

THE OLD MAN

Written by

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Based on the Novel by

Thomas Perry

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INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Darkness. Silence. The only light, the small, red digits of an ALARM CLOCK. 1:15 AM.

The silence is broken by the sound of disembodied shuffling of bedsheets. A shadow passes by the numbers... Lumbers into the darkness beyond... Then--

LIGHT. Through the doorframe of the bathroom. Silhouetted against it-- AN **OLD MAN**. Just for a moment, before he disappears around the corner into the bathroom. A silent beat, before we hear him PEEING. By the sound of it, with some difficulty... And as he struggles, we SMASH TO:

TOTAL DARKNESS. Again. This time: 3:03 AM.

Shuffling, again. LIGHT, again. PEEING. Again. This poor bastard probably hasn't slept through the night in years. SMASH TO:

DARKNESS. 5:42 AM. Silence... But not quite. This time, the sound of RUNNING WATER. AND DRIPPING WATER. Coming from the bathroom. The Old Man shuffles past us. Turns on BATHROOM LIGHT. But rather than disappearing, he remains there in silhouette. Frozen. We MOVE SLOWLY TOWARDS HIM. And then see over his shoulder--

AN **OLD WOMAN**. Sitting on the floor, in a pool of water. (She wasn't there earlier, we saw this part of the bathroom through the doorframe and it was empty.) The sink, overflowing. Her nightgown, soaking. She's looking up at us. Frightened. Gaunt. Then, in a hoarse and haunting sing-song--

OLD WOMAN

I see you.

Nightmare fuel. Literally, apparently, as we SMASH TO:

THE OLD MAN WAKING IN BED WITH A START. The alarm clock still visible 5:32 AM, but rather than total darkness, first light is seeping in the windows, giving us our first look at the Old Man's face. Meet **DAN CHASE**. 68. For a moment we register the terror the nightmare caused. But only a moment, before he tames it. Stares up at the ceiling, as we hear--

A YOUNG WOMAN'S VOICE, just staticky enough to tell us it's coming over a telephone--

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)(FROM PHONE)

When I was a little girl, I
imagined there was nothing you were
afraid of...

WIDE - as Chase gets out of bed, we see TWO LARGE ROTTWEILERS at the foot of his side of the bed. The other side of the bed is empty, still made. Even in sleep, Chase doesn't venture over there...

In the b.g. we see Chase venture into the bathroom, turn on the shower, start his routine... And in the extreme f.g., we can now see on his nightstand-- A PRESCRIPTION PILL BOTTLE... Then another... MOVING across what seems to be quite a collection of them...

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)(CONT'D)
You were indestructible.

...but at the end of the row of pills, we then see the BLACK MUZZLE OF A REVOLVER... And off this disturbing combination, CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Chase finishes putting on his pants, then sits roughly on the bed. Looks over at the PAIR OF SOCKS next to him, maybe wondering for a moment if they're worth the trouble...

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
There was no one and nothing that could ever hurt you. There was no one and nothing you'd ever let hurt me.

Chase picks up the socks resentfully, and as he unpeels one from the other, readying to do battle with them--

INT. CHASE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Chase stands at the counter. Makes coffee. TV on in the background, some morning show. On just to be on.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
When I was a little girl, you were a king. And everything I knew was your kingdom.

As he opens the fridge to take out the milk, we see a MAGNETIC DRY-ERASE PLANNER on its door. *Tuesday - Dr. Howard. Thursday - Pay gardener...* And at the bottom, under the heading REMINDERS, in old, faded, barely legible handwriting: *Your name is Abbey Chase.*

Chase puts the milk back in the fridge, and as he shuts the door, we CUT TO:

EXT. CHASE'S HOUSE - PORCH

WIDE - A secluded house at the end of a long drive. No other houses visible from here. Chase absently throws a tennis ball that the dogs eagerly chase after... With a cellphone to his ear--

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)
I guess what I'm asking is, where
did that guy go?

CHASE
I hate to break this to you, but
you weren't very bright as a kid,
Emily. I could have told you
anything and you'd have bought it.

FEMALE VOICE (EMILY)(O.S.)
I think we both know that isn't
true--

CHASE
And which part of your experience
as a parent suggests to you I
wasn't afraid of anything when you
were a little girl? I was afraid of
everything that wasn't nailed down
when you were a little girl. And
for a good while thereafter. I just
got good at lying to you about it.

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)
Yes you did. Until recently. And
I've noticed. You don't sound
yourself. You're preoccupied when
we talk. Not sleeping. So I'm
asking, what's different now?

While Emily talks, Chase sees one of the dogs is standing over the tennis ball, staring off into the distance.

Chase follows the dog's look, and finds himself looking out into the woods behind the house. Thick forest. After a beat--

CHASE
I don't know. Something's just...
off.

Chase then checks his watch, and starts walking back towards the house--

EMILY

Ok. Listen... If this is about what I think it's about, then I understand why it frightens you. But I think you're fine. And I know what I'm talking about. Unless there's something you're not telling me.

(beat)

Is there something you're not telling me?

--this as Chase has entered into--

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

--where he tidies up... As he does we realize that question has been hanging in the air a few moments too long--

EMILY

Dad?

CHASE

Of course not. I gotta run, I'll call you when I can.

EMILY

Ok.

Chase hangs up. As he tidies, he starts talking aloud again--

CHASE

She's pretty sure everything's fine.

Um... Who's he talking to? It's a moment before we realize he's talking to the dogs, who have followed him inside, standing by the door looking up at him.

CHASE (CONT'D)

Probably helps only knowing half the story...

As Chase talks, he's grabbed his wallet, keys. Turns off the TV. Puts his coffee cup in the dishwasher. Puts the cellphone he was just talking to Emily on into the microwave. Turns on the microwave. Each step as casually routine as the last. Chase then grabs his coat, and walks out the door. We can hear him locking up from outside, as the sparks start flying in the oven. Weird.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Chase walks the dogs up the main drag of a sleepy Vermont town. Unspoiled by tourists and chain stores. Peaceful...

As he walks, he looks over at a CAFE across the street. Laptops, newspapers, morning routines. Looks about as normal as could be.

But Chase seems unsettled by it. Side-eye stares at it, like he's expecting something to reach out across the street and grab him. Until he reaches a storefront, shuffles inside, and we CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - EXAM ROOM - DAY

A small town family doctor's office. Chase sits on the exam table. The DOGS sit in the corner, curled up on the floor. Chase fidgets absently, until--

The DOOR OPENS, and A **YOUNG DOCTOR** (30s, generously) enters, reading a chart inside a RED FOLDER.

YOUNG DOCTOR
Mr. Chase?

Chase seems thrown by the Doctor's presence. Warily--

CHASE
Yes...

YOUNG DOCTOR
Good afternoon. How've you been...
feeling...

Young Doctor trails off as he notices the dogs sleeping on the floor. Stares at them a moment, maybe trying to figure out how to politely address this...

CHASE
Dave. And Carol.

YOUNG DOCTOR
Who are--
(the coin drops)
Ok, I see. Dave and Carol are your
dogs.

CHASE
Yes.

YOUNG DOCTOR

I was a little confused there for a second.

CHASE

Because they have names?

YOUNG DOCTOR

Well... They have people's names...
(off Chase's blank look)
Those are people's names.

Chase looks at the dogs.

CHASE

Not in this case.

Beat. Beat.

YOUNG DOCTOR

Let's start again-- Mr. Chase, good afternoon-- I see you've brought your dogs into the exam room--

CHASE

(re: Dogs)

Dr. Howard's never minded, I bring them everywhere--

YOUNG DOCTOR

--I'm Dr. Howard--

CHASE

See, I don't think so--

YOUNG DOCTOR (DR. HOWARD)

I'm guessing you were expecting my mother.

CHASE

I was expecting the Dr. Howard I've been seeing for going on 17 years now. Where might she be?

DR. HOWARD

She only sees patients Thursdays now. At her age it was getting hard to keep up the grind, I'm sure you understand how that goes.

On Chase. Beat. Beat.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
So... we asked you to come in to
discuss your results.

On Chase. Steels himself. Here we go...

CHASE
Yeah.

DR. HOWARD
You recently underwent a full
preventive exam-- that was
physical, cognitive, full lab.
(then)
Huh... Usually don't do cognitive
unless requested.

CHASE
I requested it.

DR. HOWARD
Are you experiencing symptoms?

