

THE ANARCHIST'S PLAYGROUND

screenplay by

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FADE IN:

INT. DEREK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

ON A SMALL FLAT SCREEN TV

plays a very cheap cable broadcast talk show in all of its standard def glory.

THREE MEN warm bar stools below A GIANT AMERICAN FLAG.

In a cheap yellow font, the words "TRUTH AND JUSTICE" glow proudly across the center frame.

In the middle stool sits THE HOST.

To his right, a bald tank-topped GUN NUT.

On the other stool, A HIPSTER in skinny jeans, denim sport coat, hair too fancy for a man.

HIPSTER

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

ON THE STUDIO AUDIENCE

Some BOOS and HISSES.

HIPSTER (CONT'D)

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

ON GUN NUT

...as he rolls his eyes.

HIPSTER (CONT'D)

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

GUN NUT

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

The crowd CLAPS. The hipster cracks a smug grin.

HIPSTER

Safe from what exactly?

GUN NUT

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

ON THE STUDIO AUDIENCE

...as they jump to their feet with applause. The Hipster
nods with appreciation.

HIPSTER

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

Some more ANGRY BOOS from the crowd.

HIPSTER (CONT'D)

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

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

HOST

Okay, okay. So violence isn't the
answer. What is the answer? There
are people in this country, from
all walks of life. Different
colors, sexual orientations,
religious backgrounds, being killed
in numbers greater than we've ever
experienced before. Unprovoked,
cold-blooded mass murders. How do
you just clap your hands, make a
few speeches about peace and
equality and make this problem
disappear?

HIPSTER

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

GUN NUT

Other words, he don't know!

The crowd APPLAUDS.

The Hipster sighs, frustrated, rolls his eyes.

HOST

(to Gun Nut)

So what do you think is the answer?

GUN NUT

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

ON THE STUDIO AUDIENCE

...as they EXPLODE with RIOTOUS APPLAUSE. And without warning --

The TV SHUTS OFF.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

A MAN sits in his recliner. Withdrawn. Sad. This is --

DEREK TAYLOR (30s), pale, unshaven, tired. He holds a silver-plated THIRTY EIGHT in one hand and bullet in the other.

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

He loads the final shell, closes the cylinder.

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

His eyes squeeze closed as he works up the nerve to finish the job.

BUZZ-BUZZ-BUZZ

...goes his CELL PHONE on an end table.

Derek opens his eyes, checks the phone: "DENISE"

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

DENISE'S VOICE on SPEAKER PHONE:

DENISE (V.O.)
Derek? Are you there?

Derek is unsure. Doesn't answer.

DENISE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Derek, please.

DEREK
Yeah. I'm here. What is it?

DENISE (V.O.)
Look. I...I don't wanna get into it with you right now, I just need your help. I need you to get over hear right away.

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

DENISE (V.O.)
Look, I wouldn't be calling if I didn't have another choice. So just...GET HERE! Okay?!

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

EXT. BAD NEIGHBORHOOD - DENISE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

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

DOGS BARK as she races up the sidewalk toward

DEREK'S CAR

Parked at a corner curb, engine running.

Following behind Denise, out the front door, steps WADE WILLIS (20s), white thug, silk robe.

WADE

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

INT. DEREK'S CAR - NIGHT

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

Denise opens, crawls in.

DENISE

Alright, just shut up and drive.
Just get us out of here.

DEREK

Let me guess. He hit you.

DENISE

Congratulations. Now drive.

Denise watches as Wade stumbles and drops his can of beer.

WADE

Shit.

He snags it from the sidewalk before it pours out.

DEREK

What for? You're just gonna have to come back later.

DENISE

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

DEREK

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

DENISE

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

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

WADE

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

Derek watches Denise shake and rub her hands up and down her cold arms. She's a train wreck.

DEREK

You're hurting. You're using again.

Denise is strangely quiet.

DEREK (CONT'D)

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

Denise shoots him a nasty look.

DENISE

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

Derek shakes his head in contempt as he drives off.

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

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Derek's car pulls in the far end of the lot, finds an empty spot, leaves the engine running.

INT. DEREK'S CAR - NIGHT

Derek and Denise have a talk.

DEREK

Okay, so what're we doing here?

DENISE

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

DEREK

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

DENISE
Because she can't, alright?!

Derek watches as she rubs her arms and shakes.

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

Denise looks away.

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

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

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

DENISE
Maybe I am. So what?

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

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

Denise looks down. Ashamed.

DENISE
I'm pregnant.

Derek's disgust turns angry.

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

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

DEREK
You know who the father is?

DENISE
(angry)
I might be an addict. And I might
be a streetwalker but I'm no whore.

Derek laughs.

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

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

DEREK
What're you talking about?

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

Derek is quiet. A painful truth.

DEREK
You're sick. You know that?

DENISE
You don't think I stay up every
night wishing it was me who died in
that accident?!
(beat)
Your son is gone! He's not coming
back! You're stuck with me and you
hate me for it! Just say it!

Denise cries.

DEREK
Are you gonna keep blaming
yourself? Every day, little by
little, doing yourself in just a
little bit more until eventually
you finish the job? Is that the
plan?

Denise wipes her tears.

DEREK (CONT'D)
What's it gonna be?

And before Denise can answer -

A GUNMAN sticks a pistol to her head.

WADE'S GUY #1

How's the action tonight, Denise?

Derek reaches for his thirty eight when another GUNMAN presses a pistol to his head.

WADE'S GUY #2

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

Derek places his hands on the wheel.

WADE'S GUY #2 (CONT'D)

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

DENISE

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

WADE'S GUY #1

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

DEREK

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

WADE'S GUY #1

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

DENISE

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

WADE'S GUY #2

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

DENISE

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

WADE'S GUY #1

Relax, baby. I told you we ain't gonna hurt you. We're just gonna take ourselves a little ride.

WADE'S GUY #2

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

Derek nods. Wade's Guy #2 opens the door, yanks him out by the collar. Denise also jerked out of her seat.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Derek walks two feet in front of his captor who holds a gun to his back.

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

They approach a DEEP HOLE dug in the ground.

Wade's Guy #2 throws Derek into the pit.

DENISE

Don't do it!

Wade's Guy #2 stuffs his pistol in the back of his pants and grabs Derek's silver thirty eight from his belt. The gun is shiny, pretty, never been shot.

WADE'S GUY #2

What's this for? You gonna plug Wade? You a badass or somethin?

Derek is surprisingly numb. Not showing his fear. He simply stares into his captor's eyes, dead, emotionless.

WADE'S GUY #1

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

(to Derek)

Stupid ass is gonna die hard, bitch.

