

THE LAST BREATH

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

Two dozen uniformly black umbrellas encircle an unseen grave protecting their underlings from a dark, penetrating shower.

A monotone funeral speech is quietly discernible through the patter of raindrops on nylon. It fades quickly into the sound of

CUT TO:

RUNNING SHOES on

EXT. A WET ASPHALT ROAD - SAME

They belong to PATRICK TAYLOR, a middle-aged, sinewy-framed, runner. His legs are ropes of muscle wrapped around piston-like legs, rhythmically opening like a pair of fleshy scissors cutting through the humid air.

PATRICK (V.O.)

Resilience. The ability to bounce back from something. Muscles are designed to do that. It's what allows us to keep going.

Shocks of light red hair are matted by the steady rain, but they don't seem to bother him. His eyes shine through the drear and there is a faint smile on his lips. His sweat is indistinguishable from the drops of rain on his skin. His arms, defined by thin veins arching over his biceps, pump in harmony with his legs.

PATRICK (V.O.)

Muscle is an amazing thing. When it tears, it must heal, and only then can it grow.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - SAME

An unseen MINISTER speaks SOTTO VOCE, barely distinguishable. An OLD WOMAN weeps somewhere under the roof of umbrellas.

PATRICK (V.O.)

I've learned a lot about muscles over the past six months...and particularly about bouncing back.

One by one, roses are thrown down onto a coffin. Thunder crackles lightly in the distance.

An elm tree bows reverently in a growing wind.

CUT TO:

EXT. WET ASPHALT ROAD - SAME

Patrick picks up speed.

PATRICK (V.O.)

And what I've learned about muscles
and their amazing abilities is that
the harder you push them, the stronger
they become.

Patrick's legs push harder as he runs faster and faster until
he is nearly sprinting.

PATRICK (V.O.)

What I have also discovered is that,
of all the muscles in the human body,
the one that is the most
resilient...is the human heart.

FADE OUT:

TO BLACK.

SUPER: "SIX MONTHS EARLIER"

FADE IN:

EXT. STREETS OF PHOENIX - DAY

The sun beats down on

PATRICK TAYLOR

as he pounds the dry pavement. A red bandanna keeps the
sweat out of his eyes and his wiry frame fits loosely in a
pair of running shorts and tank top. The number 1432 is
neatly printed on a piece of paper pinned to his shirt.

Hundreds of runners surround Patrick with their own quiet,
rhythmic breathing. Thousands of spectators line the streets.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - SAME

A bright lamp beats down on

MELISSA TAYLOR

as she leans into her pregnant belly as two NURSES, one SKINNY
and one CHUNKY, flank her. They encourage and comfort her.

She ROARS in pain.

CHUNKY NURSE
Just breathe, baby doll.

SKINNY NURSE
You're doing great.

Melissa obeys, giving short staccato breaths, finding her stride.

INTERCUT between Patrick and Melissa.

PATRICK

pumps his arms rhythmically like a seasoned runner. He breathes. Clears the sweat from his eyelids.

MELISSA

breathes. Chunky Nurse wipes her forehead and feeds her an ice chip.

CHUNKY NURSE
Okay, sweet thing. I'm gonna count to three and I want you to give me a great big push...uh huh, can ya do that for me?

Melissa nods emphatically.

PATRICK

puts a hand to his side as if it aches. He raises it up over his head and breathes methodically.

A YOUNG MAN makes his way to the front of the spectators, making a few enemies in the process. Ahead, he sees Patrick approaching. He is MARK MCCLELLAN, a twenty-something a boyish glimmer in his eye and some hair on his chin.

He WAVES to Patrick, trying to get his attention. He has a piece of paper in his hand and as Patrick approaches, he darts out into the race. Some people gasp, but he runs in stride next to Patrick. He is clumsy and awkward, but keeps pace in a pair of loafers.

PATRICK
Hey, Mark. You do know this is the Phoenix Marathon...there's a process for getting into this race.

He is barely winded while Mark gasps for air. A mixture of boos and cheers rise from the spectators.

MARK

I know. It's...it's Melissa. She's
having the...

Mark is really sucking wind.

MARK

The...the...baby.

He hands Patrick the piece of paper and nearly collapses
from exhaustion.

MELISSA

ROARS as she pushes. Chunky Nurse looks down between
Melissa's legs.

SKINNY NURSE

Anything?

Chunky Nurse shakes her head. Melissa gasps for air. She
cries out in pain and leans back. Skinny nurse eases her
forward.

CHUNKY NURSE

Come on, sweetie pie. Let's try
this one more time.

Melissa is not happy.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF PHOENIX - CONTINUOUS

Mark nearly gets run over by several runners as he gimps
over to the side. He watches Patrick disappear into the sea
of runners.

Runners begin to pass Patrick, but he paces himself. He is
in thought.

He looks at the piece of paper.

A turn in the course emerges up ahead. Runners obey the
course. Patrick eyes the turn, then looks in the other
direction, as if trying to find something.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Melissa watches the door, expecting Patrick to walk through.
She half-smiles, half-cries. Exhausted.

The Nurses keep working, excited, exhausted.

A MAN appears in the doorway. It's MARK, the messenger. He collapses a shoulder on the door, hair matted. He shakes his head. Melissa deflates.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF PHOENIX - LATER

Patrick downs a cup of water, refills it, downs another. Several runners cross the finish line in the background.

Patrick looks at the paper, goes over to a YOUNG GIRL, who points just over his shoulder. He nods a thank you.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL - MOMENTS LATER

Patrick runs through a pair of sliding glass doors, jogs through the hospital.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

A RED-HAIRED NURSE points down the hall. He nods a thanks and jogs down the hall.

He sees a "MATERNITY WARD" sign and pushes open the door. The ward is quiet except for a few crying babies. He walks through the door of his wife's room.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Melissa holds a sleeping baby.

Patrick walks in and smiles. Melissa looks exhausted, but happy.

They exchange happy glances, but something is off. In the corner chair of the room sits LORETTA, Melissa's sister, a stocky brunette with her hair in a pony tail, and she glares at Patrick. The Chunky Nurse leaves the room.

PATRICK

Hi.

Patrick walks over to the bed. He reaches for Melissa's hair, but she pulls away.

MELISSA

Patrick Michael Taylor, you are all
sweaty. You aren't touching my baby
like that.

Patrick steals a glance at Loretta in the chair and goes
into the bathroom to clean up.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Patrick rinses and dries his arms and armpits. He splashes
his face with cold water. Outside the room he hears muffled
arguing. He waits a few moments until it stops. Then opens
the door.

Loretta is at the door. She's a foot shorter than Patrick,
and she eyes him like a pitbull eyes a burglar and blocks
his entrance into the room. He tries to move past her but
she stays just long enough to make her point.

PATRICK

Loretta, please.

She moves, but eyes him out the door. He goes to the bed.
Melissa won't look at him.

PATRICK

Have you named her yet?

LORETTA

(sotte voce)

Asshole.

PATRICK

Well, that's not a very flattering
name.

Patrick winces. He shouldn't have said that.

Melissa turns. She has tears in her eyes. She shakes her
head.

Loretta's had it.

LORETTA

You selfish sonofabitch. Do you
know what your wife has been through?

Patrick looks like a scolded puppy. Loretta moves in for
the kill.

LORETTA

I sent Mark out three hours ago, and you show up now. Melissa's been pregnant for nine months and where have you been! Running.

She's close to physical assault.

LORETTA

You knew she was having the baby, and you made a choice.

Patrick touches his head as if she's in there.

PATRICK

I'm here, okay! I'm here.

LORETTA

Well, so is the baby, and now you can leave.

PATRICK

I'm not leaving. That's my baby. That's my wife.

LORETTA

Not anymore you selfish Irish prick.

Patrick blanches. He looks at Melissa who is visibly crying. She is facing the wall.

PATRICK

Can I have a minute with my wife?

Loretta backs off. Melissa turns to him. She can't contain the tears.

Patrick tries to touch her but she pulls away.

PATRICK

What? I'm sorry, okay?

MELISSA

Where have you been? Where's my husband?

Patrick collapses into a chair, runs his hands through his hair, thinking of an answer.

PATRICK

I got a call from Jonathan. This morning.

LORETTA

Now there's a winner for ya!

Patrick and Melissa shoot her a look. She backs down.

PATRICK
The date's been set...for the
execution.

LORETTA
'Bout time.

MELISSA
Patrick, I'm sorry.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - MORNING

The stage looms before an empty auditorium. Several students sit in the seats but the focus is on TOMMY BAKER, a young man in a teenage body, who watches KYLE, a sturdy 17-year-old with good family genes, from one of the seats. Tommy pushes a strand of hair out of his eyes.

Kyle rehearses for a lead role up on stage. He holds the script and acts the scene while reading from it.

KYLE
To be, or not to be...that is the
questions. Whether it's nobler--

MR. HURD, a hefty drama teacher with a bad haircut, thick glasses, and a horrible choice of shirt, launches out of his seat.

MR. HURD
No, no, no, no, no...can't you read!?
It says "Question" not "Questions"!

Kyle looks at the script and spits out a laugh. A few girls in the audience giggle, but most swoon.

KYLE
Oh, yeah. Sorry Mr. Hurd.

Mr. Hurd climbs up on stage, but it takes a few tries before he gets it.

MR. HURD
And get rid of the script. This is
Hamlet, not the nightly news. You're
Hamlet, and you've got to get it
right. Here, watch.

Mr. Hurd clears his throat. Then his voice changes dramatically from annoying to theatrical, complete with hand gestures.

MR. HURD

To be, or not to be. *That* is the question.

Tommy watches Mr. Hurd with admiration and he mimics the lines perfectly as Mr. Hurd gives the soliloquy.

MR. HURD

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.

As he continues to mouth the words to Mr. Hurd's dramatic rendition, HEATHER slides in next to him, bumping him playfully. Heather is a typical teenager, blonde, cute, braces.

HEATHER

You know, that part belongs to you.

Tommy looks at Heather and gives a wan smile, but he is quickly back to Mr. Hurd, hanging on his words.

HEATHER

You need to speak up. Being an understudy is for the birds.

TOMMY

Easy for you to say...Ophelia.

HEATHER

True, but I fought for that part. Mr. Hurd wasn't going to give it to me because I have braces.

TOMMY

That's absurd.

HEATHER

Yeah, well I guess they didn't wear braces in the 16th century.

She smiles a mouthful of metal.

TOMMY

Who knew.

HEATHER

My point is, Tommy, that you if you want something bad enough, you have to do something drastic to get it.

TOMMY

Yeah, what'd you do?

HEATHER

I get my braces off next week.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

An office. A desk. A lot of commendations and pictures on the wall.

WALLY BAKER, a moustached, slightly overweight 40-year-old man in civilian clothes sits across from the...

Chief of Police, MARTIN CRAMP, a large muscular black man who can't find a big enough shirt. A toothpick hangs from his mouth as he looks over a file.

Wally glances around the room, waiting.

MARTIN

No.

Wally shifts uncomfortably.

WALLY

No?

MARTIN

You're not ready yet.

WALLY

Of course I am. Trust me, I know me better than anyone, especially some shrink.

MARTIN

Yeah? Well that shrink says he doesn't think you're ready.

WALLY

For cryin' out loud, Marty.

MARTIN

Captain.

WALLY

It's been a month.

MARTIN

Wallace, you killed a man. Less than a fraction of a percent of the population can say that and more than half of them are never the same.

WALLY

Yeah, well he was a scumbag.

MARTIN

That may be, but this isn't about him.

WALLY

I'm ready Mar- Captain.

MARTIN

That's what I'm worried about.

He thinks for a moment, then shuts the file.

MARTIN

Two weeks. I want you to see someone. Her name's Guinevere Thandie. She's good. I've known her a long time. And if she gives you the stamp of approval, I'll clear you.

WALLY

Alright. Two weeks and I'll be back, good as new.

MARTIN

Now get the fuck out of my office.

Wally smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. LEGAL FIRM - DAY

A pretty young black woman sits at her desk. Around her are a dozen employees reviewing contracts, answering phones, typing furiously on keyboards. She is

SIMONE HENDERSON, a thin, fit middle-thirty something, and smartly dressed.

She eyes a stack of folders and sighs. She turns the ringer down on her phone and picks up a book. Before she opens it, she peers around the office to see if anyone is looking.

Nope. She opens a book titled: "TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE" by PATRICK TAYLOR--the runner we met at the beginning.

She puts the book inside one of the folders. She scans a page, and starts to settle in when...

RICHARD STEWART, an elderly man in a tie appears over her cubicle. His white beard makes him look like a younger, thinner Santa Claus.

He carries a heavy pile of folders in his arms.

RICHARD
Oh, Simone, thank God.

He puts them on her desk. She begins to protest but he smiles, wiping the sweat from his brow.

RICHARD
Everyone else is so busy. I need
these case files finished by one.
Thanks.

Simone closes her book and sighs more heavily at the added stack of folders.