CHASE
Isn't the nature of cognitive
impairment that you aren't aware
it's happening?

DR. HOWARD
Not always.

CHASE
Not never, either.
(then)
No, I'm not aware of any symptoms.
Been feeling agitated, anxious.
Maybe missing some things. My wife
went through it, and if I hadn't
spotted it I'm not sure she would
have. So I just wanted to be sure.

DR. HOWARD
I see.

Dr. Howard considers the folder. Then closes it dramatically,
frowns, leans forward on his stool, just the way he was
taught in school to deliver Serious News.

On Chase. Prepares himself for the worst.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
So... It's highly likely you have
kidney stones.

Beat. Beat.

CHASE
I'm sorry, what?

DR. HOWARD
Kidney stones. You may not be experiencing acute symptoms yet but my guess is that won't be far off.

CHASE
Mm hm.

DR. HOWARD
Don't know if you ever had them before, but I assure you, it's no fun. I'd recommend starting treatment sooner than later--

CHASE
Ok-- but, the cognitive test, there was nothing wrong there?

DR. HOWARD
Nope. Why, would you like there to be?

Dr. Howard cracks a nervous smile, a less-than-stellar attempt at icebreaking humor. And off Chase's blank glare--

EXT. MAIN STREET - LATER

Chase crosses the street we saw him walking down before.

CHASE
Remind me we gotta go to the doctor on Thursdays from now on...

But he trails off as he approaches the cafe we saw before. He's on the same side of the street now. As he walks past it, he never slows or breaks stride, but his focus seems to linger on ONE PARTICULAR MAN SITTING ALONE. Not looking at us. Just working on a laptop, eating a MUFFIN. For some reason, Chase just can't take his eyes off him...

EMILY (V.O.) (FROM PHONE)
Tell me I shouldn't be worried right now.

And off Chase's unsettled look--

EXT. CHASE'S HOUSE - DAY

We're with Dave and Carol, as they sit quietly on the lawn. They're watching something curiously, which we can't yet see. But we can hear O.S. CLUNKING and RUFFLING...

EMILY (V.O.)(FROM PHONE)
Because the last time the answer to every question I asked was, 'I'm fine, Emily, really' was when things got bad with mom.

We finally REVERSE, and catch a glimpse of Chase halfway into his recycling container by the side of the house, rummaging through the refuse.

INT. CHASE'S HOUSE - GIRL'S BEDROOM - DAY

A girl's childhood bedroom. We see pictures of the GIRL who used to live here. Various ages. Soccer trophies. Stuffed animals collecting dust.

EMILY (V.O.)
I understand why you felt like you needed to protect me from it, but I'm not a child.

All pretty unremarkable, standard fare. Except, that is, for--

Chase sitting on the floor, a pile of COFFEE CANS around him, that he must've removed from the trash. He meticulously strings FISHING LINE through small holes he's punched into them. This... is far from unremarkable.

EMILY (V.O.)(FROM PHONE)
And our situation is hard enough-- the kids not knowing you, not being able to see you-- without feeling like you're trying to keep me out of things I should be in with you.

He then stands, gathers the COFFEE CAN CONTRAPTION he's strung together-- one end of the string is tied to a piece of furniture, and he carries the other end out the door, pulling it taut.

EMILY (V.O.)(FROM PHONE) (CONT'D)
Tell me I shouldn't be worried, because I am.

HANG HERE, watching through the doorframe as Chase ties off the other end of the Coffee Can string to the base of the bannister at the top of the stairs just outside the door.

EMILY (V.O.) (FROM PHONE) (CONT'D)
Please call me.

And as he shuts the bedroom door, we CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

STARK FLUORESCENT LIGHT.

CLOSE on the POOLING WATER on the floor. The EDGE OF A NIGHTGOWN, soaking in it. The DRIP... DRIP... DRIP over the edge of the overflowing sink.

In the darkened doorframe, Chase appears, looking down at us.

CHASE
Abbey...

REVERSE, and find the Old Woman (**ABBEY**), looking back up at him. More lucid than the last time we saw her, but still disturbed, scared...

ABBEY
I'm sorry. I don't know how I got here.
(then; losing it)
And then I was afraid if I came back to bed you would see...

A look of sad resignation on Chase's face. He goes to her.

CHASE
It's ok, baby. It's ok...

He helps her to her feet. Gets her out of the wet nightgown, pulls a bathrobe off the door to cover her up.

CLOSE ON HER HAND, as it comes through the sleeve. And grasps for him. Takes his hand to stop it from tying the belt.

ABBEY
You need to put me somewhere.

CHASE
I'm gonna put you back in bed.

ABBEY
You need to put me away somewhere.
(beat)
This isn't fair to you. I'm not what you married.

CHASE

Please don't say that--

ABBEY

I could be dangerous to you.

A glimpse of a reaction on Chase. Something about that rings true to him. But he almost instantly moves past it, makes light of it--

CHASE

It keeps things interesting.

A tiny smile from her. A victory. He misses that smile.

CHASE (CONT'D)

Come...

He leads her towards the door... She holds his hand tightly. But then as they pass through the door out of the stark white light and into the DARKNESS of the bedroom--

CLOSE ON HER HAND, as her grip loosens nervously...

ABBEY

Who am I?

CHASE

You are the woman who promised to take care of me. You are the woman I promised to take care of--

ABBEY

Who am I?

Frightened. She pulls her hand away. In the pale moonlight through the window, the look in her eyes is different than before. She's not in there anymore...

But she looks up at him. Searching. Piercing. Horrible.

ABBEY (CONT'D)

I know who you are... I know what you are...

Then, her searching look turns to a mad, savage glare-- And with a startling growl--

ABBEY (CONT'D)

I see you.

But before Chase can wake up, we hear--

The FAINT JANGLING of COFFEE CANS. And we CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON CHASE as he wakes-- but this time, instantly alert. Pops up just in time to see--

DAVE AND CAROL, thudding off the bed and towards the door--

CHASE

Anhalten!

The dogs stop on a dime. Pointed at the door, but frozen in their tracks.

Chase swings out of bed, smoothly grabbing the PISTOL and a FLASHLIGHT from the nightstand. His moves are quick, efficient, controlled. This is not the guy we watched dread the idea of putting his socks on earlier.

He moves past the dogs towards the door. Peeks quickly around the corner like a pro. Clear. Moves out into--

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

--where he sees the COFFEE CAN CONTRAPTION is just where he left it, strung across the top of the stairs. Fair to wonder whether we actually heard them jangle earlier, or whether it was an artifact of Chase's dream...

Chase remains still. Listening. The bedroom doors upstairs are all closed-- the way he left them. Nothing but silence. Then, suddenly--

THE DOGS-- both of them, simultaneously-- BREAK INTO A RUN-- HEAD DOWN THE STAIRS. Did they hear something? We didn't, but there they go...

Stay with Chase, as he moves towards the stairs quietly... descends carefully. Down below, dogs disappear around the bend at the bottom. Out of sight. Silence returns. Chase thinks better of the flashlight-- turns it off. And continues to descend... Tension building again with each step... He reaches the bottom.

Darkness everywhere. He takes a step towards the FRONT DOOR, checks it. It's closed. It's locked. But just as he's about to let his guard down--

A SCUFFLE-- DOGS GROWLING, SNARLING, STRUGGLING--

Chase quickly TURNS ON THE FLASHLIGHT, shines it in the direction of the noise, just in time to see in the beam--

THE FIGURE OF A MAN-- an **INTRUDER**-- BEING TAKEN DOWN BY THE DOGS...

Chase moves quickly towards A DARK MASS OF SHAPES ON THE GROUND. DAVE'S TEETH CLAMPED ON THE INTRUDER'S ARM, CAROL ON HIS OPPOSITE SHOULDER. The Intruder has a SILENCED PISTOL in one hand, but Dave's making it impossible for him to do anything with it.

CHASE

Hals.

At this-- Carol moves, lightning quick-- gives up her position on the Intruder's shoulder, and scoots quickly over to his neck. As she clamps her jaws around it, the Intruder goes suddenly, but understandably, very still. Silence returns, but for the breathing of the Intruder, and the dogs...

Chase calmly moves closer, pistol barely raised. Seems to trust the dogs have this under control. Chase then shines his light in the Intruder's face, and we see--

IT'S THE **MUFFIN MAN** FROM THE CAFE EARLIER. Chase considers him evenly. Not at all surprised.

