyone's badge number? Their jackets?

DIETZ

You know they're gonna kill him?

KATZ

Yeah, I got that feeling.

DIETZ

So now...all we gotta do is stop them from doing that. Try to make things right.

KATZ

We should've never let him go, Sarge. Just saying.

Dietz nods in agreement.

DIETZ

Yeah.

Dietz raises his hands and makes for the front door.

KATZ

I got your back, partner.

DIETZ
Yeah, just don't get me shot.

KATZ
(to everyone)
Everybody hold up! My partner's
going in! Keep those fingers
loose!

INT. ALL NITE KINKOS - NIGHT

Dietz opens, ducks in with his hands up. He makes eye
contact with --

Derek, half hidden behind a wall partition. He aims his gun
at Dietz and walks out, into the open.

Derek motions to the dead cop on the floor.

DEREK
That's on you.

Dietz stares at the bloody lump.

DIETZ
Yeah, you're right, Taylor. We
should've never let you walk.
(beat)
So now I'm here to take you back
in. In one piece.

Derek stares through the glass and into the parking lot.
Spots all the cops ready to put him down.

DIETZ (CONT'D)
Or maybe you wanna try your luck
with the boys outside.

Derek now petrified.

DIETZ (CONT'D)
Maybe it's just me but that doesn't
look like such a grand idea.

DEREK
Get away from the window. Over
here with the rest of us.

Dietz keeps his hands up, walks into the internet room with
the other three co-workers.

DIETZ
What the hell is this, Taylor?

DEREK

My swan song. Take a look.

Dietz watches the screen. A YouTube video almost done loading.

DEREK (CONT'D)

What I should've done in the first place. As soon as I saw it. Now the whole world will see what they did. And for once, the bad guy's aren't gonna get away with it.

(beat)

And I'm gonna be the one that made it all happen.

The three co-workers clear their throats. Derek smiles.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Sorry, guys. We all are.

Dietz takes a good look at the three simultaneous videos being loaded on the computers.

DIETZ

What do you think is gonna happen when this is over, Taylor?

Derek squints, confused.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

Everyone's gonna be chanting your name on the steps of city hall? Demanding your release?

DEREK

Don't know. Guess we'll have to wait and see.

DIETZ

No. All that went out the window the second you pulled a gun on three unarmed people.

NERD

We don't mind. Really.

CHUBBY #1

Nah, man. We're good.

Dietz ignores them.

DIETZ

You see, you're no different than me, or those cops outside or any of those other poor assholes you shot, killed or maimed. You're just another nut with a gun.

Derek loses his grin.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

No better, no different. You're that guy people see on the eleven o'clock news then shake their heads, wondering what the world's coming to.

(beat)

Guys like you, they always turn.

Dietz moves closer to Derek who backs up. A bit scared.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

You wake up one day and the sky was the wrong color so you snap. Take out a dozen or so people with an AK. Somebody's mother, brother, or God forbid a kid.

Derek peeks through the blinds at the cops outside and then back to Dietz.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

If I had any sense at all, I'd let them fill you full of holes and leave you bleeding in the streets. But contrary to popular opinion, not all cops are bad.

DEREK

And I should just take you at your word? Just like the last time?

DIETZ

You took a pop at a cop. You think there weren't gonna be consequences?

DEREK

I actually trusted you. Let my guard down for two minutes.

Derek shakes his head with disappointment.

DEREK (CONT'D)

You're just like them. Just like those assholes with their pants down and their palms up.

DIETZ

You're right, Taylor. I'm in here trying to save you because I'm with them.

Derek thinks it over.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

Listen to yourself. You don't trust anybody.

DEREK

That's right.

DIETZ

Denise trusted you. She trusted you'd do the right thing. That's why she left all that shit in your care. Just in case.

(beat)

You gonna let her down now? All of this for nothing?

DEREK

Shut up about her.

DIETZ

You were wrong about her. I know you still got some hate in your heart where she's concerned but she came through in the end. Now it's time for you to do the same.

Dietz moves closer.

DEREK

Stay back!

DIETZ

Come on, Taylor. We've taken this as far as it's gonna go.

Derek peeks out the window one last time.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

You got two options. Leave with me or leave in a bag. But it's late and I'm tired. And I can't hold them off forever.

(MORE)

DIETZ (CONT'D)

(beat)

What will it be, Taylor?

Derek finds it hard to stand still. His feet shimmy and shift in place. Sweat drips from his brow.

DEREK

You forgot option three.

DIETZ

What's that?

Derek puts the silver snub to his temple. A crazed look in his eye as he works up the nerve.

KATZ (O.S.)

Don't do it, Taylor.

Dietz spots Katz at the door. Gun aimed.

KATZ (CONT'D)

You pull the trigger and they win.
I know you don't want that.

Derek's trigger hand shakes uncontrollably as his eyes almost bulge from his head.

He SCREAMS OUT.

The three Kinkos workers squeeze their eyes shut. Too scared to witness Derek's final act.

A flick of the trigger. Click.

Derek breaks down in tears. He's got nothing left as his gun hand falls limp to his side.

EXT. ALL NITE KINKOS - NIGHT

Dietz and Katz escort a broken and handcuffed Derek toward their squad car. The other officers have hate in their eyes and never lower their guns.

The crowd of blue uniforms parts like the red sea. The three men head for their squad car.

KATZ

That's it. Show's over. Let's
make some room, huh.

END TITLES:

Derek Taylor was later charged with one count of felony kidnapping, fourteen counts of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to commit murder and one count of murder in the first degree.

He was found guilty on all charges and sentenced to twenty five years.

After several more attempts at suicide, he was transferred to a minimum security psychiatric facility where he remained under close observation for ninety days.

One hour after his release, Derek Taylor bought a new gun and took his own life.

The gun was loaded.

FADE OUT.

THE END