From behind her another man appears. He is D'ANDRE GIBBS, a good looking black man in his thirties. He is wearing a sports coat.

D'ANDRE
Hey baby.

Simone spins.

SIMONE
Oh, D'Andre...hi, I'm glad you're
here. I'm sinking.

D'ANDRE
Well, how 'bout we go to lunch and
you can tell me all about it.

SIMONE
I can't. I mean, look at this.

She refers to the stack of folders on her desk.

D'Andre slides them over so he can sit on the desk. He draws a few looks from around the office.

D'ANDRE
What do you need me to do, baby?

Simone sees Mr. Stewart starting her way. She puts up a finger and stops him in his tracks.

SIMONE
D, what I need you to do right now
is leave.

D'ANDRE
I thought you said you were happy I
was here.

SIMONE

I know, and I am, but...can we talk
about this when I'm done working?

D'ANDRE

I just thought I'd drop by to see
the most beautiful girl in the world.

He pulls a small flower out from behind Simone's ear.

A girl in the next desk is impressed.

Simone's phone rings and she answers it.

D'Andre picks up one of the folders and flips it open. It
reads "CONFIDENTIAL."

SIMONE

(into the phone)

Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

Simone grabs the file out of D'Andre's hand and puts it back
in the pile.

SIMONE

No, sir. Yes, sir. He's just
leaving.

Simone hangs up the phone and turns in her chair to D'Andre,
who's kneeling on the ground. He has a very sincere look in
his eyes.

SIMONE

D, you have to go. Get up.

D'ANDRE

I'm not down here to tie my shoe.

SIMONE

I know, but you're going to get me
fired.

By this time, half the office is standing at their desks
looking over at the spectacle.

SIMONE

Wait, why are you on the floor?

D'Andre reaches into his pocket.

D'ANDRE

Simone Rachel Henderson...

SIMONE

Oh no.

He takes out a small box. Now the whole office is on its feet and the commotion has stopped.

D'ANDRE

Will you...

Simone shakes her head and a tear trickles down her cheek. She runs from the office, leaving D'Andre on the ground.

The impressed girl is even more impressed.

D'Andre looks around, a little embarrassed.

CUT TO:

INT. WALLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Clutter. Pizza boxes. Beer bottles. Dirty dishes.

Wally sits at the kitchen table, listening to the police scanner. There's a call for a robbery in progress. He holds his badge in his hand, sliding his finger along the grooves.

Tommy walks in. Tosses his bookbag on the couch. He watches his dad, who doesn't seem to notice that he even came in.

Another call on the scanner: Domestic dispute.

Tommy pulls the script from his bag, starts reading silently, but looks up at his father every few seconds.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - MORNING

DR. GUINEVERE THANDIE, 43, looks out over the street from her office. She wears a business suit well, her hair is up in a bun, and her glasses suggest a polished professional. She has a quiet confidence that her body betrays. Multiple scars are visible on her neck and chest above a white blouse.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRICK BUILDING - DAY

Wally smokes outside. He takes a drag, tosses it down.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Wally studies a large wall-hung certificate on the lobby wall.

He touches the glass as he reads: "DR. GUINEVERE THANDIE
DOCTORATE OF PHILOSOPHY IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY WITH AN
EMPHASIS IN DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY"

Dr. Thandie appears in the doorway.

DR. THANDIE
Good morning, Wallace.

Wally smiles and follows her lead into the office.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Students congregate on the steps, hurry to classes, socialize.

TEACHER (V.O.)
They can be found from the equator
to the poles, from the Himalayas to
the Marianna Trench. Can anyone
tell me the phylum? Species? Anyone?

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - SAME

Twenty students sit in the room and not one hand is raised.
It's not that they don't know the answer, but that they're
terrified.

The voice belongs to MR. LIN, who stands in front of the
room. His jet black hair is combed perfectly to the side
and his akimbo stance makes him look like the perfect samurai.
He even has a yardstick in one hand that makes him
convincingly so.

MR. LIN
Ok, since none of you morons obviously
did your reading last night, I'll
give you a hint. They're called
water bears and they're the most
resilient species on the planet.

Nothing.

MR. LIN
They are two things you should worry
about in this class!!

Mr. Lin walks slowly, with a noticeable LIMP, toward the
front row. He slams the yardstick on the desk of the student
in front.

MR. LIN

Mr. Joseph. What is the answer
please?

JIMMY JOSEPH is as thin as the yard stick with blonde hair
and freckles.

JIMMY

Uhhh...

MR. LIN

WRONG ANSWER! It starts with a "T".
Please stand up and hold out your
hands.

JIMMY

hesitantly stands and holds out his hands.

THE STUDENTS

watch Mr. Lin and the yardstick.

JIMMY

closes his eyes.

MR. LIN

grabs a heavy science textbook from another student's desk
and puts it on Jimmy's tentative arms.

JIMMY

opens his eyes.

MR. LIN

Now...

Mr. Lin paces the aisle slowly.

MR. LIN

...Mr. Joseph will keep this textbook
on his arms until I get the right
answer.

THE STUDENTS

look at each other.

TOMMY BAKER

sits in the back of the class, dozing off.

MR. LIN

sees him and quickens his pace, still limping. He RAPS the yardstick hard on Tommy's desk.

Tommy jumps.

MR. LIN

Mr. Baker...I assume some of us here are so brilliant that they must know all the answers without having to stay awake for class. So...

All eyes are on Tommy.

MR. LIN

(quietly)

Mr. Baker, what is the phylum of the most resilient species on earth?

Tommy doesn't seem to know, but Mr. Lin stares at him as if willing the answer out of him.

MR. LIN

Mr. Joseph's arms are getting quite tired. Mr. Baker?

Jimmy's arms are shaking, struggling to hold up the book.

Mr. Lin looks at Tommy. Tommy looks at Jimmy. The students look at Tommy.

Mr. Lin whirls on his heels.

MR. LIN

Ms. McGee...if you would be so kind.

Mr. Lin starts to walk away.

TOMMY

Tardigrades.

Mr. Lin stops dead in his tracks. Whirls again. His face twitches.

MR. LIN

Mr. Joseph, you can put the book down. Correct, Mr. Baker, but...your getting the correct answer does not excuse the fact that you were sleeping in my class. To the front, Mr. Baker.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S OFFICE - SAME

Dr. Thandie is writing down information. Dr. Thandie's SECRETARY walks in.

SECRETARY

Dr. Tandee.

DR. THANDIE

Yes.

SECRETARY

Your ten o'clock cancelled.

She nods and smiles curtly.

DR. THANDIE

(to Wally)

Shall we begin?

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - SAME

MR. LIN

Mr. Baker, please assume the position.

Tommy gets into the plank position like he's done this a thousand times.

MR. LIN

Mr. Baker, please make sure no more students fall asleep during my class.

Tommy's arms start to shake. He lowers his head.

Mr. Lin lifts his chin with the yardstick. Tommy responds. His face is red.

DR. THANDIE (V.O.)

So, Martin tells me you're divorced and have a son.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Wally shifts nervously.

DR. THANDIE

Tell me about your son.

WALLY

I thought we were going to talk about the shooting.

DR. THANDIE
We'll get to that soon enough. For
now. Just humor me.

WALLY
Well, ah...he's a good kid.

Dr. Thandie waits a moment.

DR. THANDIE
Tommy.

WALLY
Yeah, Tom...Thomas...Tommy.

She smiles.

DR. THANDIE
And how have things been with your
relationship with Tommy.

WALLY
Well, you know...ah...I'd say it's
pretty stable...good. It's pretty
good.

She writes.

DR. THANDIE
Alright, let's start with a few direct
questions.

Wally nods.

WALLY
Yeah, that'd be...pretty good.

DR. THANDIE
What's his favorite food?

WALLY
Ah...Ah...Pizza?

DR. THANDIE
Favorite T.V. show?

Wally shrugs.

DR. THANDIE
What kind of music does he listen
to?

Deer in the headlights.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - SAME

Tommy's arms are shaking as he struggles to keep his body up.

DR. THANDIE (V.O.)
What kind of student is he?

WALLY (V.O.)
He's a good student.

DR. THANDIE (V.O.)
What's his favorite class.

WALLY (V.O.)
Ah...Science.

DR. THANDIE (V.O.)
What's his science teacher's name?

WALLY (V.O.)
Mrs. Johnson. Yeah, I'm sure it's
Mrs. Johnson.

The bell rings and Tommy collapses.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S OFFICE - SAME

INSERT - NOTEBOOK: Dr. Thandie scribbles "KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT HIS SON!"

Dr. Thandie smiles at Wally, who smiles back.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - DAY

Patrick runs effortlessly, gliding along a wooded trail.

He runs along a lake.

He runs down a long road.

He runs through a subdivision.

He stops at a house. His house.

Melissa stands at the door with their newborn.

He looks up, but can't manage a smile.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S OFFICE - DAY

A young woman fidgets in the waiting area. It's Simone, the paralegal. She clasps her hands, then crosses her arms, then drops them on her knees, rubbing her hands on her pants. Her head snaps when

DR. THANDIE

appears in the doorway.

SIMONE

sits uncomfortably in the chair across from Dr. Thandie, not sure what to do with her hands and Dr. Thandie can sense it.

DR. THANDIE

You look nice today.

Simone smiles and appears to relax a little.

DR. THANDIE

Is everything okay? I mean you had to cancel and--

SIMONE

Oh, oh yeah...no. And, well, thank you for seeing me today even after...

Simone wells up with tears.

CUT TO:

INT. ATTICA NORTH CANCER CENTER - SAME

DR. THANDIE (V.O.)

Take as much time as you need.

DR. CHRISTIANSEN, an older black woman with a grim look and graying hair, finishes reviewing Simone's file. She tries to smile as best she can.

Simone and D'Andre wait patiently and nervously across the large clean desk.

DR. CHRISTIANSEN

I'm sorry.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S OFFICE - SAME

Simone's lips are trembling.

DR. CHRISTIANSEN (V.O.)
Stage three is quite serious.

Dr. Thandie sits quietly. Simone searches her face. Scared.

CUT TO:

INT. ATTICA NORTH CANCER CENTER - SAME

D'ANDRE
So...how long?

DR. CHRISTIANSEN
Well, hard to say. Two to five years,
with aggressive therapy. But...

Simone looks up.

DR. CHRISTIANSEN
For a young black woman, well, black
women are prone to a deadlier type
of cancer...you have that type.

Dr. Christiansen looks at her with a hard, compassionate
look.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S OFFICE - SAME

Simone chokes back some tears.

SIMONE
She sa-- She said....I should enjoy
life now.

Simone tries to control her sobs, but is failing. Dr. Thandie
gets up and goes over to give her a hug.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S OFFICE - EVENING

Dr. Thandie sits blankly in her office. It is dark and she
holds a small toy figure.

She plays with it skillfully, but doesn't seem to realize
it's there.

CUT TO:

INT. WALLY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Tommy watches the Sir Lawrence Olivier version of Hamlet. He studies his facial features when delivering the lines, pausing, rewinding, and playing the scenes over.

Wally walks in and tosses his keys and a bag on the table.

WALLY

Hey, can ya turn on the Suns for me?
Thanks.

He grabs a beer from the fridge.

Tommy turns the TV off. Heads toward his room. He sees a pack of cigarettes falling out of the bag.

TOMMY

I thought you were gonna quit smoking.

Wally shrugs. Tommy goes to his room, irritated.

IN TOMMY'S ROOM

Tommy stands in front of the mirror, attempting his best Olivier impression. He recites, from memory:

TOMMY

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am
I! It is not monstrous that this
player here, but in a fiction in a
dream of passion, could force his
soul to do his own conceit.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Wally watches Tommy go into his room, and can't believe he didn't leave the television on.

He walks over and turns it on to the frozen visage of Sir Laurence Olivier, who stares at him. He looks to Tommy's room.

IN TOMMY'S ROOM

TOMMY

Tears in his eyes, distraction in's
aspect, a broken voice--

Wally opens the door, breaking Tommy's soliloquy.

TOMMY

What!

WALLY

Nothing.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON - DAY

Two men sit facing each other, separated by a sheet of glass.

Patrick is one of the men, and JONATHAN, his brother, is the other. They are polar opposites. Patrick is youthful and vibrant. Jonathan is aged and sullen. Patrick, red hair; Jonathan, gray. Patrick, clean shaven; Jonathan, a goatee and a ponytail.

Patrick picks up his phone, then Jonathan.

JONATHAN

Hey brother.

Patrick's has a hard time with this, but manages to pull himself together.

PATRICK

Just like old times, huh. What happened to you?

JONATHAN

You mean the haircut?

They share a laugh. Patrick smiles.

JONATHAN

Yup, 'cept this time I really fucked up.

PATRICK

Yeah, you sure did.

JONATHAN

Listen, Pat...

Jonathan shifts nervously.

JONATHAN

...there's somethin' I gotta tell ya. Ya know, before I'm gone. It's been on my mind and...

He hesitates.

PATRICK

And...?

Jonathan switches gears. Uneasy.