CHASE (CONT'D)

You wanna tell me your name?

The Intruder looks up at him a moment. Not defiant. Not pleading. Maybe doesn't even speak English. But before he can react any further--

CHASE (CONT'D)

Aus.

Carol lets go-- pulls away from the Intruder's neck-- and not a moment too soon, as Chase levels his pistol, and SHOOTS THE INTRUDER IN HIS CHEST TWICE. One in his heart. And the other must have punctured a lung, because the Intruder begins to WHEEZE. A horrible sound.

The Dogs maintain their hold on the Intruder's arms, keeping him in place as he waits to see whether he'll bleed out or suffocate first.

Chase kneels down. Rifles through the pockets of the Intruder, who's still alive, but helpless to do anything about it. Chase finds nothing. No wallet, no keys, no phone. A SMALL KNIFE, which Chase pockets for himself.

A moment then, as Chase stares into the Intruder's eyes, waiting for him to finally expire.

A few final, labored wheezes, before his eyes go dead. Chase checks for a pulse on his neck. Finds none. Chase looks to the dogs--

CHASE (CONT'D)

Thank you.

They release their grip, move away from the body.

Chase then takes hold of the Intruder's pistol-hand. Uses the Intruder's finger to PULL THE TRIGGER, firing a round toward the stairs and into a wall. Chase then puts the Intruder's hand back down, positioning it just so.

Chase then moves to the kitchen. TURNS ON THE LIGHTS. Picks up the landline phone, and dials...

DISPATCHER (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)

Nine-one-one. What's your emergency?

CHASE

This is Dan Chase at Ninety-two Neville Street in Norwich. A man just broke into my house with a gun. He fired at me, I fired back... I shot him. I think he's dead.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)

Please stay on the line. Repeat your name again please?

CHASE

(beat)

My name is Dan Chase.

And then, off Chase, we CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Chase enters a closet, opens a FALSE PANEL in back, revealing a SAFE. He enters the combination, and we see a SERIES OF QUICK CUTS:

-- A BACKPACK. Opens it. We see CASH, US and Canadian inside. Lots of it.

--A STACK OF PASSPORTS. Different colors. Catch glimpses of a few of the PHOTO PAGES-- Different names in each; but Chase's photo in each.

--ANOTHER STACK OF PASSPORTS, these with ABBEY'S PHOTO. Also with a few different names.

--Thumb drives. Burner phones. A small LAPTOP COMPUTER, still in the plastic wrapping.

--Finally, TWO BERETTA PISTOLS and magazines.

Chase zips up the backpack. Walks to the bedroom door, then stops. Looks back. As though he knows he'll never see this room again. Just a moment of sentimentalism, before he shuts off the lights, and exits. And we CUT TO:

EXT. CHASE'S HOUSE - LATER

SQUAD CAR in the driveway, along with an Ambulance. No lights or sirens. This isn't an emergency anymore.

INT. CHASE'S HOUSE - SAME

Chase stands with a pair of **LOCAL COPS**. Around them, EMT'S put the Intruder's body in a bag. No CSI forensics here. Just an unfortunate evening in a small town.

LOCAL COP #1

...so you heard the dogs barking downstairs, you retrieved your weapon. You descended the stairs, at which point the intruder fired a shot. You fire back, hit him in the chest.

CHASE

That's correct.

LOCAL COP #2

Dogs usually spend the night downstairs?

CHASE

No, they usually sleep in my room. They must have gone downstairs while I was still asleep. It was the barking that woke me.

(then)

So was this a robbery?

LOCAL COP #1

Hard to say for sure. Seems well-dressed for a vagrant, so that'd be my guess.

LOCAL COP #2

You don't have any security issues
you're aware of, do you?

CHASE

Security?

LOCAL COP #2

Business rivals, personal issues.
Received any kinds of threats or
anything lately?

Chase's answers are all impeccably well-timed and delivered,
playing the role of shaken, upstanding, boring citizen.

CHASE

No... No, nothing like that. I'm
retired.

LOCAL COP #1

What did you do before you retired,
if you don't mind my asking?

CHASE

Real estate mostly, down in
Manhattan.

(beat)

Been here nineteen years... Never
had any kind of problem. Assumed
we'd gotten far enough away from
the city to be safe from all that.

LOCAL COP #1

You'd be surprised. Happens
everywhere these days.

(then)

The silencer is weird, though.
That you don't usually see...

On Chase. For an instant, his performance breaks-- a misstep
on his part not to dispose of the silencer. Fuck.

CHASE

Is that right?

A beat of tension... Chase bracing-- is the start of a line
of questioning he's gonna need to evade? But then--

LOCAL COP #1

Then again, we're a half-hour from
New Hampshire. You can buy 'em at
a fucking Walmart over there.

The Officers don't seem to give it a second thought. As the EMT's carry the Intruder's body out of the house, Cop #1 approaches Chase, extends a hand--

LOCAL COP #1 (CONT'D)
We'll send the guys in the morning to do a more detailed sweep through here if that's alright. I'm sure you've had a long night.

Chase shakes the Cop's hand.

CHASE
If it's alright, I might go stay with family in Milton tonight... You understand...

LOCAL COP #1
Of course. Would you mind if we--

Chase hands the cop a key.

CHASE
Leave it under the mat when you're done.

And off the Cop, appreciative, we CUT TO:

EXT. INTERSTATE - NIGHT

Chase's car speeds down the highway. We hear a PHONE RINGING in PRELAP, followed by--

EMILY (V.O.)(PRELAP)
Hello?

INT. CHASE'S CAR - SAME

Chase driving calmly with Emily on speaker. Dave and Carol are curled up on the backseat behind him.

CHASE
Hi kid, it's me. I'm sorry to call at this hour.
(then)
They found me.

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM SPEAKER)
Jesus-- Are you alright?

CHASE

I'm fine. The dogs are fine. But if they found me at the house, I can't go back. And it's a matter of time before they come for me again.

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM SPEAKER)

Are you sure it was--

CHASE

I'm sure.

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM SPEAKER)

Because after all this time, it seems unlikely--

CHASE

Emily. I'm sure.

(then)

I've felt it for a few weeks now. Thought maybe I was imagining it. My subconscious making up ghosts to remind me I've gotten lazy, and there are still things to worry about.

(beat)

But this is not a drill. This is happening. I gotta go get ahead of it now.

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM SPEAKER)

(exhales; trying to stay calm)

Ok. What can I do?

CHASE

There's nothing to do right now. The local cops won't get suspicious about me being gone for a few days, so the roads should be clear. And even if they do get suspicious, the house is a dead end, there's nothing to trace from it.

(then)

I'm gonna lay low for a bit, just to be on the safe side.

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM SPEAKER)

Ok.

(beat)

I assume I won't be hearing from you for however long 'a bit' is.

CHASE

Yeah... Not ideal, but probably for the best, until I get myself settled and get my bearings.

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM SPEAKER)

How long?

CHASE

I don't know. A few weeks. A month maybe.

Silence from the phone. Chase reacts a little. He knows she isn't thrilled with that answer.

CHASE (CONT'D)

I don't like how this feels either, kiddo. And it probably isn't even necessary; but if being a little more careful than necessary means I can sleep knowing you're totally clear of this...

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM SPEAKER)

I know. I get it, I do. I'd just... gotten used to our routine.

CHASE

Yeah, me too.

(then)

We'll make a new one, alright?

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM SPEAKER)

Yeah.

Beat. Beat. Neither of them want to say goodbye.

CHASE

I'm sorry--

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM SPEAKER)

Don't say that. You have nothing to apologize for.

On Chase. We get the sense he doesn't believe that's true.

CHASE

Alright... I'll call you soon as I can.

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM SPEAKER)

Love you, Dad.

CHASE

I love you too. Bye kiddo.

He hangs up the phone, eyes still locked to the road. He glances in the rear-view, sees Carol looking up at him from the back seat.

CHASE (CONT'D)

...what?

(beat)

I didn't lie. There's no reason to worry her right now about things we don't know.

Carol puts her head back down. And as Chase drives on, unsettled, into a dark night ahead... we PRELAP:

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)(PRELAP)

Space is the breath of art...

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - MORNING

CLOSE ON AN UNFINISHED HOUSE, in miniature. A LEGO house, under construction.

WIDER NOW - a **YOUNG BOY** (8) sits on the floor in pajamas. Working away intently on the house.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

You know who said that?