DEREK

(to Wade's guy #1)

I'm not afraid of dying. Are you?

WADE'S GUY #2

(laughs)

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

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

DEREK

Why so far away? You gonna shoot me, be a man, get down here and put that gun in my face. Look me in the eye when you pull the trigger.

DENISE

Are you crazy?!

WADE'S GUY #1

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

Wade's Guy #2 can hardly believe it. He seems unsure, reluctant.

WADE'S GUY #1 (CONT'D)

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

DEREK

Yeah. Do it.

Wade's Guy #2 drops into the pit and steps to Derek.

DEREK (CONT'D)

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

Denise cries her eyes out. Wade's Guy #2 slowly points the silver thirty eight at Derek's head.

WADE'S GUY #2

Any last words?

DEREK

Quit stalling.

WADE'S GUY #2

Whatever you say, bro.

He points and squeezes. The TRIGGER IS LOCKED. As the gunman stares at the gun, confused -

Derek grabs his wrist as they wrestle for control of the weapon.

Wade's Guy #1 throws Denise to the ground, runs to the ditch and points his weapon inside.

Denise attempts to stand.

DENISE

Derek!!!

Wade's Guy #1 tries to get a clear shot but before he can pop one off --

Derek wrestles the pistol in his direction: POW!

Wade's Guy #1 is hit CENTER MASS and falls face first into the shallow grave. Dead.

Wade's Guy #2 gets the best of Derek and shoves him to the soft dirt. He aims the silver thirty eight.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Derek!

Wade's Guy #2 walks to the edge of the pit, points at Denise and fires --

POW!

She is struck in the stomach. Down she goes.

Derek grabs him from behind, THROWS HIM INTO THE PIT and PUNCHES HIM, over and over. A bloody pulp.

THE SILVER SNUB lay in the nearby dirt.

Derek picks it up, holds it on Wade's Guy #2, now helpless and unable to move.

WADE'S GUY #2

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

DEREK

Whatever you say.

DENISE

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

The rapid gunfire LIGHTS UP THE NIGHT SKY.

DENISE

(whispers)

Help. Der...Derek...

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

DENISE (CONT'D)

Help me.

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

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

He places it in the dirt before his mother's face.

DENISE (CONT'D)

You...son of a...bitch.

She gives him an ugly, hateful look, smiles at him with blood in her mouth, on her gums.

She LAUGHS OUT LOUD before collapsing. Dead.

Derek takes a moment. Stares at all the carnage around him.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

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

He reaches inside, shuts it down. He grabs the rear view mirror and jerks it his direction. His face a filthy and bloody mess.

INT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

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

He makes for the MEN'S ROOM.

INT. GAS STATION MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

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

He quickly steps into a --

BATHROOM STALL

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

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

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

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

PROPHET

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

Derek is intrigued by him. He watches him closely.

PROPHET (CONT'D)

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

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

Derek sports a hopeful grin.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - NIGHT

Derek steps inside the all night confessional.

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

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

The Young Man spots Derek walk to the pulpit.

Derek stops before the large stage, stares at all the religious imagery before him.

INT. DEREK'S APARTMENT - DUSK (FLASHBACK)

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

EXT. WOODS - SHALLOW GRAVE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Wade's Guy #2 pulls the trigger on the SILVER SNUB. It doesn't fire. The SAFETY LOCK STILL ON.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

Derek quietly pulls the SILVER SNUB from his belt loop and opens the cylinder chamber.

The Young Man jumps to his feet, nervous, scared.

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

The Young Man watches on.

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

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

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

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

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

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

Derek's blank stare turns to an ear to ear smile.

DEREK

Sure. Never been better.

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

INT. DENISE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

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

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

WADE

(into phone)

Come on, bitch. Answer the phone!
What the hell, dog?!

Wade is oblivious to

DEREK

-- sneaking in through the rear screen door, silver snub in hand, pointed and ready.

WADE (CONT'D)

Where ya'll at, man?!

DEREK

What's the matter, Wade?

Wade almost jumps out of his shoes, spins around and spots Derek. Gun aimed.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Your friends not picking up?

WADE

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

DEREK

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

WADE

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

DEREK

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

WADE

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

DEREK

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

WADE

Nah, man. Not really.

DEREK

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

WADE

How's that?

DEREK

In that moment. That very last moment, you think about all the things you would do differently. If only you had to do it all over again. Only you know that you can't. You can't go backwards.
(beat)

But then something crazy happens.

WADE

What, man?

DEREK

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

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

WADE

Hell you talkin' about, man?

DEREK

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

WADE

You're crazy.

DEREK

You know what else I was thinking?
(beat)
I was thinking...maybe it just wasn't my time to go.

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

DEREK (CONT'D)

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

Derek also spots the shotgun on the table.

DEREK (CONT'D)

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

Wade once again eyes the shotgun.

DEREK (CONT'D)

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

WADE

Nah, man.

DEREK

Three people are dead because of you. God only knows how many other lives you've ruined.
(angry)
I'm thinking it's your time.

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

WADE

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

Wade jumps for the shotgun, pumps one into the chamber.

Derek squeezes the trigger: POW!

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

Dead.

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

EXT. DENISE'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

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

INT. DENISE'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

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

M.E.

Yep. He's deader than hell alright.

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

DIETZ

Thanks, Doc.

M.E.

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

Dietz flips his notes back a page.

DIETZ

Call came in at exactly Two Thirty Five AM.

M.E.

(unconvinced)
Exactly?

Dietz shoots him a serious look.

DIETZ

Exactly.

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

KATZ
Okay, so check this out.

Dietz looks up from his notes.

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

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

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

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

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

Katz lays the weapon down. Dietz thinks it all over.

DIETZ
You said this guy was a pimp, right?

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

Dietz points at an end table next to the couch.

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

Dietz points to the bedroom.

KATZ
His old lady was packing her shit in the bedroom.

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

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

DIETZ
 So who was his regular?

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

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

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

A FEMALE CSI gives him a nasty look as she dusts for prints
 on the screen door.

KATZ (CONT'D)
 (to CSI)
 Pardon me.
 (to Dietz)
 According to her sheet, she's held
 no legal residence since her
 divorce six months ago. Busted for
 prostitution last month and listed
 Wade's place here as last known
 address.

Dietz shakes his head. A look of sheer disgust for Denise.

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

INT. DEREK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Derek has both palms down on the kitchen counter as he stares
 at the silver snub and a tall bottle of bourbon.

A NEWS BROADCAST blasts from a nearby TV.

FIELD REPORTER

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

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

GESSNER

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

Derek unscrews the cap but reluctant to pour.

GESSNER (CONT'D)

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

Derek watches the report.

GESSNER (CONT'D)

Or his years as head deacon at First Family Church.

(beat)

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

Derek hangs on every word.

GESSNER (CONT'D)

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

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

AVERAGE JOE

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

Joe is almost in tears.

Derek is affected by the man's words. He quickly pours himself a tall one.

AVERAGE JOE (CONT'D)

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

(beat)

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

Derek pours the entire bottle down the sink. A real self hatred burning in his eyes. He grabs the silver thirty eight and heads for his bedroom.

INT. DEREK'S BEDROOM - DAY

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

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

A huge CROWD OF REPORTERS, PROTESTORS, COPS and SUITS spill down the steps as CAMERAS FLASH.

The star defendant and recently acquitted GARY O'DELL (50s) grins ear to ear with his crack team of attorneys.

REPORTER #1

Tell us, Gary! Was justice served today?

GARY

(smug)

You tell me. You guys are the expert.

REPORTER #2

Looking forward to going back to work, Gary?

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

Gary pushes through the crowd.

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

Police and court officials hold back the crowd.

INT. COURTHOUSE PARKING GARAGE - LEVEL 3 - DAY

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

He PUTS A BLACK SKI MASK ON and heads into A STAIRWELL.

INT. GARAGE STAIRWELL - DAY

Gary and three of his legal team in tow.

GARY
 I just want a steak and a beer and
 be left the hell alone.
 (beat)
 That means you guys.

They share a good laugh.

ATTORNEY #1
 No problem.

ATTORNEY #2
 Did I hear something about a beer?

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

A MASKED MAN

Greets them. SILVER SNUB aimed and ready.

Gary looks up, spots him.

GARY
 Holy shhh...

Masked Man aims low and FIRES TWO SHOTS

Hitting Gary twice IN THE LEG and KNEECAP. He drops like wet cement on the steps.

The three lawyers all raise their hands.

MASKED MAN
Get lost!!!

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

Masked Man hovers over Gary, ready to finish the job.

GARY
Lousy sonofabitch!

MASKED MAN
Sarah Dobbs father sends his regards. Bad news, Gary. We're down to the five yard line and you're out of time outs.
(beat)
Any last words of wisdom?

Gary spits at him.

GARY
Yeah. Tell him they taste even better than they look. I'll see him and that cock teasing whore of his in hell.
(angry)
You TELL HIM THAT!!!

MASKED MAN
I won't have to. You just did.

GARY
Hell are you talking about?

MASKED MAN
Smile, Gary. You're on camera.

Masked Man points to a GOPRO CAMERA strapped to his chest. Hidden by his dark clothing.

Gary laughs, collapses on the cement, gives up.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - ELECTRONICS - NIGHT

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

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

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

All eyes on the flat screens.

GARY (CONT'D)
You TELL HIM THAT!!!

And the video PLAYS ON A LOOP.

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

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

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

SALESMAN
I think so.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLS - DAY

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

MALE STUDENT
You're busted, Coach.

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

MALE STUDENT #2
That-is-classic!

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A few important looking SUITS watch a large FLAT SCREEN TV mounted on the wall.

ON THE TV - A NEWS REPORT

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

ANNE

This, of course, is Gary O'Dell, just minutes after his surprise acquittal Tuesday morning, gunned down in a parking garage by a man in a ski mask, and according to Gary O'Dell, facing eminent death. In a desperate bid for his life, O'Dell makes a very shocking confession. One that he's now claiming "isn't true". At least that's his story and he's sticking to it. But the people clearly hold a different opinion.

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

ANNE (CONT'D)

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

MAYOR

Shit!

The Mayor aims his clicker: SHUTS DOWN THE TV.

INT. THE TRUTH AND JUSTICE SHOW - NIGHT

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

The subject of the hour: Gary O'Dell

HIPSTER

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

Some usual BOOS from the crowd.

HIPSTER (CONT'D)

Seriously. Where does it end? Who decides who gets punished and who doesn't? Some people are calling this guy a hero. But you have to understand, there are a lot of us out there who don't like this. At all. The cops are all taking their time finding this guy because it's taking the attention away from them for a change. But there's a lot of us out there that think you're setting a very dangerous precedent by not locking this guy up as soon as possible.

HOST

Let me stop you there.

Some APPLAUSE but mostly BOOS.

HOST (CONT'D)

Joining us tonight is Derek Taylor. Derek is the owner and operator of Big City Liquors. And he's been robbed a shocking...

(to Derek)

How many times has it been?

DEREK

At least twenty five that I can count.

HOST

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

DEREK

By the grace of God, I'm here.

HOST

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

DEREK

I think, like you said, the people have spoken. They're tired of the quote...

(MORE)

DEREK (CONT'D)

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

HIPSTER

(to Derek)

Guns. It all comes back to guns.

(to crowd)

This guy's no different!

HOST

Let him finish.

DEREK

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

The crowd ERUPTS with APPLAUSE.

HOST

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

HIPSTER

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

DEREK

What I'm saying is...there's good and there's bad. We all have a choice. Do good things, do what you're supposed to be doing and you won't get yourself dead.

(MORE)

DEREK (CONT'D)

If you choose to be a bad person
and do bad things and you end up
nose to barrel with my shotgun, I
got no sympathy for you when I pull
the trigger and blow your head off.

The crowd GOES NUTS.

HIPSTER

That's it. Keep encouraging the
violence.

Derek sports a sly grin, stares into the camera. The gritty
image suddenly FREEZES.

INT. HOME OF DETECTIVE MIKE DIETZ - NIGHT

The face of Derek Taylor frozen on a television.

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

DIETZ

Mister Taylor. Nice to make your
acquaintance, sir.

EXT. DINGY BAR - LATE NIGHT

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

CUSTOMER #1

You alright there, buddy?

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

INT. DINGY BAR - LATE NIGHT

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

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

BARTENDER

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

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

BARTENDER
We're closed.

DRUNKARD
Since when?

BARTENDER
Since now.

Everyone in the room, POOL PLAYERS, DRINKERS, a COUPLE
throwing darts, all turn and stare dead at the drunk.
Absolute silence.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Fine. Guess I'll see all you in
about seven or eight years.

The Drunkard stumbles his way back out.

EXT. DINGY BAR - LATE NIGHT

The Drunkard spots his car in the rear lot, points his key
ring and unlocks: BEEP BEEP and a RED GLOW from his tail
lights.

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

As the Drunkard turns, he is hit with

A BRIGHT WHITE BEAM

From A FLASHLIGHT. We can barely make out this figure from
behind the white mist.

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

The Drunkard laughs.

DRUNKARD
No, sir, officer. Not me.

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

The Drunkard squints from the bright light.

DRUNKARD
No problem.

DEREK
Drop the keys.

DRUNKARD
What?

DEREK
I said drop-the-keys.

DRUNKARD
Whatever you say, officer.

He drops them to the asphalt.

DEREK
That your green Cherokee?

The drunkard smiles.

DRUNKARD
Wait a minute. Didn't I see you on
TV?

Derek SHINES THE LIGHT directly in the drunkard's face.

DRUNKARD (CONT'D)
How about showing me that badge,
partner.

DEREK
Sure. Got it right here.

Derek pulls a TAZOR from his coat pocket: BUZZZZZZZ!

AN ELECTRIC CURRENT shoots through drunkard's body and...

Down he goes.

INT. ABANDONED HOME - NIGHT

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

The room is otherwise completely DARK.

DRUNKARD
What is this?

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

He spots some BLOOD dripped on the newspaper.

Derek AIMS THE FLASHLIGHT at a headline:

"BOY KILLED IN HIT AND RUN"

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

DRUNKARD (CONT'D)

Who are you???

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

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

DEREK

Sorry, Bill. Survey says --

(beat)

Two thumbs down.

The Drunkard SCREAMS OUT in both anger and horror.

Derek KICKS HIM DEAD IN THE FACE. Goodnight.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The Mayor, POLICE CHIEF and some other heavy hitters watch the latest vigilante video.

ON A FLAT SCREEN

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

The GoPro camera points to A ZIPLOC BAG OF ICE.

The Mayor pauses the image.

They all stare at the bag with confusion.

MAYOR'S AIDE

Is that what I think it is?

MAYOR

Cut this poor prick's thumbs off.

The Mayor's Aide lets out a sigh of relief.

MAYOR'S AIDE

Oh, thank God.

POLICE CHIEF

You should read some of these message boards.

The Chief reads some comments from his smart phone.

POLICE CHIEF (CONT'D)

If I could only hit thumbs up twice.

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

MAYOR'S AIDE

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

MAYOR

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

(to Police Chief)

You know what that means?

(beat)

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

POLICE CHIEF

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

(beat)

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

MAYOR

Is that it?

The Chief stalls. He comes around.

POLICE CHIEF

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

MAYOR

What does that mean? You either have something or you don't.

POLICE CHIEF

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

MAYOR

Who is he? The cop?

POLICE CHIEF

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

MAYOR

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

INT. DOWNTOWN POLICE PLAZA - DAY

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

DEREK

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

DIETZ

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

DEREK

How's that?

DIETZ

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

DEREK

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

KATZ

So you knew they were an item?

Derek nods appropriately.

DEREK

I heard something like that.

KATZ

Sounds like you two still stayed in regular contact.

DEREK

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

DIETZ

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

KATZ

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

Derek cracks a slow grin.

DEREK

This sounds suspiciously like an interrogation.

DIETZ

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

Derek fidgets in his chair, lets out a huge sigh.

DEREK

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

DIETZ

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

DEREK

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

KATZ

You went up to the door?

DEREK

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

(smiles)

Yes, Detective. I went to the door.

Katz gives him a nasty stare.

Dietz cues his partner to back off.

DIETZ

(to Derek)

And nothing?

DEREK

Nothing.

KATZ

You remember what time you got there, Mister Taylor?

Derek smiles.

DEREK

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

-- stares up at Katz.

DEREK (CONT'D)

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

DIETZ

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

DEREK

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

Derek stands to leave.

DEREK (CONT'D)

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

KATZ

(smug)

Yeah. You seem overwhelmed with concern.

Derek stares back at him. Gives him nothing. No real emotion. Just a blank stare.

DEREK

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

And he heads out. Dietz and Katz watch him closely.

INT. BIG CITY LIQUORS - NIGHT

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

Ray finishes with a customer, rushes to Derek with both red hot anger and honest concern in his eyes.

RAY

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

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

DEREK

I'm dealing with some shit right now. Okay?

(beat)

Denise is missing.

RAY

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

Derek steps into --

THE OFFICE

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

RAY (CONT'D)

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

Derek shoots him a back off look.

DEREK

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

Ray raises his hands. A defensive stance.

RAY

Oh, well, gee wiz, sir. I'm so sorry for stepping out of line. Forgive me. But you don't think I got a life outside of this place? I've been keeping this hell hole running while you're off doing God knows what.

Derek calms down. A tired sigh.

DEREK

You're right. I'm sorry. Why don't you take off. Go get some rest. Get laid. Do whatever it is that you do when you're not here.

RAY

Thank you. I will.

Ray ducks out but quickly stops himself.

RAY (CONT'D)

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

DEREK

A kid? What kid?

RAY

Oh, I'd say seventeen at best. Black. Real pretty.

(unsure)

(MORE)

RAY (CONT'D)
She looked kind of worried. Kind of nervous almost.

Ray smiles.

RAY (CONT'D)
Anything I need to be concerned with?

DEREK
Such as?

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

DEREK
In that case...no.

RAY
Good. Here's her number.

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

RAY (CONT'D)
Said to call her as soon as you got here.

He sports a sly grin.

RAY (CONT'D)
Sounds like a real stormy romance.

DEREK
It's not like that.

RAY
Yes, sir. Whatever you say.

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

RAY
Gotcha. See you up front.

Ray ducks out. Derek dials the number. He waits a few moments for the other end. And all of the sudden --

A BLACK GIRL

-- dressed like a streetwalker appears in the doorway. She is frantic, out of breath. A RINGING smart phone in hand.

This is CHANDRA SWAIN (18), curly hair, light-skinned black girl, prettiest eyes ever.

DEREK

Where the hell did you come from?

CHANDRA

You're Derek?

DEREK

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

CHANDRA

We need to talk. It's about Denise.

EXT. BIG CITY LIQUORS - BACK DOOR - NIGHT

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

CHANDRA

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

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

DEREK

Whoa whoa. First off, who are you again?

Chandra stares in all directions. Paranoid. Scared.

CHANDRA

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

DEREK

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

CHANDRA

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

Derek gives her a good once over.

DEREK

I would've never guessed.

CHANDRA

I was supposed to meet her the night she disappeared. She said it was important. Like life and death important.

(beat)

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

DEREK

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

CHANDRA

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

Derek throws her a nasty stare.

DEREK

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

Chandra laughs out loud as she spins in a frantic circle.

CHANDRA

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

DEREK

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

CHANDRA

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

(beat)

A lot.

Derek nods.

CHANDRA (CONT'D)

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

DEREK

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

CHANDRA

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

Chandra cries. Derek also looks sad.

DEREK

You're pregnant.

CHANDRA

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

Chandra checks over her shoulder, still scared.

CHANDRA (CONT'D)

Look, we should be inside.

DEREK

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

Chandra fights telling him.

CHANDRA

I can show you if you want.

INT. POLICE PLAZA - NIGHT

Dietz and Katz wait patiently at a couple of random desks
while they watch their CAPTAIN (50s) talk on the phone
through a large office window.

The Captain hangs up. Moves lazily for the door and into the outer room.

CAPTAIN

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

Dietz and Katz are shocked. Speechless.

KATZ

Bullshit.

CAPTAIN

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

(beat)

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

DIETZ

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

CAPTAIN

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

KATZ

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

DIETZ

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

CAPTAIN

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

KATZ

I don't like him.

CAPTAIN

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

DIETZ

His last two victims were a sex offender and a drunk driver.

(beat)

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

CAPTAIN

So what?

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

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

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

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

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

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

Dietz and Katz share a dumb look.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

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

The Captain storms off. CLAPS his hands.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
Get to it!

EXT. HOTEL BALCONY - NIGHT

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

A PUBLIC PARK

Across the street. PEOPLE and DOGS stroll the sidewalks.

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

DEREK'S POV:

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

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

Derek shifts focus and watches A CAR PULL TO THE CURB about fifty yards from the working girl.

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

The working girl heads for the car.

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

Derek lowers the binoculars.

DEREK
Who's them?

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

DEREK
Knew what?

CHANDRA

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

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

CHANDRA (CONT'D)

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

DEREK

What did she do?

CHANDRA

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

DEREK

Pretty dangerous. Not to mention
stupid.

CHANDRA

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

The wheels spin in Derek's eyes.

CHANDRA (CONT'D)

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

Derek thinks it all over.

DEREK

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

CHANDRA

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

DEREK

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

CHANDRA

You starting to get the picture now?

DEREK

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

CHANDRA

They did.

Derek shoots her a surprised look.

CHANDRA (CONT'D)

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

Derek squints, thinking back.

DEREK

Wade.

CHANDRA

What is it?

DEREK

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

CHANDRA

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

DEREK

I have a pretty good idea.

INT. DEREK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

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

INT. DEREK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

CHANDRA
What're you doing?

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

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

CHANDRA
I thought you two were --

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

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

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

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

CHANDRA
Try to think. Where else would it be?

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

CHANDRA
Well try.

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

CHANDRA
Denise said you quit.

DEREK
Yeah, well, I also quit smoking.

Derek rushes out. Chandra follows behind.

CHANDRA
Where are you going?

KITCHEN

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

CHANDRA (CONT'D)
We're wasting time.

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

DEREK
What is that?

Chandra follows his look to something in the far corner of the room. An AIR VENT nearby.

Derek walks to it, picks it up. It's a SMALL SCREW.

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

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

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

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

CHANDRA
Which drawer.

DEREK
Beats the hell out of me.

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

She runs back to Derek.

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

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

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

STACK OF DVDS and AN ENVELOPE OF MONEY

CHANDRA

Oh my God.

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

DEREK

It can't be that easy.

CHANDRA

What's in the envelope?

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

DEREK

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

CHANDRA

Sounds like she really trusted you.

DEREK

Yeah. Yeah, she did.

CHANDRA

So what do we do now?

DEREK

I have an idea.

CHANDRA

You do? What?

Derek is quiet.

DEREK

I lied. I have no idea.

Chandra laughs.

CHANDRA

Neither do I. I didn't expect to actually find this shit.

DEREK

Come on. Let's go.

Derek heads for the door. Chandra drags along.

CHANDRA
Go where?

EXT. BUS STATION - NIGHT

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

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

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

CHANDRA
I suppose you're keeping the money too?

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

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

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

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

DEREK
You're probably right.

CHANDRA
So what's the plan?

DEREK
Do something that will probably get me killed.

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

DEREK (CONT'D)

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

Chandra smiles.

CHANDRA

And where am I going again?

DEREK

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

Chandra laughs.

CHANDRA

Room service. Yeah, right.

DEREK

Get a pedicure. Get your hair did. Whatever.

CHANDRA

My hair did?

DEREK

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

Chandra laughs, shakes her head.

CHANDRA

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

DEREK

I'll try. Get out of here.

Chandra smiles, steps out. Heads inside the depot.

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

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

RAY

You gonna tell me what that is?

Derek thinks about it.

DEREK

No.

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

RAY

Good to know.

SALES FLOOR

Derek steps behind the counter, pulls a BLACK THIRTY TWO from his pants, places it under the register in its usual spot.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Ray exits Big City Liquors, done for the night.

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

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

INT. BIG CITY LIQUORS - NIGHT (SAME)

Derek taps a ROLL OF QUARTERS on the edge of the cash drawer as COINS FLY EVERYWHERE.

DEREK

Shit.

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

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

GUNMAN

Heads up, asshole!

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

GUNMAN (CONT'D)

I said open sesame, bitch! Unless
you wanna eat a bullet!

DEREK

Not really.

GUNMAN

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

DEREK

Fine. Since you asked nicely.

Derek grabs the THIRTY TWO.

And before you can blink --

POW!

The bullet GRAZES gunman's right ear as he knocks over a
sales display.

Derek leaps over the counter.

The gunman drops and twists like a wiggly worm.

GUNMAN

Cock-sucker!

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

A BOX OF CIGAR CUTTERS at the register.

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

GUNMAN'S POV

A swift KICK to the face. Out cold.

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

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

STOCKROOM

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

DEREK

Shhhhit.

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

OPERATOR (V.O.)
911. What's the nature of your emergency?

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

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Yes, sir. And is this a business you're calling from?

DEREK
You better hurry. He's bleeding out.

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

Derek KICKS HIM IN THE FACE. Back to bed.

DIETZ (V.O.)
Dietz here.

DEREK
You're looking for me.

DIETZ (V.O.)
Any reason I should be looking for you, Mister Taylor?

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

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

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

DEREK
Good. But we do it on my terms.

A sigh from Dietz.

DIETZ (V.O.)
I'm listening.

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

DIETZ (V.O.)
Fuck are you talking about, Taylor?

DEREK
I'm talking about he just stuck a
gun in my face. As it turns out
wasn't such a grand idea.

DIETZ (V.O.)
Don't go doing anything stupid.
You kill a cop... all deals are
off.

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

DIETZ (V.O.)
Fine. Where are you?

DEREK
You know where I am.

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

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

INT. POLICE PLAZA VIEWING ROOM - NIGHT

Dietz and his Captain stare through a two way mirror at Derek
sitting at a folding table in a cold white room.

Katz walks in.

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

DIETZ

Bingo.

KATZ

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

DIETZ

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

CAPTAIN

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

KATZ

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

DIETZ

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

Katz thinks back.

KATZ

Which finger was it again?

Dietz pieces it all together.

DIETZ

Right index.

Dietz smiles.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

So he shoots the sex criminal in the crotch. At least he tries to. Only he misses.

Katz smiles as he figures it out.

KATZ

Hits him in the knee instead.

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

CAPTAIN
And now a cop's finger. His
trigger finger.

The Captain watches Derek closely.

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

KATZ
Got it.

Katz ducks out.

INT. POLICE PLAZA - HOLDING ROOM - NIGHT

And in walks Dietz. Derek patiently awaits his arrival.

DEREK
Detective Katz.

DIETZ
Dietz.

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

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

DIETZ
Something like that.

DEREK
You know, it's ironic.

DIETZ
What is?

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

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

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

Dietz is confused. Offended.

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

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

DEREK
Maybe.

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

Derek is strangely quiet. Dietz hit a nerve.

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

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

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

Derek looks away, unwilling to listen.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

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

Derek watches him.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

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

(beat)

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

Derek sighs. He doesn't wanna hear it.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

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

DEREK

And what am I supposed to accept, Dietz?

DIETZ

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

Dietz stands up, hovers over Derek with intimidating swagger.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

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

Derek smiles.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

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

Derek's expression is blank as he stares down at the table.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

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

Derek now worried. For the first time.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

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

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

DEREK

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

Dietz cracks a grin. Nods.

DIETZ

Good.

DEREK

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

DIETZ

What's that?

DEREK

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

DIETZ

Hell are you talking about?

Derek shrugs his shoulders.

DEREK

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

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

DIETZ

Bullshit.

DEREK

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

Dietz takes a seat. Not quite done here.

DIETZ

Denise. You've seen her.

DEREK

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

Dietz looks sick to his stomach.

DEREK (CONT'D)

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

DIETZ

What do you want?

DEREK

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

DIETZ

Sounds like a threat to me, Mister Taylor.

DEREK

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

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

DIETZ

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

DEREK

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

Dietz grins ear to ear.

DIETZ

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

(beat)

Something like that?

DEREK

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

DIETZ

Anything else?

DEREK

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

Dietz nods in agreement.

DEREK (CONT'D)

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

EXT. POLICE PLAZA - EARLY MORNING

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

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

INT. DINER - MORNING

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

A WAITRESS greets him.

DEREK
Coffee please. And some aspirins
if you have them.

WAITRESS
I'll see what I can do.

A NEWS REPORT

Plays from a mounted TV. The VOLUME TURNED DOWN.

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

News bumper: NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN O'DELL SHOOTING

DEREK
Hey! Can we turn this up?

The news story ends and cuts to commercial.

DEREK (CONT'D)
Shit.

A CUSTOMER in a corner booth turns to Derek.

CUSTOMER
You haven't heard the latest?

DEREK
No.

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

Derek is sick by this.

DEREK

Hell are you talking about?

CUSTOMER

The Dobbs girl. Her father.

(beat)

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

DEREK

Who said?

CUSTOMER

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

(beat)

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

DEREK

Why does it make sense?

CUSTOMER

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

Derek thinks it over.

DEREK

I don't know.

CUSTOMER

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

(beat)

I can see him doing something like that.

A second Customer turns in their seat.

CUSTOMER #2

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

The Waitress joins in.

WAITRESS

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

Another joins in from across the dining room.

CUSTOMER #4

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

CUSTOMER #3

How's that?

CUSTOMER #4

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

WAITRESS

Since when is being raped by your teacher acting out?

CUSTOMER #4

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

DEREK

Why would she do that? Why would she lie?

CUSTOMER #4

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

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

EXT. BRIDGE - MORNING

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

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

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

STONER (O.S.)
Excuse me, bro.

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

STONER (CONT'D)
You got a light, man?

Derek just stares back at him.

STONER (CONT'D)
Yes? No?

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

STONER (CONT'D)
Damn, dude. You look like you got some serious shit on your mind, bro.

Derek stares back at him. He smiles and walks off.

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

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

DEREK
Ray!!!

Ray ducks his head in.

RAY
What is it?

DEREK
Has anyone been here since last night?

RAY

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

DEREK

What kind of package?

RAY

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

Ray stares into the empty safe.

RAY (CONT'D)

Wait. That wasn't it?

DEREK

You gave her those discs that were in the safe?

RAY

Well...

(beat)

Yeah, man.

Derek shuts his eyes in defeat.

RAY (CONT'D)

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

Derek storms out.

RAY CONT'D)

Now where are you doing?

The back door SLAMS behind him.

RAY (CONT'D)

Fine, don't tell me!

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

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

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

Derek finishes his drink, heads out.

EXT. NIGHT CLUB - BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

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

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

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

CLUB GIRL
Leave him alone!

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

The other guy KICKS him in the chest and stomach.

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

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

GUY #2
Gonna snap his arm for him.

Derek approaches.

DEREK
You heard him. He's had enough.

GUY #2
Mind your fuckin' business!

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

Guy #1 laughs.

DEREK
You got your hands on a female.
And you're kicking a guy while he's down.
(beat)
I'm making this my business.

GUY #1
Sounds like he wants some, Bodie.

GUY #2
Okay, badass. So why don't you come over here and stop me.

Guy #2 kicks his guy in the stomach. Down he goes.

Derek pulls his SILVER SNUB.

CLUB GIRL

Oh my God.

(to all)

Stop it! All of you!

Guy #1 loses his cocky grin.

GUY #1

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

GUY #2

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

(to Derek)

Well come on then, tough guy. Shoot me.

Guy #2 beats his chest.

GUY #2 (CONT'D)

You got a clear shot. Right here. Show me how tough you are.

GUY #1

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

GUY #2

Yeah, I see it. If he was a real man, he'd put it away.

(beat)

But he's a scared little bitch.

The guy on the ground stands.

VICTIM

(to Derek)

Let it go, man.

(to Guy #2)

Listen to your friend. He's trying to save you, asshole.

GUY #2

Shut up!

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

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

Derek stands his ground.

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

Derek lowers his weapon.

DEREK
(to Guy #1)
Let her go.

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

GUY #1
No problem, man. Be cool.

DEREK
Take a hike.

GUY #1
Anything you say, partner.

Guy #1 runs off.

Guy #2 smiles, licks his lips at Derek.

Derek slowly turns, walks away.

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

Derek quickly turns --

POW!

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

The Club Girl and her boyfriend stand in shock. Derek points his gun at them.

DEREK
Go on. Get lost.

They retreat up the alley.

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

GUY #2
What the fuck, man!!

Derek hovers over him, gun aimed.

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

Guy #2 grabs at his aching shoulder, curls up like a scared child. Not so tough anymore.

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

EXT. KIDS PLAYGROUND - GRASSY FIELD - NIGHT

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

POLICE SIRENS in the near distance.

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

Derek steps into the playground, stares at the asphalt.

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

EXT. DEREK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

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

INT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR - NIGHT

A couple of plain-clothes COPS, one older and one young, Officer Tompkins and Chandra await in the car.

All eyes on Derek as he heads for the front door.

COP #1
You did real good, Chandra. Real
good. We're almost home.

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

COP #2

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

CHANDRA

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

COP #1

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

Cop #1 gives the heads up to his partner. They all crawl out
except Tompkins.

TOMPKINS

Tell Taylor I said hello.

EXT. STREET - APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Cop #2 grabs Chandra her by the arm, escorts her toward the
apartment complex. She jerks away.

COP #2

Whoa whoa. Easy does it.

CHANDRA

Just keep your hands off me!

Cop #1 gets in her face.

COP #1

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

Chandra fights the nerve, swallows her pride.

CHANDRA

(smug)
Yes, sir, Officer.

INT. DEREK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

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

He shuts the chamber.

CHANDRA (O.S.)
Don't touch me!!!

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

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

Chandra spots him. The two cops grab her by the arms and
head for the building.

Derek backs away from the window.

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

INT. DEREK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - STAIRS - NIGHT

Chandra is being used as a shield by one cop while the other
stays two steps behind. Shotgun racked and ready.

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

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

Chandra and the cops stop.

COP #1
I see you, Taylor!

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

COP #1 (CONT'D)
Your new girlfriend is here too.

Cop #2 laughs.

COP #1 (CONT'D)
Why don't you come out and say Hi?
She misses you.

DEREK
No thanks!

COP #1
In case you were wondering, we got
the discs! All of them! You got
your girl here to thank for that!

Chandra looks apologetic.

CHANDRA
Hey, man, I'm sorry, okay?

Cop #1 has a good laugh.

COP #1
I don't know, Taylor! Don't sound
so genuine to me!

Derek looks for shadows at the top of the steps.

COP #1 (CONT'D)
What can I say? You just can't
trust anyone these days.

DEREK
Let her go and I'll come out!

Cop #2 gives his partner the heads up and moves around him,
toward the next set of steps.

COP #1
Sorry, Taylor, but we can't make it
that easy for you.

Cop #2 quietly begins up the stairs, one small step at a
time.

COP #2
You piss me off, Taylor! You were
supposed to die two weeks ago with
your old lady! But then you fuck
around and lived! Well that's not
gonna happen twice!

COP #1
You hear that, Taylor? You pissed
off my partner! Not something you
wanna do, my friend!

COP #2
Tell you what we're gonna do!
We're gonna give you to the count
of three! If you don't toss that
piece of yours out the door, your
girlfriend here is dead!

COP #1
That's right! We can do you or the
both of you! Either way, you're
coming with us!

(MORE)

COP #1 (CONT'D)
(beat)
You decide how this goes down!

Derek shuts his eyes. He recites The Lord's Prayer.

COP #1 (CONT'D)
Okay! Here we go! One!

Derek trembles with fear.

COP #1 (CONT'D)
Two!

POW!

The sound of a GUNSHOT.

Cop #2 rushes up the steps. The others follow his lead.

INT. DEREK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Cop #2 is the first inside. He stares down at Derek's limp, motionless body on the carpet.

Cop #1 and Chandra rush in. Chandra horrified.

COP #1
Well, whadd'ya know? It worked.
The sonofabitch did himself.

Derek jumps up, gun aimed:

POW-POW-POW-POW-POW!

The two bad cops riddled with bullets.

Both of them desperately return fire.

POW-POW!

Derek struck in the LEFT ARM and upper shoulder.

The two cops fall to the carpet. Dead.

Chandra can't believe it.

CHANDRA
Holy shit.

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

DEREK
Going somewhere?

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

DEREK
Shut...your mouth.

Chandra trembles at the sight of the gun's barrel.

CHANDRA
Yeah. Okay. Just don't shoot me,
okay? Please.

Derek slowly lowers his gun.

DEREK
Get out of here.

Chandra sighs in relief.

CHANDRA
Thanks.

She rushes out the door. Derek grimaces in terrible pain
from his fresh gunshot wounds. He drips with blood.

DEREK
Yeah. Don't mention it.

EXT. DEREK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

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

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

He has a SAWED OFF SHOTGUN in his left.

Derek spots him. Aims and fires --

POW-POW-POW!

-- and KNOCKS Tompkins clear off his feet and onto the car
trunk. He slowly slides off.

With no hesitation, Derek crawls in the unmarked squad car,
shuts the door.

INT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR - NIGHT

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

He cranks the engine and leaves some tire on the ground as he SQUEALS OUT.

EXT. ALL NITE KINKOS - NIGHT

Derek and the unmarked car come to a screeching halt just outside of the print store.

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

The SILVER SNUB still out and ready. And in the other hand are the stack of discs.

INT. ALL NITE KINKOS - NIGHT

Derek bursts through the door like he owns the place.

The evening staff are here and there. TWO CHUBBY BLACK GUYS behind the counter and one NERDY TYPE in the internet room behind a desktop.

All three stop what they're doing and stare back at Derek in a genuine stupor.

NERD
Welcome to Kinkos.

DEREK
Good evening.

Derek points his gun at him.

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

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

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

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

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

DEREK (CONT'D)
You dial 911?

CHUBBY #1
Nah, man.

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

The other raises his hands.

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

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

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

DEREK (CONT'D)
Is this everybody?

NERD
It's just us.

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

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

Derek smiles.

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

CHUBBY #1
That's good to know.

Derek laughs.

DEREK

As you can see...

(beat)

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

CHUBBY #2

What's that?

DEREK

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

The three employees share an intrigued look.

DEREK (CONT'D)

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

All three confused but excited just the same.

NERD

Yeah. Okay.

Derek smiles. Points his gun at the nerd.

DEREK

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

(beat)

Very slowly and very carefully.

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

DEREK (CONT'D)

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

NERD

You got it.

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

DEREK

How we doing over there?

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

Derek thinks it over.

DEREK
Any of you guys ever upload videos
online?

The two chubby friends laugh.

CHUBBY #1
Are you serious?

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

CHUBBY #1
Depends.

DEREK
On what?

The nerd ducks his head in.

NERD
How long your video is. And what
format.

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

NERD
Yeah.

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

CHUBBY #1
Yo, you better get to a hospital,
man.

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

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

Derek thinks about it.

NERD (CONT'D)

If all you care about is getting it
online.

Derek spins in his chair, faces the chubbies.

DEREK

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

CHUBBY #2

Do we have a choice?

DEREK

Not really.

CHUBBY #2

Let's do it then.

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

CHUBBY #1

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

DEREK

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

CHUBBY #1

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

CHUBBY #2

Shut up, man.

CHUBBY #1

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

Derek laughs.

DEREK

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

(beat)

I promise.

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

DEREK (CONT'D)
Excuse me, boys. I'll be right back.

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

The armed GUNMAN rushes the front door.

Derek aims and fires --

POW-POW-POW!

-- and down goes another one. Into a tall sales display. The shotgun drops to the carpet.

Before Derek can inspect his handy work --

POW-POW-POW!

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

Derek dives for cover.

The three co-workers duck under desks.

CHUBBY #1
It wasn't me! I didn't call shit!

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

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

CHUBBY #2
Cool?!
(panicked)
We gonna be picking bullets out each other's asses!

CHUBBY #1
Shut up! They're here to save us, stupid!

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

Chubby #1 seems unsure.

CHUBBY #1

Word?

Derek nods with assurance.

DEREK

Word.

The nerd is frozen with fear and covers his ears.

NERD

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

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

DEREK

Okay. New plan.

CHUBBY #2

Good. I don't like this plan.

DEREK

(to Chubby #1)

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

CHUBBY #1

Yo, you kill somebody, man?

Derek stalls.

DEREK

Just a couple of cops.

NERD

Holy shhhhhit.

DEREK

Those bad people I told you
about...

CHUBBY #1

Yeah?

DEREK

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

CHUBBY #2

Oh, shhhhhit.

Chubby #2 beats his head against the desk.

CHUBBY #1

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

DEREK

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

NERD

Are you guys like friends or something?

DEREK

We have an understanding.

EXT. ALL NITE KINKOS - NIGHT

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

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

Dietz joins Katz.

KATZ

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

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

KATZ (CONT'D)

And now he's asking for you.

Dietz shakes his head. Frustrated.

KATZ (CONT'D)

We fucked up.

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

DIETZ
You do a roll call on our boys in
blue?

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

DIETZ
You know they're gonna kill him?

KATZ
Yeah, I got that feeling.

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

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

Dietz nods in agreement.

DIETZ
Yeah.

Dietz raises his hands and makes for the front door.

KATZ
I got your back, partner.

DIETZ
Yeah, just don't get me shot.

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

INT. ALL NITE KINKOS - NIGHT

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

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

Derek motions to the dead cop on the floor.

DEREK
That's on you.

Dietz stares at the bloody lump.

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

Derek stares out into the parking lot. Spots all the cops
ready to put him down.

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

Derek looks petrified.

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

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

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

DIETZ
What the hell is this, Taylor?

DEREK
My swan song. Take a look.

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

DEREK (CONT'D)
What I should've done in the first
place. As soon as I saw it. Now
the whole world will see what they
did. And for once, the bad guy's
aren't gonna get away with it.
(beat)
And I'm gonna be the one that made
it all happen.

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

DEREK (CONT'D)
 Sorry, guys. We all are.

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

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

Derek squints, confused.

DIETZ (CONT'D)
 Everyone's gonna be chanting your name on the steps of city hall? Demanding your release?

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

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

NERD
 We don't mind. Really.

CHUBBY #1
 Nah, man. We're good.

Dietz ignores them.

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

Derek loses his grin.

DIETZ (CONT'D)
 No better, no different. You're that guy people see on the eleven o'clock news then shake their heads, wondering what the world's coming to.
 (beat)
 Guys like you, they always turn.

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

DIETZ (CONT'D)

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

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

DIETZ (CONT'D)

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

DEREK

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

DIETZ

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

DEREK

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

Derek shakes his head with disappointment.

DEREK (CONT'D)

You're just like them. Just like those assholes with their pants down and their palms up.

DIETZ

You're right, Taylor. I'm in here trying to save you because I'm with them.

Derek thinks it over.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

Listen to yourself. You don't trust anybody.

DEREK

That's right.

DIETZ

Denise trusted you. She trusted you'd do the right thing.

(MORE)

DIETZ (CONT'D)

That's why she left all that shit
in your care. Just in case.

(beat)

You gonna let her down now? All of
this for nothing?

DEREK

Shut up about her.

Dietz moves closer.

DIETZ

Come on, Taylor. We've taken this
as far as it's gonna go.

Derek peeks out the window one last time.

DIETZ (CONT'D)

You got two options. Leave with me
or leave in a bag. But it's late
and I'm tired. And I can't hold
them off forever.

(beat)

What will it be, Taylor?

Derek finds it hard to stand still. His feet shimmy and
shift in place. Sweat drips from his brow.

DEREK

You forgot option three.

DIETZ

What's that?

Derek puts the silver snub to his temple. A crazed look in
his eye as he works up the nerve.

KATZ (O.S.)

Don't do it, Taylor.

Dietz spots his partner at the door. Gun aimed.

KATZ (CONT'D)

You pull the trigger and they win.
I know you don't want that.

Derek's trigger hand shakes uncontrollably as his eyes almost
bulge from his head.

He SCREAMS OUT.

A flick of the trigger. Click.

Derek breaks down in tears. He's got nothing left as his gun hand falls limp to his side.

EXT. ALL NITE KINKOS - NIGHT

Dietz and Katz escort a broken and handcuffed Derek toward their squad car. The other officers have hate in their eyes and never lower their guns.

KATZ

It's over! Everybody back off!

The crowd of blue uniforms parts like the red sea. The three men continue to the squad car parked somewhere in the center of this mess.

END TITLES:

Derek Taylor was later charged with one count of felony kidnapping, fourteen counts of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to commit murder and one count of murder in the first degree.

He was found guilty on all charges and sentenced to twenty five years.

After several more attempts at suicide, he was transferred to a minimum security psychiatric facility where he remained under close observation for ninety days.

One hour after his release, Derek Taylor bought a new gun and took his own life.

The gun was loaded.

FADE OUT.

THE END

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