JONATHAN

You 'member that time we found that cat down by the river.

PATRICK

How could I ever forget that. Rabid sonofabitch.

JONATHAN

Slobbering, snarling piece o' shit. Ya' know if it wasn't for you, I'da been in the hospital with the fever. You cracked that damned cat like an egg, you 'member?

PATRICK

Yeah, I remember...

A GUARD watches them from a corner.

GUARD

Two minutes!

PATRICK

That's what's been on your mind?

JONATHAN

No...

(a beat)

But that's all I can muster right now.

PATRICK

Listen, Jon, I know you don't have a lot of time left...

Jonathan harumphs in agreement.

PATRICK

I know I haven't always been the best brother...you know, I haven't always been there the way a brother should.

Jonathan rolls his tongue inside his mouth, listening.

PATRICK

I just wanted to say I'm sorry...for being a shithead. And I want you to know that I would do anything for you...now.

JONATHAN

A little late, don't you think.

He laughs a little too cynically.

JONATHAN

How about a goddamned governor's pardon. That'd be nice as pie. Or how about a fuckin' shovel. You could do that for me couldn't you brother? Yeah, get me a fuckin' shovel so I can dig my sorry ass outta here.

GUARD

Alright, time's up.

JONATHAN

I don't wanna...

The guard pulls a night stick.

JONATHAN

Don't let 'em kill me, Pat! Don't let 'em take my dignity.

Patrick eyes swell. He shakes his head.

JONATHAN

Don't you fuckin' dare let 'em do it to me!

Another GUARD joins in. He takes the phone and hangs it up.

JONATHAN

DON'T YOU FUCKIN' LET 'EM, PATRICK!!

GUARD

Get him the fuck outta here.

Patrick hangs up the phone.

PATRICK

(to himself)

I won't.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - MORNING

D'Andre walks side by side with Simone.

SIMONE

You know, I never thought it would be me. It was always someone else...not just someone I knew, but someone somebody else knew.

D'Andre nods patiently. They walk a while and stop on a bridge, overlooking a glassy pond.

D'ANDRE
Simone, you know I will always be
here for you...no matter what.

She struggles with the words.

SIMONE
Then why does it seem like I'm saying
goodbye...every time I see you?

D'ANDRE
Oh, baby.

He hugs her. She hugs him and then pulls back.

SIMONE
But I can't do this.

D'ANDRE
What do you mean?

SIMONE
D, we've been together for ten years.

D'ANDRE
Ten amazing years.

SIMONE
And...every time I think of our
future, it's blank.

D'ANDRE
We have a great future.

SIMONE
What? Two years maybe and instead
of marriage and kids and retirement,
we'll be talking about wills and
caskets. That's not fair...don't
make me do that to you.

He takes her hands.

D'ANDRE
Let me decide what's fair for me.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALLY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING

Wally smokes a cigarette outside his building.

OUTSIDE THE APARTMENT

Wally stops at the top of the stairs. He pauses. He goes inside.

INSIDE THE APARTMENT

It's quiet. It's clean. No dishes in the sink. No pizza boxes. No beer bottles.

Wally opens the fridge. There's a note. "NEED FOOD."

He takes it out and closes the door. Tommy is there.

WALLY

What's this?

TOMMY

What's it say?

WALLY

I know what it says.

TOMMY

So...

WALLY

So there's some leftover General Tso's on the bottom shelf.

Wally sits at a table he can actually see. He takes out the day old newspaper and opens it.

Tommy takes out a box of cheerios, pours it in a bowl and starts eating it dry.

WALLY

You want some milk with those?

Tommy just keeps eating the Cheerios, staring at his father.

Wally looks up. He gets it.

WALLY

Alright. I'll go shopping today.

He goes back to his paper.

WALLY

Hey, shouldn't you be in school?

Tommy shrugs.

WALLY

Huh.

TOMMY
Exterminator's gonna be by today,
too.

WALLY
What for?

TOMMY
Termites.

WALLY
Termites?

TOMMY
Yeah, Mr. Shultz in 1A says they're
falling out of the wall.

WALLY
I doubt that.

TOMMY
It's what he says.

WALLY
You know you should probably ask me
before you call the termite guy.

TOMMY
I did. Three weeks ago.

CUT TO:

INT. WALLY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - APT 1A - LATER

The EXTERMINATOR examines the baseboard in the corner. MR. SHULTZ and Wally watch over his shoulder.

Mr. Shultz is seventy something, white-haired, and has a cast on one arm.

EXTERMINATOR
Yup! You got 'em bad.

MR. SHULTZ
See, I told you. Damn vermin.

The Exterminator, wearing a blue jumpsuit and balding except for a ring of hair around his scalp, stands up and holds one up to the light.

WALLY
Termites?

The Exterminator snaps his attention to Wally. His eyes are wild.

EXTERMINATOR
 Reticulitermes hageni. The
 subterranean termite. Eat you outta
 house and home if they could.

Mr. Shultz looks at Wally and lights up a cigarette.

The Exterminator looks from the ceilings around the room slowly. He kneels down by one of the baseboards.

WALLY
 You mind not smoking in here?

Mr. Shultz shrugs. Lights up anyway.

EXTERMINATOR
 Yeah, those things'll kill ya.

MR. SHULTZ
 Yeah? Who asked you?

The exterminator goes back to checking for termites.

EXTERMINATOR
 (looking around)
 I bet this whole dang building is
 just festering with these little
 buggers.

WALLY
 So, you can take care of the problem?

The exterminator smiles.

EXTERMINATOR
 Of course I can. That's what I do.

CUT TO:

INT. WALLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Smoke everywhere. An alarm blares. Wally has fallen asleep on the couch, but wakes up.

Tommy comes out of his room. Panic.

WALLY
 Tommy, let's go.

They go for the door, but Wally burns his hand on the door knob.

TOMMY
 The back!

They head for the window. Wally and Tommy climb out onto the fire escape. Tommy first.

WALLY

Keep going. I'll be right down.

Wally goes back in.

TOMMY

Dad, no!

Tommy waits. Smoke roils out of the window. Fire truck sirens blare and flash below as they roll to a stop.

Tommy waits, but Wally doesn't show.

TOMMY

DAD!

He starts to climb back up the fire escape. An explosion rocks the building.

Firemen call to Tommy from below.

TOMMY

DAD!

Tommy climbs through the window, and Wally appears, a t-shirt over his face.

WALLY

What are you still doing up here?!
Get outta here!

CUT TO:

EXT. WALLY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

Wally stands on the curb watching his apartment building burn, a cigar-box sized ornate wooden box tucked under his arm.

Tommy sits, knees up, arms crossed, staring at the ground.

The flicker of the fire engine lights reflects of their clothes. The flames are out.

A short, stocky FIREMAN walks up to Wally. His sweaty face is charred with smoke and his thick moustache is peppered with ash.

FIREMAN

You the owner of this building?

Wally nods. Behind the fireman, some other FIREFIGHTERS carry out a charred body on a gurney, covered with a sheet.

WALLY

What happened?

The fireman nods back to the body.

FIREMAN

Guy fell asleep. Cigarette in his mouth. He went up with the chair.

FIREMAN

We're gonna need you to help identify the...

(coughs)

body. What's left of him.

Wally nods again. The fireman walks away.

Tommy looks up as the fireman walks away.

TOMMY

Guess we don't have to worry about termites anymore.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

KAREN STEADMAN peeks past a curtain out of a sidelight, waiting. She is a ghost in a wispy nightgown.

BRAD STEADMAN, her husband, looks down at her disapprovingly from the top of the stairs.

Karen opens the door to Wally and Tommy. Karen hugs Wally and invites them in. She looks at Tommy and smiles.

KAREN

(to Tommy)

You can stay in Wesley's room. He's off to college. He has some clothes up there too.

Tommy looks up the stairs at Brad, who turns around and goes back to his bedroom.

Tommy climbs the stairs.

WALLY

Listen, Karen. We don't want to impose--

KAREN

Nonsense. You're my brother and you can stay as long as you need.

WALLY

We'll be out in a week, tops. I just gotta find a place for me and Tommy.

KAREN

Well for now, my home is your home.

Wally gives Karen an unsure smile. She hugs him.

IN WESLEY'S ROOM

Tommy looks around the room, taking in the somberness of his predicament. The room is eerily quiet. The bed is made. The walls are bare.

He opens the closet. There are several shirts hanging, neatly pressed.

Tommy opens the chest of drawers. There are some jeans, socks, and t-shirts, folded neatly.

He sits on the bed, gives it a couple bounces.

Tommy opens the nightstand drawer, but when he closes it, he hesitates. There is a book inside. It is old, with ornate scrolling on the cover. It reads: "Tragedies."

He opens the book. Inside is an elaborately sketched picture of Hamlet looking at a skull. He runs his fingers across the vellum page.

TOMMY

Alas, poor Yorick.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Tommy walks up the deserted stairs to the school. The letters of the school loom on the brick facade in front of him: "EAST PHOENIX HIGH SCHOOL". He's wearing a red Polo shirt and khaki shorts.

INSIDE THE SCHOOL

Tommy walks slowly down the hallway. He approaches Mr. Lin's class and hears screaming. It is unmistakably Mr. Lin's voice. He looks through the window to the door.

Mr. Lin yells at a student.

He waits for Mr. Lin to turn around and makes his move. He slides in, gliding to the nearest open seat.

Mr. Lin turns to see the slightest movement by Tommy, followed by the click of the closing door.

MR. LIN

Ah, Mr. Baker. Thank you for joining us. You did not miss much. I was just explaining the importance of not failing. Please, join me up front.

Tommy deflates. He slinks out of his seat.

Mr. Lin retrieves a rubber stamp from his desk.

He walks up to Tommy.

MR. LIN

(quietly to Tommy)

We have a saying in China: Jade must be chiseled before it can be considered a gem.

He stamps the word "LATE" on Tommy's cheek. He gestures for Tommy to take a seat. Tommy sees Heather, who smiles at him.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - AFTER CLASS

Tommy looks into a mirror at his locker, trying to rub away the "LATE" stamp on his face, but he's just smearing it into a blob of black ink.

Heather walks up behind him.

HEATHER

Hey.

Tommy shuts his locker.

TOMMY

Hey.

She smiles brightly.

TOMMY

What?

HEATHER

Notice anything different?

He squints, thinking, analyzing.

TOMMY

Botox?

She slugs him in the arm, playfully.

HEATHER

NO!! The braces! They're gone!

He looks closely, almost close enough to kiss.

TOMMY

I think they missed one.

Heather panics. She feels her teeth. Relaxes.

HEATHER

You jerk!

They share a laugh. They start walking.

HEATHER

Nice shirt. When'd you start dressing like a yuppie?

He looks at his shirt.

TOMMY

Oh, this? This is my cousin's. My place burned down last night and I'm staying with my aunt.

HEATHER

Tommy, that's terrible. Why are you at school? You should get, like, at least a couple days off of school for that.

TOMMY

What if I said I was just here to see you?

HEATHER

I'd say you were a terrible liar.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A fancy restaurant. Candlelight. Quiet dinner talk.

Patrick and Melissa sit across from each other, quiet, both picking at their plates.

Melissa shifts as if she's sitting on a bed of needles. She watches him intently, silently willing him into conversation.

Patrick stares at his plate. Something is on his mind.

Melissa can't take it anymore!

MELISSA

We didn't have to come to this nice a restaurant if we're just going to eat. We could have done this at home.

Patrick stops chewing, looks up.

PATRICK

It's our anniversary.

MELISSA

So act like it's our anniversary.

PATRICK

Ok, dear!

He's a volcano, and she leans back a little.

He hails the WAITER, who promptly comes over.

WAITER

Yes, sir?

PATRICK

What is your most expensive bottle of champagne?

MELISSA

Patrick, don't.

WAITER

Ah, we have a *Bollinger Blanc de Noirs Vieilles Vignes Francaises*, 1997. But it's six-hundred dollars--

MELISSA

Patrick!

PATRICK

That sounds wonderful. Bring us that with two glasses.

MELISSA

(to the waiter)
Don't bring it.

The waiter is frozen, caught in the middle of their war.

PATRICK
(to the waiter)
Yes, bring it.

The waiter hurries away, before Patrick changes his mind.

Melissa leans over, angry.

MELISSA
Patrick, this is not what I was
talking about.

PATRICK
Well, then, tell me...what were you
talking about? Because you are always
so direct in your communication.

MELISSA
All I meant was that if we aren't
going to have a conversation, there
is no reason for us to come out to a
fancy restaurant. We can just eat
and not talk at home.

PATRICK
So let's talk.

Melissa stares at Patrick. Other patrons have quieted their
conversations.

A cork POPS. The waiter has returned with the champagne.
Patrick and Melissa stare down in silence as the waiter pours
the champagne. He waits.

Neither Melissa nor Patrick back down. The waiter leaves.

Patrick picks up his glass and studies it, then back to her.

PATRICK
What shall we toast to?

Melissa is speechless.