Across from him, REVEAL his **GRANDPA** (70s), also sitting on the floor, works on his own section of the Lego structure. Grandpa watches the Boy, realizes he isn't gonna get an answer to that. Won't take it personally.

GRANDPA

Do you have any idea what it means?

YOUNG BOY

No.

(takes a beat)

Do you?

Grandpa smiles. Smart kid. Then-- still working--

GRANDPA

Well... I think it means, when you're building a house, there's gotta be a place for everyone and everything that's important. But it's also ok to have some space to just be, you know... space.

YOUNG BOY

You think this is too big?

GRANDPA

Not at all. I love what we're building here. And I love building it with you.

(then)

I do think we'll be able to host a small army in here when we're done though.

YOUNG BOY

It's just for our family.

GRANDPA

Yeah...?

YOUNG BOY

A room for you and Grandma. A room for me. And a room for Mom and Dad.

On Grandpa. Receives that evenly.

GRANDPA

For Mom and Dad...?

YOUNG BOY

In case someone figures out how to bring them back someday.

Off Grandpa's neutral expression, we CUT TO:

INT./EXT. - BATHROOM - LATER

Grandpa, huddled at the far end of the bathroom. As far away from the door as he can get, and facing the wall. He's weeping. Doing the best he can to get control of it, but he just can't get it to stop...

A KNOCK at the door...

GRANDMA (O.S.)

Harold...?

Grandpa pulls himself together.

GRANDPA

Yeah.

GRANDMA enters in b.g. Holding a phone.

GRANDMA

There's a call for you.

He turns, she sees it in his eyes. But knows he doesn't want comforting, so doesn't offer it. She brings him the phone dutifully, and he raises it to his ear with a nod of *Thanks--*

GRANDPA

Hello.

VOICE (O.S.)

Deputy Director Harper?

GRANDPA/HARPER

This is he.

VOICE (O.S.)

Please hold...

As he hears the line click off, he turns his attention back to his wife...

WIFE

Have you ever thought it might help... if he saw you cry.

HARPER

Everyone cries around a kid who's lost his parents. I think if for nothing other than the sake of variety, I'll be the one who doesn't.

Off these two, bearing one of life's brutal tenures, as we hear--

VOICE (O.S.)

Special Agent Waters is on the line.

WATERS (O.S.)

Sir, this is Special Agent Raymond Waters. Bob Blasky at DCS put me on to you.

(then)

I'm working a case he thought you might be able to be helpful with.

HARPER

What kind of case?

And we INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CHASE'S HOUSE - DAY

--where **RAYMOND WATERS** (30s) stands in a familiar setting...
IT'S CHASE'S HOUSE.

Standing outside the kitchen, as a serious team of CRIME-
SCENE TECHS sweep the place. This is not the local cops
anymore.

AGENT WATERS

I've been granted SCI access for
the sake of this interaction, just
so you're aware--

HARPER (O.S.)

I understand. What kind of case?

AGENT WATERS

In July 1987, a man under you went
MIA near Darnah. Do you know the
man I'm referring to?

ON HARPER. A beat. Reacts heavily. Catching a glimpse of the
nightmare the next chapter of his life is about to become...

HARPER

Yeah...

AGENT WATERS (O.S.)

My assignment was to ascertain
whether the subject was still in
the wild, and if so, to locate and
retrieve him. Two weeks ago--

HARPER

Retrieve?

AGENT WATERS (O.S.)

Yes, sir. Two weeks ago--

HARPER

What for?

AGENT WATERS (O.S.)

Excuse me?

HARPER

That file has been resolved-- that
file has been *sealed* for two
decades, why is this coming back up
now?

AGENT WATERS (O.S.)

That's outside the scope of my responsibilities-- sir, I've got an operation gone sideways here and time is of the essence; may I continue?

HARPER

...yeah.

AGENT WATERS

An operator was sent to engage the subject; the operator was dumped, and the subject is at large.

(then)

We have redundancies in place but given your history with the subject DCS felt your insight might be valuable.

On Harper. Beat. Conflicted maybe.

AGENT WATERS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Sir, I'm instructed to relay to you that your help was personally requested by the Secretary--

HARPER

I get it. I'll be in the air in an hour and on my way to you.

AGENT WATERS

Thank you sir--

Harper hangs up mid-syllable. Could care less about Waters's thanks. Beat.

GRANDMA

Is everything alright?

On Harper. A look on his face like he's seen a ghost.

HARPER

No.

And as he exits past her, we CUT TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE DINER - DAY

A relatively empty parking lot outside a relatively empty diner by the side of some relatively remote central Pennsylvania rural road. Flat terrain in both directions, we can see a few miles up and down the road from here.

Among the few cars parked in the lot, we notice Chase's.

INT. ROADSIDE DINER - SAME

Chase at a corner booth. Laptop open. We see the plastic wrapping it came out of, it's brand new. Chase peers through a pair of reading glasses perched on the end of his nose at--

THE SCREEN... multiple windows open, plain-text prompts... COMPLICATED... Either he's broken this thing already, or this is hacker-level stuff. Then--

A new window-- an ENCRYPTED CONNECTION. Apparently, Chase understands his way around a computer pretty well.

As he begins typing CHICAGO into a search box--

WAITRESS (O.S.)
Service animals only.

Chase looks up to see a WAITRESS standing over him.

CHASE
I'm sorry?

She jabs a finger downward... Chase follows her look down to Dave and Carol, curled up at his feet.

WAITRESS
You can't have them in here. We only allow service animals.

Chase regards the dogs for a beat, before looking back up.

CHASE
Warming my feet's not a service?

Beat. Beat. A blank stare from the Waitress.

CHASE (CONT'D)
(hands her menu, defeated)
Coffee, black, and some rye toast--

WAITRESS
White or wheat.

CHASE
...wheat, please.

The Waitress exits. Chase looks down at Dave and Carol, who are both staring back up at him. Beat.

CHASE (CONT'D)

What did you want, I'm gonna get in
a fight with her about it? You'll
live...

A TRUCK DRIVER by the counter looks over, likely wondering who the hell Chase is talking to. And off Chase, well outside his comfort zone, we CUT TO:

EXT. DINER - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Chase's car, still parked in the lot where he left it. But now, with windows cracked, Dave and Carol are stashed in the back seat.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Chase, back at his booth. It's dark outside now. Coffee and toast half-eaten. Laptop open. And we see he's perusing--

A LIST OF APARTMENTS FOR RENT. Chase casually scrolls through them. He stops at once, reads in detail--

ROOM FOR RENT IN 2BDRM UPPER. Piano, music lovers preferred. Will consider pets. Private room.

Chase considers it a moment. Thinking. Then--

A CHILD'S LAUGH draws his attention across the restaurant. Sees a LITTLE GIRL with her MOTHER at a table, COLORING on a placemat.

ON CHASE, smiles at the cuteness of it. Taken in by it. And we CUT TO:

INT. 1990S DINER - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

CLOSE ON A PLACEMAT. Crayon drawing a FAMILY, in stick figure relief. Daddy, Mommy, Little Girl.

WIDEN - and we see a DIFFERENT LITTLE GIRL from the one Chase just saw. And a DIFFERENT MOTHER. And while the booth is similar, this is a different diner than the one we were just in. It's the early 1990s...

CHASE (O.S.)

Waitress come yet?

A man sits into the booth beside the Little Girl. **YOUNGER CHASE** (late 30s).

And once that's clear, we recognize the Different Mother here as **YOUNGER ABBEY**, Chase's wife we met in his dreams. Though when she speaks now, she has an accent-- Arabic maybe?

ABBEY

Not yet...

...and if that's Abbey, that would make this little girl **YOUNGER EMILY** (4).

EMILY

I'm hungry.

Chase offers up three knuckles on his left hand to her, and indicating imaginary flavors one at a time--

CHASE

I got chocolate, I got vanilla, I got strawberry... Anything to your liking?

Emily giggles. She playfully nibbles on the vanilla one, as--

ABBEY

Did you speak to them?

Chase doesn't look up, trying to enjoy the moment with his little girl. As casually as he can--

CHASE

I did.

Abbey doesn't bother to give voice to the obvious follow up. Chase lingers a moment, as Emily playfully finishes nibbling. Then, as Emily goes back to coloring, he finally responds--

CHASE (CONT'D)

They said the meet is live for tomorrow at 8am. They said if we show, and we return the money, then we'll be given 48 hours to leave the country. If we do so, they will consider the matter closed.

ABBEY

And if we don't do those things.

Chase just looks back at her. Clearly, the answer is 'nothing good'.

ABBEY (CONT'D)

Then we return the money.

CHASE

Yeah...

ABBEY

And we begin our lives again, with
a fresh start.

CHASE

Yeah...

Something about the way he says that is less than convincing.

ABBEY

Say what you are thinking...

Chase watches his words carefully, aware of Emily's presence.

CHASE

I've been giving this some
thought... And I'm of the opinion
that the moment they started using
the word 'treason', this stopped
being about the money. What
happened back in the mountains...
That isn't something they can
forgive. It isn't something we can
buy back. I think the offer to turn
over the money tomorrow is just
about getting us to show our faces
again. So they can end this. Their
way.

ABBEY

(beat)

I have been thinking the same
thing.

CHASE

...yeah?

(then)

Why didn't you say anything?

ABBEY

I didn't want to freak you out.

Gallows humor. He smiles a little.

ABBEY (CONT'D)

Why didn't you say anything?

CHASE

My mom used to say, 'There are two
kinds of people in this world.

(MORE)

CHASE (CONT'D)

Problem solvers, and problem
announcers. Be the better kind.'

ABBEY

And you have a solution to this
problem now?

CHASE

I don't know... maybe.

(then)

What if we don't keep running, and
we don't give the money back. What
if we keep that money, and we use
it to build something.

ABBEY

...build what kind of something?

CHASE

A home. A life. A reality. A place
where good things happen.

(then)

Those things are for sale in this
country. They can be manufactured,
if you know how to work the
machinery and can cover the cost of
the material. I think I can do
both.

ABBEY

(stating the obvious)

If we stop moving, they will find
us--

CHASE

If the people we were stop moving,
they'd be found. But the people
we're *about to become*, no one's
looking for those people because
those people haven't done anything
wrong. They are honest Americans
just looking to work hard, raise a
little girl and be happy. This
country likes those people.

(then)

Plus they're rich. That helps.

Abbey stifles a laugh, but it is almost immediately
accompanied by tears, which she tries to stifle too. She
looks away, suddenly overcome.

CHASE (CONT'D)

I'm not bullshitting, I think I can
do this for us--

Abbey waves him off. Gives herself a second to recover.

ABBEY

I have known we cannot keep running for a long time. Maybe since we left my father and the mountains and started running.

(then)

I think maybe the reason I didn't say anything about my fears about tomorrow, is because since the moment we started running, I've known that was the only way our story could end. And that at least when it came, we would be together.

A moment, as the tragic honesty of that hangs in the air. Something about it feels true. Irrefutable. Until--

CHASE

Fuck that.

(beat)

I did what I did, and I'd do it again, because it led to us.

(re: Emily)

And it led to her.

She looks back at him. Caught up in it.

CHASE (CONT'D)

I don't care what your name is, or mine. All I care about is growing old with you. Come be someone new with me, and I swear to God I will make sure nothing and no one will ever harm you or her as long as I live.

A beat. Then--

ABBEY

Yes.

A moment Chase will remember for the rest of his life. But before it can continue--

WAITRESS (O.S.)

Evening, folks. What can I get you?

Chase looks up at the Waitress. Her name tag says 'EMILY'.

CHASE

We're just gonna need one more minute.

WAITRESS

Sure thing. Take your time.

She splits. Beat.

ABBEY

What will we call these new people
we are about to be?

A small smile from Chase. But as he's about to respond, we are pulled out of the moment by a CELL PHONE RINGING. And we CUT BACK TO:

INT. ROADSIDE DINER - NIGHT

--where we are back with Chase, alone, at his laptop. He considers the burner cellphone for a moment-- surprised it's ringing-- before he accepts the call, puts it to his ear, says nothing... Silence for a moment, until--

HARPER (O.S.)

Hello. It's Harold Harper.

Beat. Chase just sits still, listening. And we INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. AIRFIELD - SAME

--where we see Harper, on his cell phone, standing next to a small hangar. Some small general aviation airport in rural New England. A few small prop planes visible. But as Harper talks, he periodically looks nervously at something O.S. we can't yet see...

HARPER

Listen, there are a couple of
things we need to get clear.

(then)

First, I am not running this op, I
was asked in strictly to consult.
The agent in charge does not know
I'm speaking with you right now.
There's a good chance I am
violating a number of laws by doing
so, which should earn me a little
latitude with you. Does it?

CHASE

(long beat)

No.

HARPER

Alright. The second thing, then, is that I need for you to go to your car. Right now.

BACK ON CHASE. We'll stay with him and play this out from his POV for a little while...

HARPER (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)(CONT'D)

I need to explain to you how I just called you on a phone you believed was clean and untraceable.

Chase is now getting increasingly concerned. He stands, throws his computer in a bag hastily.

WAITRESS

Hey-- You haven't paid--

Chase doesn't even respond, just drops too much cash on the table, and walks to the door-- exits out into--

EXT. ROADSIDE DINER - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

--where he moves to the car. Hesitates a moment, maybe wondering if the thing is gonna explode, until--

HARPER (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)

Take a look underneath. Passenger side, rear wheel--well maybe.

Chase looks, and immediately, he reacts-- can't believe his own stupidity. We then catch the outlines of a SMALL DEVICE, doesn't look like it belongs there.

HARPER (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)(CONT'D)

Apparently we can match the transponder's location to the location of the phone moving with it, and then reverse engineer the number. That one surprised me, I didn't know that was a thing we could do.

(beat)

I tell you this partly to remind you that you have no idea how different the game is than the last time you played it. And partly because you've got about 3 minutes before they're on top of you.

Chase then looks up the long road into the distance. It's empty-- until HEADLIGHTS APPEAR, cresting a hill... A few miles away still, but heading this way...

HARPER (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)(CONT'D)
I'm not looking at the transponder
feed, so let me know when you're
driving, and we can talk further.

And off Chase's look of disgust with himself-- how did he fumble this so badly?-- we GO--

BACK TO HARPER. Looks at his watch. Beat. Beat. Then, hears--

CHASE (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)
I'm moving.

HARPER
(beat)
I understand you lost your wife.

CHASE (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)
(beat)
A few years back.

HARPER
Cancer?

CHASE (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)
Huntington's Disease.

HARPER (O.S.)
That's... That's awful, I'm sorry.

CHASE (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)
I appreciate that.

HARPER
(beat; genuine)
It's been a very long time since
I've heard your voice. Strange
experience. Frankly, I'd imagined
you were dead.

CHASE (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)
No. Just retired.

Harper smiles. Good one.

CHASE (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)(CONT'D)
(beat)
I read about your son and daughter-
in-law in the paper. The accident.
(MORE)

CHASE (O.S.) (FROM PHONE) (CONT'D)
I thought about reaching out,
but... you know...

HARPER
...yeah.

These are old friends, to be sure. But something about that last exchange touched a little too raw a nerve for Harper. We can almost see him shift gears back into business mode...

HARPER (CONT'D)
I'm assuming you can see the tail
by now, yes?

Chase doesn't need to look in the mirror, he knows. But we notice a pair of HEADLIGHTS in the distance...

HARPER (CONT'D)
Alright, far as I can tell, these
are specialists, they're supposed
to be very good, so I'd keep my
distance.
(then)
Now, let me tell you where I am...

And we finally get a look at what Harper's been looking at. A GULFSTREAM JET, on the other side of the field. If it didn't already stick out like a sore thumb here, the crew of CONSPICUOUS GUYS milling about it would do it. Nearby, we also see a TRAILER/RV, like a mobile operations center.

HARPER (CONT'D)
I'm watching about a half dozen
guys from Langley fail at blending
in to Caledonia County Airfield,
loitering around their chartered
jet.
(then)
Their op is not to kill you, it's
to retrieve you, and put you on
that plane. No one will tell me
where's it's headed or why, but as
I sit here imagining nightmare
scenarios, I'm aware that with a
full tank of gas that plane can be
in Kabul tomorrow afternoon without
touching the ground.

Chase reacts. Knows where this is going...

HARPER (CONT'D)

The nightmare scenario is that Faris Hamza wants to see you again, and he convinced someone in the US government to make it happen.

A beat. Chase, feeling the water rising around him.

CHASE

Why are you telling me this? Why warn me?

HARPER

Because the scenario is a nightmare for you, but it's pretty shitty for me too. This story comes back to life, and I'm going to have to answer for some things that were dead and buried in the ground yesterday. Right now, I'm willing to aid and abet your escape to prevent that.

(beat)

Now I know you well enough to know you're building a list of options. Pretty soon you're gonna realize there are only two.

(then)

Door number 1, you engage. Go to ground, figure out how to fight back. You go through that door, and I'm here to tell you, it is going to end badly. Because the first thing that's gonna happen is this *will* become my operation. And I'm gonna have to put you down--

CHASE

I wouldn't be so sure about--

HARPER

Don't. Just-- don't.

(then)

The transponder under the car-- You left a silencer on a guy you tried to pass off as a burglar. You aren't the guy you remember. I doubt I'd even recognize you if I saw you right now.

(beat)

(MORE)

HARPER (CONT'D)

Some days I don't recognize myself either, but I've got 10000 agents and a 10 billion dollar budget to make up for whatever I've lost. What've you got?

CHASE

(beat)

Maybe I have a story worth telling.

(then)

Different time now than it was then... Maybe now I'm not the one comes off looking like the bad guy, and your life gets complicated--

HARPER

You're not gonna do that.

CHASE

Why not?

HARPER

Because *she's* in this now.

(then)

Whatever name you gave her... Wherever you put her because you thought she'd be safe... Your daughter is about to be in this.

CHASE

What makes you think I have any contact with her anymore--

HARPER

Because she's your daughter.

(beat)

And I'm telling you, if you go through Door #1, I'm gonna use her to get to you.

On Chase. Doesn't appreciate that. Not at all. A bit of a snarl, as--

CHASE

You're about to drive this to a place you won't like when we get there.

HARPER

You think I like any of this? And I'm not the one driving any of this-- from the beginning, from the moment I told you *not* to take that mission, that it would consume you and you did it anyway-- it's been *your* choices that have brought us here.

Beat. Maybe Chase can't argue that point. Maybe just too angry to try. Harper goes on--

HARPER (CONT'D)

You've given me no choice. I tracked this phone in 3 hours, how long before the guys who found you find her? A week? A month? And when they do, what happens when they all look at me-- 'Shit, Harold, when were you planning to tell us she was your goddaughter?'

(beat)

If she's gonna be found, then I gotta be the one to find her. Or no one I work with will ever trust me again. And I will not jeopardize my career and my family for you.

(then)

That brings us to Door #2. Door #2 is you disappear--

CHASE

I did that last time--

HARPER

No. Not like last time. This time, you walk out that door the same way you walked in the first one. Alone.

(beat)

What's gonna happen is, I'm gonna find your daughter. And I'm gonna tell my people, 'This is the only thread that connects him to the world, the only piece of him we have a hold on. And it'll be true, so they'll believe me.

(then)

So let's just sit, I'll say... And watch her. And wait. And eventually he'll call...' And you never will.

On Chase, as the full weight of this lands on him. Shifts in his seat, as though the emotional torture of that idea is so intense as to become physical...

CHASE

No.

HARPER

If you do call, if you reach out to her in any way, there will be agents at her door in minutes. They'll question her. If she knows about crimes you've committed, she's going to jail. It could get worse from there.

(beat)

You disappear. She lives her life. And this story goes back into the ground, where I left it.

CHASE

(beat)

Fuck you.

HARPER

You got 30 good years with her, that's 30 more than it could've been. And you get to say goodbye to her. That's not something that's guaranteed. Trust me.

(beat)

She gets to live the rest of her life; long as you stay away, she'll never even know I'm there. From where I sit, that sounds like a pretty good outcome for us all.

On Chase. Somehow, feeling like the game might be over before it even started. Then, calmly--

HARPER (CONT'D)

I gave you a headstart. Use it. Lose the tail. Disappear. You and I both get to spend whatever years we have left on this Earth pretending we never knew each other, and that none of this ever happened...

The line then goes dead. On Chase. Roiling. A beat, before--

Chase STRIKES THE WHEEL. Then AGAIN. Swears-- *FUCK!* Again, and again and again-- Strikes the REARVIEW, SMASHES IT. This is hard to watch...

Everything was set up so perfectly, everything he had counted on for so long... And a few hours and one phone call later, it's shattered.

ON THE DOGS, looking up at him quietly, as he continues to rage O.S. in the front seat. Maybe they're freaked out by the noise. Maybe, a little bit, they feel his pain. Helpless to do anything about it.

Finally Chase pulls it together... Collects himself... A silent, awful beat.

And in the dangling rearview mirror, the HEADLIGHTS OF THE CAR BEHIND... Gaining on us... And we MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MOBILE OPS CENTER - NIGHT

A VIDEO FEED of CHASE'S TAIL LIGHTS, from a few hundred yards away. WIDEN, to see--

A SECOND DISPLAY, with a SATELLITE MAP; a RED DOT REPRESENTING CHASE'S TRANSPONDER, and a BLUE DOT REPRESENTING the pursuing Assassins. Fast food containers all over.

The door opens, and Harper enters. Says nothing. Sits down by the video feed of Chase's car, picks up a box of fries, and stares at the screen. Waters considers him warily...

WATERS

He's on the move.

HARPER

I see that.

WATERS

(beat)

Just a few minutes before we arrived on target.

HARPER

That's unfortunate.

On Waters. Hesitates, before--

WATERS

You were just on the phone out there... yeah?

Harper doesn't take his eyes off the screen, doesn't stop eating. Couldn't possibly care less about Waters's questions.

HARPER

Yes I was.

WATERS

(beat)

May I ask who you were talking to?

HARPER

No you may not.

On Waters. Staring at Harper-- working up the resolve to push the issue. But before he can, Harper (without ever taking his eyes off the monitor, or his fries)--

HARPER (CONT'D)

Son, you know what my position is at the FBI?

WATERS

Yes, sir.

HARPER

Do you think I was appointed to that position because I'm someone it's safe to fuck with?

WATERS

...no, sir.

HARPER

Then quit staring at me, before I start getting the idea I'm being fucked with. Deal?

And off Waters, we go BACK TO:

INT. CHASE'S CAR - NIGHT

On Chase. Holding his cell phone in his hand. A long moment, hesitating to open it. Maybe not sure how to start this conversation... Finally, he opens it, dials...

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)

Hello?

CHASE

...hey.

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)

Are you ok? I thought we were offline for a while--

CHASE

I'm okay-- listen...

(beat...)

(MORE)

CHASE (CONT'D)

We've never talked about this before, about this eventuality, because I honestly didn't think we'd have to... I didn't think it could happen so suddenly... *shit*...

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)

Dad, what are you talking about?

CHASE

I gotta go away, sweetie.

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)

...you said that before-- I don't understand, what's changed--

CHASE

Away, away. For good.

(beat)

You and I won't be able to talk again. Not for a long time. Maybe not at all.

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)

(beat; then, quiet...)

...why?

CHASE

I thought I'd covered all the tracks, I thought you were insulated, no matter what happened to me. Thought even if I had to move again one day, at least you'd be safe.

(then)

I don't think that's true now. I don't think I can be in your life, even as a voice on a phone, and keep you safe now.

Silence from the phone. Beat.

CHASE (CONT'D)

If there was any other way for me to protect you, you gotta know I would do it. But maybe this was always where this was headed... Maybe being able to say goodbye on our own terms was what this was always about.

More silence. Excruciating.

CHASE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, sweetheart. Please remember that I love you. That I will always love you. But I think I gotta go now.

Chase considers the phone. Is she crying? Is she angry?

CHASE (CONT'D)

Emily... It'd help if I could hear you say goodbye.

Another beat. The slowly dawning realization that he might never hear her say another word. That she's too distraught for it right now, and there is no later. Suddenly, the world gets very dark.

And then, evenly, but firmly--

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)

Fuck that.

CHASE

...excuse me?

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)

I believe things just took a turn. I believe the way forward is more dangerous than it was yesterday. I do not believe there's nothing else you can do about it but run.

CHASE

I don't have time to argue this, you're gonna have to take my word for it--

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)

What are you afraid of?

CHASE

What am I *afraid* of?

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)

You heard me--

CHASE

I'm afraid someone's gonna find you, torture you, and kill you to get to me--

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)

They frightened you with that?

CHASE

I don't know, Emily, it sounds pretty goddamned frightening to me--

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)

Then frighten them back.

(beat)

You've told me what you used to do, you've told me what you're capable of--

CHASE

I told you *some* of what I used to do. I wanted you to come home from school at the end of the day. If I'd told you everything I did, I'm not sure you would have wanted to.

(then)

You don't know how ugly these things get when they get ugly. You have no idea who I was, and at this point in my life I'd like to keep it that way--

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)

Who do you think I am? Who do you think raised me? And why would you think I can't handle ugly things--

CHASE

--and you don't know what it's like to watch someone you love become someone you can't.

(then)

It's things you can't un-know and can't un-see. And I won't have that be how you remember me when I'm gone-- I just won't.

Beat. Beat. Chase glances in the mirror. Those headlights behind us, so close...

CHASE (CONT'D)

I'm out of time sweetheart...

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)

Don't make this about me. I'm not afraid to know you--

CHASE

Emily, I have to go-- I didn't want it be like this, but I don't have time to argue--

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)
Don't you hang up this phone--
don't you give up on me--

CHASE
I love you, Emily.

EMILY (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)
Daddy, don't--

Click. Chase hangs up.

We might expect him to break. Cry, punch something, *react* somehow. But he doesn't. Turns off the phone, sets it down.

A long beat, on Chase. What the hell is going on in his head right now? A glimpse maybe, though, of some serious internal turmoil...

Then, a deep breath. As if he's fully processing the most difficult decision of his life, and coming to terms with having to act on it. And then--

--one more glance in the rearview mirror... And we CUT TO:

INT. MOBILE OPS CENTER - SAME

Harper, watching on the video feed from the Assassins' car, as Chase's car speeds up, a little at first, and then-- a BURST OF SPEED. And as he pulls away, Chase TURNS OFF HIS TAILLIGHTS, and disappears into the dark...

On Harper, as he leans in. Here we go...

AGENT (O.S.)(INTO RADIO)
Do you still have contact?

ASSASSIN #1 (O.S.)(FROM RADIO)
Standby please.

And we then INTERCUT WITH:

INT. ASSASSIN'S CAR - SAME

--as ASSASSIN #1 (driving) and ASSASSIN #2 (watching a LAPTOP with the same transponder/tracker as Waters has)...

ASSASSIN #2
He's heading off the main road-- an access road maybe, to your right, about 80 yards-- Right there--

ASSASSIN #1

I see it.

We watch on the VIDEO FEED, as the Assassins pull off the main road, onto an ACCESS ROAD. The Transponder signal still ahead...

On Harper, can't hide his curiosity... Chase knows he's being tracked, what the hell is he doing?

BACK IN THE ASSASSINS' CAR-- pitch dark ahead, the access road has no lighting. Assassin #1 peers ahead, just trying to stay on the road. Then--

ASSASSIN #2

He's stopped, 200 yards ahead.

BACK IN THE OPS CENTER-- Anticipation building... The Assassins' car getting closer... 100 yards away...

WATERS (INTO RADIO)

Do you have a visual?

ASSASSIN #1 (O.S.)(FROM RADIO)

Negative. I don't see--

(beat)

Wait...

The Assassins' car comes to a stop in the video feed. Can't see much ahead, but we see the two Assassins get out of the car, move ahead. No sign of Chase's car, but ASSASSIN #1 leans down, picks something up. Walks back to the car's camera, and holds up THE TRANSPONDER. Chase dumped it.

Beat. Silence in the room. Then, Waters, pissed-- turns to the Agent--

WATERS

Have them sweep the area. He can't have gotten far.

Waters catches a look on Harper's face. Waters bristles, an unable to fully contain his shitty attitude--

WATERS (CONT'D)

Do you have an opinion, sir?

HARPER

My opinion is you missed twice.
You're never gonna see that man again.

Waters stews. Harper gathers his coat to leave. The Agent picks up the radio, and we CUT TO:

EXT. RURAL ACCESS ROAD - NIGHT

--where Assassin #1 hears through his earpiece--

AGENT (O.S.) (FROM EARPIECE)
Sweep the area, tracks, whatever
you can find.

ASSASSIN #1
Yes.

Assassin #1 looks to Assassin #2.

ASSASSIN #1 (CONT'D)
We just got shook by a senior
citizen. I gotta imagine we're
gonna hear about that--

CRASH!!! The Assassin's car is VIOLENTLY TOSSED SIDeways as a
CAR EXPLODES THROUGH IT FROM OUT OF THE DARKNESS.

As the ASSASSIN'S CAR SPINS, it WIPES OUT ASSASSIN #1,
violently tossing him aside, as we--

REVEAL - Chase's car, as it skids to a stop. He gets out--
pops open the rear door, and DAVE AND CAROL SHOOT OUT OF THE
CAR-- but not at the Assassins. Instead, they veer away and
disappear off into the night.

Chase, pistol at the ready, moves forward. Assassin #1 is
laid out on the ground, seriously messed up from the
collision, squirming to try to get up. No sign of Assassin
#2...

Chase cautiously moves toward the wreck of the Assassin's
car... As he passes Assassin #1 on the ground, he casually
FIRES A SHOT INTO HIS CHEST-- never even looks down at the
guy. Cold blooded. Assassin #1 goes still.

Chase moves forward... Silence out there. Searching... Then--

ASSASSIN #2 appears from behind the car-- FIRES AT CHASE--
CHASE REACTS QUICKLY, FIRES BACK, causing the Assassin's shot
to go wide (barely).

Chase scoots to the opposite side of the car for cover. All
that separates these two men is about 15 feet of car. And
nowhere in sight to run for cover.

On Chase, which way to go around the car-- Left or right--
life or death...

He moves left-- TURNS THE CORNER, gun raised-- NO ONE THERE. Turns back to go the other way-- Two steps, before, approaching the corner--

ASSASSIN #2 IS RIGHT THERE, JUST A FEW FEET AWAY--PISTOL RAISED.

Chase reacts-- BATS AWAY THE PISTOL, just as-- BANG!-- it fires, a split second too late, and misses...

Chase goes to FIRE, but THE ASSASSIN STRIKES AT IT-- CHASE LOSES HIS GRIP ON THE GUN, it goes flying...

Chase then goes after the Assassin's gun-- quick moves, economical-- everything about the way he fights calibrated to minimize his physical limitations...

And just as the Assassin almost has it free, CHASE BODIES HIM INTO THE SIDE OF THE CAR-- a HEADBUTT TO THE NOSE-- stuns him just enough to SWIPE AT THE GUN-- IT'S LOOSE (though lands not far away).

HAND TO HAND now... Chase fights smartly-- no wasted moves, everything targeted precisely to blunt the Assassin's attacks, or to strike vulnerable spots-- eyes, groin, kidneys...

Chase can't outmuscle this guy-- even punches he blocks take a serious toll... This is brutal; this should feel real; and this should feel uncompromising in conveying the damage being done to a 70 year-old body...

Chase counters, and gets the Assassin to the ground-- Chase follows him. Grappling. Savage. Chase manages to spin around, gets position on the Assassin, and is desperately trying to apply a choke hold... The Assassin resists, but Chase has put himself in a position with maximum leverage... He's almost got the hold applied-- if he can lock his hands, this is over-- But then--

The Assassin punches-- breaks the hold-- LANDS A NASTY ELBOW TO CHASE'S NOSE... Just sheer, brute strength... And the tide starts turning against Chase...

ANOTHER PUNCH TO CHASE'S FACE... A VICIOUS KICK TO THE RIBS... And Chase goes down to the ground...

The Assassin then turns to where his pistol lays on the ground, a few feet away... Bends down to pick it up-- but with his last ounce of energy, Chase LUNGES FORWARD. The Assassin has the pistol in hand, but Chase manages to get enough of a grip on it to PULL THE TRIGGER RAPIDLY-- BANG BANG BANG-- firing four harmless shots into the ground, until-- CLICK. It's empty.

The Assassin-- more annoyed than concerned-- shoves Chase back to the ground, gives him a few extra KICKS IN THE SIDE, punishment for making life more difficult than it needed to be... Chase is down. Wheezing. Still. Spent.

The Assassin stands over him a moment. Maybe some begrudging admiration for the fight he just put up.

ASSASSIN #2

Man... Who the hell are you...?

A beat. Then, as if in response, Chase lifts his head up. AND WHISTLES. One loud, piercing burst. And almost immediately, it's answered by DISTANT BARKING...

The Assassin looks over, and sees-- The DOGS, charging out from the darkness... Bats out of hell... Maybe 80 yards away already and closing fast...

The Assassin considers the gun, as it dawns on him why Chase emptied it. The Assassin decides he'd rather not be standing here unarmed when those dogs arrive-- so he wraps an arm around Chase's neck, pulling him to his feet in a chokehold. He drags Chase towards the car as fast as he can, which isn't all that fast, considering the dogs are now about 50 yards away... This is gonna be close...

The Assassin gets to the car-- shoves Chase in the back seat-- Dogs just 20 yards away, we can hear their collars jangling, they're so close--

The Assassin opens the front door-- and he scoots--

INSIDE THE CAR-- and pulls the door shut just as--

THE DOGS LAUNCH THEMSELVES AT THE WINDOW... An instant too late-- Dave bounces off the door, as Carol BARKS AND SCRATCHES AT THE WINDOW. The Assassin considers them from the safety of the car interior. His heart's racing, but unless those dogs can pick a lock, they're no longer a threat.

The Assassin then quickly zip-ties Chase's hands at the wrist, then does the same with his feet... This as the dogs continue desperately slamming up against the car, making a hell of a racket...

As soon as the Assassin finishes securing Chase, he fires up the engine. And we go--

OUTSIDE THE CAR, as it pulls away... the DOGS RACE AFTER IT.

BACK IN THE CAR... we watch Chase slowly sit up in the backseat, lean himself against the window... wincing in pain.

He watches out the rear window, watching the dogs fall farther and farther off the pace, receding into the darkness. And then quickly... They're gone.

The Assassin puts his earpiece in, and we INTERCUT--

INT. MOBILE OPS CENTER- SAME

Back with Harper and Waters, as we left them, as Waters's phone RINGS.

WATERS (INTO PHONE)

Yeah.

ASSASSIN #2 (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)

I have him. En route.

Waters exhales. Then turns, eyefucks Harper from across the room as he says--

WATERS

Copy that. ETA?

ASSASSIN #2 (O.S.)(FROM PHONE)

(checks watch)

Oh-one hundred, give or take.

Reynolds is dead, I couldn't retrieve the body at the scene.

INT. ASSASSIN'S CAR - MOVING

Chase's POV - of The Assassin in the seat up front. Ear piece installed. Listening over the line, though we can't hear what Waters is saying--

ASSASSIN #2 (INTO PHONE)

Copy. I'm sending you exact GPS so they can retrieve him...

And as the Assassin texts and drives, he doesn't see that in the backseat--

Chase, with bound hands, carefully reaches up over his shoulder... Grasps the seatbelt... Pulls it down across his body-- slowly, so as not to draw attention-- and silently clicks it into the buckle... He then reaches down, and we--

ANGLE - CHASE'S BOOT, as he carefully starts pulling from it--

THE SMALL KNIFE he pulled off the Muffin Man at his house. Leans casually back into the seat, and starts quietly sawing at the bindings on his ankles...

BACK ON THE ASSASSIN, listening to Waters. And then--

ASSASSIN #2 (INTO PHONE)(CONT'D)
Checking in every 15. Out.

The Assassin taps off his ear piece. Checks the rearview mirror, and sees Chase staring back at him. Beat.

ASSASSIN #2 (CONT'D)
Fuck are you looking at?

A silent moment, Chase not responding. The Assassin sighs-- whatever-- and goes back to the road. But just as he does--

Chase, his legs now freed, and pulled up toward his chest-- THEN KICKING OUT WITH BOTH FEET-- WHAM-- Chase makes contact, slamming the driver forward into the wheel as--

Chase then braces for what he knows is coming, because--

OUTSIDE THE CAR-- we see a STEEP EMBANKMENT ahead-- the car SWERVES TOWARDS IT-- and CLIMBS IT FOR A MOMENT, BEFORE THE CAR STARTS TO ROLL-- ONCE... then AGAIN... GLASS and PARTS SPRAYING... METAL CRUNCHING... before it finally comes to a rest UPSIDE DOWN, on its roof... grinding to an awkward stop in the road with a clatter and a SPRINKLING of glass.

SILENCE now. Everything still.

INT. CAR - SAME

Find Chase, still buckled in, upside down in his seat. Head inches from the caved-in roof. Dazed, but alive.

Upside down-- Chase gets his bearings. Then, he SPOTS THE KNIFE, sitting on the ceiling below him. But almost immediately he also sees--

THE ASSASSIN, coming to, and seeing the knife as well. They lock eyes for a moment, before--

Chase UNBUCKLES HIS SEATBELT. Drops to the ceiling, wincing in pain. The Assassin is almost at the knife, but Chase desperately KICKS AT HIM, connecting with his jaw... Chase's hands still bound, but trying to maneuver to get to the knife first--

A CLOSE-QUARTERS fight in an UPSIDE DOWN CAR... Both men crawling over broken glass-- Brutal. Bloody... Then--

CHASE GRASPS THE KNIFE-- DRIVES IT INTO THE ASSASSIN'S ARM-- HE BELLOWS IN PAIN, then SHOVS CHASE OFF OF HIM into the backseat...

Chase recovers-- turns-- has the knife raised, ready.

The Assassin stares back at him. Recovers from the wound. And glares at Chase. *Now, he's really angry...*

ASSASSIN #2
 Fuck you, Old Man. Try that shit
 again. Come on...

Chase stares at him. A long beat. Then, slowly, Chase lowers the knife... And he slumps. The Assassin grins-- *that's what I thought...* Until--

CHASE
 Fass.

On the Assassin-- what the fuck is a Fass? But then-- sensing movement out of the corner of his eye, he turns and sees--

DAVE. Inches away from his face-- outside the car, snarling through the open window frame.

The Assassin has just enough time to turn and see CAROL-- LUNGING AT HIM from the passenger side... And we SMASH TO:

EXT. CAR - ROADSIDE - DAY

The upside-down wreck, rocking gently, as the sounds of GROWLS AND SCREAMS seep out into the night... Then--

CHASE GINGERLY PULLS himself out the rear window, onto the roadside. He then collapses.

CLOSE ON CHASE, face down on the road. Spent. But through the blood and mess on his face, we start to see something forming.

A small, satisfied smile.

Finally, the awful ruckus behind us dies down. Silence again. Until we hear light footsteps padding towards us. And CAROL appears, licking Chase's face...

And off Chase, we CUT TO:

INT. MOBILE OPS CENTER - SAME

--where Waters, Harper and the rest are silent. The VIDEO FEED is pointed to an empty field, so they didn't see most of what just went down. But they heard it. Until finally--

CHASE STEPS INTO THE VIDEO FEED. Just a silhouette, a vague shape in the darkness, and framed strangely with the camera askew from the crash. Something haunting about the image. Then, from the radio--

CHASE (O.S.)(FROM RADIO)
Is he there...? Harper...?

Waters glances at Harper-- *you motherfucker*. Whatever suspicion he had that Harper warned Chase earlier is now confirmed.

With the shittiest look he can muster, Waters hands Harper the earpiece.

WATERS
It's for you.

Harper takes the earpiece. Beat. Then--

HARPER
Yeah...

CHASE (O.S.)(FROM RADIO)
That's three.
(then)
Any more you send at me, I'm
sending back in a bag.

On Harper. No reaction. Beat.

CHASE (O.S.)(FROM RADIO) (CONT'D)
Do you recognize me now?

Beat. Beat. Chase then turns, and walks out of the video feed's frame.

Well that took the air out of the room. Silence, until--

WATERS
Who the hell is this guy?
(then)
Sir-- I'm asking, because those
were three of my best men, and it's
my responsibility to clean this up--
what am I dealing with here?

HARPER
I imagine it's about to become my
responsibility, actually.

WATERS
Yours-- Why?

HARPER

Because those men were your best,
and they failed.

(beat)

My best man won't.

And off Harper, we GO BACK TO:

EXT. RURAL ACCESS ROAD - NIGHT

WIDE - On Chase, the two dogs, the two wrecks, and the two
corpses.

CLOSER ON CHASE, as he goes to his car, reaches in. Pulls out
cell phone. Dials... Then--

EMILY (O.S.) (FROM PHONE)

Hey.

CHASE

Hey. It's your dad.

And off Chase, we SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE