

REDEMPTION

By

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**Story:**

This is a story about REDEMPTION and how Stewart Mailer, runs out of time to correct the flaws in his nature to avoid tragic consequences in his and everyone's life around him.

**Characters:**

Stewart Mailer - protagonist  
Bern - best friend  
Tyler - Stewart's Lawyer  
Leslie Fellows - Bern's wife  
Detective Rison - Late 40's  
Kathy Mailer - Stewart's Wife  
Karen - Kathy's sister  
Jane - Tyler's mother  
Jack Blair - Prosecutor  
Blaxter - Judge  
Gene Wellington - Dr., Boss of Kathy  
Jacob - Stewart's dead son  
Asley - cat  
Taggart - dog  
Keith Dixon - autistic kid neighbor  
Nicolas - small boy son of Dan  
Dan - Prospective home buyer  
Rachel - Dan's wife  
Glen - freelance artist friend of Leslie  
Lloyd - Kathy's father  
Laura = nurse friend of Leslie

FADE IN:

INT. POLICE STATION - MIDNIGHT

STEWART MAILER, early thirties. A handsome shell of a man.

Bloody shirt and jacket. Bloody pants. Downcast eyes. A face drained of color. Posture of the accused.

He holds a TANGERINE in his hand, squeezing it tightly.

DETECTIVE RISON, middle-aged, poker-faced, glances at the tangerine.

DETECTIVE RISON  
You're bruising it.

STEWART  
It's my tangerine.

DETECTIVE RISON  
Suit yourself.

STEWART  
I didn't kill her.

Rison moves his pencil against the pad, draws a tightening spiral.

DETECTIVE RISON  
You were at the crime scene.  
You were estranged. You've got  
her blood on you.

STEWART  
I would never hurt her. I  
loved her.

Rison rests his forearms on the table.

DETECTIVE RISON  
You know something? My father  
always said, it just takes one  
decent man to know the truth,  
and the wheels of justice are  
set into motion. I know the  
truth. And here's the really  
bad news.

He leans forward.

DETECTIVE RISON  
I'm a decent man.

There's not much fight left in him, but Stewart lifts his chin a little.

STEWART

So am I. Can't you believe me?  
So am I.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE UP ON:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - MORNING

Suburbia in morning light. Towering oaks frame a street full of craftsman-style houses. Mothers herd their children toward bus stops. Joggers sweat and strive.

Here, people don't buy home security systems, or put bars on their windows. It's a sleepy neighborhood about to be shaken awake.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

A beautiful artisan QUILT hangs on the wall. In it, a figure that is HALF-BOY, HALF-BUTTERFLY.

The window panes are bright, but Stewart's still asleep.

Feminine HANDS comes into frame, placing a BURMESE CAT on his chest. He opens his eyes, stares at the cat, then up at KATHY, petite and ex-cheerleader pretty.

STEWART

Why is this cat on my chest?

KATHY

Ashley says it's time to get up.

Stewart strokes the cat.

STEWART

Ashley, is it also time to  
make love to my wife?

Ashley jumps off, disappears out the door.

KATHY

That would be a no.

Stewart reaches for Kathy, tries to pull her back to bed.

STEWART

I hear women are more fertile on  
Mondays.

She bats away his hands playfully.

KATHY

Stewart, we'll be late for work.

STEWART

Are we or are we not trying  
to have another baby?

KATHY

We are, but --

STEWART

Is it too soon? Just tell me  
if it's too soon.

Kathy's smile fades.

KATHY

I'm just not in the mood  
right this minute.

KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER

Kathy at the table, drinking coffee in her nurse scrubs  
and reading the newspaper. Stewart enters, necktie  
crooked, and grabs a muffin from a plate on the counter.

TAGGART, a scruffy TERRIER MIX, wags his tail and  
presses his nose against Stewart's leg. Stewart bends to  
pet him.

STEWART

(to KATHY)

Wanna have dinner out tonight?

KATHY

I can't. I've got a dinner  
at 6:30.

Stewart sneaks Taggart a bite of his muffin.

STEWART

Really? Where?

KATHY

El Capitan.

STEWART

Fancy place. Who are you having  
dinner with?

KATHY

Some people from the hospital.

Stewart looks thoughtful. He gives Taggart's head a final pat.

STEWART

Would one of these people happen to be Dr. Gene Wellington?

KATHY

Yes, he's coming.

STEWART

Been out with him a lot lately, haven't you?

KATHY

He's my boss, Stewart. And he's married.

STEWART

So are you.

Taggart looks from one to the other. His tail stops wagging. He wanders from the kitchen.

KATHY

It's a business dinner. We're going over protocols. Other staff will be there, too.

STEWART

I could come. Tell some jokes. I specialize in kidney jokes but I can branch out to the nervous system.

She glances at the wall. Cracked plaster surrounds a quarter-sized HOLE.

KATHY

If you really want to help, maybe you can fix that tonight.

STEWART catches her tone, returns it with a cold stare.

STEWART

Sure, since you're asking so nicely.

DOORBELL RINGS.

FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Stewart answers the door, finds KEITH DIXON on the

other side. Keith is fourteen. Pale skin. Dark hair. Orange-marker MUSTACHE, crookedly drawn, just above his lip.

KEITH

I need a ride to school.

STEWART

Why don't you take the bus?

Keith points to his orange marker mustache.

KEITH

The kids at the bus stop drew on my face.

His words are stilted, strangely clipped.

STEWART

Can't your mother take you?

KEITH

Her car is in the shop.

STEWART

Sorry. I'm already late for work.

INT. HOUSE - MINUTES LATER

Stewart enters his office, where he keeps his GUN COLLECTION encased in a glass cabinet, each gun polished to a perfect shine.

Stewart unlocks the cabinet door and selects a gleaming REMINGTON RIFLE. He holds it to the light, admiring it.

KATHY (O.C.)

Going shooting today?

Stewart turns.

STEWART

Yeah. Not much else to do. Only got one showing.

She nods. Earlier tension still shimmers in the air.

KATHY

Well...have a good day.

So much unsaid.

STEWART

Kathy...

He's tone is placative, almost pleading. But, no matter. She's already slipped from the room.

INT. GARAGE - A LITTLE LATER

Stewart puts the rifle in the trunk of his blue Honda, on top of a pile of magazines.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Stewart passes by Keith, who sits by himself on the curb, ten yards from a group of rangy TEENAGED BOYS.

Stewart SIGHS, stops the car. He grabs a stack of papers on the passenger seat and tosses them into the back. He lowers the window.

STEWART

(to Keith)

Get in.

Keith rushes to oblige. As he begins to pull away, Stewart changes his mind. He stops the car and approaches the boys.

STEWART

You think you're pretty funny, huh?

One of the boys -- long bangs, acne -- sneers at him.

BOY

What are you going to do, kick my ass?

STEWART

No. I'm gonna have my lawn boy kick your ass. He's from El Salvador. He does very good work.

The boys exchange glances. Stewart gets back in the car.

EXT. STREET - LATER THAT DAY

Stewart's car now contains three other passengers - DAN, a cherubic ex-frat boy type, his wife RACHEL and their small son, NICOLAS.

Stewart pulls up to a ranch-style house with a FOR SALE sign in the yard.

STEWART

Here we are, folks.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Stewart's got his patter down as he leads the family through the house.

STEWART

They totally renovated a couple years ago. Redid the master bathroom. It's big. You could play racquetball in here...

EXT. HOUSE - LATER

Stewart takes the family out in the yard, still talking.

STEWART

Good drainage and elevation, no worries about flooding...nice big yard...

He frowns at something, looks at his papers.

STEWART

Doesn't say anything on the set-up about a pool.

Yet there it is behind the deck, complete with a diving board and a sprinkling of leaves.

Nicolas jumps up and down.

NICOLAS

Daddy, a pool! A pool!

Stewart stares at the pool. He looks at the boy, who is still hopping up and down, then at his father. When he speaks, his voice is drained of all its good humor.

STEWART

You're gonna want to put a fence around that.

INT. CAR - A LITTLE LATER

Stewart is solo again. He drives one-handed, dialing his cell phone with the other.

INT. BLUE LAKE REALTY OFFICE - DAY

BERN, too burly for his suit, intense at his computer.  
ANGLE ON THE SCREEN to reveal he's playing a video  
game. He cell phone rings. He answers.

BERN

Hey, Stewart. How was the showing?

INT. CAR

STEWART

Sucked. You got anything  
this afternoon?

INT. OFFICE

BERN

Nada.

INT. CAR

STEWART

Want to go out to the range?  
I brought the Remington.

EXT. SHOOTING RANGE - LATER

Targets lie blown to bits everywhere. Empty beer cans  
are crushed and piled between Bern and Stewart. Bern  
puts Stewart's rifle to his shoulder and takes aim at a  
fresh target.

BERN

She's cheating on you. You  
know it.

STEWART

I don't know it. I suspect.

BERN

Look, suspecting is knowing. Take  
it from a man who once suspected  
and now knows. She's working  
late, right? Seeing this doctor  
all the time for no apparent  
reason? The signs are there.

STEWART

I don't want to rush to judgment.

The gun FIRES. HOLES BURST in the target.

BERN

The signs are there.

INT. BAR - DAY

Stewart knocks another one back while Bern nurses a glass of dark lager. A foam mustache lingers above his lip.

STEWART

You really think she'd do it to me, Bern?

BERN

Why not? You think you're special? I did, too.

STEWART

We're supposed to be trying to have another baby. You know, making a new start...

His voice trails off.

BERN

Well, that's good, right? How's that going?

Stewart takes another drink.

BAR - LATER

It's 5:30 now. Stewart's throwing darts. One has hit the target. The rest stick in the wall around it. The bartender watches, one eyebrow raised.

BERN

(into phone)

Where are you?

He SNAPS the phone closed, SLAMS his hand on the counter.

STEWART

What's the matter?

BERN

I keep going straight to voice mail. Where could she be?

STEWART

Why don't you just make her

wear an ankle bracelet?

Stewart's words are slurred. He weaves a little.

BERN

Hey. You know what happened.

The gentler Bern's voice, the brighter the glint in his eyes. Were his voice any softer, he'd rip out your throat.

STEWART

Jesus. It's been what, six, seven years?

BERN

That's when the act took place. I just found out about it two weeks ago. I'd call that fresh news. I'm telling you, never marry a woman who works in advertising. They're deceitful and wicked.

He throws a twenty down and lumbers out. Stewart stares after him a moment. He signals the bartender.

STEWART

'Nother one.

INT. EL CAPITAN RESTAURANT - EARLY EVENING

Kathy looks cozy with DR. GENE WELLINGTON, early 50's, lean, silver-haired.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Stewart's Honda careens into the restaurant parking lot.

INT. RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

Stewart bursts in, red-faced. And very drunk.

STEWART

Hey, Kathy! How's it going?

KATHY

STEWART!

Stewart looks at the doctor.

STEWART

Let me guess. You're the famous Dr. Wellington.

Dr. Wellington gives KATHY a look -- "who is this guy?"

STEWART

I thought there was a big party here tonight. Apparently there is a little party.

KATHY

Stewart, you're embarrassing me.

STEWART

Sit down? Why thank you, KATHY. Don't mind if I do.

DR. WELLINGTON

I think you should leave.

STEWART

Leave? I'm her husband. I think you should leave.

Dr. Wellington looks around as though to signal for help. Kathy touches his sleeve.

KATHY

It's okay, Gene.

STEWART

Gene? He's Gene?

Wellington gives Stewart a slow, icy stare.

WELLINGTON

Get out of here.

STEWART

Ok, I'll get out of here. See you later.

He leaps up -- knocks his chair over -- rushes from the restaurant.

INT. RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

Stewart staggers back through the restaurant, brandishing his Remington rifle.

CONSTERNATION from the other diners, who leap from the tables or duck under them.

SHOUTS AND SCREAMS -- Wineglasses tip and SHATTER -- Utensils dance on the floor.

Stewart's oblivious to the panic around him. He heads straight for KATHY's table.

Kathy sits frozen in disbelief -- Two BIG DOORMEN rush at Stewart, tackling him -- OTHER MEN join in, wrestling Stewart for the gun.

STEWART

Hey! What the hell are you doing?  
It's not even loaded!

The gun GOES OFF - BLASTS a hole in the roof. Plaster rains down. MORE SCREAMS. Stewart's attackers dog-pile him, dragging him to the floor.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE UP ON SUPER: THREE MONTHS LATER.

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

A pristine, yellow building, surrounded by lantana bushes. Outside, people mill and smoke.

INT. AUDITORIUM - LATER

Coffee, folding chairs, faces that tell long, sad tales. Stewart, at the podium.

STEWART

...and so, not only am I banned forever from the El Capitan Restaurant, but my wife and I are now separated...and she's sleeping with a certain married chief of staff at St. Laurence Medical Center. Which, of course, she denies.

Lets that sink in.

STEWART

Meanwhile, my dog and I have been banished to The Villager Corporate Apartments, the go-to place for punted-out husbands everywhere. We even have a secret handshake when we meet in the laundry room and wash our red shirts with our white briefs. Pink underwear is the official uniform of the exiled man.

His smile slips.

STEWART

So here I am. Deeply sorry. I mean that. I've got through eight of the twelve steps already. I'm working very hard to be the man she used to love.

INT. BERN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Leslie dumps the leftover spaghetti into a Tupperware bowl. Her movements are nervous, jerky. Her BABY BUMP pushes out the front of her waistcoat dress.

Bern barges in, throws a PHOTO on the counter. She freezes.

INSET: Party scene. A smiling blond HIPSTER has his arm around Leslie.

BERN

Who is this?

LESLIE

Oh, that's...what's his name? Glen. He's a freelance art director. I used to work with him at J. Walter Thompson.

BERN

He's the guy, isn't he?

LESLIE

We were just good friends. That's all. I promise.

EXT. BERN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Stewart RINGS the doorbell. Gets no answer. He tries the door. It's unlocked.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

BERN

How come you've never, ever mentioned this good friend of yours? Why did you save the picture? Why is his hand on your ass?

LESLIE

It's not on my ass!

Stewart saunters in.

BERN

Not a good time, Stewart.

Stewart shrugs, heads out.

LESLIE

No, stay. Please. Have  
some spaghetti.

BERN

I'm gonna go have a smoke.

LESLIE

You quit.

Bern disappears. The back door SLAMS.

STEWART

What's wrong with him?

LESLIE

He's obsessing again. About  
you-know-what.

She dumps the spaghetti from the bowl back into the pot. Twists a knob on the stove. A HISS and a POP as the flame catches.

STEWART

What set him off this time?

LESLIE

That picture.

Stewart glances at it.

LESLIE

He's gonna leave me. I can't  
raise this baby alone.

STEWART

He's not gonna leave you.

LESLIE

You don't know how crazy and  
jealous he's been since I  
told him.

STEWART

Why did you feel the need  
to confess? Are you crazy?

LESLIE

Our counselor told us to be  
honest with each other.

STEWART

Your counselor doesn't know Bern.

LESLIE

It was so many years ago. I  
thought it was ancient history.  
It was just that one time. Just  
one stupid mistake that I will  
never do again. Go tell him that.

STEWART

I'm uncomfortable with that role.

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

Stewart irons a white shirt, using the kitchen counter  
as an ironing board. He holds up the shirt, inspecting  
it. He's ironed the outline of a QUARTER into it. He  
sighs, picks up the quarter, flicks it across the  
room.

EXT. STEWART'S OLD HOUSE - DAY

Stewart pulls up, notices a Lincoln Town Car in the  
driveway. LLOYD, Stewart's elderly father-in-law,  
limps out of the house, leaning on his cane.

The look on Stewart's face shows reverence and hope.  
He smooths his hair, approaches Lloyd.

STEWART

What's up, Lloyd?

LLOYD

Just here for a visit.

Awkward silence. Stewart looks toward the house.

STEWART

Listen, Kathy and I are gonna get  
through this - I know it - but if  
you want your guns back...

LLOYD

No, no. They were a gift.

STEWART

I polish them once a week. And I still only use vintage replacement parts.

Lloyd nods.

STEWART

Maybe we can go shooting again sometime.

Lloyd says nothing - only smiles, opens the door to his car and slides his cane onto the passenger seat.

LLOYD

Take care of yourself, Stewart.

Lloyd gets in, starts to close the door.

STEWART

Lloyd.

LLOYD

Yes?

STEWART

I'll take care of your daughter, too, just like I promised.

EXT. DOORWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Stewart re-tucks his shirt, starts to put his key in the front door lock, hesitates. RINGS the bell instead.

Kathy answers.

STEWART

Hi. I'm with the Jehovah's Witnesses. Can I have a few minutes of your time?

KATHY

Come in.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Stewart follows her into the living room.

STEWART

Just ran into Lloyd. That old man still loves me. I bet he is crushed by the recent events.

A hand-made QUILT hangs on the wall. In the design, Rapunzel leans over a wall, her beautiful hair dangling down to a frog, who looks up to her with adoration.

Stewart points to the quilt.

STEWART

That's wild. When did you finish that one?

KATHY

Last month.

STEWART

What does it mean?

KATHY

I'll get your clothes.

KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER

Stewart waits in the kitchen for Kathy. He glances out the window, sees Keith kneeling in front of a small white CROSS in the garden, smoothing the loose dirt with a ruler.

EXT. BACK YARD - MOMENTS LATER

ANGLE ON KEITH

The garden itself is in the shape of a kidney bean. Keith adjusts his position, allowing for the glimpse of the garden's perimeter:

THE COPING OF AN OLD POOL.

Stewart crosses his arms, watching. Kathy lugs a basket of clean clothes into the kitchen.

STEWART

What's Keith doing out there?

KATHY

Pulling some weeds, doing some trimming. I gave him five dollars and he's happy as can be.

STEWART

What's that cross for?

KATHY

He made it for Ashley's grave.

STEWART

Ashley's dead? And you didn't tell me?

KATHY

You knew she had cancer.

STEWART

I know, but she was in remission. Or whatever the cat version is. You should have told me.

KATHY

Okay. I'm sorry.

Kathy sets the basket of clothes on the table.

KATHY

I washed everything for you.

STEWART

Thank you. It's gonna be nice to have underwear on that's not pink.

She smiles. He smiles. There's still a glint of magic between them. Anyone can see that.

He paws through the basket.

STEWART

Did you happen to wash the blue shirt with the white collar?

He stops, pulls out a T-shirt and inspects it.

STEWART

Hey! This T-shirt's not mine! It's still got the label in the collar. I rip out all the labels!

Kathy crosses her arms, says nothing.

STEWART

I don't suppose this shirt belongs to a certain chief of staff?

KATHY

He's my boss. That's it.

Stewart throws the shirt on the counter.

STEWART

That's not it. He's been in my house. He's been in my bed.

KATHY

Stewart, you're impossible.

STEWART

We were good. We were in love  
and trying to have a another  
baby, before the rich married  
doctor came along.

KATHY

You have a funny way  
of remembering things.

Stewart shoves the laundry at her.

STEWART

Keep the clothes. Maybe some  
of them will fit your doctor.

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Stewart slams the car into gear and SCREECHES away.

EXT. VILLAGER APARTMENTS - LATER THAT NIGHT

Stewart does a drunk-man's-stagger through the inner  
compound, clutching a giant-size bag of PURINA DOG FOOD.

He stumbles, falls on the bag. It rips. He gets up and  
keeps going, unaware that dry dog food is dropping out  
of the bag and making a trail behind him.

INT. APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The unmistakable furnishings of the cheap corporate  
apartment - beige colored fabrics, a framed still life  
of a pear, and wallpaper stolen from the employee  
kitchen of some sad company.

Stewart stumbles in. Taggart dances in greeting.

STEWART

Look what Daddy brought you.

He holds up the bag, then looks at it, puzzled.  
It's empty.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - MOMENTS LATER

Stewart kneels in manicured grass, scooping up dog food with his hands and putting it into Taggart's bowl. His knees are stained. Shirt untucked.

Two well-dressed WOMEN walk by, staring at him. Some of the dog food lies scattered on the sidewalk. It CRUNCHES LOUDLY as it grinds beneath their heels.

Stewart looks up.

STEWART

Hey, that stuff's not cheap!

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

Taggart's bowl is empty now, but for a few sprigs of grass. Taggart sleeps contentedly on a frayed sofa. Stewart's passed out on the living room floor.

EXT. STREET - THE NEXT NIGHT

Stewart hunches like a bird of prey over his steering wheel, staring at his old house. A light glows from the living room window.

A BLACK MERCEDES glides up, pulls into the driveway.

Wellington steps out and saunters up to the house.

STEWART

(muttering)

Wellington!

Wellington fumbles with his keys, finds the right one, unlocks the front door.

STEWART

Shit! He's got a key?

A pale FACE presses against the driver's window. Stewart does a double-take. Lets out his breath. It's just Keith. Stewart lowers the window.

KEITH

What are you doing?

STEWART

Thinking.

KEITH

I like to think, too. Do you want me to help you think?

STEWART

I'm good, thanks.

KEITH

Then will you take me shooting?

STEWART

I told you, I'm not taking you again. You almost blew my head off.

KEITH

I have been practicing with a stick and you will notice an improvement in my aim.

Stewart points at the Mercedes.

STEWART

How many times have you seen that piece of shit in my driveway?

KEITH

Four times.

A pause.

KEITH

I have seen your car parked across the street seven times.

Stewart scowls, throws the car in drive and speeds away.

INT. BAR -- LATER THAT NIGHT

The bar swarms with young business types. Stewart and Bern play pool in a corner. Bern sips at a beer between shots. Stewart's glass of water is prominently displayed on a nearby table.

Bern aims, misses.

STEWART

Nice shot, Bern. For a Girl Scout with mad cow disease.

BERN

I've won the last two games, Ass Hat.

STEWART

Sure, bring that up.

He chalks the tip of his cue stick while Bern scans the crowd. He spies someone at a pool table nearby.

GLEN, late twenties, has blond, spiky hair, and a zebra-print shirt.

BERN

That's the guy.

STEWART

What guy?

BERN

The guy from the picture.  
The freelance art director  
guy.

(calls)

Hey! Zebra  
boy!

Glen looks up from the pool table.

BERN

Is your name "Glen?"

GLEN

Yeah.

BERN

You know Leslie Fellows?

GLEN

Yeah.

Bern glares at him. Puzzled, Glen looks away. Bern's face turns red. He starts toward Glen. Stewart gets in front of him, pushes him back firmly.

STEWART

Calm down, madman.

INT. STORE - MINUTES LATER

Stewart pays for a bottle of Ketel One.

EXT. PARK - LATER THAT NIGHT

Stewart, on a park bench, pours a capful, drinks.  
Pours another one. Drinks again.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Stewart sits on the side of a bed, playing the guitar and SINGING terribly out of tune to JACOB, a baby boy, who lies watching him.

STEWART  
Sunshine, on my shoulders,  
makes me happy...

Jacob begins to CRY. Kathy comes into frame, LAUGHING. She takes the guitar away from Stewart.

KATHY  
He hates your singing.

Stewart picks the baby up, puts him to his shoulder, pats his back.

STEWART  
Do you hate my singing, Jacob?

EXT. VILLAGER APARTMENTS - NIGHT - END OF FLASHBACK

Stewart's car jumps the curb as he turns into the garage.

INT. UNDERGROUND GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Stewart stumbles toward the elevator...

A BASEBALL BAT swings out of nowhere and -- WHAP!  
-- catches him in the back of the head!

BLACKNESS.

INT. STEWART'S OLD HOUSE - LATER

KATHY sleeps alone in her bedroom.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A FIGURE moves through the shadows, approaches the side window.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

LOUD THUMP from another room. Kathy bolts up in bed.

HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Kathy moves down the hallway cautiously.

KATHY  
Who's there?

She waits in the silence. She approaches the door to Stewart's office -- turns the knob -- the door CREAKS open.

She flicks on the lights. The room is sparse, just a desk and a glass gun cabinet with an assortment of firearms.

A breeze moves through the OPEN WINDOW, fluttering the curtains.

INT. UNDERGROUND GARAGE - NIGHT

Stewart opens his eyes. Sits up. The garage spins slowly.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - LATER

Stewart sits on a gurney, blinking in the bright lights. A COP takes notes while a doctor examines Stewart's head.

COP

So you didn't see the guy?

STEWART

No.

DOCTOR

Doesn't look bad.

STEWART

Hurts like hell.

DOCTOR

I'll give you some Percoset.  
But don't take it with any  
alcohol, okay?

STEWART

I don't drink.

INT. BLUE LAKE REALTY OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

Stewart, at his desk, rubs the bump on the back of his head. Bern breezes in, his hands in the pockets of his jacket.

STEWART

So you want to guess what  
happened to me last night?

BERN

Whatever it is, I got a  
better story.

STEWART

I doubt it.

Bern removes a hand from his pocket, revealing  
BRUISED KNUCKLES.

STEWART

You punched someone?

Bern smiles.

STEWART

Who?

BERN

Zebra Boy. From last night.

STEWART

(appalled)  
You're kidding.

BERN

He shouldn't have messed with  
my wife.

STEWART

You had no proof!

BERN

Oh, so now you're a Boy Scout.

Stewart's phone RINGS.

STEWART

Hello? What?

He sits up straight.

STEWART

I did not! I was playing pool  
with Bern last night. Then  
someone slugged me on the head  
and I went to the emergency room!

(pauses)

Why would I break into my  
own house? I have a key!

Listens, pissed now.

STEWART

I have not been spying on you -  
- and my head's fine, thanks  
for asking!

(another pause)

Kathy?

He looks shocked.

STEWART

She hung up on me.

Bern shrugs.

BERN

You'll live.

STEWART

Such amazing empathy. You should work with orphans and burn victims.

INT. OFFICE - END OF DAY.

Stewart rises wearily, grabs his keys.

STEWART

Remember when I used to sell houses, Bern?

BERN

Come on, it's just a dry spell. Let's get out of here.

INT. LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Bern and Stewart pass LAURA, a well-manicured older woman behind the receptionist desk.

STEWART

Hold our calls, Laura.

Laura smiles, in on the joke.

LAURA

You bet.

INT. BASKETBALL COURT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Stewart and Bern play a pick-up game with some other men. The men joke and trash talk - obviously they're friends. Stewart goes in for a layup, shoots and misses.

FRIEND

Good one, Stewart!

STEWART

Ah, fuck you. Listen guys, I gotta go.

His friends GROAN.

FRIEND

You were a lot more fun when  
you were drinking.

STEWART

Thanks.

He starts toward the EXIT doors. Bern catches up  
with him.

BERN

Hey, where are going?

STEWART

Gotta do something  
important. Something I  
should have done months ago.

He keeps walking.

FRIEND 2

Come on, STEWART, one more game!

BERN

Oh, let him go. He's had a  
hard day.

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

Stewart's car speeds down the road.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Stewart dashes into his apartment.

MONTAGE:

He feeds Taggart. He showers and shaves. Combs his hair. Irons a shirt on the kitchen counter. Knots his tie carefully. Puts on a nice jacket.

INT. BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Bern and the gang are still at it. Sweat runs down their faces.

INT. GROCERY STORE -- NIGHT

A bucket of single ROSES sits in a refrigerated display. Stewart hunts through them, selects a perfect red rose. He inspects it. The stem is set in a glass tube filled with water. A DROP falls from the rose onto the floor.

INT. GROCERY STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Stewart's in the produce department. He carefully selects a TANGERINE.

INT. CAR - A LITTLE LATER

The tangerine sits on Stewart's dashboard. The rose lies on the passenger seat. Stewart makes a sharp turn. The tangerine begins to slide. He reaches out, steadies it.

INT. BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Bern fakes out his opponent and makes a perfect jump shot. Nothing but net.

EXT. STEWART'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Stewart holds the rose behind his back. The tangerine makes a bulge in his pocket. He RINGS the doorbell. Waits. RINGS again - tries the knob - the door's unlocked.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The living room is empty. A TV guide lies open on the coffee table.

STEWART

Kathy?

He sets the rose down on the coffee table.

STEWART

KATHY?

HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The master bedroom door is open --

STEWART

Kathy?

He enters, notices a chair lying on its side. He walks around it to the bathroom and...

There she is. Lying facedown on a bloody floor --  
In a thin, blood-covered nightgown --

A HOLE in her back the size of a quarter -- He SCREAMS  
-- and SCREAMS -- he can't stop.

BATHROOM -- A LITTLE LATER

Stewart sits on the floor, crying, holding his bloody wife in his arms as two COPS roughly try to separate them.

His CELL PHONE lies open nearby.

COP

Goddamn it! Let go!

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM -- LATER

Back to beginning scene. Detective Rison continues the interrogation. Stewart's still fiddling with the tangerine.

DETECTIVE RISON

Step Nine?

STEWART

I was going to apologize.  
Make amends.

DETECTIVE

RISON Tell me what happened  
again, slower this time.

STEWART

I told you, I had the rose  
behind my back and --

DETECTIVE

RISON --we didn't find any  
rose.

STEWART

I left it on the coffee table  
near the front door.

DETECTIVE RISON

Nope.

STEWART

It's got to be in the house somewhere.

DETECTIVE RISON

You know what we did find? A rifle. Wiped clean of prints. You own a 30-30 Marlon?

STEWART

I own a lot of guns. I'm a collector, just like my father-in-law. But I don't hunt. I'd never shoot at anything but a cardboard target!

DETECTIVE RISON So

when they pull the bullet out of your wife tomorrow and match it to that gun, what are you going to say then?

STEWART

Someone broke in her house last night. Maybe they took the gun and came back and killed her with it.

Detective Rison gives him a look: Yeah. Right.

Stewart POUNDS his fist on the desk.

STEWART

Damn it! Listen to me! Whoever killed her is still out there. Do you understand that?

INT. JAIL - NIGHT

Stewart rubs his red eyes. Dials the phone under the watchful eye of the night guard.

STEWART

Hey Bern, it's me.

Bern's SLEEPY VOICE comes over the phone.

STEWART  
Kathy's been murdered.

BERN (VO)  
(through phone)  
What?!

STEWART  
Look, Bern, I need a lawyer.  
Find me someone, please.

INT. ROOM -- DAY

Stewart looks across the table at TYLER BARRETT. Early thirties. Hair short as a man's, sculpted eyebrows, a bare minimum of make-up. An attractiveness that sits in the grey area between wholesome and severe.

STEWART  
Three years?

TYLER  
Uh huh.

Stewart drums his fingers on the table.

STEWART  
I just thought Bern would find me someone with a little more experience. I'm in some serious trouble, here.

Stewart studies her.

STEWART  
How many murder cases have you had?

TYLER  
Two.

STEWART  
How many did you win?

TYLER  
One man was acquitted. The other was murdered in jail during the trial.

STEWART  
Does that count as a win or a loss?

She folds her hands, says nothing.

STEWART

No offense. This is first degree murder here. I'm sure you'd do fine on something else.

TYLER

My specialty is jaywalking.

STEWART

You're funny. Strike two.

TYLER

You know what? Forget it.

STEWART

(surprised)

Forget it? Why?

TYLER

Well, for one thing, you're dead meat. You owned the murder weapon, you were at the scene with enough DNA evidence on you to convict thirty men, you had motive, and you have no alibi. And secondly, if I had to defend you, I would have to spend time with you. Hours and hours. And after two minutes with you I already have a rash on my neck.

She stands, grabs her square-cornered purse.

TYLER

One more thing you should know. I've never lost a case. They were probably all easy.

She strides out the door. Stewart stares after her a long moment. He spies a GUARD, bangs on the door.

STEWART

Sir?

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Stewart slumps at the defense table, listening to the prosecutor speak to the judge.

PROSECUTOR

And he was found at the crime scene covered in her blood.

PROSECUTOR

We think he is a flight risk and request that he be held

without bail until his trial.

Tyler rises.

TYLER

The reason Stewart Mailer was found at the crime scene was that he called the police himself to report the murder of his wife. There is no proof whatsoever that Stewart Mailer pulled the trigger. No powder on his hands. No fingerprints on the gun. Mr. Mailer has never been in trouble with the law and is not a flight risk. There is no reason to spend taxpayer's money keeping this man in jail.

INT. BERN'S CAR - LATER

Stop and go traffic. Bern drives. Stewart stares out the window, hollow-eyed.

STEWART

How's Taggart?

BERN

He's good. Chewed up my favorite belt.

STEWART

Sorry.

BERN

Who sprung you?

STEWART

My grandmother.

BERN

The one in Santa Cruz?

STEWART

Yeah.

BERN

She's still alive?

STEWART

No, Bern, I dug up her grave and stole her purse.

Stewart scratches at his razor stubble, pulls the visor down to ease his squint.

STEWART

Can't you go any faster?

BERN

Do you see the other cars?

A BMW cuts Bern off. Bern's middle finger reports for duty.

STEWART

Can I use your cell phone? I gotta call Lloyd.

Bern hands it to him.

He punches the buttons. Phone RINGS.

VOICE MAIL.

STEWART

Lloyd, it's Stewart.

He fights tears.

STEWART

Lloyd, I'm so sorry. I loved her so much...I'm gonna find out who did it...I promise...call me...

He's too choked up to say any more. He hangs up.

INT. ALBERTSON'S - LATER

Stewart stands in front of a bucket of roses, staring at them. He looks over at the bank of cashiers, spies a BOY of about sixteen. His neck's too long. A couple of years and he'll grow into it.

Stewart approaches him.

STEWART

Hey.

The cashier looks at him, then down at the bare conveyor belt. Customers come with groceries. He's puzzled.

STEWART

You remember me from last night?  
I bought a rose? And a tangerine?

The cashier looks him up and down.

CASHIER

Sorry, man.

STEWART

You sure you don't remember me  
at all?

The cashier shrugs.

CASHIER

You're a guy.

EXT. ALBERTSON'S - MOMENTS LATER

Stewart tips over the trash can closest to the door,  
gets on his knees and starts going through it. A  
SECURITY GUARD strolls up.

GUARD

What are you doing?

Stewart doesn't even look up.

STEWART

I'm going through the trash. What  
does it look like I'm doing?

He reaches in his pocket, pulls out a twenty. Hands it  
up to the guard.

STEWART

Found this.

The guard takes the twenty. It's a deal. He walks away.  
Stewart glances up and notices Leslie headed to her  
car, carrying a bag of groceries. She wears a floppy  
hat and a big pair of sunglasses.

STEWART

Leslie!

She looks straight ahead, quickens her steps.

STEWART

Leslie!

She gets in her car, zooms away. He stares after her.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Stewart hunches on a bench at the edge of a pond.  
Swans are gathered, darting about.

He takes a sandwich out of his pocket, unwraps it. Tears off a piece of bread and throws it in the water.

Tyler stands beside him, watching the swans fight over the bread.

TYLER

Got something against offices?

STEWART

Got something against nature?

He tosses another piece of bread.

STEWART

My best friend's wife came out of the store when I was digging around for the receipt for the rose. I've known her for ten years. You know what she did? Walked right by me like she'd never seen me before in her life. And my own father-in-law won't return my calls.

She takes this in.

TYLER

Did anyone have a grudge against Kathy?

STEWART

Everyone loved her.

TYLER

Maybe someone wanted to get back at you. Do you have any enemies?

STEWART

I'll give you a list.

She looks to see if he's joking. But he's lost in thought.

TYLER

How about the person who hit you in the head in the parking garage?

STEWART

I told you, I have no idea who

that was. Filed a police report.  
Headache. Percoset. End of  
story.

TYLER

But --

He waves a dismissive hand. Tyler tries another angle.

TYLER

You said you came over that  
night to apologize as part of  
Step Nine. Are you an  
alcoholic?

STEWART

No. I was in the program just  
to win back Kathy. She  
thought I was an alcoholic.

The swans give up and paddle away.

TYLER

But you've had some problems -

STEWART

Look, forget about the drinking.  
This is all about Wellington!

She flinches at the hardness in his voice. Regret  
shows on his face immediately.

STEWART

I'm sorry. You're seeing me at  
my worst.

INT. CAFE - LATER

Tyler and Stewart sit in a quiet corner booth. Tyler  
blows on her soup. Stewart toys with a ham on rye.

TYLER

You have family?

STEWART

Just my grandmother. My  
mother died of cancer a few  
years ago. And I never knew  
my father. He took off when I  
was just a baby. So they say.

TYLER

No brothers or sisters?

STEWART

No.

He pulls off a corner of the sandwich.

STEWART

I guess I thought of KATHY's family as my family, too.

STEWART

Her dad is about the finest man on earth. That's all he wanted for his daughter. A decent man.

Tyler nods. Waits in the silence.

TYLER

Did you ever cheat on her?

He gives her a look.

TYLER

I have to ask.

STEWART

RT (finally)

Once. Before we were married. I was just scared of commitment, I guess. I was so ashamed of myself. I thought, one day I'm gonna pay for that. Maybe I'm paying for it now.

Tyler sets down her soup spoon, rests her chin on her hands.

TYLER

You had a son who died.

Stewart looks up.

STEWART

You've done your homework, haven't you?

TYLER

(gently)

What happened?

STEWART

What happened? Life happened.

TYLER

What does that mean?

He sighs. Lets the crust of bread fall back in his

plate.

STEWART

He wasn't even a year old. He could barely walk. We never thought he could reach high enough to pull that back door handle down...

He's choking up now. Battling for composure.

STEWART

He drowned in our pool, okay? That's what happened.

EXT. SIDEWALK - A LITTLE LATER

Stewart and Tyler make their way down a shaded sidewalk. Stewart is still subdued, his hands jammed down in his pockets.

TYLER

Did you go to counseling?

STEWART

We went for a while. Then we dropped out. Kathy's quilts became her counseling. They were so beautiful, but they never made sense again.

They stop at corner, wait to cross.

STEWART

But we were getting through it. We really were. We were trying to have another baby. Then Wellington came along...

His expression changes.

STEWART

Wait a minute. I remember something.

TYLER

What?

STEWART

Wellington had a key to the house.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Stewart RINGS Keith's doorbell.

His mother, ABBY answers. Dark circles under sad eyes.

She looks at him, then glances across the street at his old house as if it were a car wreck.

STEWART

Is Keith here?

ABBY

Around back.

STEWART

Can I talk to him?

She hesitates.

STEWART

Just for a minute.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Stewart finds Keith standing in the grass, his hands raised to the sides. He's spinning around. He sees Stewart and spins slower. Stops. Stumbles a little, trying to get his balance.

KEITH

Are you taking me shooting?

STEWART

No.

KEITH

My house was on the news last night. And my neighbors' houses. And yours.

Keith takes a breath.

KEITH "It's a quiet neighborhood near the outskirts of this city, an American dream of safety and even routine. But one day in early March, this sleepy little enclave became the scene of a nightmare."

Keith puts his hands in the air and begins to turn again, slowly.

KEITH

Turn with me.

Stewart lines up next to Keith, begins to turn.

KEITH

Faster.

They turn faster together.

KEITH

Faster.

They whirl around and around. The trees are a blur. So are the flowering bushes that line the fence. Stewart and Keith fall down in the grass.

KEITH

Look at the clouds.

Stewart looks up. White clouds spin crazily around the sky. Stewart blinks, tries to focus.

Waits until the clouds calm down into a leisurely pace, like the circling of buzzards.

STEWART

Can I ask you a question?

KEITH

Yes.

STEWART

What do you remember about the night Kathy was killed?

Keith is silent for a moment.

KEITH

The police came and their lights were red and blue and their license plate was 4CVU806 and they pushed you in the back of their car and you said Kathy Kathy Kathy Kathy OH GOD Kathy--

Stewart holds up his hand, shushing him.

STEWART

No, earlier that night. Remember that Mercedes you saw parked in the driveway four times?

KEITH

Dark windows. License plate 5EGR790.

STEWART

Do you remember if you saw that car Tuesday night? Parked in the driveway, or down the street?

KEITH

I will have to go through my  
memory. Sometimes it takes a  
long time.

STEWART

How long?

KEITH

Sometimes over fifty-seven days.

STEWART

I don't have fifty-seven days,  
Keith.

Keith studies the clouds.

KEITH

The clouds stopped. I always  
think they'll keep moving if you  
just get them started.

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

Stewart irons his shirt on the kitchen counter.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - LATER

Stewart, new suit, combed hair, pulls into the parking  
lot of an Anglican church. The parking lot is full of  
cars. Mourners stream toward the double doors of the  
church.

Stewart covers his red eyes with a pair of Oakley's as  
he exits the car.

LLOYD, Kathy's father, struggles out of his Lincoln  
town car with the help of a relative. Swirl of  
white hair, bow tie, halting gait.

Stewart rushes toward him.

STEWART

Lloyd! Lloyd!

Lloyd straightens, turns.

STEWART

Lloyd, I've been trying --

Lloyd shoves him, hard -- STEWART stumbles back, falls  
to the ground -- shocked.

LLOYD

How dare you show up at my

daughter's funeral! Have you no decency? Get out of here! Get out!

Stewart's mouth hangs open. The Oakley's hide what must be a soul-broken stare. Lloyd's people move him on toward the church.

Stewart picks himself up. His shirt is dirty. He turns slowly back to his car, is walking toward it when he sees Wellington's BLACK MERCEDES pull up and park. Wellington exits in a charcoal suit.

Stewart's body language indicates an internal battle.

Get in the car. Or kill him.

Wellington spies Stewart. They stare at each other a long minute.

Stewart takes his sunglasses off so Wellington can see his red eyes clearly. So there can be no mistake just how much he hates him.

EXT. STEWART'S OLD HOUSES - NIGHT

Stewart stands in his old driveway, studying his house. Police tape everywhere. Stewart looks around at the empty neighborhood. He creeps over to the front door, ducks under the police tape, slips his key in the lock.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

He enters cautiously, closing the door behind him. It's dark in the living room. He flicks on his flashlight, steps forward cautiously.

INT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Quick scenes:

He goes through cabinets in the kitchen...

He searches in the cushions of the couch...

He crawls around on the floor in the office, going over every space...

He pulls out drawers in the master bedroom, spilling there contents...

INT. BATHROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Finally, he enters the master bathroom.

Trains his flashlight around the little room, hunting for who knows what...

The beam of his flashlight shows blood still caked in the tiles. He flinches, pulls the shower curtain to the side and lets the flashlight beam wander over the bottom of the tub.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Stewart and Kathy lounge naked in the water. Jacob sits between them, looking from one to the other.

KATHY

What do you think he's thinking?

STEWART

He's thinking, my Daddy needs to hit the gym.

He strokes Jacob's wet tuft of hair.

STEWART

You know, he looks a lot like your father.

KATHY

Really? Do you think so?

CLOSE-UP on the baby's EYES. Calm, wise, knowing.

STEWART

I do.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT - END OF FLASHBACK.

Stewart pulls the bathroom curtain back over the memory. He starts going through drawers in the bathroom cabinet. They are all empty. Frustrated, he bends down and pulls the last one out hard.

Something FALLS inside the cabinet. His eyebrows go up. He pulls the drawer all the way out and sets it on the floor.

Reaches in all the way, gropes around...

...pulls out something.

Holds it flat in his hand.

It's an EPT WAND.

INT. OFFICE - MORNING

Tyler stares at the EPT wand on her desk.

TYLER

Where did you find this?

STEWART

In our bathroom cabinet.

TYLER

You broke into your house?

STEWART

It's my house.

She sighs.

STEWART

Look, I went to the store and figured out how to read it. It says she's pregnant.

TYLER

Those tests aren't absolute.

STEWART

It's good enough for me. You've got to call the police right now.

TYLER

And tell them what? That you're an idiot? This can never be entered into evidence.

STEWART

Why not?

TYLER

Because the police didn't find it. You did. Illegally.

STEWART

It's my house!

Tyler rubs her temples.

TYLER

The tests from her autopsy will come back soon. We'll know if she was pregnant. STEWART...

Her voice softens.

TYLER

If she was, was it...yours?

STEWART

No.

TYLER

Are you --

STEWART

If she was, it was Wellington's.

TYLER

He says he was attending a speech on prolotherapy at UCLA the night of the murder. And he claims that he had a working relationship with KATHY, nothing more.

STEWART

Liar! The cops need to go back and question him again.

TYLER

Stewart, they don't care. Why should they, when you make such a lovely suspect?

STEWART

The rose. I told you about the rose! I know I had it with me. I was in the bathroom. The killer came back in the house, or he never left. Why didn't he kill me, too?

TYLER

Maybe he was making a statement.

STEWART

About what?

TYLER

Jealousy, maybe. Sexual ownership.

STEWART

So it would make sense that it was Wellington. Can't you get some kind of court order for DNA testing? Prove that was his baby? Or how about some fingerprints? The cops found a fingerprint in the bathroom that wasn't mine and wasn't Kathy's.

TYLER

We can't get his DNA or his fingerprints. Not without

cause.

STEWART

I'll find some cause.

TYLER

Do not play detective, STEWART.  
You can barely play yourself.

INT. ST. LAURENCE MEDICAL CENTER - DAY

Stewart strolls down a hospital corridor, dressed in scrubs.

Two DOCTORS walk by. Stewart ducks his head. Keeps going.

Slows down as he reaches an office door. A PLAQUE on the door reads: GENE WELLINGTON, M.D. CHIEF OF STAFF.

Stewart tries the knob. It's open. He slides in.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Stewart rummages through the empty office, looking in drawers of a giant oaken desk. He pulls out some letters, shuffles through them.

Suddenly, A VOICE.

VOICE

Hey.

Stewart looks up to see a SECURITY GUARD in the doorway.

SECURITY GUARD

What do you think you're doing?

STEWART

I work for Dr. Wellington.

The guard comes closer.

SECURITY GUARD

Oh, yeah, where's your badge?

Stewart ducks around the guard and runs. The guard gives chase.

INT. STAIRWAY - DAY

Stewart bursts into a stairway and rushes down the stairs. The door bangs open. The security guard gives chase.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Stewart notices a nurse's station. Behind the counter stands EMILY, wholesome looks, hair back in a ponytail. She looks up from her chart, startled, as Stewart hurtles toward her and dives behind the nurse's station.

EMILY

Stewart?

The security guard comes galloping down the hallway. Stewart looks up at Emily pleadingly, puts a finger to his lips. Emily hesitates, goes back to her chart. The security guard passes them by.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Emily shoves Stewart into an empty hospital room and follows him in, shutting the door behind them.

STEWART

Thank you --

EMILY

What are you doing here?

STEWART

I was trying to get some information on Wellington.

EMILY

Wellington?

STEWART

He killed her, Emily. I know it.

Emily folds her arms, says nothing.

STEWART

I found an EPT test in her cabinet. Was she pregnant?

EMILY

Get out of here, STEWART.

STEWART

You were her best friend. She must have told you things.

EMILY

I hadn't seen her that much before she...

Emily can't finish the sentence. She starts another.

EMILY

I've been on a different floor  
the last six months. I'm not in  
cardio care anymore. I'm in the  
E.R. So, like I said, I didn't  
see her much.

STEWART

Come on.

EMILY

I can't talk to you about this.  
It isn't right.

STEWART

She was pregnant, wasn't she?

Emily's face is full of pain.

STEWART

Wellington couldn't have been very  
happy about that, could he? The  
married chief of staff getting one  
of his nurses pregnant?

EMILY

I'm sorry. I can't help you.

She turns to go. He takes her arm, stops her.

STEWART

Come on. You can't possibly  
believe I'd hurt Kathy, can you?

EXT. MAIN SQUARE PROMENADE - DAY

Stewart and Tyler walk together. Tyler looks pissed.  
They stop to watch a street musician - a young ASIAN  
BOY playing Hendrix on guitar.

TYLER

You didn't.

STEWART

I had to.

TYLER

Do you know what would have happened if that guard had caught you? You'd be locked up in jail until the end of your trial. Do you know how hard I had to work to get you bail?

STEWART

I'm just trying to--

TYLER

Stewart, if you don't stop investigating, I quit.

Stewart looks shocked. The Asian boy glances at them.

STEWART

What?

TYLER

You heard me. It's just not worth it.

STEWART

No, you can't quit. You can't!

The Asian boy stops playing.

ASIAN BOY

Hey, will you shut the fuck up?

STEWART

(to Asian boy)

Sorry.

(to Tyler)

Don't quit.

TYLER

Promise me you will not snoop around anymore or ask anymore questions.

STEWART

I promise.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Stewart RINGS the bell. Waits. Finally the door opens two inches. Shuts. Opens three inches. Shuts. Four inches. Five inches. Then, finally, enough to reveal Keith.

KEITH

People came by your house today. They took pictures of each other in your yard.

STEWART

Glad I can be so entertaining.

Keith holds out his hand, palm down.

KEITH

Look at my hand.

STEWART

What about it?

Keith points to a place between his knuckles.

KEITH

That vein was not there yesterday.

STEWART

Have you remembered anything about the black Mercedes?

KEITH

I am still remembering. Remembering is important. Remembering takes a long time. One time I remembered and remembered and remembered so hard I remembered when I was born. Do you know what being born feels like? Warm and then cold.

He studies STEWART.

KEITH

What is jail like?

STEWART

It's not fun, okay?

Stewart is losing his patience.

STEWART

Damn it, Keith, my trial starts in a week. Can you maybe think a little faster?

Keith stares at him, thinks a long moment. Concentrates. Brows knit.

KEITH

I smell burned cookies. Do  
you smell burned cookies?

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Bern and Stewart approach the stairs of a yellow,  
post-modern building. Lots of steel and windows.

Stewart looks up at the sign:

DELTON MCCLAIN ADVERTISING.

STEWART

Big place.

BERN

Big clients.

STEWART

You sure this guy is good?

BERN

He's the best. Used to work  
with Leslie. He fixed an IRS  
problem for us once. Just  
disappeared overnight. We  
didn't ask any questions.

STEWART

I appreciate you helping me, Bern.

Bern shrugs.

BERN

Hell, I just wanted to get out  
of the house.

STEWART

You know, I saw Leslie the  
morning after I got out of jail,  
and she walked right past me like  
she didn't even know me.

BERN

Baby hormones. She is one super  
duper Tasmanian bitch. I just  
duck and cover.

STEWART

She must think --

Bern punches him on the shoulder.

BERN

Come on, no one thinks that.  
No one who knows you, anyway.

INT. CUBICLE - A LITTLE LATER

Meet JUNIOR, IT guy. Always has the best pot and the latest software. If he leaned any closer to his screen, he could kiss it. His eyes don't change when he sees Stewart. He's that cool.

JUNIOR

What's happening, Bern?

Junior and Bern clasp hands.

BERN

This is the friend I told  
you about.

Junior looks at Stewart, nods.

STEWART

How you doing?

Junior smiles.

JUNIOR

So you need to dig up your  
wife's old emails, huh?

STEWART

Yeah.

Junior turns to the screen.

JUNIOR

What's her full name?

STEWART

Kathy Davis Mailer.

He types.

JUNIOR

Got her IP address?

STEWART

Yeah. I brought that, too.

He gives the number to Junior, who glances at it, then turns his attention back to the screen.

JUNIOR

Have a seat.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Legal papers spread out over the table. Tyler, in pajamas and reading glasses, scribbles madly.

Front door OPENS, SLAMS SHUT.

The dachshund starts HYSTERICALLY BARKING.

TYLER

Who's there?

Stewart enters the living room, red-faced, dripping with sweat. Out of breath. A folder in his hand.

Tyler sees him and goes limp with relief.

The dog lunges at him, YAPPING.

STEWART

You mind calling off that wind-up dog?

TYLER

Here, boy. It's okay.

She gathers the shivering dog in her arms. Glares at Stewart. Angry now.

TYLER

What the hell are you doing here?

STEWART

You were listed.

TYLER

Can't you knock?

STEWART

I did knock!

Stewart shows her the folder.

STEWART

Guess what I got?

TYLER

What?

STEWART

Kathy's email records. And guess what she sent to Wellington five days before she died?

Tyler looks at him impatiently. What?

STEWART

An email, with no subject heading. No text. Just an attachment.

Stewart pulls out a PICTURE, holds it up to the light.

It's an ULTRASOUND.

LIVING ROOM - LATER

Stewart and Tyler on the couch, studying the picture.

TYLER

This doesn't prove anything, Stewart.

STEWART

But it's a start, isn't it?

TYLER

It is.

STEWART

Just you wait, Tyler. We're gonna nail this guy.

INT. TRAVIS COUNTY COURTROOM - MORNING

The courtroom is packed with spectators and press.

Stewart and Tyler at the defense table. Stewart wears a suit and his hair is newly trimmed. He looks back in time to see Bern enter. Their eyes connect. Bern smiles. Stewart returns the smile.

He's still smiling when he spies Lloyd and his family. Lloyd's eyes go ice cold. Stewart's smile fades. He looks away.

Tyler glances at Stewart.

TYLER

You get any sleep last night?

STEWART

No. You?

TYLER

No.

Looks at his suit.

TYLER

You look very nice.

STEWART

Thanks.

TYLER

How do you feel?

STEWART

Like a lobster with its claws  
taped, just waiting to be boiled.

He reaches into his suit pocket, takes out a  
tangerine, puts it on the table.

TYLER

Getting your Vitamin C?

STEWART

No, it's for luck. My mother  
taught me when you've got a  
big challenge, always bring a  
tangerine.

TYLER

Why?

STEWART

Because it always wins. Even if  
you crush it, the seeds come  
back and grow another tangerine.

TYLER

Apples do that, too.

STEWART

My mother hated apples.

He reaches into his pocket again. Withdraws another  
tangerine. Puts it on the table in front of Tyler.

STEWART

For you, Tyler. For luck.

Tyler looks at him. A flash of pure affection crosses her face. Embarrassed, she looks away.

COURTROOM - A LITTLE LATER

The courtroom is silent as JACK BLAIR, the lean, tan prosecutor, rises to begin his opening statement.

JUDGE BAXTER presides. He's old, but his eyes blaze. Don't mess with him.

BLAIR

Stewart Mailer had a dark side. Something that lay hidden inside him that began to spill out. He attacked a noted surgeon in a restaurant, unprovoked. He stalked his wife, Kathy.

He holds up a large photo of Kathy. The people in the courtroom take in her doomed face.

The beautiful jawline. The delicate brow, the long lashes, the blue eyes.

BLAIR

Kathy and Stewart had a terrible argument on the day of March 2, 2012. Two nights later, March 3rd, Stewart shot her with one of his own guns.

Stewart stares at Kathy's picture, transfixed. His eyes register fierce pain.

BLAIR

In the coming days, we will show he had the means and the way. We will show you DNA evidence. We will show you the time-line and the witnesses. You see, we have something better than all the tricks of persuasion his defense can come up with.

He stops, lets it sink in.

BLAIR

We have the truth.

He returns to his seat. The jury glances at Stewart, who shifts uncomfortably.

Tyler rises.

TYLER

Stewart Mailer is a victim of circumstance, a husband who was truly sorrowful for his actions and truly still felt he could win his wife back. If the prosecutors have the truth, as they claim, we can all leave now. Because the truth is, Stewart Mailer did not murder his wife. Stewart Mailer is innocent.

COURTROOM - LATER

KAREN, an older, less attractive version of Kathy, hunches in the witness box, as Stewart watches her narrowly.

BLAIR

Please state your name.

KAREN

Karen Doyle.

BLAIR

And your relationship to the victim?

KAREN

She was my sister.

BLAIR

Tell me, Ms. Doyle, how would you characterize the marriage of your sister and Stewart Mailer?

KAREN

Unhappy.

STEWART

(under his  
breath)  
Bullshit.

TYLER

Shhh.

BLAIR

Did they argue?

KAREN

Oh, yes. They had terrible fights.

BLAIR

Over what?

KAREN  
Stewart's drinking, mostly.

BLAIR  
Were the fights violent?

KAREN  
There would be lots of screaming. When Stewart was drunk, he would throw things. A few weeks before she threw him out, he punched a hole in the kitchen wall.

STEWART  
That was an accident!

Tyler gives him a warning look.

BLAIR  
Was your sister afraid of Mr. Mailer?

Tyler stands.

TYLER  
Objection, your honor. The witness has no means of judging Mrs. Mailer's state of mind.

JUDGE BAXTER  
Sustained.

BLAIR  
Stewart was pressuring her to start a family, too, wasn't he?

KAREN  
Yes, he was. But she didn't think he was ready to be a father again.

Stewart looks crushed.

BLAIR  
When was the last time you spoke to your sister?

KAREN  
She called me on the night of the 3rd.

BLAIR

The night she was murdered?

KAREN

Yes.

BLAIR

What time was this?

KAREN

Sometime between seven and seven-thirty. She was afraid.

BLAIR

Why?

KAREN

Because someone had broken in the night before. She knew it was Stewart.

Tyler stands.

TYLER

Objection, Your Honor.

JUDGE BAXTER

Sustained. The jury will disregard.

BLAIR

Why didn't you go over there, Ms. Doyle?

KAREN

My little girl was sick. If I'd only known...

Her eyes fill with tears.

BLAIR

Thank you, Ms. Doyle. No further questions.

JUDGE BAXTER

(to Tyler)

Your witness.

Tyler stands.

TYLER

Mrs. Doyle, I am very sorry for your loss.

Karen wipes her eyes with a tissue and gives Tyler a look of pure disdain.

TYLER

Did Stewart Mailer, to your knowledge, ever hit his wife?

KAREN

Well, he'd yell and --

TYLER

Just answer the question, please.

KAREN

(coldly)

No.

TYLER

Ever physically abuse her in any way?

KAREN

No.

TYLER

Did she ever call the police?

KAREN

She didn't want people to -  
- (off Tyler's look)  
-- no, she didn't.

TYLER

I'm guessing that if a woman throws a man she is truly afraid of out of her house, she would of course change the locks.

Karen throws a quick, helpless glance at her father, whose eyes are alert but impassive.

TYLER

Did she in fact do this?

KAREN

No.

TYLER

Did she get a restraining order?

KAREN

No.

TYLER

At least she made him return the key?

KAREN

(defeated)

No.

TYLER

Thank you. I have no  
more questions.

INT. BERN'S KITCHEN - THAT NIGHT

Stewart and Leslie sit across from each other at  
the table.

Stewart's clearly agitated. Leslie's expressionless.  
Bern's at the stove, flipping burgers. A drop of  
SWEAT runs down his face, hits the side of the frying  
pan and SIZZLES into nothing.

BERN

Stewart, how do you like  
your burger?

STEWART

I don't know. How do they  
take them in prison?

BERN

Jesus. It wasn't that bad.

STEWART

Are you kidding? That crazy  
woman murdered me today.

Bern puts a tray of buns on the table. Mustard,  
mayonnaise, a plate of sliced tomatoes.

STEWART

She twisted everything around.  
Made our marriage sound like  
something out of Stephen King.

Bern sets plates on the table, flips a patty onto  
each plate.

BERN

(to Stewart)

Look, you're gonna have your turn.

Gloomily, Stewart slaps together his burger.  
Bern assembles Leslie's for her.

STEWART

And all this shit about the  
arguments we had. That's  
just bullshit.

BERN

Like I said, you'll get  
your chance.

Stewart shoots him a look.

STEWART

What are you gonna say, when  
they get you up there?

BERN

I told you. I was subpoenaed.  
I don't have a choice.

STEWART

You're supposed to testify on  
my side!

BERN

I'm going to! Both sides can  
call the same witness.

STEWART

You know me. You know the truth.  
You know how happy we were!

LESLIE

Why don't you just write down  
what you want him to say?

Her tone is ugly. Stewart looks at her, surprised.

LESLIE

Like he's your puppet?

BERN

Honey...

LESLIE

(to Stewart)

She was my friend, too. I loved  
her, too. And she's getting lost  
in all this because it's all  
about you.

Stewart's taken aback. Bern looks pained.

BERN

She doesn't mean that.

LESLIE

Yes, I do. I'm going to have a baby in a few months and there's not going to be any room for it to be born. Because you are here. You are always here!

Stewart's speechless. Leslie gets up, grabs the cigarettes out of the drawer and storms out into the back yard.

Stewart looks at Bern, bewildered.

BERN

I told you. Baby hormones. I was not properly warned.

STEWART

What did I do?

Bern waves a hand dismissively.

BERN

Nothing. Finish your burger.

EXT. BACK YARD - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Leslie puts her cigarette to her mouth. Two quick draws and an angry exhalation. STEWART comes out into the yard.

STEWART

I don't think you're supposed to be smoking.

LESLIE

I'm not inhaling.

STEWART

What the hell is your problem?

LESLIE

You are my problem.

STEWART

Sorry about the whining. I'm just on trial for my life, here.

She drops the cigarette and steps on it.

LESLIE

You just don't see it, do you?

STEWART

See what?

LESLIE

The truth. Karen was just saying what everyone else knows.

STEWART

What?

LESLIE

That you drove Kathy away, a long time before she even met Wellington.

The words rush out, tumbling over each other.

LESLIE

You forget, I know better than most what kind of guy you are.

Stewart's caught off guard.

STEWART

Hey, well, you're no saint, either.

LESLIE

No. But the difference between you and me is, I know what I am.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Bern looks uncomfortable, too big for the witness chair. He folds his arms, taps his foot. Stewart sits, head down. He looks dispirited.

BLAIR

Mr. Fellows, please state your occupation.

BERN

I'm a realtor.

BLAIR

And what is your relationship to the defendant?

BERN

We are friends. And co-workers.

BLAIR

Do you remember working with Stewart on the day of March 3rd, 2012?

BERN

Yes.

BLAIR

Mr. Mailer got a phone call  
that morning, didn't he?

BERN

Yes.

BLAIR

From whom?

BERN

From Kathy.

BLAIR

And what did he say she said?

TYLER

Objection, hearsay.

JUDGE

I'll allow. You may answer  
the question

BERN

She thought he'd broken into  
her home the night before.

(adds quickly)

Which he denied.

BLAIR

How late did you work?

BERN

Till about six. Then we went to  
play basketball. We played for a  
couple of hours, then Stewart  
said he had to leave. We got a  
sub and played another hour or  
so.

BLAIR

So it was around eight  
o'clock when Stewart left?

BERN

More or less.

BLAIR

Where did he say he was going?

BERN

He didn't say. He just said he was going to do something he should have done months ago.

A STIR in the courtroom.

BLAIR

I have no more questions.

JUDGE BAXTER

(to Bern)

You may step down.

He BANGS his gavel.

JUDGE BAXTER

Ten minute recess.

Bern walks by the defense table, shrugging apologetically. Stewart rolls his eyes like "what can you do?"

STEWART

(to Tyler)

Great.

TYLER

Don't worry. I have a plan.

Stewart turns around, looks out over the courtroom.

STEWART

You know when you get married, and there's a bride's side and a groom's side? This trial is like that, except there's no one on my side.

COURTROOM - LATER

Bern's back in the witness chair. Tyler's questioning him.

TYLER

Mr. Fellows, was Mr. MAILER in the twelve step program?

BERN

Yes, he was.

TYLER

And do you know what step he was on?

Blair stands up.

BLAIR  
Objection. Your Honor, what's  
the point here?

TYLER  
Getting there.

JUDGE BAXTER  
Quickly.  
(to Bern)  
You may answer.

BERN  
Step Nine.

Tyler picks up a black, hardcover BOOK from the  
defense table, opens to a page and hands it to Bern.

TYLER  
Would you please read steps  
eight and nine of the twelve-  
step program?

BERN  
(reads)  
Eight. Make a list of all the  
persons we had harmed, and  
become willing to make amends to  
them all.

A pause.

BERN  
Nine. Make amends to such persons  
wherever possible, except when to  
do so would injure them or others.

TYLER  
Thank you.

She takes the book from him.

TYLER  
Now can you please repeat the  
last words STEWART MAILER said to  
you on March 3rd, 2009?

BLAIR  
Your honor, I still have no idea  
where this is going, and the  
witness has already testified as  
to what the words were.

TYLER

Your Honor, the prosecution made an inference with the context of those last words, and the defense would like to suggest a different context.

JUDGE BAXTER

I'll allow.

BERN

He said: I'm going to do something I should have done months ago.

Tyler smiles.

TYLER

Thank you. No further questions.

EXT. COURTROOM - END OF DAY.

Tyler seems in fine spirits as she and Stewart head out of the building and down the stairs.

TYLER

I think we really scored some points today with the jury.

Stewart loosens his tie.

TYLER

You should feel good about that.

STEWART

Yeah, you know, Tyler, I was feeling good about that.

He stops, looks at her.

STEWART

Then I remembered something. I remembered my wife is dead, and she's never coming back.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

It's 2 AM. STEWART stands in the middle of the street, drunk, his arms in the air, turning and turning and turning.

He falls down, looks at the stars spinning in the sky.

A car approaches, swerves, HONKS.

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

Stewart wakes up on the floor of his apartment. Taggart stands over him, pulling on his shirt with his teeth and WHINING.

STEWART

What's the matter, boy?

Just then he notices the window to the living room is closed. But the white curtains billow. Stewart gets to his feet, approaches the window and moves the curtain aside. His hair moves from a phantom breeze. Puzzled, he tries to tap the pane, but his hand goes right through.

Someone's broken the glass.

INT. APARTMENT - MONTAGE

Stewart pulls out drawers and checks closets. He's still a little drunk. His movements are shaky, uncertain.

He stumbles into the bathroom and lets the water run for a long time, splashing it over his face.

He looks up into the mirror.

A single word, written in soap:

MURDERER.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

COPS take fingerprints in the bathroom while STEWART paces the living room. Tyler's wearing jeans and a plaid pajama shirt.

STEWART

Someone's playing with my mind. It's not enough to take my wife away.

TYLER

Whoever did this could have killed you.

She ventures into the kitchen, which is a terrible mess. She glances into the trash can. Sees two empty KETEL ONE BOTTLES. Frowns.

STEWART

Who the fuck is fucking with me?

TYLER

We're doing everything we can.

STEWART

Oh yeah?

He indicates cops.

STEWART

What are they gonna do, really?

TYLER

See if they can get a print, find a witness. But you'd help if you could be a little more clear about when you got in last night.

STEWART

What difference does it make?

She studies him. Her face is serious, troubled.

TYLER

Timing's important. You of all people should know that.

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

Stewart's wearing a silver tux. KATHY, in her bridal gown, looks beautiful. Stewart watches with the others, who are gathered in a circle, as KATHY and Lloyd dance.

The dance ends. The guests CLAP.

Stewart walks up to the two.

STEWART

Hey, mind if I cut in?

Lloyd smiles.

LLOYD

She's all yours.

The MUSIC begins. Stewart smiles down at Kathy as they dance.

STEWART

Hello, Mrs. Mailer.

She smiles. He draws her closer. His hands move down her back. His hands stop. His eyes open. Something's not right.

He looks at his hand. It's covered with blood. He spins Kathy around. A pie-sized stain of blood spreads out on

the back of her gown.

Stewart SCREAMS.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

He wakes up in bed, still SCREAMING.

INT. COURTOOM - MORNING

Stewart looks like hell. Dark circles under his eyes. He's perspiring. Has a large swatch of stubble where he missed with the razor.

He sits, looks around. Stops.

He can't believe his eyes.

Wellington is taking a seat near the back door. Tyler notices his expression.

TYLER

Are you all right?

STEWART

Wellington's here.

TYLER

Don't let him throw you.

STEWART

He just came to fuck with me.  
The bastard.

Wellington notices Stewart. They stare at each other.

TYLER

Stewart, turn around.

Stewart complies, his face red.

STEWART

He's got fucking nerve, coming here. He should be in this seat.

BLAIR

Prosecution calls Dr. Harold Kaysara to the stand.

DR. KAYSARA, a small-boned Asian, walks so gracefully he seems to float to his seat.

INT. COURTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Blair rises.

BLAIR

Dr. Kaysara, please state  
your profession.

DR. KAYSARA

I'm the chief coroner for Travis  
County.

BLAIR

And how long have you served  
in this capacity?

DR. KAYSARA

Seventeen years.

BLAIR

You did the autopsy of Kathy  
Davis Mailer, correct?

DR. KAYSARA

Correct.

BLAIR

And what was the cause of death?

DR. KAYSARA

A single bullet fired from a  
close distance. No more than two  
to three feet.

BLAIR

The people would like to enter  
into record Exhibit 84 from  
the murder scene.

Blair props an OVERSIZED PHOTO on an easel:

Kathy on the bathroom floor, facedown, a large wound in  
her back and blood covering her nightgown.

A SHUDDER through the courtroom.

Stewart begins to BREATHE HEAVILY.

TYLER

Are you okay?

STEWART

I think...I think...

Stewart falls from his chair, passes out cold on the floor, hitting his head with a THUMP.

A flurry of excitement as Tyler and the bailiff tend to Stewart.

BAILIFF

Is there a doctor in the court room?

Wellington's already making his way through the press of people.

WELLINGTON

I'm a doctor.

Wellington leans down to STEWART, pulls an eyelid back.

Stewart's other eye opens.

STEWART

You bastard!

He grabs the doctor around the throat as others try to pull him off.

TYLER

Stewart! Stop it! Stop it!

JUDGE

BAXTER (to Tyler)  
Control your client!

She grabs his arm.

TYLER

Stop it!

The judge bangs his gavel.

JUDGE BAXTER

Clear the court room!

Stewart is finally pulled off Wellington. He struggles against the men holding him.

STEWART

(to Wellington)  
I'll kill you!

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Tyler hands Stewart a glass of water.

TYLER

Drink it.

She watches him drink.

TYLER

Why don't we just skip the rest of the trial and go straight to the sentencing phase?

Stewart finishes the glass.

STEWART

I was startled. It's not very often you pass out and find your wife's killer trying to bring you around.

TYLER

I'm sure that kind of drama works in the ad world. But in court it just helps put the icing on the prosecution's cake.

She studies him.

TYLER

Can I ask you a question?

STEWART

Go ahead.

TYLER

How much do you drink?

STEWART

I told you. Moderately.

TYLER

Then why do I smell it coming out of your pores at ten o'clock in the morning?

Long pause.

TYLER

Know where I got that Alcoholics Anonymous Handbook I had?

He shakes his head.

TYLER

From my bedside table.

He nods slowly, understanding now.

STEWART

You're an alcoholic.

TYLER

Sober five years.

STEWART

(sincerely)

Good. Good for you.

TYLER

I think you might consider going back in the program and giving it a real shot this time.

STEWART

I don't need to. And what's the point? You want me to clean up my life? What life?

TYLER

The life I am trying to save over there in that courtroom every day. That life.

STEWART

That life is not worth a whole lot anymore.

TYLER

You're not just fighting for you. You're fighting for her! If you give up then no one will ever find the real killer, because everyone thinks it's you.

STEWART

(emotional)

Do you think it's me?

The question hangs in the air.

TYLER

No. No I don't. There's not a whole lot of logical reason behind it, but that's the truth.

STEWART wipes his eyes. Looks away, embarrassed.

TYLER

Now, fight.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Stewart stands next to his car, gazing at St.

Laurence Medical Center.

STREET - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

He opens his trunk. Pulls out a TIRE IRON.

Stands looking at it. He takes a deep breath. Closes his eyes. Raises the tire iron.

STEWART

SHIT!!!

He brings the tire iron down on his forearm.

A SICKENING CRACK of bone.

Stewart SCREAMS.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Emily wraps a layer of cotton around Stewart's arm.

EMILY

You're crazy, STEWART.

STEWART

You've known me a long time, Emily. Do you really think I would hurt her?

She keeps wrapping.

STEWART

Please, any information you can give me. Anything.

She says nothing as she finishes wrapping. She disappears, comes back with a prescription and a young resident.

EMILY

He's gonna finish up. Take this for the pain.

STEWART

Emily...

She's gone. He looks down at the prescription. It reads:

IZZY'S MIDNIGHT

INT. IZZY'S RESTAURANT - MIDNIGHT

Stewart waits patiently in a far booth in a restaurant filled with dark red booths. Emily enters, slides in the booth across from Stewart.

STEWART

Thank you so --

EMILY

-- Kathy told Dr. Wellington she was pregnant a week before she died. He wasn't happy. He wanted her to terminate.

Stewart listens attentively.

EMILY

They had a big argument by his car the day she was murdered. She called me right after. She was crying. Said he threatened her job, but she didn't want to give up the baby.

Stewart nods.

EMILY

She really wanted things to work out with you. She wanted your baby. She waited for you a long time.

STEWART.

I know.

She touched his hand.

EMILY

She still loved you.

STEWART.

I still loved her, too.

EMILY

She knew that.

He nods. A short silence.

STEWART

Would you be willing to testify?

INT. CAR - LATER

Stewart pumps his fist as he zooms down the 405.

STEWART

Yes!

INT. TYLER'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Tyler sits on the edge of her bed, her hair mussed up, the phone pressed to her ear. She rubs her eyes.

The clock says 3:15 behind her.

TYLER

(into phone)

No...I'm not saying that's not good...anything is good right now...I'm saying not to get too excited...yes, right. If you can get the Dixon kid to testify to seeing the car, then maybe we can subpoena some DNA...establish reasonable doubt...Stewart...I told you, it's a long shot...what?! How did you break your arm?

EXT. SOFTBALL FIELD - DAY

Stewart sits in the stands with a gaggle of parents, watching a group of BOYS play softball. A player swings, connects -- the ball goes flying -- the kid runs.

The FATHER, who's sitting two rows above Stewart SCREAMS his head off.

FATHER

Go, Quentin! Go!!!

An outfielder scoops up the ball -- fires it to first -- and he's out.

FATHER

(deflated)

Shit.

Keith ambles out of the bullpen, picks up a bat. A low, collective GROAN sweeps through the parents.

COACH

Watch the ball, Keith!

The PITCHER winds up, throws. Keith keeps the bat on his shoulder.

The ball whizzes by.

More GROANS.

Another pitch. Same result.

FATHER #2  
Why do they have to let  
every fucking kid play?

Stewart glowers at him.

STEWART  
Because every fucking kid  
deserves a chance, that's why.

The man stares at him. Recognizes him. Shuts up. Stewart rises, cupping his hands.

STEWART  
Go Keith! GOOOO!

Keith turns toward the sound of his name, shading his eyes.

STEWART  
You can do it!

Keith stands there.

COACH  
Watch the damn ball.

Another wind up. Another pitch. Keith swings weakly. Connects. The ball dribbles toward the pitcher.

KIDS/COACH  
RUN!!!!

STEWART  
RUN!!!!

Keith drops the bat, begins to lope toward first base as the pitcher scoops up the ball. He runs up behind Keith, tags him out. The parents are quiet.

FATHER #3  
Well, shit, that's better  
than he's ever done before

SOFTBALL FIELD - LATER

All the kids are packing up their gear. Keith wanders over to first base, taps it with his foot, heads out across the field, alone. Stewart catches up with him.

STEWART

Good game, Keith.

KEITH

Thank you. I went almost halfway to first base. Did you see that?

STEWART

I saw that.

KEITH

Next time I will go all the way to first base. Maybe second base.

STEWART

Hey, can I talk to you?

KEITH

I know what you are here to talk about. I remember now. I remember that night.

INT. IN AND OUT BURGER - LATER

Stewart's double/single sits untouched on his plate. He rests his chin on his hand, watching Keith build a log cabin out of French fries.

Keith has signed his cast in giant, orange marker letters. KEITH. His name takes up the whole cast.

STEWART

So? When are you going to tell me what you remembered?

Keith carefully lays down the rest of the roof.

KEITH

I need more French fries.

IN AND OUT BURGER - A LITTLE LATER

Stewart returns with another order of fries. He watches Keith dump them on the tray. Keith picks up two French fries and begins rubbing them together. Salt falls off them and sprinkles the table.

STEWART

So?

Keith lays down the fries carefully, side by side, picks up another two and rubs them together. Slowly he forms a French fry walkway leading from his French fry house.

KEITH

I remember the black Mercedes.  
Dark windows. License plate  
5EGR79. Tuesday. March 3rd.

Stewart sits in rapt attention.

STEWART

What time did you see it?

Keith rubs the fries together, just as calmly. They are free of salt by the time he answers.

KEITH

8:37 Pacific Standard Time.

STEWART

Are you sure?

Keith thoughtfully arranges his French Fries.

KEITH

I am sure.

INT. MACY'S - DAY

Tyler tags along behind her mother, JANE, a petite woman in her mid-70's, as Jane wanders the women's department.

Jane selects a purple sleeveless dress, holds it up against Tyler.

JANE

You'd look beautiful in this.

TYLER

Mom, it's not my style.

JANE

Just try it.

TYLER

Mom, I don't want to!

Her phone rings. The ID says: Stewart.

TYLER

I've got to take this.

Her mother rolls her eyes.

INT. FOOD COURT - LATER

Jane and Tyler eat from burrito plates that look sketchy at best.

JANE

So what have you been up to?

TYLER

I've been in court.

JANE

Don't you get out at all?

Tyler's not an attorney today. She's a daughter and right now she's not enjoying the role.

TYLER

I get out enough.

Her cell phone rings. It's STEWART again.

INT. FOOD COURT - MINUTES LATER

Tyler returns to her cold burrito, puts her phone down by the napkin.

JANE

Why don't you turn that thing off?

TYLER

It's important.

JANE

It's always important.

TYLER

It's a murder trial!

JANE

It's Saturday.

Jane's gaze softens.

JANE

Look, Honey, you're with this man all day, every day.

JANE

You know all his secrets. You take care of him. You fight for him.

TYLER

You don't understand. He's special.

JANE

The trial is going to end one way or another, and you're going to go your separate ways. I just don't want you to miss the chance--

TYLER

I'm not missing the chance!

JANE

(insistently)  
- of living your life. This isn't real life.

TYLER

I know!

JANE

Do you?

INT. COURTOOM - DAY

BLAIR gathers his charts.

BLAIR

The people rest.

JUDGE BAXTER

Defense, will you be ready to present your first witness tomorrow?

TYLER

We will.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Stewart and Tyler walk together. They are weary, somber.

TYLER

Get some sleep.

STEWART

You, too.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - LATER

Night is falling as Tyler pulls into her driveway.

INT. CAR

A sudden HONK.

She glances in her rearview mirror. Stewart's car has pulled up behind her.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Stewart looks serious.

TYLER

What's the matter?

STEWART

Nothing.

He looks uncomfortable.

STEWART

I just think I've spent quite a bit of my life not saying how I feel, so I thought I'd just kind of do that - say how I feel for once. And I just wanted to say thank you for believing in me, Tyler.

He's standing very close to her.

STEWART

I can never repay you for that but I can tell you I think you're an amazing woman. So I just wanted to come here and tell you that.

Tyler draws in her breath. Makes the leap.

TYLER

Stay tonight.

STEWART

What?

TYLER

Stay.

It dawns on Stewart what she means.

STEWART

Oh, Tyler, I didn't mean...you're incredible, it's just that, for me...

The spell is broken. Tyler flushes red.

TYLER

Don't worry about it.

She closes her car door, CLICKS the lock.

STEWART

I'm sorry, Tyler.

TYLER

No! Don't be sorry.

Her voice is harsh.

TYLER

Don't you be sorry for me, Stewart.

STEWART

Tyler...

TYLER

I'll see you tomorrow.

Stewart watches as she strides quickly to her door. Fumbles with her keys. She doesn't look behind her. She opens the door and disappears inside.

INT. COURTROOM - MORNING

Tyler and Stewart sit stone-faced, their arms crossed, looking straight ahead. Their body language tells a morose tale of crossed signals.

Keith, in an ill-fitting suit, is being sworn in by the bailiff.

BAILIFF

Keith Dixon, do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

KEITH

I swear to tell the truth. I swear to tell the whole truth. I swear to tell nothing but the truth.

Tyler approaches him.

TYLER

Keith, where do you live?

KEITH

5753 Franklin Street. Santa Monica, California. 90401.

TYLER

And who used to live across the street from you?

KEITH

Stewart Mailer, who is alive, and KATHY, who is dead, and their cat, Ashley, who is also dead, and their baby, Jacob -

TYLER

Thank you.

Stewart watches intently.

TYLER

Do you remember the night of March 3rd, 2012?

KEITH

Yes. I was in my room. I was looking out counting the red cars. I saw seven red cars.

TYLER

What did you see in Stewart Mailer's driveway?

KEITH

I saw a black Mercedes. Dark windows. License plate 5EGR790.

Tyler picks up a piece of paper:

TYLER

This plate is registered to the DMV in the name of Dr. Gene Wellington, chief of staff at St. Laurence Medical Center.

She hands the paper to the court clerk.

TYLER

Now, Keith, what time did you look out and see Dr. Wellington's car in Kathy Mailer's driveway?

KEITH

8:37 Pacific Standard Time.

TYLER

How did you know what time it was?

KEITH

I have a clock my uncle gave me that is set to NASA standards. It is on my wall. I was counting red cars. I saw the car in Stewart's driveway and I remembered Stewart asked me, "How many times have you seen that piece of shit in my driveway?" So I looked at the clock so I could tell Stewart what time the piece of shit was in his driveway.

She holds up a picture of the black Mercedes.

TYLER

Is this the car you saw in the driveway?

KEITH

Yes. That is the car I saw in the driveway.

TYLER

No more questions.

JUDGE BAXTER

Your witness, Mr. Blair.

INT. COURTROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Keith lips tremble slightly. He rubs his hands together.

KEITH

You are asking too many questions.

BLAIR

Sorry, Keith. I'm almost done.

Keith SIGHS.

BLAIR

Do you have a lot of friends, Keith?

Keith nods.

BLAIR

Can you name some of them for me?

He thinks.

KEITH

Stewart Mailer.

More thinking. He looks over at his mother.

KEITH

Abby Dixon.

BLAIR

Who else?

Keith concentrates. He taps the tip of his index finger, then his middle finger.

BLAIR

Keith?

TYLER

Objection, your honor, where is this going?

JUDGE BAXTER

Get to the point, Mr. Blair.

BLAIR

(to Keith)

I'm thinking that Stewart's pretty important to you, being only one of two friends.

KEITH

I have many virtual friends.

BLAIR

You have a very good memory, don't you?

KEITH

Yes.

BLAIR

When we came and talked to you a couple months ago, you said you didn't see any car. Why did you say that?

KEITH

I was still remembering.

BLAIR

Why did it take you so long  
to remember?

KEITH

Because at first I remembered  
a car I did not want to  
remember.

BLAIR

What car?

A HUSH in the courtroom. Stewart leans forward.

KEITH

A blue Honda Civic.

BLAIR

Whose car is that, Keith?

Keith looks down.

BLAIR

It's Stewart Mailer's, isn't it?

Keith strokes the vein between his knuckles.

BLAIR

And that's the car you didn't  
want to remember, isn't it?

TYLER

Objection!

JUDGE BAXTER

Overruled.

BLAIR

Keith, was there a Black  
Mercedes in STEWART's driveway  
the night of the murder?

KEITH

I do not remember.

BLAIR

You're under oath!

KEITH

You are mean. Stewart is my  
friend. And Kathy was my friend  
and his cat --

BLAIR

Did you just remember what  
Stewart wanted you to  
remember!

Keith rocks back and forth.

KEITH

I don't remember I don't remember  
I don't remember!

He's flailing wildly now. His mother jumps out of her  
seat and rushes toward him as the courtroom erupts  
into LOUD MURMURS. The judge BANGS his gavel.

JUDGE BAXTER

Ten-minute recess!

Keith's mother tries to calm him. Stewart closes his  
eyes.

STEWART

Did that just happen?

TYLER

It's okay. We'll redirect.

Stewart looks up at Keith, who's still rocking. He  
shakes his head.

STEWART

Don't.

INT. COURTHOUSE - LATER

The gavel falls.

JUDGE BAXTER

Court is recessed until  
Monday morning.

Stewart and Tyler gather their things. Stewart is  
grim-faced. Tyler touches his arm.

TYLER

We can still put Emily on  
the stand, Monday.

STEWART

And what good will that do, with  
all the evidence they have  
against me and the kid blown out  
of the water?

TYLER

I still think Emily can score

some points with the jury. We  
can't give up now.

Something in the back of the courtroom catches his  
attention. Tyler follows his gaze, sees Lloyd  
shuffling out with his family.

STEWART

You know, I had to ask Lloyd's  
permission before I asked Kathy  
to marry me. God, I was so  
scared. We sat down in his study  
and his knee cracked and I almost  
jumped out of my skin.

A pause.

STEWART

I've watched that old man come to  
court every day and I know he  
hates me and all I ever wanted  
was the chance to say, that's who  
did it, Lloyd. That's who killed  
our girl.

INT. BEDROOM - 3 AM

Bern and Leslie are fast asleep.

EXT. HOUSE

A PEBBLE sails through the air, hits their bedroom  
window. Another one follows, RAPS against the glass.

INT. BEDROOM

Leslie's eyes open. She looks out the window into  
the front yard.

She shakes Bern awake.

BERN

(groggy)  
What's the matter?

LESLIE

Look.

He does.

BERN

Jesus.

LESLIE

Deal with him. I mean it.

EXT. YARD - NIGHT

Stewart has another pebble from the garden ready to go when Bern comes out in his pajamas.

BERN

What the hell are you doing?

Stewart weaves, tries to catch his balance.

STEWART

Hi, Bern.

He is at that stage of drunkenness where men become children. Docile, sweet, confused by the big world. He drops the pebble.

STEWART

Bern? Why is this happening to me?

BERN

I'm taking you home.

STEWART

No, no, no. Wait.

He staggers toward him. Puts his hands on Bern's big shoulders.

STEWART

You gotta tell me the truth.

BERN

You've never wanted the truth.

STEWART

I want it now. I need it. Tell me the truth, Bern. Why is this happening to me? Tell me. You're my friend.

Bern looks at a loss.

STEWART

Please, please. Tell me why.

Bern takes STEWART by the shoulders. His eyes are kind. His voice is gentle.

BERN

Because you killed her, STEWART.

The words hit STEWART full in the face. His mouth falls open.

STEWART

What?

BERN

(no less gentle)

You killed her.

STEWART

No, no, no...

He takes a step back, out of Bern's grasp. Shakes his head.

STEWART

You got it all wrong. It's Wellington.

BERN

No, it's not. Listen, buddy, you've got to remember. It's time.

STEWART

(confused)

Someone's setting me up. The same person who hit me on the head.

BERN

You sure someone hit you? You sure you didn't bang it on something?

Stewart looks up at the sky. Stars are spinning. He looks at Bern again.

STEWART

Of course I'm sure!

BERN

Someone broke in your old house that night. Remember? Did you crawl through that window and take that gun?

STEWART

No!

BERN

You said Kathy heard a thump coming from the office. What was the thump?

STEWART

Someone snuck up and -

Bern grabs him, shakes him hard.

BERN  
 (urgently)  
 The truth! What did she say  
 it sounded like?

INT. STEWART'S OLD HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Holding the rifle he's just taken, Stewart tries to  
 crawl backwards through the office window.

THUMP!

He hits his head on the bottom of the window frame.

BACK TO PRESENT TENSE. Stewart's eyes are wild.

STEWART  
 Bern, stop it! Why are you doing  
 this to me? I didn't kill her!

STEWART tries to wrench free but Bern won't let him  
 go.

BERN  
 Think about it. Think hard.  
 Who wrote on the mirror?

STEWART  
 I don't know!

BERN  
 Yes, you do.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Stewart looks in mirror. His eyes are blood red. He's  
 very drunk.

BERN (V.O.)  
 You did, STEWART.

Stewart raises a trembling hand, scrawls the letter "M"  
 on the mirror in soap.

BACK TO PRESENT TENSE.

STEWART  
 (bewildered)  
 Me?

BERN  
 You.

Stewart breaks away, stumbles toward his car. Bern follows him.

BERN  
March 3rd, Stewart. Tell me  
about that night.

Stewart turns around, loses his balance. Falls in the grass. Struggles to his feet. He's angry now.

STEWART  
I told you already! I was going  
to tell her I was sorry. I had a  
rose...

EXT. STEWART'S OLD HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Stewart stands in front of the door, holding a long-stemmed rose behind his back.

STEWART (V.O.)  
I was holding it behind my back.

BERN (V.O.)  
It wasn't a rose.

STEWART (V.O.)  
Of course it was!

BACK TO PRESENT TENSE.

STEWART  
Fuck you, Bern!

He stumbles away again. He's almost at his car. Bern grabs him, spins him around, slams him against the car. Holds him by the collar as Stewart struggles feebly.

BERN  
They never found a rose. What  
was it?

EXT. STEWART'S OLD HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Stewart stands in front of the door with the rose behind his back.

STEWART (V.O.)  
I don't know!

BERN (V.O.)  
(insistently)  
What did you have behind  
your back?

BACK TO PRESENT.

Bern slams him hard against the car. Gets in his face.

BERN

WHAT WAS IT?!

EXT. STEWART'S OLD HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The ROSE behind Stewart's back turns into a RIFLE.

BACK TO PRESENT TENSE

STEWART

NOOO!

He punches Bern in the gut with sudden and ferocious strength. Bern buckles, taken by surprise.

Stewart lunges for his car door, jumps in, throws the car in gear.

BERN

Wait!

He's gone.

EXT. STEWART'S OLD HOUSE - LATER

Stewart stands in his old front yard, looking at his house as though for the first time. His car is parked haphazardly behind him. He weaves up to the door, fishes for his key.

INT. STEWART'S OLD HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Stewart closes the door behind him, locking it. He wanders through the living room, touching things.

BEDROOM - A LITTLE LATER

He's reached the master bedroom. He sees their old bed, stripped of sheets. Begins to cry.

He glances at the bathroom. He can barely force his feet in that direction. He staggers over, leans against the door frame, flicks on the lights.

Nothing but scrubbed tiles.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Stewart holds his dead wife in his arms. Her blood covers the floor, the walls, everything.

BACK TO PRESENT

Stewart sinks to his knees. His eyes are glassy, distraught. He crawls over to the cupboard beneath the sink, takes out a towel. Closes the bathroom door. Stuffs the towel in the crack between the door and the floorboard.

An old-fashioned GAS WALL HEATER is on his right. He turns the crank.

HISS OF GAS.

He waits.

BATHROOM - LATER

Stewart lies unconscious on the floor. The bathroom door opens. Keith looks down at Stewart.

Grabs him under the arms -- and drags him out the door.

HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Keith drags Stewart out into the front yard. He shakes him. Stewart doesn't move, so he shakes him harder. Stewart finally opens his eyes.

KEITH

Wake up.

EXT. HOUSE - THE NEXT MORNING

The front door is half-open at STEWART's old house.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Stewart plasters the hole in the kitchen wall -- the same one he once promised his wife he would fix.

FOOTSTEPS come closer. Tyler appears in the kitchen.

TYLER

What are you doing here?

Stewart keeps patching.

TYLER

You missed our Saturday meeting.

STEWART

How did you know I was here?

TYLER

I tried everywhere else.

He works in silence for a few moments.

STEWART

RT (finally)

I kept promising Kathy I'd fix this hole. Want to know how it got there?

He glances at her.

STEWART

Kathy told me I put my fist through it one night. I didn't remember that. Maybe I just didn't want to. There are a lot of things I didn't want to remember.

He smooths the plaster with his fingers.

STEWART

When our boy crawled outside and drowned in the pool... Kathy was sick. I was cooking dinner. He was playing on the floor of the kitchen. I was supposed to be watching him.

Tyler sets down her purse. Crosses her arms, listening.

STEWART

And she never said she blamed me, but I think she did. We stopped going to counseling and I started drinking more and she kept on making quilts. And I thought I knew what kind of man I was, but I must have gotten lost. And it's hard to remember - so hard. Days and

weeks just gone.

STEWART

I thought I knew what kind of man  
I was but I'm afraid I didn't  
know myself at all.

TYLER

I don't follow you.

STEWART

I killed KATHY.

Her face drains of color.

STEWART

The human mind is pretty  
amazing. I had blocked out  
everything. But my friend Bern  
got through to me last night.

Tyler's legs can't support her anymore. She sits down.

STEWART

I didn't want to remember but he  
made me, and I came here and  
locked myself in the bathroom,  
and turned the gas on. If that  
kid hadn't come in when he did...

A look crosses his face.

STEWART

(mumbles to himself)

I locked the front door behind  
me. How did he get in?

TYLER

What?

The wheels are spinning.

STEWART

He used to come over and feed  
Ashley when we went out of town.  
He had a key.

Stewart glances out into the back yard, in the  
corner where a WHITE CROSS sticks out of high grass.

EXT. BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Stewart stands over the cat's grave, now overgrown  
with grass. He reaches down into the grass and pulls  
out...a rose. It's withered and brown now, but it  
still has the glass container on the end of the stem.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Stewart rushes back through, grabs his car keys, barely breaks stride as he passes a still-bewildered Tyler. He pauses.

STEWART

I didn't kill her. But all that other stuff. It's still true.

INT. CAR - DAY

Stewart and Keith drive down the winding roads of Topanga Canyon.

KEITH

Thank you for taking me shooting.

STEWART

You're welcome.

His voice is somber. Troubled.

KEITH

My father never took me shooting. He took me to the Grand Canyon once. But that was a long time ago.

Keith looks out the window.

KEITH

I wrote my father fifty-two letters after he left. Then I stopped, because it was an even number.

EXT. SHOOTING RANGE - LATER

Stewart and Keith walk toward the targets. Stewart carries the rifle.

KEITH

I have been practicing and practicing with my stick and my aim is very good now.

He holds out his hand.

KEITH

I would like to shoot.

STEWART

You want to shoot?

Stewart hands him the gun.

STEWART

Okay, then shoot.

Keith raises it to his shoulder.

Stewart steps in front of Keith, blocking the target.

STEWART

Let me ask you something.

The gun points straight at his chest.

STEWART

Something really important.

KEITH

Get out of the way. I want  
to shoot the gun.

Stewart looks at him steadily.

STEWART

You like guns, don't you? You like  
guns so much that maybe you'd  
shoot at anything. A can or a  
tree. Or maybe you'd get carried  
away and you wouldn't really mean  
to but you would shoot a person.

Keith blinks.

KEITH

Get out of the way.

STEWART

Would you shoot a person, Keith?

He takes a step toward him.

STEWART

Would you? Would you?

KEITH

Get out of -

STEWART

Just because you love guns?  
Would you kill someone?

The gun begins to shake in Keith's hands. Stewart walks forward until the barrel is just a foot from his chest.

STEWART

Not that you are a bad person.  
But sometimes you have trouble  
remembering things and maybe for  
just a minute you forgot that a  
person is not made of cardboard.  
That a person is not a target.

KEITH

I want to shoot the --

STEWART

(calmly)

-- Then do  
it.

KEITH

Get out the way.

STEWART

Go on. Pull the trigger.

KEITH

I said --

STEWART

-- DO IT!

Keith suddenly pulls the trigger.

The hammer clicks harmlessly.

The gun's not loaded. Keith looks stricken.

STEWART

You killed her, didn't you?

Keith slowly shakes his head.

STEWART

I'm not mad at you, Keith.  
She's not mad at you, either.  
Just knowing who did it makes  
it easier on me.

KEITH

It does?

STEWART

Yes.

KEITH  
I am helping you?

STEWART  
Yes.

He holds out his hands.

STEWART  
Give me the rifle, son.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Stewart and Tyler watch Keith and his mother get in the back of a police car.

STEWART  
Don't let them put him in jail.

TYLER  
He's not going to jail.

STEWART  
He's not a bad kid. He needs help.

TYLER  
They'll get him help.

The police car drives away.

TYLER  
They've got his confession.  
There's no way a jury will  
convict you now.

STEWART  
I'll believe it when I see it.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The bailiff hands a folded piece of paper to Judge Baxter.

JUDGE BAXTER  
Will the defendant please rise?

Stewart rises. Tension in the air. Courtroom dead silent.

The jury FOREMAN begins to read the verdict.

FOREMAN  
We the people...

EXT. COURTROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Stewart and Tyler are tailed by a crush of PRESS as they leave the courtroom.

STEWART

Thanks for saving my ass.

TYLER

You're welcome.

He reaches out, touches her arm. A moment of electricity passes between them.

STEWART

So now what?

Tyler's gaze is fond and wise and measured. Everything it should be.

TYLER

Now we're gonna go our separate ways.

Stewart hesitates. Takes her hand. Kisses the back of it.

STEWART

Take care of yourself, Tyler.

TYLER

You too.

She turns, starts walking away.

STEWART

Hey, Tyler?

She stops, looks back.

TYLER

Yes?

STEWART

If I ever get a jaywalking ticket...

Her smile is genuine.

TYLER

...I'll be there.

EXT. COURTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Stewart notices Lloyd in the crowd. The two men exchange a long look.

EXT. CEMETERY -- DAY

Kathy's grave. Plastic begonias, two ceramic angels, a grapevine wreath. And next to it, the grave of a little boy.

The two tombstones read:

Kathy Mailer 1983-2012 OUR LOSS IS HEAVEN'S GAIN.

JACOB MAILER July 16, 2008 - June 12, 2010. WITH THE ANGELS.

Stewart kneels, places a tangerine on KATHY's grave, then one on Jacob's.

The cemetery gate creaks.

Slow footsteps come toward him, stop beside him.

VOICE

Stewart.

He looks up. It's Lloyd. Stewart rises.

LLOYD

I owe you an apology.

STEWART

No you don't. If I had been the husband I promised you I'd be, she'd still be alive.

They stand there looking at the graves. It's time for Stewart to ask a question. Something he's always dreaded.

STEWART

Did she blame me for Jacob's death?

LLOYD

Oh God, STEWART. Not for a second.

EXT. ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BUILDING - NIGHT

It's an unassuming yellow building, surrounded by lantana bushes.

INT. MEETING - NIGHT

Stewart walks slowly to the podium. Looks out at the people. Every face tells a story.

STEWART

My name is Stewart, and I'm  
an alcoholic.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Stewart stands at the front door of a tidy little house. He RINGS the doorbell.

Glen answers. The freelance art director.  
Zebra boy.

GLEN

Yes.

STEWART

You don't know me, I'm -

GLEN

Stewart Mailer. You've been all  
over the news. What are you  
doing here?

STEWART

I came to apologize.

GLEN

What for?

STEWART

I let you get beat up for  
something terrible I did a long  
time ago, one drunken night,  
when I was young and stupid. I'm  
so sorry.

GLEN

Wait a minute. Nobody beat me up.

STEWART

Come on. A few months ago. You  
were playing pool that night at  
the Cinder Bar. My friend  
Bernie hit you.

He gives Stewart a curious look.

GLEN

I have no idea what you're talking about.

Stewart's expression moves from bewilderment to concentration. A man putting a puzzle together with lightning speed.

INT. CAR - LATER

Stewart races down the street. He runs a stop sign. A horn BLARES but he doesn't seem to notice.

INT. BERN'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

Bern at the stove, making stir fry. Freshly cut chicken cubes sit on a cutting board. He's slicing up an onion when the front door opens and SLAMS shut.

Stewart enters the kitchen. He takes a tangerine out of his pocket, sets it on the counter.

Bern looks up briefly, keeps slicing.

BERN

Doorbell broken?

STEWART

Where's Leslie?

BERN

Baby class.

Stewart stands silently on the other side of the counter, watching him. Bern pours some olive oil in the wok and turns a knob on the stove.

A purple flame springs up.

Bern glances at Stewart.

BERN

Come here to stare at me?

STEWART

Guess who I ran into tonight?

BERN

Who?

STEWART

Glen. Zebra boy.

Bern throws the chicken cubes in the wok, stirs them with a wooden spoon.

BERN

Oh yeah?

STEWART

Yeah. He said you never punched him.

Bern keeps stirring.

STEWART

Your knuckles were bruised. And I was thinking that if you didn't hit Glen that night, who did you hit?

The chicken SIZZLES. Bern adds some lemon pepper.

BERN

Been watching Scooby Do lately?

STEWART

She told you, didn't she?

Bern glances up.

BERN

I'm not following you. And I don't like your tone. So get the fuck out.

STEWART

She told you it was me and you hit her. And then you killed KATHY to get me back. You set me up.

Bern's face is slowly turning red.

BERN

I'm serious. You're absolutely crazy. That fucking kid that lives across the street killed her. He confessed, remember? And I have an airtight alibi that night. I was playing basketball at the time of the murder. Now get out, and I'll pretend this conver--

Stewart grabs Bern by the collar and pulls him toward him.

STEWART

Tell me what happened, Bern!

In the blink of an eye, Bern picks up the knife and plunges it into Stewart's chest.

Stewart stares down at the knife, puzzled. Blood spreads out on his shirt. Stewart grabs on to the counter for support.

His sleeve brushes the tangerine. It falls off the counter and hits the floor, rolls away.

Bern stirs the chicken.

Stewart tries to get around the counter but collapses to his knees. He gets up, slides back to the floor again.

Blood spreads out over the linoleum.

Stewart tries to pull the knife from his chest.

Bern adds soy sauce to the chicken.

BERN

Dumb ass.

Stewart stares up at him.

BERN

I saw Zebra Boy and I just had to know. So I went home. Surprised her with the question. Took her off guard. Imagine my disappointment, to find out all these years later, that you were the snake that crawled in my sleeping bag.

EXT. ALBERTSON'S PARKING LOT - DAY - FLASHBACK

Leslie walks past STEWART, wearing a hat and a big pair of sunglasses.

STEWART

Leslie! Leslie!

She looks straight ahead at the car, quickens her steps.

STEWART

Leslie!

She gets in her car and closes the door. From a side angle: CLOSE-UP of the YELLOWING BRUISE

behind her sunglasses.

BACK TO PRESENT

Bern stirs the wok. The chicken SIZZLES.

BERN

Takes two to tango, STEWART. She  
fucked you. Then again, you  
fucked her.

Bern adds some sprouts.

BERN

I wanted to kill you. God,  
I wanted to.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Stewart lies on the ground, unconscious. Bern stands over him with a baseball bat, his face full of blind rage.

BERN (V.O.)

But you wouldn't have  
suffered enough. You see...

INT. STEWART'S OLD HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The HEAD LAMPS of a passing car sweeps the open window of Stewart's office, sending circles of light over first the gun cabinet and then Bern, who stands in a corner holding the rifle.

BERN (V.O.)

...there was no way Leslie  
could wash you off her hands.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Bern hands Leslie the rifle.

BERN (V.O.)

We had to ruin your life to get  
on with ours.

EXT. GYMNASIUM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Still in his basketball clothes, Bern stands outside the gym, dialing his cell phone.

BERN (V.O.)

I knew you were on your way to  
her house that night. I called  
Leslie and said, it's time.

EXT. STEWART'S OLD HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Leslie stands in front of the door holding the rifle behind her back.

BERN (V.O.)

She didn't want to do it. But she did what she had to. She'd do anything for me, you know.

Leslie reaches out a trembling hand, presses the DOORBELL.

BERN (V.O.)

Anything.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT.

Stewart's face is turning white. He can't stop the blood. Bern adds the vegetables to the wok, adjusts the heat.

BERN

The only part I don't understand is why that crazy kid confessed to something he didn't do. He ruined everything, that little freak. But it doesn't matter. You're gonna die. And no one's gonna convict me for killing a man who broke into my house and assaulted me.

Stewart weakly puts his hand in his pocket, pulls an iPhone out.

STEWART

Hey, Bern.

Bern looks down. The iPhone's live. A number's lit up on it.

Bern turns the fire off, moves the wok.

BERN

Who's that, the cops?

Stewart is so weak, his voice is just a whisper. He gasps for breath.

STEWART

No. Someone more important to me. You see...a guy once told me it just takes one decent man to know the truth...and the wheels of justice are set into motion.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Lloyd struggles out of his chair in the living room, his phone pressed to his ear.

LLOYD

(shouts)

Stewart!

His WIFE appears in the doorway.

LLOYD

(to wife)

Call 911!

WIFE

I did.

LLOYD

Call them again!

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Stewart looks up at Bern. His blue lips form a faint smile.

STEWART

And here's the really bad news, Bern. Lloyd's a decent man.

EXT. NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

SIRENS WAIL as police cars and ambulances descend on Bern's house, lights flashing.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE UP ON:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

No sound. Just the flickering images of a young family in the bathtub. Stewart and Kathy and Jacob.

Their skin is wet. Their hair is plastered to their heads. Jacob plays with a rubber boat. His parents smile, watching him.

STEWART (VO)

(whispers)

That's who did it, Lloyd.

That's who killed our girl.

PICTURE FADES OUT.

THE END.