PATRICK
To communication then.

He raises his glass and drains it.

MELISSA
Why are you doing this? Here?

PATRICK
Isn't this what you wanted?

MELISSA

You know what I wanted.

PATRICK

I've stopped trying to read your mind.

Patrick pours another glass of champagne.

Melissa switches gears. She grabs the bottle.

People watch as she starts drinking it right from the bottle. Patrick's a little astonished.

MELISSA

Alright, then I'll tell you what I see. I see a man consumed with himself. I see a man no longer a husband. A man who doesn't want to be a father. I mean you didn't even come to the birth of our daughter because you were running for chrissake! Running!

Patrick holds his champagne glass. Listens.

MELISSA

You know, for just once I'd like for you to give a shit about someone besides yourself.

PATRICK

Can I say something?

MELISSA

No, you can't.

Melissa takes another long swig of champagne. Wipes her mouth off.

MELISSA

(louder)

I'm just getting warmed up!

People in the restaurant are visibly concerned. The MAITRE D makes his way over to the table.

Melissa takes another drink. Patrick reaches for the bottle, but Melissa pulls it away.

PATRICK

I think you've had enough.

MAITRE D
Excuse me. May I be of some
assistance?

MELISSA
Yeah, we'll take another bottle of
this stuff.

She looks at it. Takes another swig.

MELISSA
Wow, this is good.

MAITRE D
Madam, I don't think that's a good
idea.

MELISSA
Madam? Madam. I like the sound of
that.

Melissa drains the bottle. Then thrusts it at the Maitre D.

PATRICK
(to the Maitre D)
I'll take the check, please.

Melissa, visibly drunk, stands and puts her arm around the
Maitre D. He is noticeably uncomfortable.

MELISSA
(to the Maitre D)
You know what today is?

MAITRE D
No madam.

MELISSA
It's our anniversary.

MAITRE D
Congratulations.

MELISSA
No, I think condolences are more in
order. You see, my husband missed
the birth of our daughter.

MAITRE D
Oh, my.

Restaurant patrons watch. Patrick is mortified.

MELISSA
Yeah, but that's not the ironic part.

MAITRE D

It's not?

MELISSA

No. Can I tell you a secret?

MAITRE D

Of course.

Melissa whispers something in his ear. The Maitre D is shocked.

MELISSA

Uh, huh. Go ahead, tell him.

MAITRE D

Uh, madam, I don't think that...

MELISSA

No, really. I think he needs to hear this.

MAITRE D

I really don't think it's my place.

PATRICK

Oh, just tell me, already!!

The Maitre D nods.

MAITRE D

Sir...

He gulps.

MAITRE D

The madam wishes you to know that the baby is not yours.

Patrick is stunned. There is a moment of silence and the patrons resume their conversations.

MELISSA

Whoops!...Cat's outta that bag.

She whispers something in the Maitre D's ear. She prompts him to tell Patrick.

The Maitre D is extremely uncomfortable now.

MAITRE D

Ummm...She wants to know if you'd like to know who the father is?

PATRICK

I don't believe this. No, I don't particularly want to know.

MELISSA

Oh, why not dear? You're going to love it!

Patrick hands the Maitre D his credit card.

PATRICK

I'm extremely sorry about this.

Patrick walks off.

MELISSA

Where ya going, Patrick? Don't you wanna know who screwed me?! Okay, okay, you twisted my arm. It was Jonathan, alright!! How's that for taking control of your life?!

She sits down.

MELISSA

I need a drink.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S HOME - NIGHT

Dr. Thandie walks through her door and turns on the light. She takes off her heels.

IN THE KITCHEN

She pours a glass of wine.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Dr. Thandie sips her wine. Looks at a photograph of her husband and son. She picks it up, studies it.

IN THE BATHROOM

She flips on the light and stares at herself in the mirror. She takes off her glasses.

She seems like she's in a trance.

She removes her suitcoat slowly. Then unbuttons her blouse. When she removes it, the scars that were visible around her neck are now all over her torso.

Knife scars cover her arms, stomach, breasts up to her neck.

She stands in her bra, looking at her horrific scars in the mirror. She is seemingly unaffected for a moment, almost admiring the scars. Then she starts to sob, composes herself, then attempts to control the tears, but cannot.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Thandie is the composed professional we saw when we first met her.

Simone sits across from her on the couch.

DR. THANDIE
How does that make you feel?

SIMONE
I'm not sure how I should feel.
No...that's a lie.

Dr. Thandie cocks her head, but says nothing.

Simone gathers her thoughts.

SIMONE
I hate it. It's so fucking unfair.

She puts her hand to her mouth.

SIMONE
I'm sorry. I never swear.

Dr. Thandie smiles.

DR. THANDIE
It's okay. You can say whatever the
fuck you want in here.

They both smile. The ice is broken. Dr. Thandie leans forward.

DR. THANDIE
You want to know a secret?

Simone nods.

DR. THANDIE
Happiness doesn't wait.

SIMONE
Why did you say that?

DR. THANDIE
Because it's true.

SIMONE

No, why did you phrase it like that?

Dr. Thandie leans back. Thinks.

DR. THANDIE

I don't know. It's kind of a philosophy.

SIMONE

I just read that same phrase in a book. It's called "Taking Control of Your Life" by Patrick Taylor.

DR. THANDIE

Then he sounds like a very wise man.

CUT TO:

INT. DRY CLEANERS - DAY

Wally pays for a police uniform in a plastic bag.

WALLY

(to the clerk)

Thanks.

CUT TO:

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - LATER

Karen and Brad square off in the living room.

BRAD

I know he's your brother, but I don't want him here.

KAREN

Yes, he's my brother, Brad, and he just lost his house. Maybe you could have a little compassion.

BRAD

Karen, he shot a man.

KAREN

He's a police officer.

BRAD

So that makes it okay?

KAREN

What's wrong with you?

BRAD

You know he brought a gun into this house?

KAREN

No, but how do you know?

BRAD

I found it in his box.

KAREN

You went through his things?!

The door opens. Wally walks in with his uniform in hand.

BRAD

You're damn right. This is my house and I don't want a gun in it. I don't want a killer either.

WALLY

Did I interrupt something?

BRAD

Don't you knock?

Brad walks into the other room.

Karen looks apologetically at Wally.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

Tommy stands up on an empty stage in an empty auditorium, no script in hand.

TOMMY

How all occasions do inform against me,
 And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
 If his chief good and market of his time
 be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.
 Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,
 looking before and after, gave us not that
 capability and god-like reason to fust
 in us unused. Now, whether it be bestial
 oblivion, or some craven scruple of thinking
 too precisely on the event, a thought which,
 quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom and
 ever three parts coward, I do not know
 why yet I live to say "This thing's to do."

Heather sneaks in midway through Tommy's speech and sits in the back of the auditorium.

She is impressed at his acting ability.

When he is through, she claps.

TOMMY

Who's there?

HEATHER

It is I, Ophelia.

Tommy stays in character.

TOMMY

How dost thou proclaim so in darkness
when thy light should enough for the
entire world. Show thyself.

HEATHER

But my light is just for one, and
one alone, lest the world seek to
extinguish't.

Heather appears from the darkness.

She joins Tommy on stage.

TOMMY

The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy
orisons be all my sins remember'd.

HEATHER

Good my lord, how does your honor
for this many a day?

TOMMY

I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

HEATHER

My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
that I have longed long to re-deliver;
I pray you, now receive them.

TOMMY

No, not I; I never gave you aught.

HEATHER

My honor'd lord, you know right well
you did; and, with them, words of so
sweet breath composed as made the
things more rich. Their perfume lost,
take these again; for to the noble

(MORE)

HEATHER (CONT'D)
 mind rich gifts wax poor when givers
 prove unkind. There, my lord.

TOMMY
 Ha, ha! are you honest?

HEATHER
 My lord?

TOMMY
 Are you fair?

HEATHER
 What means your lordship?

TOMMY
 That if you be honest and fair, your
 honesty should admit no discourse to
 your beauty.

HEATHER
 Could beauty, my lord, have better
 commerce than with honesty?

TOMMY
 Ay, truly; for the power of beauty
 will sooner transform honesty from
 what it is to a bawd than the force
 of honesty can translate beauty into
 his likeness. This was sometime a
 paradox, but now the time gives it
 proof. I did love you once.

HEATHER
 Indeed, my lord, you made me believe
 so.

TOMMY
 You should not have believ'd me, for
 virtue cannot so inoculate our old
 stock but we shall relish of it. I
 lov'd you not.

HEATHER
 (softly)
 I was the more deceived.

Heather moves toward Tommy slowly.

TOMMY
 (softly)
 Get thee to a nunnery.

Tommy moves toward Heather slowly.

Just before they kiss, the doors to the auditorium open.

Mr. Hurd enters.

MR. HURD
 Alright you love birds, this isn't
 Romeo and Juliet.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Wally sits across from Dr. Thandie. She hands him a coffee.

WALLY
 Thanks doc.

Wally blows across the top. Sips it.

WALLY
 Man, this is great coffee!

DR. THANDIE
 Don't tell anyone. I don't really
 need the business.

WALLY
 Our little secret. So, what should
 we talk about today, doc?

DR. THANDIE
 How about your wife?

Wally pauses, then sips slowly.

WALLY
 Well, she's ain't dead and she ain't
 with me. What's there to know?

DR. THANDIE
 So she left you?

WALLY
 Like a rat leaves a sinking ship.

DR. THANDIE
 You think you're a sinking ship?

Wally's face answers the question.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

EXT. PHOENIX POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

A younger, much thinner, moustacheless Wally storms out of main entrance doors. JACK, another officer, follows him out. A pillar of charisma. He could be Wally's father.

JACK

Get back here. I'm not done talkin' to you.

Wally spins around. Marches back. Jack stops.

WALLY

I oughta slug you right in the puss.

JACK

What, right in front of police headquarters? You do and your career's over. They won't even let you write parking tickets.

Wally's silence is filled with city noise. Honks. Sirens.

JACK

Come on Wally, you both knew it was over.

WALLY

Yeah, and you was right there waitin' weren't you...Christ Jack, we were friends. I mean how long?

JACK

Don't torture yourself like this. You got a good life. A good career. Don't throw it away.

BACK TO SCENE.

Wally's face says it all.

DR. THANDIE

How do you feel?

WALLY

I feel like a bagel in a donut shop.

CUT TO:

INT. MR. LIN'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Tommy nods a sleepy head while Mr. Lin drones on about biology.

Mr. Lin catches Tommy nodding. He keeps talking but goes to his desk and without skipping a beat, he takes out an air horn. He walks up to Tommy and blows the air horn right next to his ear.

IN THE HALLWAY

A student jumps at the sound of the horn.

IN AN OFFICE

The PRINCIPAL reacts to the sound. Takes his glasses off.

CUT TO:

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - LATER

Mr. Lin sits across the desk from PRINCIPAL ROBERTS, a rather large man with an intimidating demeanor.

The air horn sits on his desk.

PRINCIPAL ROBERTS

What do you hope to accomplish with an air horn, Mr. Lin?

MR. LIN

My classroom is not a motel.

PRINCIPAL ROBERTS

Perhaps you're boring the students. Maybe your methods need some work, because this...

(gestures to the
airhorn)

...has no place in my school.

MR. LIN

My methods are fine, Mr. Roberts. And I guarantee no student will sleep in my class again.

PRINCIPAL ROBERTS

You just focus on teaching and I'll take care of the discipline.

MR. LIN

Where I come from, they are the same.

PRINCIPAL ROBERTS

This isn't China, Mr. Lin, and I hope you'll remember that then next time you want to discipline one of my students.

MR. LIN

You're too soft on them. You ever stop to wonder why America is so far behind the rest of the world?

PRINCIPAL ROBERTS

Mr. Lin, I don't need a lecture on educational statistics--

MR. LIN

It's precisely this attitude that keeps your students back in the stone age.

PRINCIPAL ROBERTS

I think *your* attitude needs some adjusting. This isn't the first complaint I've gotten about your class, Mr. Lin. I've just chosen to let it slide for the sake that we can't keep quality teachers here. So, this is what I propose. I want you to see a therapist--

MR. LIN

I don't need therapy, Mr. Roberts.

PRINCIPAL ROBERTS

No, perhaps not, but I can't have you berating and punishing students in contradiction to my school's philosophy. So, if you like working here, you'll see the therapist. If not, we have some room in our janitorial sciences department. Do I make myself clear?

Mr. Lin nods.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Thandie moves her chair a little closer to the couch.

DR. THANDIE'S PERSONAL BATHROOM.

She checks her hair in the mirror and applies some perfume to her neck.

She applies some eye shadow.

She slips off her slacks and puts on a skirt.

She checks her teeth in the mirror.

CUT TO:

INT. LEGAL FIRM - DAY

Simone carries a large stack of folders through the office.

She moves quickly and stumbles. Files and papers scatter everywhere.

Richard, her boss, walks out of his office just as the papers hit the ground.

Simone tries to pick the papers up, but Richard stops her.

RICHARD

What have you done?! I don't have
time for this nonsense!

SIMONE

I'm so sorry, Mr. Stewart, I'll--

RICHARD

No, you've done enough! Just leave!

Richard and most of the office watch her go.

CUT TO:

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - DAY

Tommy walks in, backpack slung over his shoulder. The house is quiet. He looks around the house, walking through.

When he gets to the kitchen, he sets his backpack down and takes out his science book. He touches the cover. Opens the book.

He's not really reading as much as flipping through pages. Then he begins tearing out pages, slowly at first, speeding up with frustration, and pushes them down into the garbage disposal.

Tommy crams pages into the disposal until no more fit. Then he turns it on, ripping out more pages at a furious pace and stuffing them down.

The disposal growls furiously as it devours the pages. Tears of frustration stream down Tommy's face, but he is laughing. Release!

Tommy tears the thick cover off and tries bending it to put it into the disposal.

Brad walks in, obviously intrigued and confused by the noise.

BRAD
WHAT ARE YOU DOING??!!

Brad turns off the disposal.

BRAD
Are you nuts??

Tommy tries tearing the cardboard with his bare hands but can't. He pushes past Brad, who watches him go.

UPSTAIRS

Tommy sits alone on his father's bed, the ornate box in front of him. We don't see what's inside the box. Tears still flow, but he is not laughing now.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON - DAY

A loud buzz as Jonathan Taylor, wearing an orange jumpsuit, is led out by a GUARD.

Patrick waits at a table. He stands when Jonathan enters and hugs Jonathan. The guard clears his throat. They sit.

After several moments...

PATRICK
(choking on the words)
The other day...what was it you were going to tell me?

JONATHAN
Oh, man...I can't even 'member.

PATRICK
Memory fading, Johnny?

Jonathan eyes him curiously.

JONATHAN
Cabin fever. Johnny...gawd, I haven't gone by that name in a long time.

Patrick nods.

PATRICK
How about my wife?

JONATHAN
Melissa? Yeah, how's she doin'?

PATRICK
She ever call you that?

JONATHAN
Man, you must be smokin' some good
stuff. I ain't talked to her in
over...

PATRICK
Nine months?

Jonathan nods.

JONATHAN
Yeah, it's all coming back to me
now.

PATRICK
Fuck you.

JONATHAN
Pat, I was gonna tell you.

PATRICK
Yeah, when? When you're lying on
the table?

Jonathan ponders.

JONATHAN
Listen to me, bro. I'm sorry. I'm
sorry for all of it. The whole
shitstorm, but I ain't no father. I
just wanted you to know.

PATRICK
It's a little late now.

JONATHAN
Hey, don't do this to yourself.
That ain't my kid, it's yours. Don't
you ever tell her either. She doesn't
deserve to know.

PATRICK
And who are you to decide that?

JONATHAN
I am goddammit, and if you ever want
that girl to grow up straight, you
won't never say a word.

Patrick nods.

PATRICK
I sent the letter.

JONATHAN
And...

PATRICK
Well, if you don't get that pardon,
I'll kill ya myself.

JONATHAN
Well, at least I'll have my fuckin'
dignity.

Patrick just studies him.

JONATHAN
'Member that time we was trick or
treatin' and we left that bag of
crap on that one guy's porch.

PATRICK
Oh, yeah, the cop. And then he showed
up at our house next day.

JONATHAN
Yeah, but it was just me and you.
Johnny and Patty. We were
unstoppable. We were a team.

PATRICK
We still are. Hey, you remember
those candy bars our neighbor used
to leave out.

JONATHAN
And we took fifteen of 'em. Hell
yeah! What I wouldn't do for one of
those right now.

They are silent for a moment.

GUARD
Alright, Baker, you got about ten
seconds.

JONATHAN
Don't forget what I said.

Patrick nods. Silence eats the time.

GUARD
Let's go. Time's up.

The guard leads Jonathan out. Patrick stays in his seat.

PATRICK
(to himself)
I remember.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Thandie meets Wally at her office door.

WALLY
Hey, I'm sorry. I'm a little early.

Dr. Thandie smiles.

DR. THANDIE
That's okay. Come on in.

A cup of coffee sits on the table waiting for Wally.

He sits down. He notices the skirt, the perfume, the closeness of her chair to his.

He takes a sip of the coffee.

WALLY
Hey doc, you mind me asking you where you got those scars.

DR. THANDIE
Actually...I'd rather not talk about it.

WALLY
I don't mean no disrespect. I just, I mean, they look an awful lot like knife scars.

Dr. Thandie places a hand over her scars.

WALLY
Ok, so you don't wanna talk about it. That's fine.

DR. THANDIE
No, I'd rather not.

Wally takes a sip of his coffee.

WALLY
So doc, how 'bout them Diamondbacks.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

Tommy sits in the auditorium, watching Kyle and Heather rehearse their lines opposite each other. Frustrated, he walks out.

Heather is distracted. She watches him leave.

MR. HURD
Ophelia? Ophelia?

He snaps his fingers.

MR. HURD
Heather?! Alright people, let's
take it from the top again. Kyle,
your line.

Heather watches the door close.

MR. HURD (O.S.)
Alright, focus time.

CUT TO:

INT. SIMONE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Simone sits at a sewing table. She is making a garment of some kind, but she seems distracted, frustrated. She pulls the garment out, tearing it.

She rethreads the spool with some difficulty. Her frustration increases. She tries again.

Her nose begins to bleed. She gets up to go to the bathroom and stops.

Her vision blurs. She collapses onto the floor with a THUD!

CUT TO:

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - WALLY'S ROOM - DAY

Wally takes out his ornate box and opens it. Inside are a badge and a gun. He studies them for a moment, then removes the gun.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S OFFICE -LADIES ROOM - MORNING

Dr. Thandie looks in the mirror and touches the scars on her neck. She buttons up her blouse to hide them.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIRING RANGE - DAY

Wally takes aim at a target. He wears safety glasses and earmuffs. He fires several shots.

He checks the target. He is several inches off center mass.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Thandie sits across from Mr. Lin whose arms are crossed.

DR. THANDIE
May I call you Lin?

MR. LIN
My last name is Lin. But if that is what you wish to call me.

DR. THANDIE
So your first name is Feng?

MR. LIN
Fung.

DR. THANDIE
Oh. My apologies.

She studies the information in her file.

DR. THANDIE
Ok, Fung. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself. I'd like to get to know you before we get started.

MR. LIN
I can tell you I don't need to be here.

DR. THANDIE
How about we start with where you think you need to be.

Dr. Thandie smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - WALLY'S ROOM - DAY

Tommy opens Wally's ornate box. He picks up the gun and studies it. He hears a door slam downstairs and quickly puts the gun away.

He looks downstairs and Brad carries a new garbage disposal. Brad looks up at Tommy.

BRAD

A hundred and fifty bucks for this.
Hope you're gonna pay me back.

CUT TO:

INT. MR. LIN'S CLASSROOM - MORNING

Mr. Lin stands sheepishly in front of the class. Principal Roberts stands at the back door of the classroom.

Mr. Lin seems unsure of what he is supposed to do.

The students eye Mr. Lin with uncertainty.

Mr. Lin removes a piece of paper from his pocket.

MR. LIN

(reading from the
paper)

Good morning class. I am sorry for
the way I have treated you.

He stops. Looks at Principal Roberts. Some of the students chuckle, but Principal Roberts indicates he wants more.

MR. LIN

I have acted in an unprofessional
manner and can assure you that nothing
like this will ever happen again.

Principal Roberts nods his approval and then leaves the classroom.

Mr. Lin is embarrassed and composes his thoughts. There is chatter throughout the classroom and as the volume rises, so does his boiling point.

He crumples the sheet of paper and throws it in the trash.

MR. LIN

HEY! Why are you all talking? You
think this changes anything? That
garbage I just read? It means
nothing! You're all just a bunch of
undisciplined cows.

Now he has the students' attention, including Tommy's.

MR. LIN

You wonder why your country is failing. Why the world hates you. Why your crime is so high, your prisons so full, and your economy collapsing. It's because of you. All of you. You have no discipline, no respect, no gratitude for what you have.

He looks at Tommy.

MR. LIN

You have no spine, you are indifferent, and you want everything handed to you, not now, but yesterday. You feel entitled when you shouldn't, take when you should give, and talk when you should keep your mouths shut. I despise each and every one of you, but I teach you to make you a better person, not so you can go out and do better for yourselves, but so you can do better for society. For this world. You think you're special. You're not. There are 7 billion people in this world and you think it's just about you. You're wrong. Shut your mouths, be on time, listen, and you just might make this world a better place.

Off Mr. Lin's expression.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Wally sits across from Dr. Thandie. Her chair seems closer today. Her hair is down and she is not wearing glasses.

WALLY

Listen, doc, I'm really sorry about, you know, the other day. It was really--

DR. THANDIE

None of your business.

WALLY

You're right. It's nonna my business. How about talking about me getting back to my job?

DR. THANDIE

We can talk about that today if you like. Maybe we can talk about it over lunch.

WALLY

You think that'd be okay? You know, professional?

DR. THANDIE

Yeah, since I make the rules, I think it'd be okay.

Wally smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAFE - LATER

Wally and Dr. Thandie sit across from each other, lunch in front of them.

Dr. Thandie looks around.

Wally eats.

DR. THANDIE

You know, Wallace--

WALLY

Please, call me Wally. I don't know why people insist on calling me Wallace...I hate it.

DR. THANDIE

Ok, Wally.

WALLY

I mean, really...yeah, it's my name and all, but it sounds so, so...

DR. THANDIE

Pretentious.

WALLY

Yeah, that word. What's your first name?

DR. THANDIE

It's Guinevere.

Deer in the headlights.

WALLY

What the heck kinda name is that?

DR. THANDIE

Right. I thought for the longest time I was going to have to marry someone named Arthur.

Deer in the headlights.

DR. THANDIE

Nevermind.

Silence for a few moments.

WALLY

So, you gotta be married or somethin', beautiful woman such as yourself?

Dr. Thandie seems a little uncomfortable.

DR. THANDIE

I was, once.

WALLY

If ya don't mind my askin', what happened?

DR. THANDIE

Ah, yeah, that's a long story.

WALLY

It's alright, I got all day.

DR. THANDIE

So are you saying you want to be my therapist?

WALLY

Yeah, I guess I kinda am.

DR. THANDIE

Alright. Let's see, where to begin. I met this really great guy named Jim and we hit it off. We got married fairly young and had a son. Gosh, this is weird. I haven't talked about this in years.

WALLY

No, I'm very interested. Go on.

DR. THANDIE

We lived in Denver for a while and my husband tried to get me to move to Phoenix for the longest time. But I didn't want to.

(MORE)

DR. THANDIE (CONT'D)
I was always afraid of change, you
know, afraid to take the leap. So
we stayed in Denver.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

INT. DENVER - DR. THANDIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Loud KNOCKING at the front door. Jim and Dr. Thandie wake.

DR. THANDIE (V.O.)
It was after midnight and there was
this godawful banging at the front
door.

Jim puts on his glasses.

DR. THANDIE (V.O.)
He told me to stay in bed.

JIM
Stay here.

Jim walks downstairs. The KNOCKING continues.

DR. THANDIE (V.O.)
I just got this weird feeling, so
I...I...

BACK TO SCENE

DR. THANDIE
I'm sorry...I can't do this right
now.

Dr. Thandie gets up to leave. She has tears.

She walks away briskly.

WALLY
Wait.

Dr. Thandie keeps walking.

Wally throws some money down on the table and goes after
her.

He catches up to her and stops her, but she sobs. She keeps
her face hidden from Wally.

DR. THANDIE
I'm sorry. I shouldn't be telling
you this. You can't see me like
this.

WALLY
It's okay.

He hugs her hesitantly.

WALLY
We don't hafta talk about this.

CUT TO:

INT. ATTICA NORTH CANCER CENTER - EVENING
Simone lies under an MRI machine. Scared.
D'Andre stands outside a window looking in.
The machine scans her.
Dr. Christiansen enters.

D'ANDRE
She gonna' be okay?

DR. CHRISTIANSEN
Maybe you should go home and get
some sleep. We're going to keep her
overnight.

D'Andre looks in. Watches the machine as it passes over
her.

DR. CHRISTIANSEN
Don't worry, she's in the best place
she could be right now. And she
needs you, but worrying right now
won't make her better.

D'Andre nods.

CUT TO:

INT. PATRICK'S HOME - MORNING

Patrick watches the news. His breakfast is uneaten in front
of him.

Melissa watches him from the doorway, but says nothing.

NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.)

Arizona's first execution in three years is scheduled to take place on Friday. Forty-seven year old Jonathan Lee Baker, convicted of killing three men last August will be executed by lethal injection...

Patrick is stone-faced. He leaves his breakfast and walks past his wife who hides her tears.

CUT TO:

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

Wally nods to the CLERK, a large Hawaiian man.

WALLY

You gotta bathroom?

CLERK

In the back.

WALLY

Thanks.

INSIDE THE BATHROOM

Wally washes his hands.

IN THE STORE

A young BLACK GUNMAN, 20, walks in with a hood over his head. Looks around the empty store, then pulls a gun out and points it at the Clerk.

BLACK GUNMAN

Give me the fuckin' money.

CLERK

Get the fuck outta my store!

IN THE BATHROOM

Wally splashes water on his face. He turns off the faucet and hears the commotion out in the store.

IN THE STORE

Two girls walk in the door and see the man with the gun. He points the gun at them and they run back outside.

BLACK GUNMAN

Let's go chunky, I ain't got all day!

Wally comes out and sees the man with the gun. He ducks down and moves stealthily down one of the aisles, popping his head up every few feet.

He gets to the corner near some chips and peers around. The clerk sees Wally and stalls, pretending the drawer won't open.

Wally takes a coin from his pocket and tosses it at the door. It pings off the glass, drawing the Gunman's attention for just a second. Enough time for Wally to leap and broadside him.

The Gunman reels from the hit, crashing into a magazine rack. His gun skitters across the floor. Wally goes for him.

He throws a magazine at Wally and darts out the door. Wally gives chase out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF PHOENIX - CONTINUOUS

The Gunman slips, but gets back up, giving Wally some time to gain ground on him.

The chase ensues and the Gunman takes off down a side street, looking behind him.

Wally is not far behind, moving with surprising speed for his size.

The chase continues for several blocks. The Gunman darts out into the street and nearly gets hit by a car. The car HONKS.

Wally pursues him across the street.

The Gunman finds himself in an alley.

Wally turns to see him racing for a fence.

The Gunman climbs the fence.

Wally grabs him off the fence and throws him to the ground.

BLACK GUNMAN

'Fuck off me, man. What the fu...
Who the fuck are you?!

Wally takes out a riot cuff and pins the Gunman's arms behind him, securing his wrists.

WALLY

Just your ordinary Citizen on Patrol.
Keeping the neighborhood safe from
pieces of shit like you.

Wally pulls him up by one arm.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Lin sits across from Dr. Thandie, arms crossed again.

DR. THANDIE

Did you read the letter, Fung?

Mr. Lin nods.

DR. THANDIE

And how did it make you feel?

Mr. Lin shrugs.

DR. THANDIE

It's alright, Fung. These sessions
are designed to be two way. I'd
like to help you with your anger, if
you'll let me.

MR. LIN

What makes you think I'm angry?

DR. THANDIE

Because I do this everyday.

MR. LIN

So, you think because I sit here
with my arms crossed and don't talk,
that makes me angry? Well, I have
news for you...I am a happy person.

DR. THANDIE

Fung, no one is going to hurt you in
here. I get the sense that you've
been hurt a lot in your life. Would
you like to talk about it?

MR. LIN

No I would not like to talk about
it.

CUT TO:

INT. ATTICA NORTH CANCER CENTER - DAY

D'Andre sleeps peacefully in a chair not far from Simone's bed.

Simone is awake. She watches him from her hospital bed with a faint smile.

Dr. Christiansen walks in. She smiles at Simone. D'Andre wakes.

DR. CHRISTIANSEN
Good morning. How are you feeling?

Simone manages a smile.

DR. CHRISTIANSEN
D'Andre, can I ask you to give us a moment.

D'ANDRE
I think I'd rather hear what you have to say, doc.

Dr. Christiansen says nothing. She just looks at D'Andre.

SIMONE
Hey, Baby, why don't you go get me some breakfast.

D'Andre is not happy, but he nods and leaves.

Dr. Christiansen sits on the bed next to Simone and takes her hand. Her look speaks volumes.

Simone tears up.

SIMONE
How long?

DR. CHRISTIANSEN
Two weeks. Maybe a month...I'm sorry, Simone.

Dr. Christiansen stands. Simone grips her hand tightly. She swells, attempting to contain her emotion.

SIMONE
I don't know what to do.

DR. CHRISTIANSEN
Be happy. For the next few weeks. Just...be happy.

Dr. Christiansen leaves.

Simone sits up in her bed. Alone.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Thandie hands Mr. Lin a box of tissues. He takes them.

Mr. Lin is in tears, bent over his knees.

DR. THANDIE

Take your time. You have years of
unresolved conflict in there.

Mr. Lin composes himself.

Dr. Thandie gives him a reassuring smile.

MR. LIN

I loved baseball. More than life
itself.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

EXT. BASEBALL GAME - CHINA - DAY

A crude field with makeshift bases. Several men throw around
a baseball with ratty gloves.

A young Lin Feng, 9, stands outside a fence, watching with
great anticipation.

MR. LIN (V.O.)

He was the greatest player I had
ever seen. But China didn't have
real baseball. Not like Japan.

LIU CHEN, a strong, stout Chinese man, steps up to the plate.
He wields a long, wooden bat. He pats his hat and taps his
shoes with the fat part of the bat.

He shouts in Chinese to the pitcher.

MR. LIN (V.O.)

His name was Liu Chen. To me he was
a god.

He spits on the dusty ground and the pitcher winds up and
blows one by him as he stands by and takes the pitch.

A stand-in umpire calls a strike.

Liu Chen laughs and shouts at the pitcher goodheartedly.

He takes another pitch, pretending like he wasn't ready. The umpire calls strike two. He takes the taunts from some of the other players.

MR. LIN (V.O.)

Then he looked over at me. He smiled and dug in. He was ready.

The pitcher winds up and hurls the ball toward the plate. THWACK!

MR. LIN (V.O.)

He hit the longest home run I had ever seen.

Liu Chen rounds the bases. Lin Feng cheers wildly along with some other kids.

Liu Chen sends a SCRAWNY KID to look for the baseball, but a several minutes later, he comes back.

The Scrawny Kid shrugs.

MR. LIN (V.O.)

After the game, I asked Liu Chen for his autograph and he just laughed. He walked away and I was heartbroken. I started to leave and he called to me. I ran back and he signed his bat and gave it to me.

BACK TO SCENE

MR. LIN

That was the greatest day of my life.

DR. THANDIE

I'm not quite following.

MR. LIN

It was also the worst day of my life.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

MR. LIN (V.O.)

I had skipped school that day, and my mother found out.

*

Lin Feng walks in his front door with the bat.

His MOTHER's on him, screaming at him in Chinese. A NECKLACE DANGLES from her neck.

MR. LIN (V.O.)

I promised her I'd never skip school again. Then she saw the bat.

Lin Feng's Mother grabs the bat from him. Lin Feng pleads with his Mother to return it. She continues screaming at him in Chinese.

MR. LIN (V.O.)

She said I had stolen it and that I would be punished for my thievery.

Lin Feng's Mother starts hitting him with the bat. Hitting him in the legs and arms. He screams in pain.

Then she walks over to the fireplace where there is a good fire going and she shouts at him and shakes the bat.

DR. THANDIE (V.O.)

So, that's where you got the limp.

MR. LIN (V.O.)

I pled with her not to do it.

Lin Feng pleads with his mother. He cries out to her, but she does it. She throws the bat into the fire. Lin Feng runs toward it and tries to reach into the fire to pull the bat out, but he can't. It's too hot.

MR. LIN (V.O.)

I just watched it burn.

BACK TO SCENE

DR. THANDIE

I'm so sorry. What did you do then?

MR. LIN

I ran away from home. I spent three days looking for the baseball Liu Chen had hit.

DR. THANDIE

So did your parents ever find you?

Mr. Lin nods.

MR. LIN

I got the worst beating of my life. Two weeks later, my father left my mother and took me to America.

Off Dr. Thandie's pained look.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIRING RANGE - DAY

Wally wears his earmuffs and fires several shots into the target.

He checks the target and finds a nice tight grouping center mass.

CUT TO:

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - BOBBY'S ROOM - EVENING

Bobby sits on his bed studying his lines from Hamlet. Sounds catch his attention. Muffled arguing. He looks up.

WALLY'S ROOM

Wally inspects his uniform. He places his badge on the uniform. He looks up at the sound of arguing.

IN THE KITCHEN

Brad and Karen face off. He's holding the old garbage disposal.

KAREN

Don't tell me what I should and shouldn't do in my own house!

BRAD

This is my house too, and I'm the one who's picking up the broken pieces.

He raises up the disposal.

Wally and Tommy walk into the kitchen.

WALLY

Karen? You okay? What's goin' on?

BRAD

You stay out of this fatboy.

KAREN

Don't talk to him like that!

WALLY

Who you callin' fatboy, pencildick?

BRAD

(to Wally)

Pencildick? Is that the best you can come up with?

WALLY

Why don't you come over here and
I'll show you what I can come up
with.

KAREN

BOYS!

Karen puts herself between them.

BRAD

Great. Whattya gonna do? Shoot me?

KAREN

HEY! HEY!!

WALLY

I might. Don't tempt me.

Tommy slips out and goes upstairs.

WALLY'S ROOM

Tommy goes into Wally's room and takes the gun out of Wally's
wooden box and takes it to...

TOMMY'S ROOM

...where he puts it in his backpack. He slips out the front
door as the arguing continues. He has the backpack slung
over one shoulder.

IN THE KITCHEN

Brad sticks a finger in Wally's face. Karen pushes Brad
back.

BRAD

And that son of yours. You need to
keep that dog on a leash.

WALLY

You sonofabi--

KAREN

(to Wally)

Just stop it!!

(To Brad)

JUST GO! GET OUT! Go for a walk!

Cool off.

BRAD

Fine!

Brad throws the disposal into the sink. CRASH!!

Karen winces through tears.

The front door slams.

WALLY
Listen Karen, I'm--

She pushes past Wally.

Wally is left in the kitchen. Alone.

CUT TO:

EXT. HEATHER'S HOUSE - LATER

Tommy throws pebbles at Heather's window. After a few moments and another pebble, she opens the window.

HEATHER
What are you doing? It's after
midnight.

Tommy shrugs. Heather closes the window.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAYGROUND - MOMENTS LATER

Tommy and Heather sit on swings.

HEATHER
So...why are you here, Romeo?

Tommy grins.

TOMMY
I'm not sure.

HEATHER
Oh, come on...you could have at least
said something romantic, like, it
was fate, or destiny, or--

Tommy stops her with a kiss. They kiss for a moment and Tommy pulls away.

Heather's eyes remain closed, lost in the kiss.

HEATHER
You could kiss me.

She opens her eyes. And smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - WALLY'S ROOM - MORNING

Wally finishes getting dressed and opens his ornate wooden box. He discovers the gun is missing.

He goes downstairs and finds Brad at the kitchen table eating breakfast and reading a newspaper.

WALLY

Alright numbnuts, where's my gun?

Brad just looks up at Wally, then goes back to his newspaper and takes a bite of toast.

WALLY

I swear ta God--

Karen walks in.

KAREN

Oh, you two aren't at it again? For crissake.

BRAD

If he's going to insult me in my own house, I'd appreciate it if he did it with a little more respect.

WALLY

Who you talkin' to? I ain't speakin' Japanese. I'm right here liverlips.

KAREN

What're you guys like two?

BRAD

I didn't take your gun. I don't even like guns.

WALLY

You expect me to believe that? You didn't want that thing in here in the first place.

BRAD

I didn't mind the gun. It was you I didn't want here.

WALLY

Alright. You want me outta here? I'm outta here.

Wally leaves the kitchen. Karen throws a dishrag at Brad.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Thandie sits across from Wally. Her skirted legs are crossed.

DR. THANDIE

So you're saying you're ready to return to duty?

WALLY

You know, doc, it's funny...I've been seeing you for two weeks and we haven't once talked about the shooting. But yeah, I'm ready.

DR. THANDIE

Well then...

She removes her glasses and stands. She closes his folder and reaches out for a handshake. Wally pulls her to him and kisses her. Long. She doesn't resist.

Wally pulls back.

DR. THANDIE

Ah...

WALLY

Thanks doc. Ah, I'm sorry...I don't know why I--

She quickly composes herself. He starts to leave and she grabs him and pulls him into her and they kiss.

They break and she smiles at him.

DR. THANDIE

I'm sorry about yesterday. I usually don't get so emotional.

She unbuttons her shirt.

Wally looks around, a little panicked.

WALLY

Whoa doc. I'm all for fast women and all, but...

DR. THANDIE

These are knife marks, Wally. The night my husband answered the door, two men shot and killed my husband.

WALLY

Oh, doc. I'm--

DR. THANDIE

They came upstairs and held a knife
to my son's throat and said if I
didn't do what they said...well.
They didn't leave me in good shape.

Wally looks at her scars.

WALLY

I think those have got to be the
most beautiful scars I've ever seen.

Dr. Thandie starts to tear up again.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - MORNING

The sun peaks on the horizon. Mr. Lin sits on a park bench
with an elderly ASIAN MAN who holds a cane across his lap.

They say nothing.

The Asian Man clasps Mr. Lin on the shoulder and pulls a
necklace from his breast pocket. He puts it in Mr. Lin's
hand and closes it.

Mr. Lin is overtaken by emotion. He breaks down in tears
and hugs the Asian Man.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAYGROUND - MORNING

Heather and Tommy sleep on top of a slide at the playground.
The sun dances across Tommy's face and he wakes.

INT. D'ANDRE'S CAR - MORNING

D'Andre opens the ring box. He studies the ring. Claps it
shut.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S OFFICE - MORNING

Simone sits across from Dr. Thandie. She is stone faced.

DR. THANDIE

Good morning, Simone.

Simone gets up, almost too systematically and moves to the
window.

Dr. Thandie watches with mild concern.

Simone looks out the window. Dr. Thandie joins her.

DR. THANDIE

It's beautiful outside today isn't it.

SIMONE

I wish it could be that beautiful for me.

DR. THANDIE

Happiness doesn't wait.

SIMONE

(matter of factly)

Happiness is a lie we tell ourselves to keep from preoccupying our minds with the fact that we are going to die.

Dr. Thandie is silent.

SIMONE

I grew up believing that life was worth something. I've always done the right things. Eaten the right things. Never touched things I knew would kill me. Exercised. Kept my stress down. I had no idea I had been harboring a deadly secret inside that even I didn't know about.

DR. THANDIE

What can I do Simone?

She turns to Simone.

DR. THANDIE

(almost a whisper)

Tell me.

Simone turns to her, tears in her eyes.

SIMONE

Help me to die.

Dr. Thandie can't respond.

SIMONE

Please help me to end my life.

DR. THANDIE

I...I...I'm sorry, Simone. You can't ask me to do that. I won't do that. Anything. I'll do anything but that.

Dr. Thandie hugs Simone who bursts into tears.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON - MORNING

A familiar buzzer sounds. Jonathan emerges from a heavy door with a Guard behind him.

Patrick sits at a table. Jonathan joins him.

JONATHAN
Hey Brother.

PATRICK
How you holding up?

Jonathan shrugs.

JONATHAN
Tomorrow's the day.

Patrick nods. It's killing him, but he tries not to show it.

Jonathan is more jittery, more aware of his surroundings. He's like a deer in a den full of lions and Patrick looks like an open door.

JONATHAN
You know it's Halloween tomorrow?
Yeah, pretty ironic, huh. Wish we
had those days back.

Patrick sees the fear creeping into Jonathan's eyes.

PATRICK
Hey, Jon...we'll always have those
days.

Jonathan nods.

PATRICK
I've been giving a lot of thought to
what you asked me, and I just want
you to know...

JONATHAN
You don't have to say it.

Patrick gets up to leave. He turns to Jonathan.

PATRICK

Hey...is there anything I can get for you. You know, for old times' sake.

JONATHAN

Yeah...I'd like one of those candy bars. Could you get me one of those?

Jonathan winks.

PATRICK

You got it.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Thandie is alone in her office. She sits on the edge of the patient's couch holding a picture of her husband and son.

DR. THANDIE

(quietly)

I wish you were here.

She weeps.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Wally sits in the Police Chief Martin's office. Martin reviews a file.

Wally waits patiently.

Martin closes the file. He stands and proffers his hand.

MARTIN

Welcome back Officer Baker.

Wally shakes his hand.

SCENE SEQUENCE

- Wally opens his locker, inventories his belongings.
- Wally gets dressed in his uniform.
- Wally straightens his tie in the mirror.
- Wally puts on his utility belt.

- Several officers congratulate Wally.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

Simone stands on a bridge.

Children play in the park.

A man throws a Frisbee and his dog retrieves it.

The park is alive.

Simone stares at her reflection in the calm water below. She tosses bread crumbs to some nearby floating ducks, which disturbs her reflection, making her image grotesque and distorted.

SOMEWHERE IN THE PARK

Patrick runs. He is the specimen of fitness where we first encountered him.

He runs faster and faster. The trees whip past him, until he bursts out into an open field.

The trees shed their leaves. The sound of children's laughter plays on the wind.

He slows to a jog. He comes up on a bridge and stops to stretch.

A lovely young black woman stands, tossing bread to ducks.

As he stretches, Simone looks over and recognizes him as the author of the book she is reading. She's unsure of whether or not to say something to him.

SIMONE

Hi.

Patrick looks up from his stretching. He smiles politely.

PATRICK

Hi.

He returns to his stretching.

Simone recognizes Patrick from the picture in his book. She searches for three words, then finds them.

SIMONE

Happiness doesn't wait.

Patrick smiles.

PATRICK

I see you've read my book.

Simone seems relieved.

SIMONE

Well, I think it's a crock of shit.

PATRICK

Wow. Honesty, I like that.

Simone looks around as if she's got the wrong author.

SIMONE

Yeah, I've tried to take control of my life but my life's got control of me. Stage four cancer.

Patrick stands, props his leg up on the bridge, stretching his quad.

PATRICK

I'm sorry to hear that.

Patrick switches legs.

PATRICK

You know, I used to visit my grandfather on his farm. I was from the city, so farms were just so foreign to me. I'm sorry, I didn't catch your name...

SIMONE

It's Simone.

PATRICK

Well Simone...my grandfather had the biggest oak tree I had ever seen in my life. It stood over the farmhouse, towering. I used to watch the squirrels run in and out of the tree. I could just watch them for hours. It was a beautiful thing...life.

Simone studies him.

PATRICK

Then one day, my grandfather showed me inside one of the holes. It was hollow from top to bottom. You know what he said then?

SIMONE

No.

PATRICK

He said the tree had been there for a hundred years...before the house was built even. He loved that tree dearly. So, I asked him what he was going to do. He said he wished he had never seen that squirrel.

SIMONE

So, what are you saying?

PATRICK

Sometimes the less we know about something, the better a life we're able to lead.

SIMONE

I don't remember reading that in your book.

PATRICK

It's kind of a new philosophy.

SIMONE

So, ignorance is bliss.

PATRICK

Yeah, I guess all that to say three words.

SIMONE

I guess I have to agree with you, but it just seems like sometimes it's so overwhelming, it's hard to not notice it.

PATRICK

We plod through life hoping for something to magically give us reprieve from all this misery. Sometimes, we take the bull by the horns, only to end up getting gored. The worst part is: we like it. And we do it over and over and over.

SIMONE

Oh...

PATRICK

What?

SIMONE

Not really what I expected from the man who wrote a book on taking control of your life.

PATRICK

Maybe you should write a book. It's kind of therapeutic.

Simone smiles.

SIMONE

Maybe I will.

Patrick jogs in place a little bit.

PATRICK

Well, I hope I didn't ruin your day.

Patrick takes off running again.

Simone ponders for a moment, looking back into the pond. As the ducks retreat, the water becomes clearer, returning her reflection to one of calmness and perfection. Her smile is returned in the reflection.

CUT TO:

INT. PATRICK'S HOME - MORNING

Patrick sits at the kitchen table. On the table are a candy bar, a syringe, and a vial of liquid.

Patrick stares at the items for a few moments. He rests his chin on his hands which are clasped together.

Then he begins his work. He fills the syringe from the vial. Then he injects the liquid into the candy bar along the seam. He takes great care to make sure he does it right.

He folds the lip back over the seam.

Melissa walks into the kitchen. They exchange a look of understanding.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON - SECURITY CHECKPOINT - MORNING

Patrick places the candy bar in a tray and his keys and watch and other miscellaneous items in another tray. The candy bar passes through the x-ray machine.

On the other side of the machine, a SECURITY OFFICER takes it out and looks at it.

SECURITY OFFICER
(To Patrick)
What's this for?

PATRICK
My brother.

SECURITY OFFICER
Last request, huh? Maybe I should
eat it.

PATRICK
Please do.

The Security Officer looks at Patrick to see whether or not he's joking. He looks to his supervisor who waves it through.

He hands Patrick the candy bar.

IN THE VISITATION ROOM

Patrick sits at the table. The candy bar sits on the table.

The buzzer sounds, admitting Jonathan.

Jonathan smiles when he sees the candy bar. He sits down.

PATRICK
I brought you your dignity.

Jonathan smiles. He understands.

JONATHAN
Thank you.

Jonathan eats the candy bar as Patrick watches. His eyes well with tears.

When Jonathan finishes, they embrace.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON - SECURITY CHECKPOINT - MOMENTS LATER

Patrick walks past the guards who admitted him. There is a commotion followed by a few panicked radio transmissions.

Two guards and a nurse race past Patrick as he continues to walk away.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING

Tommy walks up the steps to the school. His backpack is slung over his shoulder.

IN THE HALLWAY

Tommy walks slowly through the empty hall.

A SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR, a perm-haired woman with large glasses and walks like she has a quarter pinched between her hindquarters, walks the hallway, clipboard in hand.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR
Excuse me, young man...may I see
your hall pass.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Wally steps out of the building and takes in the sights and sounds of the city. He is in uniform.

OFFICER CHAD WILSON walks out. He is youthful, fit, and ready to fight crime.

CHAD
You ready to go?

Wally nods.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Tommy is a deer in the headlights.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR
Your pass?

TOMMY
Ahh, I don't have one.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR
(annoyed)
Well, what class are you supposed to
be in?

TOMMY
Biology.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR
Well, then, I suggest you get there.

Tommy nods, but just stands there.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR
Are you on drugs?

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Wally and Chad stand beside the police car. Wally runs his hand along the top of the cruiser.

CHAD
You sure you're ready?

WALLY
Just get in the car.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The School Administrator escorts Tommy to class.

MR. LIN'S CLASSROOM

Tommy walks in followed by the Administrator. Mr. Lin stops his lecture.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR
(to Mr. Lin)
He yours?

Mr. Lin nods.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR
(to Mr. Lin)
I found him wandering the halls.

Mr. Lin waves a thanks. Then beckons Tommy up front. Tommy slowly opens his backpack as he walks toward the front.

Mr. Lin takes out the late stamp.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE CAR - CONTINUOUS

Wally drives and Chad rides shotgun.

CHAD
So, what's it like?

WALLY
What's what like?

CHAD

You know...shooting someone. I mean...I've never even drawn my gun.

Wally ponders this.

CHAD

I mean, I'm sorry...if you don't want to talk about it.

The silence builds. Chad looks out the passenger side window.

WALLY

It's the worst feeling in the world. The second you pull the trigger, you wish you could undo it. Take it back. Even if it's a scumbag. It's a human life. Nobody deserves to die.

Chad understands. He doesn't ask any more questions.

CUT TO:

INT. MR. LIN'S CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Lin puts the stamp on the ink pad.

Tommy PULLS THE GUN from his backpack and points it at Mr. Lin.

Several of the students gasp. A few students scream.

IN THE HALLWAY

The School Administrator hears the commotion and looks in Mr. Lin's classroom. She panics and runs down the hall.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE CAR - CONTINUOUS

The scanner comes to life.

SCANNER

All units...armed student reported at East Phoenix High School.

Wally powerslides the car and flips on the lights.

WALLY

That's my son's school.

CHAD

Shit.

The police car races toward the school.

CUT TO:

INT. LEGAL FIRM - DAY

Simone walks between the office desks. The other workers stop and watch her.

She stops at her desk and looks at it for a moment.

Richard sees her and rushes out of his office, and has to go back for another stack of files.

Simone picks up a few personal belongings.

RICHARD

Simone. Simone! Where have you been? Oh, never mind. Thank God you're here. I need these files done by noon.

Simone smiles slightly, satisfied.

SIMONE

So do them.

Simone walks out and a few of the workers cheer until Richard silences them with a look.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - LATER

Simone sits on a park bench. She watches two ducks playfully chase each other on the other side of the pond.

ACROSS THE POND

Two ducks court, playfully chasing and nipping at each other.

In the distance, D'Andre walks up and sits next to Simone. They watch the two ducks from afar.

The ducks continue their romp.

D'Andre gets on one knee and takes something out of his pocket.

Simone grabs D'Andre around his neck and hugs him. They twirl as the ducks leap into the pond, one chasing the other.

CUT TO:

INT. MR. LIN'S CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Mr. Lin stares at the gun pointed at him. Then puts his head down and his hands up, backing away.

The students wait, watch with bated breath.

MR. LIN

What do you want?

TOMMY

I want you to know what it feels like to be humiliated.

MR. LIN

Okay, okay, I think you've proven your point.

TOMMY

SHUT UP! Get down on the floor!

The students watch with increasing interest.

Heather stands.

HEATHER

Tommy, what are you doing?

TOMMY

Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as swift as meditation or the thoughts of love, may sweep to my revenge.

HEATHER

You don't need to do this, Tommy. This is madness.

CUT TO:

INT. PATRICK'S HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Patrick walks in the front door. His wife is crying. She's holding a letter.

Patrick takes it from her.

INSERT - "FROM THE DESK OF THE GOVERNOR"

Patrick scans the document.

The baby sits in a high chair, nibbling on a piece of apple.

A few words catch Patrick's eye.

INSERT - "REGRET TO INFORM YOU"; "PARDON"; "NOT GRANTED"

He kneels down and comforts his wife, who is now sobbing.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Wally makes his way up the steps. He and Chad have their weapons drawn.

The school has been evacuated and the students mingle around the school. The sound of sirens blare in the distance.

Principal Roberts meets them on the front steps. He escorts them into the building. A few teachers pass them on their way out of the building.

IN THE HALLWAY

Principal Roberts leads Wally and Chad down the hallway.

MR. LIN'S CLASSROOM

Mr. Lin's face has "LATE" stamped all over it and he is in the prone pushup position, supporting his body weight. Sweat pours from his face and he is shaking from exhaustion and humiliation.

Tommy stands before the class. Over Mr. Lin.

TOMMY

O, my offence is rank it smells to
heaven; It hath the primal eldest
curse upon't, A brother's murder.
Pray can I not, Though inclination
be as sharp as will:

IN THE HALLWAY

Wally and Chad arrive at the classroom.

Chad looks in.

WALLY

Whattya see?

CHAD

Twenty kids, maybe. Gunman at the
front. Teacher on the ground. I
can't tell if he's been shot. Whadda
we do?

MR. LIN'S CLASSROOM

Tommy waves the gun around, dramatically.

TOMMY
My stronger guilt defeats my strong
intent.

HEATHER
Tommy, please!

IN THE HALLWAY

WALLY
Alright. Here's what we're gonna
do. I'm gonna go in.

CHAD
You can't do that. You wanna get
shot? Let's wait for SWAT.

WALLY
Shut up and listen. I'm gonna go
in. I'll get the gunman's attention
and while he's got the gun on me, I
want you to get these kids out of
the room.

CHAD
This is crazy.

WALLY
On three. You open the door.

Wally raises his gun, ready.

WALLY
One...two...three!

Chad pulls the door open. Wally races in, pointing his gun.
His face falls when he sees Tommy.

MR. LIN'S CLASSROOM

Tommy sees the door open and his face falls when he sees his
father.

They keep the guns on each other.

WALLY
Tommy?

TOMMY
Dad?

Mr. Lin collapses to the floor.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S OFFICE - LATER

Dr. Thandie packs up a box and heads out. She passes her SECRETARY, who is on the phone, on the way out.

DR. THANDIE

Hey, why don't you take a couple weeks off. I'm not gonna be here for a while.

SECRETARY

But you have three appointments today. What should I tell them?

Dr. Thandie thinks for a moment. Then smiles.

DR. THANDIE

Tell them happiness doesn't wait.

She leaves. The Secretary is left holding the phone.

SECRETARY

(into the phone)
Ah, yes...I'm sorry.

CUT TO:

INT. MR. LIN'S CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tommy and Wally have their guns on each other.

WALLY

Whattya doin' son?

TOMMY

Something I should have a long time ago.

Chad tries to coax the students out of the classroom, but none of them budge.

WALLY

What? Take a bunch of kids and a teacher hostage?

Tommy shakes his head.

Wally recognizes his gun.

WALLY

And you took my gun?

Mr. Lin tries to get up.

TOMMY
(to Mr. Lin)
Did I tell you to get up?

Mr. Lin stays on the floor.

WALLY
This is serious stuff, son. They're
not just gonna let you walk out of
here.

TOMMY
I wasn't counting on it.

HEATHER
Tommy, what are you saying?

She is in tears now.

WALLY
Come on, son. Put the gun down and
let's talk.

Chad stays a group of SWAT members who have made their way
down the hall.

The SWAT TEAM LEADER puts a fist in the air.

TOMMY
No. I think this works better.

Wally moves closer, slowly.

WALLY
Listen, Tommy. There's a tonna cops
down there who don't care who you
are. All they care about is getting
that gun outta your hands so nobody
gets killed.

TOMMY
How about you dad? Do you care who
I am?

WALLY
Of course I do, son.

TOMMY
Really, dad? I think you'd much
rather be a cop than have a son.

Wally lowers his gun a little. This has hit home.

WALLY

Son, I...

TOMMY

Dad, when I was a kid, I wanted to be just like you. When other kids wanted to be Batman and Superman, I wanted to be you. But you turned into this different person when you put the uniform on. You couldn't see past your handcuffs. You couldn't see you had a family that needed you and you let mom slip away. You let me slip away, Dad.

Wally moves closer, lowering his gun a little more.

WALLY

Your mother left because she wanted to.

TOMMY

No, she left because you didn't fight for her. You gave up on her. On us. I was eight and I could see that. You loved being a cop more than you loved having a family. You may as well kill me dad, because I'm already dead. You don't even know I exist.

WALLY

Don't talk like that, son.

Tommy has tears now.

Heather moves closer to the front.

TOMMY

You always told me to tell the truth, Dad, so there it is. The truth.

OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL

Martin, the Chief of Police, stands next to a police car with a radio.

MARTIN

(into the radio)

What's going on up there?

IN THE HALLWAY

The SWAT Team Leader's mike crackles to life.

TEAM LEADER
 (into the radio)
 Standby, sir.

MR. LIN'S CLASSROOM

Wally is now only a few feet from Tommy, their guns still on each other.

WALLY
 Tommy...you want to know what the
 happiest day of my life was?

TOMMY
 Dad, don't do this. Not now!

Tommy nods. He wipes his eyes dry.

WALLY
 It was the day you first said Dad.
 I couldn't believe it...I mean, I
 knew I was a dad, but, it hit me
 like a tonna bricks when you said
 it.

Wally drops his gun.

WALLY
 This has to end. Right now.

He walks into Tommy's gun and embraces him.

BANG!!

Wally's eyes go wide.

Tommy's eyes go wide.

Heather thrusts her hand to her mouth.

IN THE HALLWAY

TEAM LEADER
 Shots fired. Shots fired.

TOMMY
 (quietly to Wally)
 O, I die, Horatio; The potent poison
 quite o'er-crows my spirit.

Wally tries to hold Tommy up.

WALLY
 Oh, son. What have you done?

Heather drops to her knees, crying.

Wally lays Tommy on the floor. He is bleeding from the abdomen.

WALLY
(to Chad)
GET AN AMBULANCE! NOW!!

The SWAT Team enters the room, guns drawn.

Tommy lies on the floor, staring into the fluorescent lights.

CUT TO:

INT. PATRICK'S HOME - DAY

Patrick plays with his baby girl. The television plays in the background.

NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.)
In an ironic turn of events, Jonathan Lee Baker, the man convicted of murdering three men, scheduled to die tonight by lethal injection, died today in his prison cell. Prison officials declined to comment on the cause of death...

Melissa sits next to them on the floor as they shake a rattle in front of their daughter. She laughs playfully.

Melissa smiles at Patrick, who returns the smile.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - LATER

Tommy is put into the ambulance.

Wally accompanies the gurney to the ambulance.

Martin approaches Wally.

MARTIN
What the hell happened in there,
Wallace?

Wally hands Martin his badge and claps him on the shoulder.

Martin looks perplexed as he watches Wally get into the ambulance.

Wally and Tommy lock eyes as he is driven away in a police cruiser.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - EVENING

Tommy lies in a hospital bed, hooked up to an IV.

He is sleeping.

IN THE WAITING AREA

Wally paces nervously. A DOCTOR approaches him.

DOCTOR

Mr. Baker. The damage was pretty extensive. These types of gunshots are usually fatal.

WALLY

Is he gonna be alright?

DOCTOR

We're going to keep him here for a few days. I suggest you get some rest.

Wally nods.

WALLY

Can I see him?

DOCTOR

Sure.

IN THE HOSPITAL ROOM

Wally stands over Tommy.

WALLY

Tommy, I hope you can hear me son...

Wally gathers his thoughts.

WALLY

I'm a fool. I spent all this time looking for something to fill the hole in my soul after your mother left. I didn't realize that something was you. I promise, I swear to God, if you make it outta this, I'm gonna be the best father. You wait and see.

Wally grips Tommy's hand.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL - LATER

The rain falls steadily.

Wally watches cars as they pass by the hospital. He takes out a cigarette and puts it in his mouth.

He reaches for his lighter and thinks about it.

He looks at the cigarette and crumples up the pack and throws it in the trash.

CUT TO:

INT. GROCERY STORE - EVENING

Wally walks down an aisle, a basket in his hand.

Dr. Thandie walks down the other end of the aisle, a basket in her hand.

Neither see each other until they meet in the middle. They face each other. A wall of condoms stands behind them.

WALLY

Hi.

DR. THANDIE

Hi.

WALLY

I stopped by your office, but it was locked.

DR. THANDIE

What were you doing at my office?
Our sessions ended last week.

WALLY

I wasn't there for a session.

DR. THANDIE

Oh, really. So, why were you there?

WALLY

I just wanted to tell you I ain't
cop no more.

DR. THANDIE

What a coincidence. I'm not a
therapist anymore.

Wally smiles.

WALLY

Really? What should we do then?

DR. THANDIE

I'm sure we can think of something.

They don't see the wall of condoms behind them.

CUT TO:

INT. MR. LIN'S CLASSROOM - EVENING

Mr. Lin sits behind his desk, reflecting. A box of his personal belongings sits on the desk. He stands and opens the box. Atop several books, there is a faded picture of Liu Chen standing up to bat. There is a scuffed baseball. There is a necklace, the one we saw around his mother's neck. Mr. Lin takes the necklace out and sets it on the desk. He folds in the tops of the box and carries it out the door, leaving the necklace behind.

Off the necklace.

PATRICK (V.O.)

Resilience. The ability to bounce back from something. Muscles are designed to do that. It's what allows us to keep going.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - MORNING

The leaves fall around Simone and D'Andre as they walk arm in arm. She inspects the ring, then kisses D'Andre. She is all smiles. Some small children playing tag run by and get tangled up around their legs. They laugh as the children try to catch each other.

PATRICK (V.O.)

Muscle is an amazing thing. When it tears, it must heal, and only then can it grow.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. THANDIE'S HOME - MORNING

Dr. Thandie stands in a robe, looking in the mirror. She is unfazed by her scars. Wally appears behind her and kisses her neck. She smiles and kisses him.

PATRICK (V.O.)
I've learned a lot about muscles
over the past six months...

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Tommy sits up in the hospital bed.

A nurse changes his IV.

PATRICK (V.O.)
And particularly about bouncing back.

Wally and Dr. Thandie stand beside Tommy's bed.

Dr. Thandie shakes Tommy's hand.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - DAY

Heather swings, clearly thinking about Tommy.

CUT TO:

EXT. KAREN'S HOUSE - DAY

Brad walks out of the house with a suitcase. Karen watches him go.

PATRICK (V.O.)
And what I've learned about muscles
and their amazing abilities is that
the harder you push them, the stronger
they become.

CUT TO:

EXT. A WET ASPHALT ROAD - SAME

A pair of running shoes.

They belong to Patrick Taylor, a middle-aged, sinewy-framed, runner. His legs are ropes of muscle wrapped around piston-like legs, rhythmically opening like a pair of fleshy scissors cutting through the humid air.

Shocks of light red hair are matted by the steady rain, but they don't seem to bother him. His eyes shine through the drear and there is a faint smile on his lips. His sweat is indistinguishable from the drops of rain on his skin. His arms, defined by thin veins arching over his biceps, pump in harmony with his legs.

Patrick's legs push harder as he runs faster and faster until he is nearly sprinting.

PATRICK (V.O.)

What I have also discovered is that,
of all the muscles in the human body,
the one that is the most
resilient...is the human heart.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

Two dozen uniformly black umbrellas encircle an unseen grave protecting their underlings from a dark, penetrating shower.

A monotone funeral speech is quietly discernible through the patter of raindrops on nylon.

The minister is SOTTO VOCE, barely distinguishable. A woman weeps somewhere under the roof of umbrellas.

One by one, roses are thrown down onto a coffin. Thunder crackles lightly in the distance. An elm tree bows reverently in a growing wind.

Patrick runs toward the cemetery. He stops just beyond the few people attending Jonathan's funeral.

MINISTER

"And no matter what anybody says
about grief and about time healing
all wounds, the truth is, there are
certain sorrows that never fade away
until the heart stops beating and
the last breath is taken."

Patrick listens. His tears are indistinguishable from the rain.

FADE OUT:

TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

SUPER: "6 MONTHS LATER"

EXT. JUVENILE FACILITY - DAY

Razor wire tops a fence. An armed SENTRY stands atop a tower wearing mirrored sunglasses and a baseball cap, and carrying a high powered rifle.

A large metal gate glides clunkily on wheels over a dusty gravel entrance road.

Wally watches from the driver's seat across from the gate. Dr. Thandie rides shotgun. Heather is in the back seat.

Tommy emerges from the dust with a jean jacket slung over his shoulder.

DR. THANDIE

Alright, where to?

WALLY

Doesn't matter.

DR. THANDIE

Why not?

Tommy gets in.

TOMMY

Hey, Dad.

WALLY

Cause I'm already there.

They drive off in a cloud of dust.

FADE OUT: