

# RESERVATION ROAD

Screenplay by  
John Burnham Schwartz and Terry George

Based on the novel by  
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TITLES...

A-F A MONTAGE OF SHOTS OF THIS IDYLIC CONNECTICUT TOWN A-F

THE COUNTRY ROADS. CHILDREN PLAYING. A GROUP OF TEENAGERS LOUNGING AT A FAMILY POOL. LUXURY STORES ON A MAIN STREET. AFTERNOON CROWD AT A FASHIONABLE COFFEE SHOP. A YOUNG WOMAN JOGGER pushing her \$2,000 stroller.

ALL UNDER THE SOUND OF AN ORCHESTRA.

1 EXT. CONNECTICUT PARK - DAY 1

Late afternoon on a sunny, late summer day. A beautiful public park. A SCHOOL ORCHESTRA plays on a public bandstand.

CLOSE ON a beautiful woman (mid-30s). This is GRACE LEARNER. She listens as the piece plays, then a young boy, her son, JOSH (10), stands to play his solo piece. Her husband, ETHAN LEARNER, mid-thirties, holds their daughter EMMA (8) on his lap.

As Josh plays, an AIRLINER flies overhead, preparing to land. Grace looks up, annoyed. Josh finishes, the orchestra starts up just as Emma stands and applauds her brother.

2 EXT. CONNECTICUT PARK - DUSK 2

The concert is over. The audience breaks up. Ethan and Grace, arm around each other (like lovers), move through groups of parents. Ethan carries his son's Cello.

Josh plays with his sister Emma and some other kids by a tree, they are catching fireflies.

PARENT (O.S.)

Mr. Learner, Mr. Learner!

Ethan turns. An ELEGANT LADY (40s) catches up, thrusts her hand out to Ethan.

PARENT (CONT'D)

Evelyn Williams. My son Jed is in your media studies class. He just loves that course.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETHAN

Jed's a clever guy, and fun to be around. You should be proud. This is my wife Grace.

Josh and Emma run towards their parents.

They shake hands.

PARENT

Hello. Do you teach also?

GRACE

No, I'm a landscape designer.

A tug on Grace's skirt.

EMMA

Mommy, mommy, look what Josh has got for me.

ETHAN

We must get going. Tell Jed I said hello.

Emma holds a glass peanut jar filled with fireflies.

EMMA

Fireflies. They're magic!

EVELYN

Thanks again, good night.

Grace walks away with Ethan who has his arm around her waist.

Josh arrives, his hands cupped.

JOSH

I've got another one.

GRACE

You were excellent, Josh.

ETHAN

You played beautifully.

Josh is busy putting the firefly in the jar.

JOSH

Thanks, Dad.

They arrive at their car, get in.

3 EXT. ROUTE 7 - NIGHT 3

It's dark now. A VOLVO STATION WAGON travels along a country road.

GRACE (V.O.)  
A big bath as soon as you get back young lady.

4 INT. VOLVO - NIGHT 4

Ethan drives, Grace beside him. Josh and Emma in the back. (Prairie Home Companion is on the radio).

GRACE  
The orchestra conductor says you're going inot the Northeast finals this semester. That's exciting.

JOSH  
Yeah, we have practice Tuesdays and Saturdays.

ETHAN  
Saturdays? What about our canoe trips?

JOSH  
I don't know, dad. It's the finals.

Garrison Kellior on the radio: "It got cold in Lake Wobegon, like your father just walked into the room."

EMMA  
What does that mean?

ETHAN  
I guess some people's fathers are...how would you say it?

GRACE  
They're severe, cross. They make people tremble.

JOSH  
Like when Mrs. Prendegast walks in the room at school.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE  
No. Mrs. Prendegast isn't that bad.

JOSH  
Mom!

Josh and Emma begin to study the fireflies.

Ethan switches on the wipers, pushes the wiper button to clean the dirty screen. Nothing.

ETHAN  
(muttering)  
Damn.

EMMA  
Mommy Can I keep them in my room forever?

GRACE  
I don't think so sweetie, they might die.

Emma starts crying.

EMMA  
I don't want them to die. Will they die in the jar?

GRACE  
It's okay, we'll let them go when we get home, won't we Josh.

JOSH  
Sure, mom.

The Volvo signals left and turns on to Reservation Road.

5 EXT. RESERVATION ROAD - CONTINUOUS 5

The road, narrow and unlit, flanked by woods.

Ahead lies A COUNTRY GAS STATION.

6 INT. ETHAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 6

EMMA  
I need to pee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE  
Can't it wait darling?

EMMA  
No mommy.

ETHAN  
It's alright. I need to get wiper  
fluid anyway.

The Volvo pulls in and stops. Ethan, Grace and Emma get out. Josh picks up the glass jar, studies it.

CLOSE ON the glass jar. There are two dead fireflies at the bottom of the jar.

7 INT. GAS STATION. WORKSHOP - NIGHT

7

Ethan walks into the workshop. The AUTO REPAIRMAN, JIMMY MCBRIDE, looks up from an engine repair job. An old 13 inch TV, with rabbit ears, plays in a corner.

ETHAN  
Working late tonight?

JIMMY MCBRIDE  
Every night.

Ethan already has a gallon of fluid in hand.

ETHAN  
How much?

JIMMY MCBRIDE  
Give me three dollars.

IN THE BACKGROUND, a sports news report on TV.

SPORTSCASTER (O.C.)  
A marathon session at Fenway ended  
tonight with the Sox winning 6-4  
in the twelfth.

Ethan hands over three dollars.

ETHAN  
Twelve innings. You're not the  
only one working late.

JIMMY MCBRIDE  
Different pay scale.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETHAN

For sure. Is this stuff bio-degradeable?

JIMMY MCBRIDE

Whatever it says on the label.

8 EXT. RESERVATION ROAD - NIGHT 8

A FORD EXPLORER comes barreling around a corner.

9 EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT 9

Ethan steps out into the night, reading the label, then looks up as a CAR comes from his left, the road is illuminated and in the blaze of light (from brights). He sees Josh standing between two clumps of bushes on an aisle by the road.

Then there is a SCREECH of tires, and, suddenly, from his right, the dark SUV careens into the light of the car then they pass. Ethan is frozen, about to turn as the SUV veers toward his son.

ETHAN

JOSH!

10 EXT. GAS STATION. BATHROOM - NIGHT 10

Grace is holding the door open for Emma when she hears the awful tone of Ethan's warning.

11 EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT 11

Ethan, frozen, makes out the shape of a man driving the SUV as it swerves in toward the aisle and his son steps back.

12 INT. FORD EXPLORER - NIGHT 12

DWIGHT ARNO (40ish) sees the terrified face of a young boy frozen in his headlights. He tries to brake. His cell phone flies against the windshield.

13 EXT. RESERVATION ROAD - NIGHT 13

The peanut jar falls, crashing through the grill and smashes the passenger side headlight of the SUV.

14 EXT. RESERVATION ROAD - CONTINUOUS 14

Ethan watches in terror as the SUV HITS JOSH, BOUNCES him sideways, and he disappears behind the clump of trees.

15 INT. FORD EXPLORER - NIGHT 15

Josh's body flies off to the side. At the same time:

Inside, LUCAS ARNO (11), is asleep in the passenger seat. He flies forward, his face smashes into the dashboard.

DWIGHT

LOU!

16 EXT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS 16

Ethan is RUNNING NOW across the forecourt out onto the road.

Behind him, A CRY:

GRACE (O.S.)

Ethan!

As he runs, he catches a glimpse of the red brake lights on the SUV further along the road.

17 INT. FORD EXPLORER - NIGHT 17

Inside, Dwight reaches across to Lucas, who is doubled up in pain, clutching his eye.

DWIGHT

Are you alright?

Then, Dwight looks in the mirror, sees a man (Ethan) standing in the road, staring, but Lucas is crying now.

LUCAS

Dad, dad, my eye!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DWIGHT

Oh, Jesus! Jesus!

LUCAS

It hurts.

Dwight cradles Lucas in his arms, on his face a look of absolute terror. Then a BUZZING SOUND.

18 EXT. RESERVATION ROAD - NIGHT

18

Ethan calls out to the SUV.

ETHAN

Hey!

GRACE (O.S.)

Where's Josh?! Josh!

Ethan turns back toward the verge.

ETHAN

Josh!

Then, the sound of an ENGINE REVVING. The SUV takes off. Ethan reaches Josh but, confused, he turns toward the fleeing SUV. He shouts, begins to run after it ...

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Hey! Stop!

19 INT. FORD EXPLORER - NIGHT

19

Dwight looks in the mirror again, then puts his foot on the gas.

DWIGHT

It's alright, I'm gonna take care of it. Don't cry, please.

The Ford Explorer speeds off into the night. Dwight reaches over to Lucas.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

Come on, stop crying.

20 EXT. RESERVATION ROAD - NIGHT

20

Now Ethan sees Josh, lifeless, blood trickling from his ears. He falls to his knees beside his child.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETHAN

Oh, God, oh God, you're alright,  
you're alright ... AAAHHH!

A CRY OF PAIN, as he kneels on shattered glass.

GRACE

(beyond terrified)

ETHAN!

He looks back, sees Grace running toward him, then, confused, she turns back toward Emma, who is frozen mid-forecourt.

21 INT. FORD EXPLORER - NIGHT

21

DWIGHT

Come on, stop crying, let me see.

Lucas turns to him, the eye has begun to swell up.

LUCAS

What happened Dad?

DWIGHT

We hit a log. It was lying on the road. I'm sorry. It's gonna be alright.

22 EXT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

22

A King Kullen supermarket on the edge of town. Dwight's Ford Explorer pulls into the almost deserted car park.

DWIGHT (V.O.)

I'll only be a second.

Dwight sprints across the car park.

23 EXT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

23

From outside, we see Dwight's anxious trot along the aisles, past the registers, as he disappears, and reappears with a bag in hand.

24 INT. FORD EXPLORER - NIGHT

24

Dwight jumps into the car. He has a pack of frozen peas.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DWIGHT

Let me see that.

Lucas turns his head, a full blown shiner is developing.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

Here, put this on it.

LUCAS

Peas! Dad!

DWIGHT

They're frozen ... like an ice pack. Pitchers use it on their arms.

As Lucas places the frozen pea pack on his eye, Dwight starts the Explorer. A STATE TROOPER CAR, SIRENS BLARING, LIGHTS FLASHING, races past on the road.

LUCAS

What happened Dad?

DWIGHT

We hit a log, a tree branch on the road. You didn't see it?

LUCAS

No dad. I didn't see anything.

25

EXT. RESERVATION ROAD - LATER

25

Sounds first: CRICKETS, RADIO SQUAWK and STATIC. Then the state trooper car pulls in to join several others blocking roads at the accident site.

RADIO VOICE (O.S.)

Anything?

RADIO VOICE 2 (O.S.)

Negative.

An AMBULANCE'S warping red light competes with the flashing lights of PATROL CARS in front of the gas station. SEVERAL POLICE are at work, stringing tape, directing cars away, taking measurements.

Grace, visible in the backseat of the car, face tear-stained, lifeless. Emma curled on her lap, like a baby.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ethan stands in the middle of the road, stares over at the covered body of his son. He looks dead, crushed.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Sir?

SERGEANT KEN BURKE (40-ish), clean-cut, pulls a notebook and pen from his back pocket.

SERGEANT BURKE

I'm afraid I need to ask you some questions about what occurred here.

Ethan just stares at him. Underwater.

SERGEANT BURKE (CONT'D)

Can you tell us exactly what you saw? Mr. Learner ... I have to do this, we have a crime, a fugitive and time is of the essence.

ETHAN

Sorry.

SERGEANT BURKE

It's a terrible thing, Mr. Learner, but I need your best recollection.

ETHAN

Yes.

(beat)

I was getting washer fluid.

SERGEANT BURKE

What time would this have been?

ETHAN

Time? I don't ... it must have been close to nine. The game report was on ... on the TV. I came out ...

26

INSIDE THE POLICE CAR

26

Grace has Emma's head buried in her chest.

EMMA

Where's Josh, Mommy?

Grace's POV of the medics hovering over her dead son.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE

They're taking care of him.

EMMA

Is he going to be alright?

Grace watches as the paramedics lift the body bag, she's dying inside, but tries not to lie.

GRACE

I ... ahh ... your daddy's with him.

She holds Emma's head against her so she can't look.

27

ON THE ROAD

27

SERGEANT BURKE

And the vehicle that hit your son came from the right?

Ethan manages a nod.

SERGEANT BURKE (CONT'D)

Could you describe it for me?

ETHAN

A truck, an SUV ...

SERGEANT BURKE

You get the make?

ETHAN

No. Big ... medium ... dark, blue maybe.

SERGEANT BURKE

Could you describe the driver?

Ethan is frozen by his own uncertainty.

ETHAN

He was ... ah ... no.

Burke waits for more.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Oh Christ ... I don't know. It's a blur.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SERGEANT BURKE

What was your son doing on the road?

Ethan looks at him with tears in his eyes.

ETHAN

(beyond pathetic)

I don't know.

A long silence.

Burke slips the notebook into his back pocket and clips the pen to his shirt.

SERGEANT BURKE

I understand. We'll continue tomorrow. One of my guys will drive you home.

But Ethan's no longer listening. Lost in the nightmare of his own helplessness, staring at the body bag.

ETH

I'm not leaving my son.

SERGEANT BURKE

I'm sorry Mr. Learner but need to keep the body here for now. It's a crime scene. I'm going to make sure everything is handled with the greatest respect. You've got family to look after. Please go home.

The word 'body' cuts Ethan like a sword.

28

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

28

Ethan gets in the back seat. A STATE TROOPER in the driver seat. Emma has cried herself asleep.

GRACE

Where are we going?

ETHAN

Home.

GRACE

Home?

The word is poison to her.

29 EXT. WHELDON HOUSE - SAME TIME

29

A Colonial house with a porch. A couple of lights on inside.

RUTH WHELDON (mid-30s) is at the window, staring out.

The Explorer turns into the driveway and stops with the single headlight beam shining over the porch.

The door opens, Ruth emerges, flashlight in hand.

She shines the flashlight toward Dwight.

RUTH  
What happened to you?

She shines the light directly into Dwight's face. (How could she know already?)

DWIGHT  
Why, what's wrong?

RUTH  
You're more than two hours late.

Now the light is on Lucas and she sees him hold something to his eye as Dwight gets out of the SUV.

RUTH (CONT'D)  
What the hell happened to him?

DWIGHT  
Take it easy Ruth.

Now Lucas gets out, reveals his eye.

RUTH  
Oh my God! Did you do this?

DWIGHT  
What! Are you crazy?

LUCAS  
Mom, wait.

RUTH  
Look at him!

Lucas is between them now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCAS

Please mom, it was an accident.  
We hit a log.

DWIGHT

There was a downed tree branch or  
something on a bend. We went over  
it and his head hit the ...

RUTH

Why wasn't he wearing a seat belt?

DWIGHT

He was ... he messed with it. I  
didn't see him.

RUTH

(as she examines  
Lucas)

Oh God, look at this, you know  
what people are going to think?

DWIGHT

No Ruth, what are they going to  
think?

RUTH

That you hit him again.

DWIGHT

When are you going to get off that  
lie. I did not hit him, I tried to  
hit you and I missed.

NORRIS WHELDON (40-ish), insurance salesman, Ruth's  
husband, rushes out of the house, intervenes.

NORRIS

Hey, hey! Please, everyone take  
it easy. Let me see that Lucas.

RUTH

Where the hell were you?

DWIGHT

We were at the ball game for  
Christ sake. Where the hell did  
you think we were?

RUTH

Who knows with you. You're two  
hours late. I called ten times.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Dwight looks to Lucas.

RUTH (CONT'D)

One month, just one month you've been allowed to have him over the weekend and he comes back looking like this. Every time I cut you some slack, you mess it up.

DWIGHT

You cut me slack?!

RUTH

You wanna go back before the court? I'll have your visitation rights pulled in a heartbeat.

NORRIS

Please, everyone, lets take one step back from this. Dwight everything's fine, get in the car.

Ruth examines Lucas eye.

RUTH

(to Norris)

Do you think he needs to go to the hospital?

DWIGHT

Don't be so ...

NORRIS

Dwight please! Ruth take Lucas inside.

As Ruth leads Lucas away.

DWIGHT

(to Lucas)

Hey, you okay?

LUCAS

Yeah, Dad, I'll call you tomorrow.

Dwight smiles, nods "yes."

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Hey Dad,

(holds up the peas)

pee ... nuts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Ruth throws a disgusted look back at Dwight. Norris meanwhile has shone his light on the broken headlight.

NORRIS

You better get that light fixed,  
Dwight. You'll get ticketed.

DWIGHT

Yeah. Thanks Norris.

29A INT. LEARNER HOUSE. KITCHEN - NIGHT 29A

A dog - SALLIE, hears something, pricks up its ears, bounds to the living room window, looks out.

30 EXT. LEARNER HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT 30

A handsome old New England house, set amid a pleasant garden. A COP CAR pulls away as Ethan carries Emma towards the door. Grace follows closely into the house.

31 EXT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE. GARAGE - NIGHT 31

A two-bedroom ranch-style, with a single car garage. A place devoid of personality, a divorcee's rental.

Dwight pulls into the driveway. He lifts the remote for the garage door, starts it, then changes his mind. He gets out, walks around to the front passenger side, studies the grill guard and the broken headlight.

32 INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE - NIGHT 32

Dwight paces into the living room, turns on TV, clicks through the STATIONS, and finds the local news, a report on deadlock in the Connecticut State Legislature.

He wanders over to the door, he's left the main door open, gazes through the screen door at the SUV.

He goes to the phone, dials.

DWIGHT

(into phone)  
Connecticut, Stratton. Stratton  
police station.

Dwight listens, mutters a number, hangs up. Then fumbles for a pen, scribbles, studies the number.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He opens the freezer, pulls out a bottle of Stolli vodka, pours some into a glass, takes a big swig, then spits it out.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

Shit, fuck, shit!

He collapses onto the couch.

33 INT. LEARNER HOUSE. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 33

Ethan is in their bed with Emma, who has her arms clamped around his neck.

EMMA

He's not coming home? Why?

She looks to the door in panic.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Where's mommy? Mommy!

(TRACK out the door, along the hall, to the bathroom)

33A INSIDE THE BATHROOM 33A

Grace sits on the edge of the bath, listening to the ring of a cellphone, then a woman's voice, a faint hello.

GRACE

Mom. Mom, I've got some terrible news ...

Grace tries to say the words, they can't come out, instead silence, then gasps, then tears ... collapses, can't speak.

34 INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE - DAWN 34

Dwight is still on the couch, most of the bottle of vodka gone, and the ashtray full.

He surf's the RADIO STATIONS, stops at the local station. A News Reporter talking again about the deadlock at the State Legislature.

Dwight gets up, wanders to screen door, sees the first rays of a glorious sunrise.

Dwight's POV of the Ford Explorer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

## NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

Connecticut state troopers are investigating a fatal hit and run accident on Reservation Road near Old Greenwich. The victim is believed to be a ten year old boy. No name has been released but State Troopers are appealing to anyone driving in the vicinity around 9 PM last night to contact them at 1-800-555-1212. On I-95 a tractor trailer accident closed down the southbound highway for over two hours last night ...

CLOSE ON his face, forehead flat against the door window, as though his whole body needs support.

35 INT. LEARNER HOUSE. BATHROOM - DAWN 35

A set of blinds open on a window revealing a glorious sunrise on a very pleasant back garden. The light streams in on Ethan, still in his t-shirt and boxers red eyed, from lack of sleep. He stares into the mirror, sees a spiderman towel hanging over the shower bar (or door). He takes it down, folds it carefully.

35A EXT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE - DAY (FORMERLY SCENE 39) 35A

Dwight emerges, gets into the Explorer, and drives it into the garage. He gets out and pushes a button on the wall and ducks under the door as it starts to close.

The evidence sealed up, he starts back to his house.

36 OMIT 36

37 INT. LEARNER HOUSE. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY 37

Ethan, lies on the bed beside Grace. Emma asleep on the other side. He holds her.

## DWIGHT

I've got to go pick up the car.  
Your mother should be here soon.

He goes to her, leans, kisses.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE  
Don't be long, please.

The doorbell rings.

GRACE (CONT'D)  
That can't be mom?

37A INT. LEARNER HOUSE. FRONT DOOR - DAY 37A

Ethan opens the front door. BLANCA, a Hispanic woman, with cleaning equipment in her hand, smiles.

BLANCA  
Good morning, Mr. Learner.

ETHAN  
(shocked)  
Oh Blanca, it's your day.

37B INT. LEARNER HOUSE. THE MASTER BEDROOM - DAY 37B

Grace settles and looks at Emma sleeping then, a PIERCING CRY from downstairs.

BLANCA (O.S.)  
Ahh, no! No not my Josh!

Blanca's voice cuts the air.

38 INT. LEARNER HOUSE. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 38

Grace rushes down the stairs in her nightdress and sees Ethan trying to console BLANCA.

GRACE  
Oh, Blanca, Blanca.

Blanca has known Josh since he was a little boy. Her grief is raw.

Emma stands at the top of the stairs looking frightened.

38A INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE. BEDROOM - DAY (FORMERLY SCENE 36) 38A

Dwight asleep, still clothed, in the fetal position, on the bed. He awakens, looks at the clock, it's 10:05. He jumps up, rushes out.

39 OMIT 39

40 INT. LOCAL TAXI - DAY 40

CLOSE ON a thickset HISPANIC DRIVER who laughs at a joke by the morning DRIVETIME DJ.

Ethan, in the back, scribbles in a note pad, raises his head, stares out the window at the work day morning hustle on this busy street: SCHOOL KIDS ON BIKES, COMMUTERS scurrying to the local train station, A COUPLE OF 14 YEAR OLDS, boy and girl, holding hands as they walk to school.

Ethan's cell rings, he studies the number, it reads DEAN PHILIP CLARKSON, he answers. The driver lowers the radio.

ETHAN

Hey Phil ... yeah. Sorry I can't, Phil ... ah ... I'm not going to make it in today ... No, no ... a family thing ... in fact, I'm not going to be in for a while.

Ethan listens, as he's asked what's wrong, finally he drops his head, confesses.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Look Phil, we've had a tragedy ... Josh was killed last night.

PHIL (V.O.)

(muffled)  
Jesus Christ, Ethan! How?

ETHAN

Hit and run.  
(a beat)  
Thanks, thank you. Let me call you later.

CLOSE ON The rearview mirror and the driver's eyes.

41 EXT. CUTTER & ASSOCIATES LAW OFFICE - SAME TIME 41

A Victorian house just outside the center of town. Clipped hedges out front and a small parking lot behind. A painted sign reads "Cutter and Associates."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A (similar) cab pulls up. Dwight gets out in a hurry.

42 INT. CUTTER & ASSOCIATES. RECEPTION AREA - DAY 42

Dwight hurries past the middle-aged, frumpy RECEPTIONIST, who is on the phone.

He heads down the corridor.

STEVE (O.S.)

Hey Dwight.

42A INT. CUTTER & ASSOCIATES. STEVE CUTTER'S OFFICE - DAY 42A

A smartly dressed, handsome man (50ish). This is Steve CUTTER, the owner and principle lawyer of the firm.

STEVE

You in court this morning?

DWIGHT

Nah, car trouble, the fucking transmission went on the Explorer yesterday, spent the morning dealing with it.

STEVE

How'd it go with Lucas this weekend?

DWIGHT

Really good, why?

STEVE

I got a call from Ruth this morning, said you were belligerent, brought Lucas home with a black eye.

DWIGHT

Bitch. He smacked his eye on the dash. She threw a shit fit.

STEVE

Look buddy, you can't get into situations with her. She drags us in front of that judge again you'll lose the sleep over. Nora Fennelli's waiting.

Dwight nods, mutters fuck to himself as he leaves.

43 INT. CUTTER & ASSOCIATES. DWIGHT'S OFFICE - DAY 43

Dwight hurries in. NORA FENNELLI is reading an old New Yorker magazine.

DWIGHT  
Hey Nora, how are you?

NORA  
Bored. I've been sitting here for forty minutes.

DWIGHT  
Sorry, car trouble. You look good. Have you lost weight?

NORA  
Only in my purse, thanks to the bills I get from you guys.

44 EXT. STATE POLICE BARRACKS - MORNING 44

Sunlight. The state trooper offices, clean, modern.

The cab pulls up at the entrance. Ethan hands the driver some money.

ETHAN  
Keep the change.

As Ethan walks up the steps, he sees a battered old SUV, (dark blue) on a truck flat bed. He hurries.

ETHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Did you get him?

45 INT. STATE POLICE BARRACKS. BURKE'S OFFICE - DAY 45

Ethan sits across from Sgt. Burke.

SERGEANT BURKE  
No, I'm afraid not.

ETHAN  
I saw an SUV out there.

SERGEANT BURKE  
Similar?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETHAN

Well yeah, dark, the same shape.

ETHAN'S POV - THROUGH A WINDOW - of the SUV.

SERGEANT BURKE.

We've had that since Saturday.  
You think that might be the model?

ETHAN

Well something like that.

They sit again.

SERGEANT BURKE

Good, we're getting somewhere.  
Let's look at some similar makes.

ETHAN

What are the chances of this man  
turning himself in?

SERGEANT BURKE

In the first few days, very good.  
He's drunk or high, he goes home,  
sobers up, realizes what he's done  
and turns himself in. The longer  
it goes then surrender becomes  
less likely.

CUT TO:

46 INT. STATE POLICE BARRACKS. BURKE'S OFFICE - LATER 46

CLOSE ON a Starbucks coffee cup placed on a desk.

STATE TROOPER (O.S.)

Decaf latte.

Ethan nods as the State Trooper sets it down. Ethan's  
been there awhile now - files, photos are spread across  
Burke's desk. Ethan sips, thinking, then ...

ETHAN

He shouted something.

SERGEANT BURKE

Who did?

ETHAN

The driver. Yeah, that's right a  
shout, sounded like Lo ... Look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SERGEANT BURKE

Look out maybe.

ETHAN

I don't know, I didn't hear anymore.

SERGEANT BURKE

No one else in the truck?

ETHAN

No, I didn't see anyone. It all happened in a flash.

SERGEANT BURKE

Did you notice anything unusual about the vehicle, snow plough attachment, grill guard.

Ethan shakes his head "no," uncomfortable with his lack of memory.

SERGEANT BURKE (CONT'D)

The reason I ask is that we usually find some debris from the impact: paint flakes, fiber glass, dirt the wheel well. There was none of that at the scene.

ETHAN

It was all so fast.

Burke lifts some evidence bags from a box.

SERGEANT BURKE

We gathered up some items from around the scene, perhaps you could take a look.

The first bag contains some crushed soda cans, empty cigarette packs. Ethan studies, shakes his head no.

The Burke reaches in takes out another bag, its the peanut jar, intact, the lid is separate, the fireflies are gone. Etha's look registers with Burke.

SERGEANT BURKE (CONT'D)

You recognize that.

ETHAN

No. It is a peanut jar. Josh collected fireflies in it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SERGEANT BURKE

You think that's why he got out of  
your car? To collect fireflies.

ETHAN

No. to let them go.

46B EXT. POLICE BARRACKS - DAY

46B

Burke walks Ethan to his car.

SERGEANT BURKE

This is a small town, Mr. Learner.  
We've mobilized all our resources.  
I'm hopeful we'll find this  
vehicle and catch this man  
quickly.

Ethan acknowledges the support. Sergeant Burke hands  
Ethan a brown envelope.

SERGEANT BURKE (CONT'D)

Victims Services have put together  
a package of brochures, advise  
about practical and legal aspect  
of dealing with this sort of  
crime. All our numbers are in  
there. Call any time.

ETHAN

Thanks.

Ethan gets in the Volvo, still dazed from the peanut jar  
revelation.

47 OMIT

47

48 OMIT

48

49 OMIT

49

50 INT. CUTTER &amp; ASSOCIATES. RECEPTION AREA - DAY

50

Inside, Dwight heads toward the exit door, stops  
momentarily at Cutter's door. Steve is on the phone.

STEVE

(on phone)  
One second ...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DWIGHT

I gotta get a rental 'till I  
figure this car thing out.

51 EXT. CUTTER & ASSOCIATES - DAY 51

Dwight steps outside, a TAXI is waiting. He tries to breathe fresh air into his lungs.

As he stands, Ethan's car drives by.

52 INT. LEARNER HOUSE. KITCHEN - AN HOUR LATER 52

Sunlight. Grace is at the kitchen table, doing nothing. Shuffling papers, staring at Emma who sits on the outside porch drawing for her GRANDMOTHER BETH.

Grace sees Ethan come up the porch stairs, take Beth in his arms, they embrace, profoundly.

Ethan enters,

ETHAN

It's good your mother's here.

Grace gets up, moves toward him.

GRACE

What did they say? Did they get anyone?

He takes her in his arms. The embrace holds.

ETHAN

No. They don't have anything yet.

GRACE

Not anything?

ETHAN

Nothing.

GRACE

Did you remember anything?  
Anything more?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETHAN

I ahh, yeah I went over what I saw, tried to pick the make of his truck. Details.

The embrace breaks, she looks in his eyes.

GRACE

What was he doing out of the car, Ethan?

He's silent, but Grace knows Ethan, reads his face.

GRACE (CONT'D)

What?

ETHAN

Nothing.

GRACE

Tell me Ethan.

ETHAN

They found the peanut jar ...

GRACE

The firefly jar? Where?

ETHAN

Broken, on the road.

GRACE

Oh Jesus, It was my fault. He was letting them go because I told him they might die!

Ethan grabs her hands, holds on.

ETHAN

It was nobody's fault.

GRACE

But he went to the bushes, all over the stupid fireflies.

Emma appears behind them holding a drawing.

EMMA

What happened to the fireflies? Did they die with Josh?

Her grandmother scoops her up.

53 OMIT 53

54 EXT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE - DAY 54

Dwight pulls up into the driveway in a rented, light colored, mid-size car, and parks it under the tree.

54A EXT. RESERVATION ROAD. GAS STATION - AFTERNOON 54A

Ethan's car pulls up. As he walks away from it we see he is at Reservation Road Now in the afternoon sunlight, autumn trees, under a clear sky. He walks the road, sees a softball square, an old cemetery. He wanders to the gas station. He stands by the gas pumps, staring up the road. Trying to force himself to see clues he missed.

55 EXT. FUNERAL PARLOR - DAY 55

Again, the setting idyllic, trimmed bushes, carefully groomed lawn, fake roman pillars around the entrance to add style to the building. Ethan pulls up.

56 INT. FUNERAL PARLOR. OFFICE - DAY 56

The interior tastefully depressing, wood panelling, abundant flowers soothing music. Ethan sits opposite the FUNERAL DIRECTOR.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Were you thinking of cremation or  
burial?

Ethan is stunned by the choice.

ETHAN

Cremation, no? I don't know ...

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Some people prefer to have a place  
in a garden of remembrance to  
visit, care for. Others prefer  
cremation so that they can perhaps  
release the ashes in a favorite  
place ...

57 OMIT 57

58 INT. LEARNER HOUSE. KITCHEN - NIGHT

58

Late night. Grace and Ethan are at the kitchen table alone.

ETHAN

... we can bury him in the cemetery, among the lines of headstones. Or we can take him to the place he loved most in the world, and let him become part of that.

He takes her hand pulls her closer.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Let's take him to the shore.

He kisses her, wipes tears from her eyes.

GRACE

Will I see him, one last time, the way he was?

ETHAN

Tomorrow.

GRACE

I'm going mad Ethan. Why did this happen to us? What did we do to deserve this?

ETHAN

Don't, we'll get through it.

They kiss, and cling to each other.

59 INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY

59

CLOSE ON the local newspaper headline. "LOCAL BOY KILLED IN HIT AND RUN - POLICE APPEAL FOR HELP."

Pull back from photo and reveal:

Dwight studying the photo, reading the article, the newspaper spread out on his breakfast bar. He drops his head and bangs it on the newspaper, again and again, harder and harder.

INT. LEARNER HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY

The same newspaper is on the counter top. Ethan has his arm around Grace as they read it together. They are in their funeral clothes

GRACE

Who gave them that photo?

ETHAN

It's a school photo. It doesn't matter.

CLOSE ON the school photo of Josh smiling. Grace's mother arrives in the kitchen with Emma, both dressed for the funeral.

GRANDMOTHER

Here we are.

Ethan picks Emma up in his arms.

ETHAN

We'd better go.

61 EXT. LOCAL STREET - DAY

61

Dwight's rental car pulls up and parks. He switches off the engine and stares out at:

A church, some 100 yards away.

62 INT. CHURCH - DAY

62

CLOSE ON the puzzled faces of SCHOOLBOYS and GIRLS - Josh's classmates - not used to dealing with death.

This small Episcopalian church is crowded with Ethan's FELLOW PROFESSORS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS, and a contingent of SCHOOL CHILDREN, who have gathered for this ceremony.

MINISTER

Ruth Wheldon, from High River school and some of her choir will sing Amazing Grace. Feel free to sing along in celebration of Josh.

A SMALL CHOIR including LUCAS plays. Ruth Wheldon is on the piano, they launch into Amazing Grace, many in the church join in.

63 EXT. LOCAL STREET - DAY 63

Dwight sits in his rental car, looks toward the church further down the street as the CROWD emerges from the service. Dwight takes off his sunglasses, stares.

He watches as Ethan and Grace emerge with Emma, hand in hand between them.

Dwight's heart is pounding, his hand trembles, as though Ethan will look up and recognize him. He puts the sunglasses back on.

Then his eyes widen in shock, because:

He sees his ex-wife Ruth emerge from the church and console Ethan and Grace.

Dwight starts the car, does a u-turn in the street, and takes off.

64 EXT. CHURCH - DAY 64

The coffin has been placed in the HEARSE. Ethan, and Grace watch. GRACE'S MOTHER holds on to Emma.

As the hearse pulls away, Grace can no longer hold her composure, she moves away from Ethan toward the hearse.

GRACE

(crying) No, no, please. Josh  
don't leave us.

Ethan is beside her now holding her as her mother comforts Emma.

65 OMITTED. 65

66 EXT. LEARNER HOUSE - MORNING 66

It's Monday morning, a week has gone by. The house, an emblem of New England serenity. Ethan emerges, hand in hand with Emma.

Grace in her bathrobe, hair unbrushed - watches from the window. Emma waves goodbye.

The car takes off, now Grace is totally alone.

67 INT. LEARNER HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY

67

Close on Grace's hand as she plugs the power cord of the answering machine back in. Presses play. The recorded message light shows 34. Her finger hovers over the 'delete all' button, about to hit it, then she stops, hits 'play'. She listens to the first word of a message, a distraught voice, "Ethan, Grace.." she hits delete, next is "My God..." Delete. With each message, all Grace needs is the first syllable, then delete, faster, faster, the number dwindles, 22, 17, 11, 9, then the frantic tones of voice disappear. Now we hear "Hello Grace, its Walden, I have those white pines you ordered." Delete. Grace, Judie Greenberg darling, my rockery's ... Then:

JOSH (V.O.)

Hey mom, I need rosin for my cello, it's on top of my desk. Can you bring them with you? Love you. Bye."

She plays it again, again, transported back before the horror, then a BUZZ, another BUZZ. It's the doorbell.

68 INT. LEARNER HOUSE. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

68

Grace opens the door and reveals, A Mexican gardener, RAUL, and behind him out on the road, his TRUCK and his TWO MAN CREW, watching.

RAUL

Signora Grace, you were to meet us at the Greer house.

GRACE

Where?

RAUL

The Greer house, the new job?

GRACE

Have you got any other work you can do for a few days Raul?, I'm not feeling too good.

RAUL

(disappointed)  
I don't have no big jobs...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE

Just a few days.

A STATE TROOPER PATROL CAR pulls into the driveway.

RAUL

Okay, Okay! Call you Wednesday.

GRACE

Yes, call.

Sgt. Burke emerges from his car, carrying a plastic bag.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Is there news?

Burke takes in the sight of this beautiful disheveled woman in her bathrobe, finger-combing her hair.

Burke comes forward. Grace eyes the bag.

SERGEANT BURKE (CONT'D)

I told your husband I'd drop by?

GRACE

He's taking our daughter to school. What is ...

SERGEANT BURKE

Forensics have returned your son's belongings.

She stands back from the door, and Burke enters.

INT. LEARNER HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY

Grace and Sgt. Burke sit in oppressive silence.

GRACE

Ethan should be back soon.

SERGEANT BURKE

(helpfully)

Yeah he said he'd be here.

Grace looks down at the bag. Goes to reach out. Burke throws a diversionary request.

SERGEANT BURKE (CONT'D)

You wouldn't have some water ...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE

Sure, would you prefer coffee?

SERGEANT BURKE

Coffee would be great, I never  
feel human 'til my sixth cup.

Grace is having trouble putting this cup of coffee  
together. She searches in the fridge.

GRACE

Milk. I'm not ...

SERGEANT BURKE

Black is fine.

The front door opens, Ethan hurries in.

GRACE

Ethan, Sergeant Burke stopped -

ETHAN

(interrupts Burke)  
Any news?

SERGEANT BURKE

I brought back some items, your  
son's clothes. But yes we're  
making some progress.

Ethan sits beside Grace at the table, takes her hand.

Grace drops her head, Ethan waits for more news.

SERGEANT BURKE (CONT'D)

As I thought, the nature of the  
injury indicates that the SUV was  
fitted with a grill guard.

ETHAN

The nature of the injury?

SERGEANT BURKE

The autopsy results indicate a  
grill guard.

ETHAN

How?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SERGEANT BURKE

(reluctant) Josh suffered a sharp blow to the rib cage which fractured several ribs, and unfortunately drove one into his heart. He died instantly, no pain.

GRACE

How do you know?

SERGEANT BURKE

(lies)

The medical officers assured me.

ETHAN

You're looking for a dark SUV with a grill guard. Anything more?

SERGEANT BURKE

It helps us narrow the field somewhat. We're still working on the headlight glass and we're canvassing the area. On Sunday we intend to set up checkpoints at the time of the accident. Question drivers who may have passed.

GRACE

But its been seven days now.

ETHAN

He could be in Mexico by now.

SERGEANT BURKE

These investigations can take time..

GRACE

If you catch him? What will happen to him?

SERGEANT BURKE

He'll be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

ETHAN

Which is what?

SERGEANT BURKE

Depending on the circumstances he could get ten years in prison ...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ETHAN

What does depending on the  
circumstances mean?

SERGEANT BURKE

The state of Connecticut has a  
variety of sentencing criteria  
that have to be assessed ...

GRACE

I don't understand, he killed our  
son?

ETHAN

How many people get away with  
this?

SERGEANT BURKE

You know Mr. Learner, I don't have  
the exact figures, but I'll get  
them for you. Rest assured, we  
are doing everything to get him.

70 OMIT 70

71 INT. LEARNER HOUSE. ETHAN'S STUDY - DAY 71

Ethan watches as the state trooper car drives away, then  
heads for his computer.

ON SCREEN: googles Hit and Run, Connecticut.

GRACE (O.C.)

Do you think I should wash them?

He turns around. Grace has Josh's clothes in her arms

INT. ETHAN'S STUDY - NIGHT

It's dark now Ethan is on the internet scanning web  
sites.

ON SCREEN:

The screen flickers through: Deadlyroads.com., pages  
related to stats., statue of limitations, victims photos.

Grace comes in, kisses him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE

She's asleep now.

ETHAN

You've got to read this. Ten percent of hit and run cases are never resolved.

Grace doesn't know what to say.

GRACE

Are you coming to bed?

ETHAN

Yeah.

GRACE

Tomorrow, will you pick up some groceries on the way home?

ETHAN

You have to leave the house soon, Grace.

GRACE

I can't, Ethan, not yet.

He holds her.

73 EXT. CONNECTICUT COLLEGE - DAY

73

From afar: As Ethan ascends the steps, he is stopped several times by WELL WISHERS who offer handshakes, pats on the back, nods.

74 INT. CONNECTICUT COLLEGE. LECTURE HALL - DAY

74

Maybe FORTY STUDENTS, whispering gravely among each other. Then Ethan enters. SILENCE.

ETHAN

Hi there. Okay. I guess you all know that we lost our son Josh last week.

(a beat)

I know from all your emails that you grieve with me. Now I need to move forward. The best thing you can do to help me is for us all to plunge back into our work.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETHAN (CONT'D)

(opens file)

Today we pick up with our investigation of the twenty four hour news channels, where all the news is breaking, and all the commentators are righteous.

They all laugh.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Let's go back to where it all started with Ted Turner and CNN.

75 EXT. CUTTER & ASSOCIATES - DAY 75

Dwight's rental car pulls into the lot.

76 INT. CUTTER & ASSOCIATES. RECEPTION AREA - DAY 76

Dwight is walking past Cutter's office, the door is half open. Steve Cutter is talking to somebody we can't see.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Hey Dwight, you got a minute?

77 INT. CUTTER & ASSOCIATES. CUTTER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 77

Dwight walks into Jack's office - and sees Ethan on the couch looking up toward him.

DWIGHT

Oh ... ah ... hello. Sorry I didn't ...

STEVE

Dwight, this is Professor Ethan Learner. My associate Dwight Arno. Ethan lost his son Josh in that terrible hit and run last week over by Reservation Road. You must have read about it?

Dwight addresses Ethan - disappointed in some way that Ethan hasn't identified him.

DWIGHT

Yes. I'm truly sorry, Mr. Learner.

ETHAN

Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEVE

Mr. Learner feels he needs our help.

Cutter indicates for Dwight to sit beside Ethan.

ETHAN

It's been over a week. The police haven't found the killer. They have nothing or they're not telling us what they have. (hands a folder to Dwight) Here's their initial report. (beat) I want this man, this ... animal, prosecuted for homicide.

DWIGHT

You saw the guy?

ETHAN

For an instant.

STEVE

Would you be able to give a description?

ETHAN

I might be able to pick him out of a police lineup, or if I saw a picture. It was very dark.

STEVE

We'll start with the state troopers, and the DA's office, light a fire under their asses, make sure the case is being prosecuted professionally. Then you should think about a civil suit.

ETHAN

What does that ential?

DWIGHT

A civil suit ... ah ... would be ... it's a suit against ... the person

STEVE

(jumping in) The perpetrator.

DWIGHT

Uhm, yes, the perpetrator.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STEVE

We'll sue the perpetrator. A civil suit is an action that results in financial remuneration.

ETHAN

I want this man to go to jail.

STEVE

You told me earlier that your son died because he was struck by the grill guard. The manufacturer should be sued, let them know these things are for cattle ranches, not our city streets. Dwight and I will get all the relevant details from the police, the coroner's office. I think Donna has all our contact details, right? Here are our cards.

Ethan takes the cards. He and Steve stand. Dwight follows, fumbles for a card, and finally hands one to Ethan. Ethan shakes hands with Dwight and Steve.

ETHAN

Thank you.

Dwight turns away as Steve walks Ethan to the door.

STEVE

We're sorry for your loss. We're going to stay with you during this whole process.

Ethan leaves. Steve closes the door.

STEVE

What the fuck is wrong with you?

DWIGHT

Come on Steve, we don't do this sort of case.

STEVE

Why not? There are guys in the city making a fortune with this sorta work. Since 9/11 victims comp. is huge. Besides, I feel for the guy, don't you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DWIGHT

Yeah but I've got the Fennelli thing ... You think you can take this one?

STEVE

What, you're too busy? Come on Dwight, eleven o'clock, you wander in, what gives these days?

DWIGHT

I haven't been sleeping good.

STEVE

You see a doctor?

Dwight shakes his head "no."

STEVE (CONT'D)

Hey what have I told you, stop putting things off. Go see a doctor, get a good night's sleep. We got work to do.

78 OMIT 78

79 EXT. LONG ISLAND SHORE - DAY 79

Dawn breaks, the sun rises over the Connecticut shore. Ethan and Grace are on a rock at the edge of a cove, watching the sunrise. Ethan has the stone urn in his arms as Grace speaks

GRACE

You gave us more than we could have ever asked. You gave us joy and laughter, and the beauty of your music. Thank you my beautiful Josh.

Ethan carefully pours the ashes into the sea as they hold each other like two survivors on the last piece of driftwood from a shipwreck.

79A EXT. CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND - DAY 79A

A GROUP OF MOTHERS play with their KIDS on the slides and swings. In the background, Grace's car speeds past.

80 EXT. SHERMAN R. LEWIS SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

80

School's out, most of the children have gone. Emma sits on a bench with Ruth Wheldon. Grace's car pulls up.

Ruth sees her.

RUTH

Hey, there's your mom.

Grace gets out of the car and hurries to them

GRACE

I'm really sorry I'm late Mrs. Wheldon.

RUTH

No problem. Emma was so good today, I wish you could have heard her.

GRACE

Thank you, she loves your class.

As Emma trots on toward the car:

RUTH

Can I have a quick word, Mrs. Learner?

GRACE

Grace, please.

RUTH WHELDON

Emma shows a lot of promise on the piano. I'd like to give her some extra tutoring after school, free of course. I think it might keep her occupied. Help, you know ...

GRACE

You don't have to do that.

RUTH WHELDON

I really want to.

GRACE

Why don't I ask her.

RUTH WHELDON

Of course.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Grace walks to the car.

81 OMIT 81

82 INT. GRACE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 82

Grace gets in.

EMMA  
Why were you late?

GRACE  
I'm sorry sweetie, I ahh ...  
Mrs. Wheldon was wondering if  
you'd like to practice piano with  
her, after school?

Emma looks out the window, doesn't answer.

GRACE (CONT'D)  
You don't have to do anything you  
don't want to do.

EMMA  
Can you hear music if you're dead?

Grace stares at her.

GRACE  
Yes.

EMMA  
Okay then.

83 OMIT 83

INT. LEARNER HOUSE. ETHAN'S STUDY - LATER - DAY

Ethan is on the internet.

On screen: Web sites showing damaged cars, advice pages  
about law suits, civil actions. The printer spews out  
pages.

Emma comes in, hugs him, tighter, more desperate than  
normal. Grace comes in behind her.

ETHAN  
How was school honey?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMMA

No one wants to talk to me.

ETHAN

They're sad about Josh and they don't want to upset you.

EMMA

Can I watch TV?

ETHAN

Sure.

Emma wanders off. Grace looks at Ethan.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Look at this.

Ethan pulls up an internet page on law.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

In order to prove hit and run you have to be able to prove that the driver knew he someone. If he says he thought he hit a deer, he can get off.

Grace is in a different zone.

GRACE

You think maybe you can make dinner for the kids?

Ethan is caught up in the web page.

ETHAN

Sure.

Grace realizes.

GRACE

The kids?

Ethan turns now, takes her in his arms.

84A EXT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE - DAY

84A

Dwight and Lucas walk from the car, loaded down with pizza, snacks, soda.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCAS

(nervous)

Hey dad, I've got something I've got to tell you.

DWIGHT

Yeah?

LUCAS

I got suspended from school.

DWIGHT

Why? Get the door.

And Lucas does.

85

INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

85

DWIGHT

Come on, out with it.

LUCAS

I got into a fight, with Paulie Ferrari. He had to have stitches.

Dwight grabs Lucas by the shirt and pulls him closer.

DWIGHT

What the hell's wrong with you man? What did you do to him that he had to have stitches?

Lucas starts to cry. Dwight suddenly realizes that he's over-reacting.

LUCAS

Please Dad, don't!

DWIGHT

I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to do that. It's alright. Come on, sit down, tell me what happened.

Lucas rubs his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCAS

We were in the hallway, and Paulie Ferrari threw a water balloon at Benny, but Benny ducked and Mrs. Swanson, the math teacher, came round the corner and got hit in the face. She wanted to know who did it but Paulie wouldn't own up. So we all got after school detention.

DWIGHT

How did you get into a fight?

LUCAS

After detention I called Paulie a no-good coward. We started to fight and he banged his head on the ground.

DWIGHT

How many stitches?

LUCAS

Six I think.

DWIGHT

I don't want you fighting do you hear me.

LUCAS

You and mom fight.

DWIGHT

Yeah, and look where it got us. I don't want you fighting.

LUCAS

But Dad, he was a total coward.

DWIGHT

Paulie Ferrari doesn't need you beating him up to know he did wrong.

LUCAS

Mom says I've to have no TV tonight. Will you watch the game and tell me the scores.

86 INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

86

Dwight's in his living room. (Lucas is in his bedroom) A Redsox game is on the TV - on mute. The cellular phone rings. Dwight picks it up.

DWIGHT

Oh, Hi Ruth.

RUTH (O.S.)

Did he tell you?

DWIGHT

Yeah, he told me.

INT. RUTH'S KITCHEN. NIGHT

Ruth is in a corner\*. on the phone. We cut between locations.

RUTH

I think he needs therapy.

DWIGHT

What?

RUTH

He needs to see someone to deal with ...

DWIGHT

It was a fight in a schoolyard, Ruth.

RUTH

He has anger issues ...

DWIGHT

What if we went to therapy instead of him?

RUTH

We?

DWIGHT

Yeah you and me. Try to change our lives, lead by example.

RUTH

Dwight there is no we anymore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DWIGHT  
I'm serious. Let's do it.

RUTH  
Did he tell you he has to stay in his room?

DWIGHT  
Tell me this, do you really love Norris?

RUTH  
Boy you never change?

DWIGHT  
But do you?

RUTH  
Make sure he stays in his room. No TV. Good night.

DWIGHT  
(pleads)  
Wait Ruth, I need to talk to you.

CLICK.

87 INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE. SPARE BEDROOM - NIGHT

87

Dwight sits on the bed beside Lucas.

LUCAS  
How's the game going?

DWIGHT  
The Sox are ahead three to one. Listen, I want to talk to you about what you said, about your mom and I fighting. Since I was your age, I thought that was how men and women behave. Your grandpa would fly off the handle at the smallest thing. His soup was cold he'd blow his top. I'd sit there wanting to put my fingers in my ears. I'd want to do what you did when your mom and I fought that time. I'd want to run between them, but I knew he'd beat me. I hated him, I hated my mom crying.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

I never wanted to be with him, that's why he only came over at Christmas. Then, when he got cancer, he said to me how sorry he was, how he never meant it, and he'd die knowing he'd wasted his life. And now I've done the same with your mom. But I'll never do it to you again - or to her - do you understand? We're friends right, and friends never hurt each other.

He has tears in his eyes.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

We'll make a pact. Shake on it. No fighting, and if you get mad at your mom, tell her you love her. Deal?

LUCAS

Deal.

DWIGHT

Come on and watch the game.

LUCAS

Thanks dad.

88 INT. ETHAN'S CAR - DAY

88

Ethan drives along a quiet residential street of upscale houses. Ethan glances sideways, clearly sees something, looks back, hits the brakes, and reverses back.

He studies a late model dark SUV. Its passenger side fender is damaged, its light is smashed.

Ethan studies the SUV, notes the diplomatic plates. His adrenalin is pumping. He pulls out his cell phone, checks the camera function.

89 EXT. ETHAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

89

Ethan gets out, moves into the driveway, lines up his camera and snaps a photo.

He fails to notice the PERSON at the window who watches, looks alarmed, then disappears.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ethan studies the SUV some more, notes the address, gets back into his car, and drives off.

The face at the window appears again, watches.

90 EXT. STREET - DAY

90

Ethan is on another street. He checks his phone to make sure he got the shot. A LOCAL POLICE PATROL CAR, races past him, lights flashing. It screeches to a halt, and does a rapid three point turn, as a second POLICE CAR appears and pulls in front of Ethan. COPS jump out, in combat stance, guns drawn.

COP

Get out of your car, with your hands on your head!

Ethan is terrified.

91 INT. STATE POLICE BARRACKS. BURKE'S OFFICE - DAY

91

CLOSE ON the photo of the house on the screen of Ethan's digital camera phone.

Reveal Sgt. Burke showing it to Ethan.

SERGEANT BURKE

It's the home of a Middle Eastern Diplomat. You can't be doing this, Mr. Learner.

ETHAN

No one else is.

SERGEANT BURKE

That's not true. We've been canvassing houses, visiting repair shops, junk yards. These things ...

ETHAN

(interrupts)

... take time. Time doesn't exist for me anymore. Do you understand that? I'm in this vacuum, this hole were an innocent life was snuffed out and none of you seen to notice or care.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SERGEANT BURKE

That's not true. We investigated that car. It was involved in a fender bender a few days ago in the city.

ETHAN

Are you sure?

SERGEANT BURKE

Yes I am, Mr. Learner.

ETHAN

Diplomatic plates. These guys can get away with whatever they want. A diplomat from which country?

SERGEANT BURKE

What does that matter Mr. Learner?

ETHAN

Let me ask you this, when was the last time you mentioned my son's name before today?

SERGEANT BURKE

This is not a productive discussion. The diplomat wants to charge you with trespass.

ETHAN

Go ahead, at least there'll be one charge to come from my son's death.

SERGEANT BURKE

I persuaded him not to. Why don't you go home and calm down?

91a INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - NIGHT

91a

Dwight has a video camera resting on some books on the breakfast bar. He flips the lcd screen so that he can video himself.

He sits on a stool, checks his image in the lcd screen then presses the record button on a remote.

DWIGHT

What I did was terribly wrong. There's no excuse for it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

I was afraid that night that I would lose you. You are going to hear bad things about me, things that will make you ashamed. I'm going to go to prison for what I did. I deserve it. People will talk behind your back. It will be hard. I am so sorry but please try to remember these days we had together. They are wonderful days, I thank you for them and hope that one day we can pick up where we left off. I love you so much. Please forgive me.

He chokes back a tear.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

Please, please, remember I love you more than anything. I hope one day you will forgive me. I never meant to hurt you, but sometimes doing the right thing means hurting those you love most.

Dwight finishes the video.

92 INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING 92

Dwight is at the table in boxers and T-shirt, writing on a legal pad. He's clearly troubled. He writes, makes a mistake, tears off the page, gets up, paces, smokes a cigarette, sits down, writes again.

93 INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE. BATHROOM - DAY 93

Dwight shaving, his hand trembling, he cuts himself, washes the soap off, patches the cuts with tissue.

94 INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. DAY 94

Dwight ironing a shirt, searching for socks, putting on a suit, fixing his tie, cleaning shoes with a towel.

95 INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY 95

He folds up the legal paper, finds an envelope in a cluttered drawer, seals the note, writes 'Lucas' on the envelope, sets it on the table propped up by salt shaker, gets up to leave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As he's heading out the door, he turns, hurries back, takes the letter, puts it in his pocket.

96

INT. STATE POLICE BARRACKS - DAY

96

Dwight's at the front desk. A STATE TROOPER is on the phone. Dwight looks around, watching other TROOPERS, feeling that they will all point a finger at him.

DESK STATE TROOPER

Yes sir.

DWIGHT

I'm here about the Josh Learner case. The boy ... ahh ... killed on Reservation Road.

The phone rings again.

DESK STATE TROOPER

Front desk. Yes it is ma'am. No we don't take reports of lost cell phones. That's a local police matter ... It's in the phone book.

He hangs up.

DESK STATE TROOPER (CONT'D)

Lost cell phones, you know how many of those calls we get each day. Can I have your name sir?

DWIGHT

Dwight Arno. I've got important information -

The phone rings again.

DESK STATE TROOPER

(interrupts)

Excuse me. Hey Jackie, where's Emelda? I'm dying out here.

(turns to Dwight)

Let me get the case officer for you, Mr. Arno. Take a seat.

Dwight nods, sits down, beside another guy watches the hub bub of the front desk. A uniformed officer emerges from a doorway.

STATE TROOPER #3

(aggressive) You com'er.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He points at Dwight. Dwight stands fearful.

DESK STATE TROOPER  
Hold it Joe, that's not the fraud  
guy. He's getting printed.

STATE TROOPER #3  
Sorry.

Sergeant Burke emerges and waves to Dwight.

SERGEANT BURKE  
Mr. Arno, come on in.

97 INT. STATE POLICE BARRACKS. BURKE'S OFFICE - DAY 97

CLOSE ON Burke.

SERGEANT BURKE  
I'm glad you've come in Mr. Arno.

On Dwight, speechless.

SERGEANT BURKE (CONT'D)  
What kept you. Steve called me a  
while go to say you'd taken the  
case. We've got to make sure we  
don't have a reoccurrence of the  
last incident .

DWIGHT  
Yesterday?

SERGEANT BURKE  
He didn't tell you?

Dwight shakes his head no.

SERGEANT BURKE (CONT'D)  
He's been going around  
photographing damaged SUVs. Scared  
the daylights out of a Saudi  
Diplomat. Could have got himself  
shot. Now he seems to have got a  
thing in his head that it might  
have been a diplomat involved in  
the accident.

(he opens a folder)  
Here's the reality of the case.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SERGEANT BURKE (CONT'D)

We're three weeks out, there's not a decent lead - a dark SUV with a grill guard - a needle in a hay stack. Unless this guy walks in the door we're gonna have to gonna have to back burner this one.

(he shuffles some papers in the file)

You'd be doing the guy a favor if you could help him understand. I really feel for the guy but he gave us nothing to go on.

98 EXT. STATE POLICE BARRACKS - DAY 98

Dwight emerges in a complete fog.

100 INT. LEARNER HOUSE. MASTER BEDROOM - LATER 100

Ethan GASPS awake. The room is dark. He sits up in bed, reality coming back to him like a nightmare.

Grace lies sleeping. He moves toward her, needing her. Half-asleep, she opens herself to him. They kiss, slowly at first, then with greater urgency.

They begin to make love, Grace desperately needs this physical contact, she grows more passionate, while Ethan tries to slow things down, suddenly they are completely out of wack, Ethan can't do it. He backs off.

GRACE

What's wrong?

ETHAN

I'm sorry, I ... ah ...

GRACE

What? Tell me.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

I just can't, not now.

GRACE

Is it me?

ETHAN

Don't be ridiculous.

GRACE

You blame me. I see it when you look at me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETHAN

What are you talking about? The killer's to blame. No one else. The fucker who stole our son away from us.

Ethan swings out of the bed.

100A INT. LEARNER HOUSE - ETHAN'S STUDY. NIGHT 100A

CLOSE ON COMPUTER MONITOR: A jazzy clock screen saver flashes 2:06. Then the sound of a key CLICKING, the screen changes to a web page which illuminates Ethan's face, concentrated on his search.

101 OMIT. 101

102 INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE. BEDROOM - NIGHT 102

Dwight lies on his bed, stretched out like he's ready to be crucified. Sleepless. The TV plays some ridiculous infomercial on mute.

Dwight lifts his cell phone and presses the "1" key. We hear the voice mail menu through the speaker.

CELL PHONE VOICE

You have five saved messages ...  
the first saved message ...

ETHAN (V.O.)

Hello, Ethan Learner here,  
wondering where we are at with the  
case. Can you call me 555-6469?  
Thank you.

CELL PHONE VOICE

Press seven to erase, nine to  
save.

Dwight presses the "9" key.

ETHAN (V.O.)

Ethan Learner. Can I schedule an  
appointment. I'm wondering about  
diplomatic immunity. Yeah, anyway  
please call. 555-6469. Thank ...

Dwight closes the phone. He gets up, pulls on a T-shirt, shorts, and grabs a pair of running shoes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

103 OMIT. 103

104 EXT. STREET - NIGHT 104

The pounding of Dwight's feet on a suburban street, dead of night, no cars, no people. Dwight running hard, trying to run away from himself.

105 INT. LEARNER HOUSE. ETHAN'S STUDY - NIGHT 105

Ethan listening to a pod cast.

106 EXT. LEARNER HOUSE - SAME TIME 106

Dwight has stopped under a tree, studies Ethan's house, through a net curtain, he can see the changing colors from a screen (The computer monitor flashing).

A106A INT. LEARNER HOUSE. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT A106A

Ethan wanders in, looks toward the bed. Grace has his back to him, her eyes are open, but she doesn't move. He sits on the bed.

Close on Grace, her eyes still open, but now her breathing sounds as though she is sleeping - she's faking it. Behind her, Ethan studies her back - then he turns, leaves.

106A INT. LEARNER HOUSE. MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING 106A

Sunlight. Grace blinks awake and finds Emma sitting on the edge of the bed.

GRACE

What's wrong?

EMMA

Dad's asleep downstairs.

Grace sits up.

EMMA (CONT'D)

There's nothing good to eat anywhere and I'm going to be late.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Grace takes her in her arms - a mother paying attention now. She musters a smile for her daughter and gets out of bed.

GRACE

That doesn't sound very good.  
Let's go down together and see  
what we can do.

106B INT. LEARNER HOUSE. HALLWAY. DAY 106B

As Grace leads Emma toward the kitchen she looks in, sees Ethan stretched out on the couch sleeping.

106C EXT. LEARNER HOUSE - CONTINUOUS (FORMERLY SCENE 120) 106C

Grace loads Emma into the car and drive off.

107 INT. CONNECTICUT COLLEGE. LECTURE HALL - DAY 107

The room is filled with Ethan's media students. The plasma screen is frozen on an image from Iraq (or Afghanistan).

A Persian student, RASHID, is talking angrily.

RASHID

The cable news channels and the politicians have you Americans deluded.

ETHAN

How so, Rashid?

RASHID

They make you believe you are a warrior nation with an invincible army. Your machinery is tough, but this country has grown soft.

BRETT

(interrupts)

Bullshit. There's no army in the world can defeat us, it's the terrorists ...

ETHAN

Let him finish, Brett.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RASHID

You come from Connecticut, one of the most affluent, comfortable, safe places in the world. My people, like most of the world, come from a place that knows pain and suffering, violence, loss.

AMERICAN GIRL

AMERICAN GIRL (CONT'D)

Are you saying that Persians or Africans feel pain differently from us?

RASHID

No, no, it is the same. I'm saying they live with pain and death every day. You don't, you have become soft.

AFRICAN AMERICAN

Poor Americans, Blacks, Hispanics aren't soft.

RASHID

Yes, but most Americans are insulated from death. Look at Vietnam, Somalia, Iraq.

In the heat of the argument, Rashid has forgotten the circumstances. The class becomes silently uncomfortable.

RASHID (CONT'D)

Americans fall apart at the sight of coffins. They lose their resolve...

Ethan is completely absorbed in what Rashid is saying, then he notices the class discomfort. Rashid now notices.

RASHID (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Mr. Learner, I never meant ...

ETHAN

No, no. These are valid points, anyone else?

Silence.

107a INT. ETHAN'S STUDY - NIGHT

107a

Ethan is at the computer, listening intently to a podcast blog (or utube video) from one of the victim web sites.

This victim is vitriolic.

BLOG FATHER

When they caught this guy, I was overjoyed. He was so stupid. He took his car to a repair shop and there was blood, my son's blood, his hair, all over the radiator. The prosecutor told me we're gonna put him away forever. I walk into the court and I see the prosecutor and this lawyer guy, expense suit, perfect teeth, talking, smiling. The prosecutor comes to me he says the defendant is willing to plea involuntary manslaughter. I said are you crazy. Then he tells me this murderer got himself a hot shot lawyer, and if we go in front of a jury we'll probably loose. Involuntary manslaughter. Six months in jail, three years probation, for murdering my only son. And now he's out, in the fresh air, polluting it. I can barely breathe now, knowing his foul breath is mixed in. My wife's fifty now, we have nobody, no children, no grandchildren, our family name all gone. We're talking about adopting, but its not the same.

INT. LEARNER HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY

Grace is unpacking grocery bags. Food, cleaning products. She's re-stocking.

ETHAN

What?

GRACE

I need a hand here. There are more in the car.

108 EXT. WHELDON HOUSE - DAY

108

Dwight drives along the street toward Ruth's house. As he approaches Ruth's house he slows, because he sees:

Ethan talking to Lucas who is petting SALLIE.

Dwight makes the decision to drive by when Lucas looks up and sees him and waves.

LUCAS

Hey dad ...  
(runs down garden)  
Where you going?

Dwight stops, reverses, and turns into the driveway.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Dad, you forgot where I live?

Dwight gets out of the car.

DWIGHT

No, I left my wallet in the bank,  
I was heading back to get it. (a  
beat) You got your books?

LUCAS

Yeah.

Lucas runs to the porch. Ethan is surprised.

ETHAN

Hey Dwight.

DWIGHT

Hey Ethan, how are you?

ETHAN

Good thanks. Lucas is your son?

DWIGHT

Yeah. Ruth is my ex.

ETHAN

No kidding. She's giving my  
daughter Emma some piano lessons.

DWIGHT

Yeah, she's good at that.

Lucas arrives.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DWIGHT

We'd better get going. I don't get much time with this guy.

ETHAN

I left a few messages.

DWIGHT

Yeah, yeah, I'm sorry. I've been waiting for Steve Cutter to get word back from the state troopers.

ETHAN

Forget about the state troopers, they're useless. We need to talk. When would be a good time?

DWIGHT

Let me check my book. 555 6496, right? We'll schedule something.

ETHAN

Very good.

Norris appears at the door as Dwight is at his car.

NORRIS

Hey, Dwight?

DWIGHT

Hey, Norris.

(to Lucas)

Come on.

(to Ethan)

We'll talk.

ETHAN

Good to see you.

Dwight drives off.

NORRIS

You know Dwight?

ETHAN

Yes, I've been working with him, legal stuff.

NORRIS

(dubious)

I hope it works out.

Emma comes out of the house, followed by Ruth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RUTH

Hey, Emma's piece is really coming along, you're going to be so proud of her at the concert.

ETHAN

You're gonna play at the concert, that's wonderful.

EMMA

It's for Josh. Mom says you can still hear music when you're dead.

Now Ethan needs to get away.

ETHAN

Thanks for everything.

109 INT. DWIGHT'S CAR - DAY

109

As Dwight drives Lucas:

DWIGHT

Your mom's giving music lessons?

LUCAS

Just that kid, her brother Josh was killed. Remember? In the car crash, the day we went to Fenway?

DWIGHT

Was that the same day, I don't think so. Did you know that kid?

LUCAS

I saw him around. He was a bit of a dweeb, but nice. You know his dad?

DWIGHT

Yeah. I'm doing some legal work for him. He didn't mention that to you, talk about it?

LUCAS

Like what dad?

DWIGHT

Doesn't matter. Let's get a pie and some snacks for the game.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCAS  
Have you got money?

DWIGHT  
(puzzled)  
Your mom say I'm broke or something?

LUCAS  
I thought you left your wallet?

DWIGHT  
Oh yeah, I've some extra cash.  
I'll get the wallet tomorrow.

110 INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

110

Dwight and Lucas are on the edge of their seats. The Sox are ahead 10-3. It's a thrilling game. The Yankees ground out - the Sox are in the Series! Lucas hugs his dad, jumps with joy.

LUCAS  
Oh my God, dad, you think this is the year they win the Series?

DWIGHT  
Remember you can always trust the Sox to break your heart.

LUCAS  
No, dad, no. This is it.  
(a beat)  
You're the best, dad.

99 INT. LEARNER HOUSE. ETHAN'S STUDY - NIGHT

99

Grace is on Ethan's home computer.

As she hits the space bar:

ON THE SCREEN: a private detective web site.

She clicks on the screen and another investigative screen appears. She clicks again, another, and another, and another.

ETHAN (O.S.)  
Hey.

Ethan is back from college,

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE  
(slightly guilty) I was just  
looking at some of this stuff.

Ethan joins her, looks at the page on the screen.

ETHAN  
That's a group who accumulate  
information about repeat  
offenders, drunk drivers, lenient  
judges.

She clicks again. A site on diplomats who have committed  
crimes while covered by diplomatic immunity.

ETHAN (CONT'D)  
Yeah, diplomats can just walk away  
from a crime, often the state  
department wants to cover it up.  
There are a lot of them up here.

She clicks again. A Net Detective Agency.

ETHAN (CONT'D)  
Wait, let me show you.

He ushers her up from the office chair clicks on another  
site.

ETHAN (CONT'D)  
I'm looking into other  
possibilities.

GRACE  
What sort of possibilities?

ETHAN  
Of how to find this guy.

GRACE  
I thought we had lawyers doing  
this for us. I'm worried about you  
Ethan. You seem to be lost in this  
stuff.

ETHAN  
I've got to find him, Grace. I'm  
going to find him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GRACE

Which "him" are you talking about, Ethan? Not our son. How are you going to *find* him?

ETHAN

How can you say that. I can't believe that I have to defend myself to you as well.

GRACE

As well, as well as who?

ETHAN

Everyone I talk to says you have to move on, put it behind you, let the police take care of it. Why? Why do they say that?

GRACE

Because they want to see you heal.

ETHAN

No they want to see me resign myself to the fact that this guy who destroyed our lives will get away with it. Why should he get away with it?

GRACE

I don't want him to get away with it but he can't suck the life out of us as well. It's going to take everything we have - everything - for this family just to survive. You were always there for us Ethan, please don't abandon us now.

He hears what she says, takes it in.

111 INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE. BEDROOM - DAY

111

Sunday morning. Dwight, in his boxers, on the bed staring at the ceiling. Lucas comes in, decked out in Red Sox gear.

LUCAS

How about you pitch me a few?

DWIGHT

Sure, I'll be right out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dwight gets up, pulls on sweats, rummages for a T-shirt but hears something, listens closer, A LOW MECHANICAL RUMBLE. Panic, as Dwight bursts from the room.

112 EXT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE - DAY

112

Dwight rushes out and discovers Lucas staring into the garage at the Ford Explorer as the garage door rumbles open. Lucas sees the fear in Dwight's eyes.

LUCAS

What's wrong Dad?

Dwight stops.

DWIGHT

What are you doing?

LUCAS

I'm getting the net out.

Dwight calms down.

DWIGHT

Go ahead.

Dwight stares at the Explorer.

113 INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE. GARAGE - DAY

113

Lucas squeezes by the Explorer to get to the net frame at the back of the garage.

LUCAS

You're keeping the truck?

DWIGHT

No, no, I'm waiting for the junk people to come and get it.

Lucas reaches the net frame at the back of the garage.

LUCAS

You'll have to move the truck, Dad.

DWIGHT

Let's forget the net. I'll just pitch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCAS

Ah Dad, we'll have to run after  
all the balls.

114 OMITTED.

114

115 INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - DAY

115

Sunday afternoon. ESPN baseball round up on TV. Lucas  
is glued to every word. Dwight's enjoying his company.

SPORTSCASTER

So is this the Red Sox year? Will  
we see the end of the curse of the  
bambino?

Lucas nudges his dad.

LUCAS

Told you.

SPORTSCASTER

Let's look at last week's play.

The doorbell rings. Dwight gets up. Checks through the  
blinds, sees a STATE TROOPER CAR in the driveway.

Dwight opens the door and greets TWO STATE TROOPERS.

STATE TROOPER

Mr. Wheldon?

DWIGHT

Yes.

STATE TROOPER

Do you own a 1998 Ford Explorer?

DWIGHT

I did. Why?

STATE TROOPER

You don't have it anymore?

DWIGHT

Why, what's this about?

STATE TROOPER

Routine investigation. We're  
checking on those types of  
vehicles.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STATE TROOPER (CONT'D)

State records show you are the owner of 1998 explorer CUR 560H. Is that right?

DWIGHT

The transmission went. I donated it to one of those charities, a Cancer thing. They towed it away. I'm still waiting for the receipt.

LUCAS (O.S.)

Hey, Dad ...

Lucas appears at the living room door behind Dwight but stops talking when he sees the state trooper.

DWIGHT

I'll be back in a second.

Lucas studies the state trooper.

LUCAS

Hi.

The state trooper smiles, nods.

STATE TROOPER

You turn the plates in yet?

Lucas turns, heads back into the living room.

DWIGHT

No I haven't. I took them in to work and forgot to have them mailed back.

STATE TROOPER

Better mail them in, and when you get that receipt ...

(hands card)

... drop off a copy. I need to account for it.

DWIGHT

Sure officer.

The state trooper turns, walks away, sees the rental car, turns back to Dwight.

STATE TROOPER

This your new car?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DWIGHT

It's a rental, until I decide what  
to buy next.

The state trooper points to the rental, which is  
splattered with bird droppings from the overhanging tree.

STATE TROOPER

Better move it into the garage.  
That bird shit will corrode the  
finish.

DWIGHT

Thanks.

116 EXT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE - DAY 116

The trooper sits in his cruiser, writing notes, as Dwight  
goes back inside.

117 INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAY 117

Lucas is engrossed in the TV.

LUCAS

Are you in trouble, dad?

DWIGHT

No, a form I didn't fill out,  
that's all.

Dwight goes to the blinds, eases them back. The state  
trooper is gone.

EXT. LEARNER HOUSE. DRIVEWAY - DAY

Ethan pulls up and discovers RAUL'S TRUCK parked in the  
driveway. Alongside the usual lawnmowers and leaf  
blowers is Josh's bicycle. ONE OF RAUL'S WORKERS emerges  
carrying roller blades, another has an aquarium.

ETHAN

What the hell are you doing?

The Mexican laborers clearly don't speak English. They  
look at him puzzled.

EXT. LEARNER PORCH - DAY

Grace has all of Josh's possessions, clothes, games, equipment, stacked on the picnic table, and is handing piles to Raul and his workers. Ethan bursts in.

ETHAN

What the hell are you doing?

GRACE

Raul, take the rest of these.

ETHAN

Wait a minute.

GRACE

Raul, take them and go.

ETHAN

Have I no say in this?

GRACE

No you don't Ethan. Unless there's some advice, some wonderful remedy on the internet as to how to dispose of your dead son's possessions. Or do they recommend keeping them in order to nurture your anger.

ETHAN

Don't fucking talk to me like that. I want to heal as much as you do, but I will never get it while his murderer is out there. Don't you understand that?

GRACE

No I don't. All I understand is that my son is not coming home. He's not coming home.

ETHAN

No. I won't go through my life hiding from the fact I never did anything to right that wrong.

She turns into the house yelling back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE

Now we have a daughter to raise  
and if you can't understand that  
you can get out!

She slams the door.

118 OMIT 118

119 OMIT 119

120 OMIT 120

121 EXT. BLACK BEAR SALOON - DAY 121

Outside tables at a downtown restaurant, filled with the regular LUNCHTIME MIX OF LOCALS. Dwight and Steve sit over the remains of lunch.

CHERYL, the cute, the waitress, bangs two orders of pie down on the table.

CHERYL

Who's got the coconut cream?

STEVE

(leering)

The nut's mine, Cheryl honey. The cream, too.

CHERYL

I don't get paid enough to be your honey, Steve. Cream or no cream.

STEVE

We can negotiate.

Cheryl walks off, Steve watching her ass all the way.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Jesus, my fucking kingdom for a waitress. You getting much these days?

DWIGHT

I'm not getting any.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEVE

Come on, good looking guy,  
divorced, party animal. You must  
be knocking them down two by two.

DWIGHT

Party animal? I go to Pizza Hut  
once a week with Lucas. That's my  
idea of a party.

STEVE

Jeez, that's depressing. I  
figured you come in looking like  
shit, you musta been banging all  
night. Now you're telling me ...

DWIGHT

I come in looking like shit?

STEVE

Check the mirror. You're letting  
it slide buddy.

DWIGHT

What's this about?

STEVE

You haven't done a thing in over a  
month. Nora Fennelli's  
threatening to find another firm.

DWIGHT

She doesn't know what she wants.  
One minute it's ...

STEVE

Forget it Dwight, you've always  
got somebody else to blame. It's  
about running a business. I took  
a gamble hiring you.

DWIGHT

Gamble? Harvard Law school.  
Boston's best law firm.

STEVE

Oh yeah, how about drunk and  
disorderly, and an order of  
protection against you? A child  
with two teeth knocked out?

Dwight's trigger temper takes over, his eyes are on fire,  
his whole demeanor is attack.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DWIGHT

Go ahead Steve, take Ruth's side now...

STEVE

Listen to yourself, everybody's against you. I'm all you've got Dwight. I've gone to court for you. I gave you a job when no one would hire you. I've been taking your side for years and, still, you won't listen to me. I'm gonna say it one last time, you wipe your own shit or you lie in it.

Steve gets up.

STEVE (CONT'D)

You get the check, I pay you enough.

122 INT. SHERMAN R. LEWIS SCHOOL. LOBBY - A LITTLE LATER - 122  
DAY

PARENTS and CHILDREN mill around. Above a folding table with school printed programs. A SIGN announces "SCHOOL CONCERT - 7:00 PM. ADMISSION FREE."

CLOSE on Ethan, head down, forging through, as Grace acknowledges nod, smiles.

Ethan is on ahead now - a distance between them.

123 INT. SHERMAN R. LEWIS SCHOOL. CONCERT HALL - LATER - 123  
NIGHT

Rows of folding chairs. At the front a piano, a piano stool, and music stand occupy a low makeshift stage.

As people take their seats. Ruth Wheldon adjusts the height of the music stand.

CUT TO:

INT. CONCERT HALL. NIGHT

A student quartet is playing.

124 INT. DWIGHT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 124

Dwight in his car in the crowded school parking lot. The sound drifts out of the building. He opens the glove box and pulls out a pint of Jack Daniels, takes a swig.

125 INT. SHERMAN R. LEWIS SCHOOL. CONCERT HALL - CONTINUOUS 125

The performer finishes playing the song. APPLAUSE.

From the back of the gym, the faint GROAN of hinges. A couple of heads turn to glare at the latecomer.

DWIGHT eases the door closed. He decides to stand against the back wall, in the shadows.

Ruth steps back up to the stage.

RUTH

The next performer will be Emma Learner who will play her own composition.

APPLAUSE. Emma emerges from stage right.

Dwight stares.

EMMA

This is for my brother Josh.

Deathly silence in the hall. Emma begins to play. She misses an occasional note, but soldiers on.

Ruth stands close by, ready for whatever support Emma might need, but the child makes it through the piece.

Rapturous APPLAUSE. The audience stands and claps.

Ethan hugs Grace close, helps her dry her tears. He is close again, holding, bridging the gap that has grown through recent days.

The fear, recriminations, self doubt have been driven away by Emma's simple tune of love.

At the back of the hall, Dwight is still as stone, as though he were a statue fixed to the wall.

The Ruth Wheldon wanders out on stage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUTH

This school prides itself on the wit and outstanding intelligence of its pupils and to demonstrate we present our battle of the brains, between Lucas Arno of the sixth grade and Gerry Edelstein of the seventh grade.

The curtain pulls back to reveal a game show backdrop and two podiums, Lucas behind one, GERRY behind the other.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Each contestant will ask a question of the other. The contestant with the most correct answers wins. Gerry Edelstein will go first.

GERRY EDELSTEIN

If a turtle loses its shell is it homeless or naked?

LUCAS

Both.

RUTH

Correct.

LUCAS

Can vegetarians eat animal crackers?

GERRY EDELSTEIN

Yes.

RUTH

Correct.

GERRY EDELSTEIN

Why did kamikaze pilots wear helmets?

LUCAS

Pass. If a man speaks in the middle of the forest and there's no woman to hear him, is he still wrong?

GERRY EDELSTEIN

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RUTH

Correct.

GERRY EDELSTEIN

If a deaf person swears, does his mother wash his hands with soap.

LUCAS

Yes.

The audience is in stitches. Ethan and Grace are laughing through their tears.

At the back of the hall, Dwight is also in tears, laughing but there's a madness to his laugh, a terrible lost desperation.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

What do you get if you cross poison ivy with four leaf clover.

GERRY EDELSTEIN

A rash of good luck.

RUTH

Correct.

LUCAS

If a cow laughs does milk come out its nose?

GERRY EDELSTEIN

Pass. Two part question. What do you call a deer with no eyes?

LUCAS

No ideer.

RUTH

Correct.

GERRY EDELSTEIN

What do you call a deer with no eyes and no legs?

LUCAS

Still no ideer.

RUTH

Correct. Last round. You can choose. Movies and politics.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LUCAS

Movies. If Superman can stop bullets with his chest, why does he always duck when someone throws a gun at him?

GERRY EDELSTEIN

No idea. Politics. If con is the opposite of pro, then what is the opposite of progress.

Lucas waves his arms to the audience. The all shout.

ALL

Congress.

RUTH

Ladies and gentlemen, it's a draw.

Huge applause. Lucas and Gerry bow.

126 EXT. SHERMAN R. LEWIS SCHOOL. FORECOURT - NIGHT 126

The concert over, Ethan, Grace (holding hands, close) and Emma work their way through the CROWD OF HAPPY PARENTS. Everyone offers congratulations to Emma. There's a great buzz following the finale skit.

Ethan, has his arm around Grace as they move toward their car. Another PARENT stops them.

PARENT

Thank you, thank you Emma. What an inspiration. I wanted to come by your house at the time but ...

As they talk Ethan hears someone calling, a distinctive voice, a terrible echo of that night.

DWIGHT (O.S.)

Lou.

He breaks away as Grace talks with the parent. Now he's almost trembling, his eyes search the car park.

He moves further among the tangle of cars and parents. His eyes search around, he's panicked, maybe he's hearing noises.

Across the car park, he sees Lucas, taking high fives and congrats from people.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Then, from behind, Lucas he hears the voice again.

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

Lou! Hey Lou.

He looks back beyond Lucas who has turned around, and sees Dwight, hurrying through the crowd.

Lucas walks toward Dwight, who picks his son up and twirls him around.

Ethan is frozen to the spot.

Then a tap on his shoulder.

GRACE (O.C.)

What is it?

Ethan turns to her.

GRACE (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

ETHAN

Nothing.

Grace finds Emma, kisses her.

GRACE

Oh sweetie that was so beautiful.

She looks around for Ethan, sees that he has wandered further away.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Ethan, where are you going?

He returns.

GRACE (CONT'D)

What's up.

ETHAN

Nothing's wrong. I can't stand all this sympathy. Let's go.

GRACE

Hey, our composer's here.

Ethan bends down to Emma, but keeps looking in Dwight's direction.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ETHAN

You were marvellous.

They get in the car and begin to drive, and, as they pass, Ethan watches as Dwight with his arm proudly around Lucas meets up with Ruth and Norris.

Ethan's car cruises past unnoticed.

DWIGHT

Was he the greatest or what?

Norris ruffles Lucas hair. Dwight holds on to his son, possessively.

NORRIS

See, you remembered every line.

RUTH

(to Dwight)

Norris practiced with him every night.

DWIGHT

Yeah, great.

INT. LEARNER HOUSE. JOSH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ethan sits on the floor by Josh's bed, his eyes a million miles away. Grace comes in. in bed with Grace. He lies on his back staring at the ceiling.

GRACE

What are you doing here Ethan?

He doesn't answer.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Please Ethan, let's get therapy. I thought tonight you had broken free, now look at you. I've lost you Ethan and I don't know how to get you back.

ETHAN

You've lost me! I've lost myself. My soul. No amount of therapy is ever going to give that back to me, don't you understand that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE

Please Ethan, you are our strength, our security ...

ETHAN

Yeah, the great protector of the family. How can you say that? My son is dead ... while his father watched ...

GRACE

Please, please Ethan we have got to get past this.

ETHAN

(quiet anger) Don't say that to me. There's no going past this.

Grace leaves. Ethan opens his hand to reveal Dwight's business card.

128 OMITTED 128

129 EXT. ESTUARY ROAD - DAWN 129

Dwight jogs down the street.

130 INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING 130

Dwight returns from a early morning sprint. He takes juice from the fridge, pours a glass, sits at the breakfast bar. His house phone rings. He picks it up, answers expecting a friendly voice, instead he looks stunned.

DWIGHT

Hello ... Oh, Mr. Learner. No, no, I've been running ... Not at all ... Ah, no, I'm free ... Sure, where? ... Where? No, but I can find it. An hour, yeah. Yeah.

Dwight hangs up, looks like he has just been shot.

131 INT. DWIGHT'S CAR - DAY 131

Dwight approaches the junction at Reservation Road. This is the first time he's been there since the accident.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Now he sees the junior league soft ball pitch and the old cemetery. And, as he turns the bend, he sees:

132 EXT. RESERVATION ROAD - DAY

132

Ethan in the forecourt of the gas station looking up at the CROWS 'cawking' above him

Dwight's car pulls in. He gets out. They shake hands. Ethan starts walking toward the spot where Josh died.

ETHAN

Dwight, thanks for taking the time. I wanted to meet here because I've a few ideas that might help the investigation.

As they cross the gas station forecourt

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Have you been here before?

DWIGHT

No, no. Why do you ask?

ETHAN

I thought maybe you'd come to familiarize yourself with the case.

DWIGHT

We're looking into hiring a private investigator. He'd do that.

ETHAN

Let me show you where Josh died.

They reach the spot.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Right here. The killer came round that bend, had to be doing fifty, swerved right over there, came back and hit my son right here. He must have been drunk?

He looks to Dwight for an answer.

DWIGHT

Well I guess there's no way of knowing for sure?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETHAN

Only the killer knows, and he's not going to talk.

Ethan starts walking back toward the crossroads. A truck comes up behind them, Dwight sees it first, grabs Ethan's arm, pulls him off the roadway as the truck roars by.

DWIGHT

Jesus! Be careful.

ETHAN

The police have dumped this case, haven't they?

DWIGHT

No, not completely. I think they have a few things going. I'm hopeful they might catch a break soon.

ETHAN

Like what?

DWIGHT

Gimme a few days and I might have something concrete for you.

At the corner where they can see A KIDS' SOFTBALL GAME in progress.

ETHAN

I'm sorry Mr. Arno but I'm sick of waiting. Look how beautiful it is. Here's what I'd like to do. I'd like to offer a reward, a big one. \$250,000, a half a million, whatever I can borrow on the house. Get the press to come here. That would give me a chance to make an appeal, to ask this man how he can live with himself. How he could do such a cowardly thing as to drive away and leave a ten year old boy dying in the dirt? Do you think that would work?

DWIGHT

Yeah, that might spark something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ETHAN.

(checking watch)

I got to get home. My daughter frets when I leave.

(a beat)

Let me ask you this, you've got a son, same age as Josh. If someone killed him and you found out who this guy was what would you do?

DWIGHT

I'd turn him in.

ETHAN

Would you? Knowing he'll get a slap on the wrist.

DWIGHT

I don't know that this is a good conversation to have with your lawyer.

Ethan reaches over, shakes Dwight's hand, holds it.

ETHAN

Thanks again.

DWIGHT

Sure, sure.

Ethan leaves. Dwight's hands are trembling as he watches Ethan get into his car and drives off.

Dwight wanders to the crossroads, studies some kids hitting balls on the diamond, he sits on a bench. he can barely breath. Then the sound of a CAR HORN.

He turns, sees ETHAN driving in the opposite direction. Ethan waves.

133 INT. WHELDON HOUSE - NIGHT

133

Dwight's rental car pulls in next to RUTH'S MINIVAN and TWO OTHER CARS in the driveway. As he walks thee path to the door, Dwight can see a GROUP OF FRIENDS gathered around the fireplace and hears CONVERSATION and LAUGHTER coming from inside the house. He KNOCKS on the door.

Norris opens the door. His smile evaporates when he sees who it is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORRIS

Hey Dwight.

DWIGHT

Norris, listen. I'd like to talk to Ruth. Can you get her for me?

NORRIS

She's kinda busy just now.

DWIGHT

It's important. I wouldn't be here otherwise.

NORRIS

Actually, we're in the middle of a little shindig, a few friends.

DWIGHT

I want to talk to Ruth. Okay?

NORRIS

Okay, Dwight, take it easy.

RUTH

Norris ...

Ruth appears at the door beside Norris.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Dwight, what's wrong?

DWIGHT

Ruth, can I talk to you for a minute?

RUTH

We've got people over.

DWIGHT

(sardonic)  
Yeah a shindig.

RUTH

(annoyed)  
Dwight, you want to talk to me, you can talk on Sunday like usual.

DWIGHT

Please, I need a big favor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RUTH

Norris, you better go back to our guests.

Ruth steps onto the porch. It's cold, she rubs her arms.

DWIGHT

You want my coat?

RUTH

What's wrong?

DWIGHT

The World Series starts tomorrow. Let Lou stay over with me for the week.

RUTH

No.

DWIGHT

Please. I really need your help. Norris doesn't care about baseball. The Sox in the Series. It might never happen again. Please. I'll get him to school every morning. Just one week then you'll have him all the time.

RUTH

What do you mean?

DWIGHT

I'm going away.

RUTH

Where?

DWIGHT

Away, something I've got to do.

She studies.

RUTH

For how long?

DWIGHT

I don't know.

RUTH

Jesus, Dwight, you're always running away from yourself ...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DWIGHT

Not this time. This time I have  
to face up to who I am.

She turns and stares out at the night.

RUTH

Why should I believe you this  
time? I've heard this so many  
times before and I prayed it was  
true. Now it's too late for us.  
But our son ...

DWIGHT

This time I've no choice.

RUTH

Tell me what's wrong.

DWIGHT

Let me have the Series with my  
son.

RUTH

Okay, Dwight. You can have him  
for the week. Just make sure you  
get him to school on time in the  
morning.

DWIGHT

You know I'm sorry.

She hands him his coat back, then kisses him on the  
mouth. And she's gone, leaving him alone on the porch.

134 OMITTED 134

135 OMIT 135

136 EXT. RYE PLAYLAND - DAY 136

Dwight and Lucas enter this amusement park.

DWIGHT

I though we'd catch a few rides,  
get some of those chili cheese  
dogs ...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCAS

The ones that made me puke on the roller coaster.

DWIGHT

That's the ones.

136A INT. WHELDON HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY 136A

Ruth is cleaning up. The doorbell rings.

137 EXT. WHELDON HOUSE - DAY 137

The door opens to Ethan and Emma are on the porch. Emma holds the flowers, Ethan has the cake.

RUTH

Oh my God, Emma. What's this?

ETHAN

She did so well at the concert, played so beautifully, we wanted to thank you.

138 EXT. RYE PLAYLAND - DAY 138

Dwight and Lucas, wandering the fairground, stop at the hot dog stand.

139 INT. WHELDON HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY 139

Ethan, Emma and Ruth sit around the kitchen table. The flowers are already in a vase on the table, and Ruth is opening the Black Forest cake.

RUTH

Oh my God Look at all this chocolate. You have to have some Emma.

Ruth gets a plate, cuts Emma a slice.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Mr. Learner?

ETHAN

Ethan. Not for me thanks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUTH

I've made some coffee.

ETHAN

Great.

RUTH

I hope Emma's going to keep up her lessons now that the concert's over. You're a very talented young lady.

EMMA

I'd like that.

Ethan sees photos of Lucas on the fridge.

ETHAN

Your son's sox fan. He must be excited about the series.

RUTH

He and his dad are fanatics. He's over at his Dwight's place to watch the ball game.

ETHAN

How long where you guys together?

RUTH

Eight years. Yeah well Dwight and I used to have two nicknames for each other. Nitro and Glycerine. You mix the two and you've got a big explosion. But he's devoted to Lucas. very close.

ETHAN

Dwight lives near by?

RUTH

Yeah on Cove Road, so that he could be close to Lou.

140 EXT. RYE PLAYLAND - DAY

140

Dwight clears up the food trays on a bench. . Lucas arrives, excited.

LUCAS

Dad, you gotta check this out. Come on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He hurries Dwight over to an old-fashioned arcade machine. The head and shoulders of an old fashioned clown.

DWIGHT

This is old.

LUCAS

It's so great, watch.

Lucas drops a quarter in ... and the clown begins to laugh ... harder, and harder. And now Lucas is laughing ... and Dwight's starting to laugh and it builds ... and people who stop are laughing as well ... all of it propelled by Lucas infectious joy.

The clown finally stops. Dwight and Lucas, tears of laughter streaming down their faces, hug ... true, unconditional love.

141 INT. WHELDON HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY

141

Ruth beams as she talks about Lucas.

ETHAN

Tell your son I said he has a big future in comedy.

RUTH

It's such a surprise when you discover a talent in your child.

ETHAN

Yes, I remember when we discovered Josh was such a beautiful cello player ...

RUTH

(realizes)

I'm truly sorry, I never meant ...

ETHAN

No, don't be sorry. Anyway, we'd better get back to Emma's mom. Do you mind if I use the bathroom?

RUTH

No, go right ahead, it's at the top of the stairs.

142 INT. WHELDON HOUSE. UPSTAIRS - DAY 142

Ethan climbs the stairs. He looks around finds the bathroom but also sees a bedroom festooned in Red Sox paraphernalia. He stops, listens to Ruth chat with Emma, then, quietly, walks into Lucas' room.

143 INT. WHELDON HOUSE. LUCAS' BEDROOM - DAY 143

Ethan takes in the room, the mess, school books, baseball glove, and on a chest of drawers, a series of photos in cheap frames.

He studies this chronicle of Lucas' life. Then one photo rivets him to the spot.

CLOSE ON a photo of Dwight and Lucas in the car park of Fenway, holding Red Sox shirts, as they lean against a 1998 dark blue Ford Explorer with a grill guard.

Ethan carefully picks up the photo, slides it between his belt and the small of his back, and adjusts his shirt.

144 INT. WHELDON HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY 144

Ruth is still talking to Emma.

RUTH

I think you should compose more,  
we'll do a symphony.

Ethan appears.

ETHAN

Okay, little lady we got to go.

Emma gets up, heads to the door with Ethan.

RUTH

Thank you for everything. See you  
soon Emma, yes?

EMMA

Bye.

145 EXT. RYE PLAYLAND - DAY 145

Dwight and Lucas leave the rollercoaster, and head past the bumper cars on their way out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DWIGHT

After the Series, I've got to go  
away for a while.

LUCAS

(distracted)  
Sure, dad. Hey, I got tickets  
left, let's do the bumpers.

DWIGHT

Nah, come on, we want to get home  
in plenty of time.

LUCAS

Please.

Lucas is already on the steps.

DWIGHT

You can go on, I don't want to.

LUCAS

Come on.

DWIGHT

(firm)  
No, you go.

Lucas jumps in a bumper car. The ride starts, there are  
a BUNCH OF COLLEGE KIDS showing off to their GIRLFRIENDS.  
One of them - A JOCK - starts picking on Lucas, banging  
him hard.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

HEY!

But his shout can't be heard over the LOUD ROCK MUSIC.

The Jock lines up behind Lucas, times it to sandwich him  
and really hits him hard.

Lucas head shoots forward, almost hits the wheel.

Dwight runs out onto the metal floor, stands on the back  
of Lucas' car.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

Hey, knock it off.

The ride stops.

JOCK

Get off the floor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DWIGHT

Take it easy. Come on Lou, lets go.

JOCK

If your kid's chicken get him outta here.

Dwight throws him a look, then leads Lou away. The jock makes chicken noises. Lou looks to Dwight.

146 EXT. PLAYLAND. TURNSTILES - DAY

146

Dwight leads Lucas through the exit tunnel.

LUCAS

You could have kicked his ass.

DWIGHT

Yeah, I could have. We'd have gotten thrown out. Or worse. Your Mom would have been mad at me, and we'd have missed the Series together.

LUCAS

I'm glad we got out of there.

(a beat)

How long you got to go away for?

DWIGHT

I'm not sure.

INT. LEARNER HOUSE. ETHAN'S STUDY - NIGHT

Ethan locks the door, goes to his desk, takes out the photo, breaks the frame, places the photo on the desk, takes a digital photo.

ON MONITOR: The photo is now in the computer. Ethan is enlarging it, focusing on the grill guard.

CUT BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN:

ETHAN'S FACE

AND A RAPID CUTS OF A SERIES OF WEB PAGES: on guns - shot guns - catalogues. A mix of the boring - supermarket catalogues - with the crazy - Soldier of Fortune - info on sawed off shotguns - revenge photos.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Now Ethan is on the phone.

ETHAN

I saw your ad on the web. I'm  
looking for a pistol, something  
simple, a revolver maybe.

He hangs up, then the sound of the door handle. The  
knocking.

GRACE (O.S.)

Ethan!

ETHAN

Yeah.

He sticks the photo in his pocket.

GRACE (O.S.)

Why's this door locked?

Ethan opens the door.

ETHAN

I don't know, maybe something's up  
with the lock.

GRACE

Will you be joining us for dinner.

ETHAN

I'm not hungry.

She walks away.

148 INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

148

The first night of the Series. Red Sox vs. Cardinals.  
Chips, soda, hot dogs spread out on a table.

Dwight and Lucas are totally absorbed in the game.

150 INT. ETHAN'S CAR, LOCAL HUNTING STORE - NIGHT

150

Ethan sits outside the hunting store, he's nervous as he  
fumbles with a revolver. It falls apart in his hands.

A car pulls up beside him, he hastily packs the pieces in  
the box, takes off.

CONTINUED:

153 OMITTED 153

155 OMITTED 155

157 EXT. LEARNER HOUSE. NIGHT 157

9 pm Fall night, leaves blow around the garden. A few lights on, the house looks peaceful

INT. DWIGHT'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

The world series game has just started. Lucas is almost exploding with excitement. Dwight is beside him.

158 INT. LEARNER HOUSE. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - LATER 158

Ethan stands alone outside Emma's room, thoughts and feelings barely in control. He takes a deep breath before entering.

159 INT. LEARNER HOUSE. EMMA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS 159

Emma's in her pajamas, under the covers. Ethan sits down on the edge of the bed.

ETHAN

Sleepy?

EMMA

Not yet.

ETHAN

Well, try. Close your eyes.

Her eyes remain open, looking at him.

EMMA

Will you tell me a good night story?

ETHAN

Not tonight.

Ethan places his hands over Emma's hands. He looks on the verge of tears.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMMA

Dad, your hands are shaking.

ETHAN

I must be tired.

EMMA

Time for bed.

Ethan tries to smile.

ETHAN

Good night, Pumpkin. Don't ever  
forget how much I love you.

EMMA

I love you too, Dad.

She closes her eyes. He kisses her and gets up and turns  
out the light.

160 INT. LEARNER HOUSE. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 160

He leaves Emma's door open a few inches. Grace stands in  
the hallway, dressed in her nightgown. She stares at  
him, a look wavering between forgiveness and rejection.

He stares back, is about to offer an excuse.

ETHAN

I ...

She disappears inside their bedroom and closes the door.

161 INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE - SAME TIME 161

The final moments of the game. A cliff hanger. The Sox  
take it. Lucas is ecstatic.

LUCAS

Oh my God, dad, I can't wait for  
tomorrow, you think they can do  
it, do you?

DWIGHT

I told you this is their year.

LUCAS

Hey dad, do you think mom would  
let me live here with you for a  
while?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WIGHT

We've got to work on that one,  
come hit the sack buddy.

LUCAS

Night dad.

162 EXT. LEARNER HOUSE. NIGHT 162

Ethan walks from his house to his car.

163 OMITTED 163

164 INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 164

Dwight cracks open a beer, collapses onto the couch.

165 OMITTED 165

166 OMITTED 166

167 EXT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE - NIGHT 167

Ethan's car appears a short distance from Dwight's house,  
the lights go off, the engine shuts down and the car  
coasts in neutral to a spot on the street outside Dwights

168 INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 168

Dwight's has dosed off on the couch. The doorbell rings.  
Dwight's eyes wide open now - anxious. He goes to the  
window, pulls aside the blind a little,

And sees Ethan. He's pulls back from the window - panic.  
Then he makes the decision - goes to the door.

The door opens. Dwight appears.

DWIGHT

Mr. Arno.

Ethan holds up the photo of Dwight and Lucas.

Ethan sticks the barrel of his revolver in Dwight's face  
and pushes him back into the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Dwight backs into the house, across the floor, knocks a stool over.

Lucas voice from his bedroom, breaks through.

LUCAS (O.S.)

Dad!

Ethan spins around, the revolver is pointed toward the sound. Dwight puts his body between Ethan and the corridor to Lucas bedroom.

DWIGHT

It's alright Lou, I knocked over a stool.

ETHAN

(confused, angry) Is that your son?

Dwight is backing up, keeping his body between Ethan and Lucas room.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Shut him up.

Dwight backs up to the door to Ethan's room. His hands up appealing for Ethan to stay out.

Dwight opens the door to Lucas bedroom. Ethan flattens himself against the wall beside the door, points the shotgun, hears Lucas.

LUCAS (O.S.)

Who's there dad.

Dwight stands in the doorway.

DWIGHT

No one, I banged a stool and the tvs too loud, come on go asleep.

Ethan has the shotgun leveled at his head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCAS

I need to pee.

Dwight's look says "Oh Jesus.

DWIGHT

Ah Lou, you'll ruin your sleep.

Ethan's moves out so that he keep the shotgun trained on Dwight.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

Hurry up.

Dwight is dying inside. Ethan briskles with nervous adrenalin. An eternity. The sound of the toilet flushing, the toilet door opening.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

Get in to bed. You gotta catch up on your sleep.

LUCAS

Okay dad, love you.

DWIGHT

I love you too, goodnight.

Dwight closes the door, turns to Ethan who is backing away along the corridor toward the living room. He looks panicked, unsure.

ETHAN

Come on.

EXT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE. NIGHT

The door opens, Dwight emerges, the gun is in his back. Ethan appears.

Dwight stands in the garden. Ethan looks around, unsure, grabs Dwight by the coat and pushes him toward his car.

ETHAN

Hurry up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They get to the car, Ethan looks confused, this is uncharted territory.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Go to the trunk.

Dwight heads for the trunk.

Close on the trunk pops open.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Get in.

Dwight clambers in. Ethan pushes the trunk down.

To black

He snaps the trunk closed. BANG

TO BLACK

The bang of the trunk turns into the CRACK of a baseball bat hitting a ball

FLASHBACK TO:

171 EXT. FENWAY PARK. STANDS - THE DAY OF THE ACCIDENT 171

MUSIC overwhelmed by the growing ROAR of 30,000 fans.

It's not just another baseball game - it's the Red Sox-vs. Yankees. Fenway's a madhouse.

THE SCOREBOARD

The scoreboard shows the game tied 4-4 in the bottom of the 9th.

CLOSE IN on a DWIGHT and LUCAS in box seats on the third base line. LUCAS has his chin just above the railing and his hands clenched into fists, YELLING himself hoarse.

LUCAS

Come on, Pedro! Strike him out!  
Strike him out!

Pedro Martinez winds up and throws a blazing fastball right past a flailing Bernie Williams. The crowd erupts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Yeah! Dad, didya see that?  
Didya, Dad?

Lucas and Dwight jump as one, ROAR, high five, the pure joy of a moment shared between father and son.

As they settle into their seats, Dwight hears the faint ring of a cell phone over the cheers.

DWIGHT

What's that?

He looks toward Lucas pocket.

LUCAS

What?

DWIGHT

It's your phone, answer it please.

Lucas retrieves the phone like it's Kryptonite, checks who it is, a look of resignation to Dwight, then he answers.

LUCAS

Hey mom ... no, we're still at the  
game ... but its not over. No,  
no, its nearly over.

Lucas listens, then hands the phone to Dwight.

DWIGHT

Yeah I know what the curfew time  
is. I'll have him back ... I said  
I'll have him back.

He hands the phone back to Lucas.

LUCAS

We can't leave dad. Please?

Dwight jumps to his feet CHEERING, problems forgotten. He picks up his laughing, yelling son, hugs him in a raucous dance.

173 INT. DWIGHT'S CAR - DUSK

173

The car park exit is JAMMED WITH CARS, HORNS SOUND in frustration. Dwight whispers a curse as he jockeys for position to get out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lucas slips his phone from his pocket and checks, the screen reads 6 missed calls.

DWIGHT

Is that your mom again?

LUCAS

No, I was checking the time. You wanna hear a joke?

DWIGHT

Sure.

LUCAS

A doctor at a mental hospital decides to take his patients to a Red Sox game, but he says you have to do what I say. When they get to their seats he says, "sit nuts." They all sit. When the Red Sox score he says, "cheer nuts." They all cheer. The Yankees score he says, "boo nuts." They all boo. Then, a guy with a tray comes down the aisle shouting "pea nuts!"

Dwight loves it.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Can I change the station?

DWIGHT

Sure.

Lucas seat belt won't let him reach. He unbuckles, reaches the radio and tunes in the sports station.

174 EXT. CONNECTICUT PARKWAY - NIGHT

174

Dark now. A country parkway (The Hutchinson). Dwight's Ford Explorer guns along at 80. The passenger side headlight is not working.

175 INT. FORD EXPLORER - NIGHT

175

In the gloom of the car, Dwight takes a drag on a cigarette, rolls down his window and blows the smoke out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He checks on Lucas: who is asleep, with his cheek pressed up against the door. He checks the dashboard clock: 8:40.

DWIGHT  
(under his breath)  
Fuck.

Then: up ahead, in the lone beam of light, we see a SIGN for the next exit - RESERVATION ROAD (a short cut).

At the last minute, Dwight decides to take the exit. Tires SQUEAL lightly.

He checks on Lucas again: still sleeping. He hits the radio button to the progressive rock station.

176 EXT. RESERVATION ROAD - NIGHT 176

The road, narrow and dark, running through woods.

Dwight gives the car more gas.

177 EXT. RESERVATION ROAD - FURTHER - NIGHT 177

Dwight's car with the single headlight SPEEDS through the darkness. The orange tip of his cigarette GLOWS behind the windshield.

178 INT. FORD EXPLORER - NIGHT 178

Dwight's faintly sweaty face silhouetted behind the orange tip of his lit cigarette.

He checks the dashboard clock again: 8:55

He gives the car more gas.

179 INT. FORD EXPLORER - CONTINUOUS 179

As he rounds the corner, Dwight's face is illuminated by the white light of the brights from a car coming in the opposite direction.

DWIGHT  
Son of a bitch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dwight's POV a blaze of light, the faint glow of an old gas station off to his left, then something moving on the grass verge.

A boy's face, frozen in horror!

Dwight, jams on the brakes hard, hurls Lucas into the dash.

BANG - the boy flies off to the side, as Lucas' face smashes into the dash.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

LOU!

Dwight reaches across to Lucas who is doubled up in pain, clutching his eye.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

Are you alright?!

Then Dwight looks in the mirror, sees a man (Ethan) standing in the road, staring, but Lucas is crying now.

LUCAS

Dad, dad, my eye!

DWIGHT

Oh, Jesus! Jesus!

LUCAS

It hurts. Please dad.

Dwight looks in the mirror again, then puts his foot on the gas.

FLASH FORWARD

TO:

180 EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

180

Ethan appears confused, not sure where to go.

The car's headlights push through the darkness revealing, rocks, trees, and beyond the moon glistening off the waters of Long Island Sound where josh's ashes were scattered.

181 EXT. SHORELINE - NIGHT

181

The trunk pops open. Dwight is disoriented doesn't know what to do, hesitates.

ETHAN

Get out!

Dwight still doesn't move.

Ethan lifts the barrel of the gun, brings it down on Dwight's head, BANG, the revolver accidentally discharges.

DWIGHT

ETHAN

AaaHH!

Aaahh!

Ethan jumps back in shock, stands motionless as the gunshot rings across the Sound.

Ethan doesn't know what to do. He looks at Dwight breathing heavily inside the trunk.

Still silence. Close on Dwight.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Get out!

Dwight clambers out.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Over there!

Dwight heads toward the sandy shore.

Ethan looks like he's going to explode. He rushes toward Dwight with the revolver.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Do you know what you have done to my family. You have destroyed us!

DWIGHT

Turn me in to the police. I'll go to jail

He is close enough to kick him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETHAN

You want me to turn you in so that you can pull your tricks in court, and then laugh at me on the street. You sat and lied to me. We'll get this guy, compensation. I gave you his accident report, with those photos, his dead body. You're a fucking murderer.

DWIGHT

Please, believe me. It was an accident.

ETHAN

(screams) An accident, you fucking killed him, and you drove away, why would you drive away from an accident.

DWIGHT

I didnt know you son was dead, I ....

ETHAN

He was road kill, a dead squirrel, stray dog, my Josh. Did he see you.

DWIGHT

Please, I see him every night ... his face. Please

ETHAN

Did you see the fireflies .... He as releasing fireflies. He wouldn't hurt fly... Fuck you, fuck you to hell.

You sat and listened to me, shook my hand. You said you were going to help me. What sort of a monster are you? Have you no soul?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DWIGHT

All I wanted was a few days with my son before he hates me .... I needed time.

ETHAN

Time! What time. Time to torment me, to shout Lou in my face. You went with me to the place where you killed my son and you stood there with your stupid face and said there would be a break in the case. You don't deserve to live.

He pushes Dwight toward the water ...

Dwight is destroyed by Ethan's rage and hate.

DWIGHT

Don't do this, not for me, for you, don't ruin your life like I did ....

ETHAN

Jesus Christ, you're pathetic, you'll say anything, to save yourself.

As they move so seaweed covered rocks, Ethan slips, he reaches, tries to grab on to Dwight's sweater. Misses.

Crashes on to the rocks,

Bangs his head,

The revolver flies from his hand.

And falls to the ground.

He's stunned, can't move.

Then turns to see Dwight lift the revolver.

The cylinder has fallen open.

Now Dwight Snaps it back into place.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

And points the gun at Ethan.

DWIGHT

Get up.

Ethan stands, Dwight holds the gun on him.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

Get back. I'm not going to let you be a murderer. You can't do this.

COCKS the hammer.

And HOLDS it to his head.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

No. No. I have to die to get this over. I have to end this. You need me dead? Blood for blood. Nothing else will do.

Ethan, stares at him.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

Nothing else to do.

Ethan stares. SILENCE

Dwight's hand tightens on the trigger.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

Oh jesus, oh jesus. I took your boy's life,. If this is what it takes to give you back your life I'll do it. Tell me to do it.

Dwight's hand trembles as he presses the gun to his head.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

COME ON, tell me, Please. This is easier.

Ethan stares at him, tries to find the words, can't he's frozen between anger and pity.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

Tell me, tell me, I'll do it, say it. Please.

Ethan can only stare.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

Please.

Ethan turns,

And walks away.

Dwight calls out after him.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

Don't leave me here. Please don't  
leave me.

Dwight falls to his knees, weeping uncontrollably.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

Please forgive me! Please.

EXT. LEARNER HOUSE. BACK PORCH. PRE-DAWN

Ethan sits alone on the top stair of the porch as the faintest light of dawn breaks.

EXT. SEASHORE. DAWN

The grey of pre dawn, Dwight is still sitting on a rock, staring out at the faint glow of the sun.

EXT. LEARNER HOUSE. BACK PORCH.

DAWN

Ethan's still there, weeping with grief, exhaustion. The dog barks, a light comes on, Grace emerges.

He looks round at her, puts his hand out, she takes it, sits beside him, he puts his arm around her.

ETHAN

(crying) God, I miss him so.

She rests her head on his shoulder.

GRACE

I know, I know. Come into the  
house.

She helps him up, leads him inside.

184 INT. DWIGHT'S HOUSE. NIGHT

184

It's the last pitch of the Series. Cardinals Vs Sox. The Red Sox Keith Foulke pitches. Edgar Renteria of the Cardinals grounds out! And it's over! Total jubilation among the Sox.

Lucas jumps up on the couch, squeals with delight, grabs his dad, and hugs him.

LUCAS

They won Dad. They won!

Dwight hugs Lucas close.

Track back to the video camera alone on the video camera, on the breakfast bar.

INT. LUCAS ROOM. DAY

Lucas sits on the bed, facing the wall, only his back is visible. Over his shoulder, he's looking at the video camera. It's Dwight's confession to him.

ON SCREEN:

EXT. BEACH. DAY

It's cold December day. Ethan and Grace walk hand in hand along the beach. A couple again.

FADE