

THE CURE FOR MALE LONELINESS

Written by

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"I think it is possible for ordinary people to choose to be extraordinary."

--- Elon Musk

INT. CHEMO ROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY

WE PAN ACROSS several SAD ELDERLY PEOPLE hooked up to caustic chemotherapy drips. At their center is JOE MALONE (40s)--worn flannel, faded jeans--But we haven't seen his face yet.

Joe is obscured by a MEN'S HEALTH MAGAZINE in a sea of AARP and MARIE CLAIRE. On its cover? A handsome man named ETHAN AVEDON (50s). It's a glamour shot, bespoke suit--no smile.

The subscript--"Can This Billionaire Change the World?"

A WRINKLED HAND taps Joe's knee. It belongs to his mother, CATHY MALONE (60s). She's wearing a head scarf and uses a cane to balance in front of him. Yes, she has cancer.

CATHY

Make any friends, Junior?

Joe lowers the magazine, and we finally get a look at his world-weary face. Broad shoulders and fit. He'd be better looking if anything in life had gone his way. He pops up immediately and takes her arm to guide her out.

JOE

Tons.

The old folks continue on like Joe was never there.

INT. HALLWAY - HOSPITAL - DAY

Joe and Cathy hustle toward the main exit. Footsteps on the tile behind them. Joe pulls his mother a little faster until--

VOICE (O.S.)

Cathy--Joe--Don't make me run.

Cathy and Joe turn to see the portly DR. KEYA VAKIL (50s) waving them down. He's huffing and puffing.

CATHY

Sorry, doc. We didn't see ya.

A very tired Cathy sits in an empty chair. She pats his arm.

CATHY (CONT'D)

Can you handle it? I'm beat.

DR. VAKIL (PRE-LAP)

When you moved here, I said I would try to give your mother the best care and cutting-edge medicine--

INT. DR. VAKIL'S OFFICE - HOSPITAL - DAY

Homey and lived in. Oak accents, a bookcase. Its aged carpet has seen better days, but there's a comforting vibe here.

DR. VAKIL

--but you have to pay your bills.

Joe looks out a window toward some construction. It's a brand-new hospital facility across the parking lot. There is a lot of work left to be done. He turns to Dr. Vakil at his desk.

JOE

(taps on the glass)

You really think all this new shit will make a difference for her?

DR. VAKIL

Like all of Avedon's other additions to this town, it's better than anything we had before--

(joins Joe at the window)

--but they're months behind. And I'm not sure that's enough time for your mother to take advantage.

I/E. SHITTY SEDAN - MOVING

Joe's car speeds through small-town Pennsylvania. Like Jackson Hole or San Francisco, this scenic area is overrun by the rich. The neighborhood changes as he drives--ranch houses become McMansions. Local joints become chain restaurants.

SCREECH! Joe hits the brakes. Cathy jolts back into her seat. A police car blocks the street. A crowd of people ahead. They snap photos, loiter outside a diner. Block the windows. Joe rolls his window down and nods to a cop standing nearby.

COP

Can't pass. Avedon's eating breakfast with Good Morning America.

Joe spins the wheel. The car heads in reverse. Cathy changes the radio to find the interview.

ROBIN ROBERTS (O.S.)

Thank you for joining. If you're just tuning in, we're sitting down with tech billionaire and activist Ethan Avedon, who seems to be truly living the American Dream.

We ZOOM OUT--through the throngs of people, and into--

INT. DINER - DAY

ROBIN ROBERTS and GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS are in medias res, interviewing ETHAN AVEDON (40s). Lights and cameras surround. Avedon is a pro: charismatic, relaxed--in complete control.

ETHAN AVEDON

I love this country--it's the land of opportunity--where dreams come true. But how do you pick a place to settle down? Every state has something great to offer. Well, my team and I did A LOT of research.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS

Yes, that's a good segue. Many people are asking--"Why here?"

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

A well-maintained, humble home in an aging neighborhood. American flag out front. Joe leaves Cathy at the door--hustles back to the car. Tires CHIRP as he speeds away.

ETHAN AVEDON (ON THE RADIO)

Because here, everything seemed to fall into place. I found a beautiful spot to set up my warehouses--ask my employees to move--to build my personal home.

EXT. COUNTRY ROADS - DAY

Joe's car winds through backroads. Eventually, he comes to some MASONS building the outer wall of a huge compound.

They lay beautifully smooth stones in place. A man pushes a wagon full of shattered colored glass behind them. He cements the jagged pieces atop the wall, points up.

Joe follows this wall until it ends in two large, marble pillars. He parks in a lot at the mouth of the property.

ROBIN ROBERTS (ON THE RADIO)

What do you say to critics who assume you're here because property is cheap and taxes are low?

ETHAN AVEDON (ON THE RADIO)

I'd tell them that's how I define the American Dream--and you'd have to kill me before I gave up on it.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

The foundation has been dug for a contemporary mansion that will stand alone in this wilderness--currently in early stages. A large backhoe digs a sewer line. Huge pipes lowered by crane. Joe jogs to CHUCK (60s), the grumpy foreman. He doesn't seem happy to see Joe arriving. Puffs a cig.

CHUCK

I spent the last hour doing *your* job, which means I'm behind on *my* job. And now, I'll have to stay late to make sure the guys on this crew don't lose *their* jobs.

Chuck gestures to the other guys. They pull their weight.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Go home. You're done here.

I/E. SHITTY SEDAN - PARKING LOT

Joe just sits in his car as men pass around him, sulking. Eventually, he turns the key, and the car chugs to life.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

A dive in a strip mall. This is where locals drink hard.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

A watering hole older than the town itself. There's a "no smoking" sign that no one pays attention to. Philadelphia sports emblems adorn walls. A jukebox plays Waylon Jennings.

PATRONS shake their empty mugs at Joe. Cathy plays pool with a few TOWNIES. She's in a headscarf--sipping tonic & lime.

Joe pulls a beer, but the keg is kicked. He whistles. DANNY (20s), the bar-back, appears. He has Down Syndrome and is always in good spirits. He loves this job and the customers.

JOE

Hey, handsome--need a keg of lager.

DANNY

Why do you always call me handsome?

JOE

Because you are. Now get going.

Danny hustles away from the bar to the cooler.

Just then, the doors open, and Chuck and his CREW enter. Chuck gives a nod to Joe, who starts handing out Coors bottles. All the men light cigarettes. Chuck sucks in deeply, then he downs his bottle in one gulp. Afterward, he blows the smoke out. His men CHEER. He waves his empty bottle at Joe.

Cathy chalks her pool cue with menace. Joe shoots her a look. He doesn't want any trouble, so his mother stands down.

Danny comes out of the fridge and gives a "thumbs-up." Joe slides a new bottle to Chuck. Then pulls the others' beers.

CHUCK

Look, sorry it didn't work out, but I don't want to wind up working in one of Avedon's warehouses because one guy was careless. Get me?

Chuck taps the ash of his cigarette onto the bar, right where Joe just cleaned. LIV (40s), the bar's owner, grabs an ashtray. She aggressively shoves it toward Chuck.

LIV

You keep ashing on the bar, and I'm gonna cut you off, Chuck.

CHUCK

The cigarettes keep me sober.

LIV

So use the ashtray!

Liv is the life of this place. Every guy flirts with her, and somehow, every woman still likes her. She takes no shit.

A bashful Chuck backs off. That's her power.

Liv hip-checks Joe out of the way to grab some beer bottles.

LIV (CONT'D)

Don't take it personal. He's just a dick because the work's dried up.

JOE

I don't blame him.

LIV

That's because you're a good person. Wish he'd see that.

Liv shoots an endearing look at Joe, who shies away. But Cathy, never missing a chance to meddle, heads over to chat.

CATHY
I'm just glad a beautiful woman
like you can see that, Liv.

JOE
Should you even be in here, Ma?

Cathy wafts the smoke toward her--relishing the aroma.

CATHY
I have stomach cancer, not lung
cancer. I need some kinda vice to
remind me that life's worth living.

Cathy moves onto an empty stool and sidles up to Liv. She
takes her hands and pulls her close.

CATHY (CONT'D)
Don't think I ever got the
opportunity to thank you properly
for the headscarf.
(to Joe)
Junior, we got anything special
going on for dinner tomorrow?

Joe is hesitant to reveal this next tidbit of information.

JOE
...It's my birthday...

CATHY
I know. My gift to you is inviting
over a single, gorgeous woman.
(to Liv)
Dinner is at six. See you there.

Liv laughs hard and walks away. Joe turns red. Cathy beams.

EXT. BEHIND THE BAR - LATE NIGHT

Joe and Danny take out the trash. Liv locks the back door and
joins the guys as the last bag hits the dumpster.

LIV
Danny, want to drive Chuck home? Go
slow. I'll be right behind you.

Liv hands Danny the keys. He struts over to a huge Dodge Ram.
A sloshed Chuck is in the passenger seat. He waves at them.

Joe looks past Liv at his sedan. Cathy snores in the front.

JOE

I guess we both know what it's like to take care of someone.

LIV

But we can't forget to take care of ourselves, too. I mean, when was the last time you hung out with your buddies and had some fun?

Joe shifts his weight as he thinks.

JOE

My friends and I used to do this thing where we read all our letters from home in these goofy voices. We called it "Mail Bonding."

LIV

They ever come up here? Bet they're due for a birthday visit.

JOE

Been a minute since I saw them. Look, to me, birthdays don't mean anything until they hit your tombstone. I'll see you tomorrow.

Joe is a mystery that Liv can't solve.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - JOE'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

Organized and clean. Deer head mounted on one wall. A hand-sewn quilt on another. Joe sits on the couch and watches CNN. Jake Tapper has Avedon appearing as a talking head.

Joe flips the channel away...but then grunts and flips back.

ETHAN AVEDON (ON TV)

See, I resent that question, Jake. Luck has nothing to do with it.

INT. JOE'S ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Spartan. Joe doom scrolls 'X'. Lots of Avedon complaints. He flips to a hunting page. Peeps a new long-range rifle. There's a sexy model holding it--zooms in. We hear VOMITING.

ETHAN AVEDON (V.O.)

I'm a billionaire because I'm special. Yes, you heard me right. I. Am. Special. I'll tell you why:

INT. BATHROOM - JOE'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

Cathy pukes in the toilet. Joe holds her hair. Comforts her.

ETHAN AVEDON (V.O.)

I was born into a two-parent household to people with advanced degrees, where only excellence was rewarded. Mediocrity was punished.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - JOE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Cathy rests on the couch. Blanket over her. Joe puts one go-bag by the door. Shoulders the other. Kisses her forehead.

ETHAN AVEDON (V.O.)

The weak were discarded.

I/E. SHITTY SEDAN - DAY

Joe passes through town. Stops at a traffic light. There's a HOMELESS GUY on the corner, asleep. One of those food delivery robots is stuck trying to maneuver past him. The bottom of the robot is labeled "An Avedon Company."

ETHAN AVEDON (V.O.)

I've always held myself to those standards. They helped me build a successful company--made me rich.

EXT. HOME DEPOT - DAY

Joe stands next to a group of DOWN ON THEIR LUCK MEN. They eye Joe, distrustfully. A MAN in a pickup pulls up. He waves everyone over except for Joe. He's left alone on the corner.

ETHAN AVEDON (V.O.)

That's not luck. That's generations of hard work paying off.

I/E. SHITTY SEDAN - MOVING

Joe passes signs for 'Avedon Warehouse Parking'. The car breaks from a wooded area, and we see a giant industrial park with a warehouse at its center. A parking lot being paved.

ETHAN AVEDON (V.O.)

If you don't like the power I've earned, then do your best to find a way to take it. I dare you.

EXT. JOE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Joe parks behind Liv's SUV. She and Danny carry a cake to the door. Cathy waves them all in. Joe hesitates. No escape.

INT. JOE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tiny candle flames flicker. Danny carries the cake and places it before Joe. He takes a breath to blow, but Cathy slides an envelope in front of him. She's bursting with excitement.

CATHY

Liv got it for you. Open it now.

Joe tears into the envelope. He pulls out a piece of paper. It's an ad for "Alpha Male Excursion Weekends."

LIV

I booked you a male bonding weekend. Camping, bonfires, fun!

JOE


Uhh...Thanks. Really.

CATHY

Blow the damn candles out!

Joe takes a breath and blows the wilted candles out.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

A battered sign points: "CAMP THIS WAY "--Joe's shitty sedan follows its direction down a rocky dirt road.

CATHY (O.S.)

I can tell Liv cares. She looks at you and sees someone special--

I/E. SHITTY SEDAN - MOVING

The car bounces. Joe takes it slow. Cathy holds on to the dashboard. It's physically and emotionally uncomfortable.

Joe groans as she rants to him.

CATHY

I'm just saying, some day I'll be gone. I don't want you to be alone. And we both know I'll meddle as much as it takes to make it happen.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NATURE PRESERVE - DAY

A group of a DOZEN MEN mill about. Most give off Wall Street vibes, with some scattered good 'ole boys in the mix.

Joe grabs a worn green military bag out of the back seat.

CATHY

Okay, Junior. Be nice to the other boys. And have some goddamn fun.

Cathy waves at the grown men. Some wave back. She takes the keys from an embarrassed Joe and pulls away. He stiffens.

No one is sure of themselves enough to talk except for one burly meathead: DOUG (30s)--a thick hick who laughs at Joe.

DOUG

I hope your mommy packed enough Lunchables for you, *Junior*.

Some of the other guys nervously laugh with him.

Joe clenches his fist. But before an altercation can happen, there's the sound of a SIREN. A man walks out of the woods. He's in head-to-toe First Lite gear and carries a bullhorn--

BRETT

Buck up, boys. It's go time.

This is BRETT JONES (50s). He oozes charisma and charm. Brett is the opposite of Joe--tall, dark, handsome--commanding. He has a .44 Magnum in a leather holster on his belt.

BRETT (CONT'D)

The name's Brett. For the next few days, your ass is grass. And I'm the boot pressing on it. Now, take a second and reach into your pants and feel your lifeless, floppy scrotums. By Sunday, two shiny brass balls will live there.

Brett pulls out a list of attendees and reading glasses.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Roll call. By show of hands, who signed up for this themselves?
 (off a few raised hands)
 Great. The first step is admitting you're a pussy and need to change.
 (scans the others)
 The rest of you, I bet a lovely lady signed you up.
 (MORE)

BRETT (CONT'D)

She wanted a cowboy and got the manager of a Texas Roadhouse. My goal is to get you back to buttering her buns.

(off their faces)

Anyone got any stupid questions?

DOUG

(pointing at Joe)

'Junior' over here had his Mom drop him off. What does that mean?

Joe stiffens. Annoyed and embarrassed. The others laugh.

BRETT

Don't have a 'Junior' on the list.

JOE

It's Joe.

BRETT

Why did he call you Junior?

JOE

My mom calls me Junior.

BRETT

But no one else does?

JOE

My old man ran off when I was a kid, so didn't seem to fit.

DOUG

I'm gonna call you Junior, anyway.

Doug stands akimbo, thinking he's winning this debate.

BRETT

This is perfect. Second lesson: When men mouth off to other men, they can either bury the hatchet or get hit in the fucking face. Joe, you have my permission to scrap.

Everyone looks stunned. Including Doug and Joe.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Hey--this isn't a weekend for the faint of heart. The world is full of people who crumble at confrontation. So, let's get confrontational. Knock him out.

(MORE)

BRETT (CONT'D)
(with fervor)
Fucking hit the son of a bitch.

A nervous Joe takes a step forward. Doug takes a step back.

DOUG
Look, we just got here--nerves and
shit. I didn't mean anything by it.

Doug clearly doesn't want the smoke. Joe relaxes.

JOE
We're good.

BRETT
Boooo. Oh well, that's outta the
way, and the sun is shining. Grab
your shit, and let's hit the path.

The men disperse. They grab their gear and exit down a dirt path. Joe approaches Brett while they file away.

BRETT (CONT'D)
Military bag--You serve?

JOE
Marines. Two tours.

BRETT
Hoorah. I was in the OG Gulf. Never
made it past Sergeant, but out
here, I'm the ranking officer. Ok?

Brett sizes Joe up. Not sure what to make of him yet.

JOE
That's what I wanted to talk to you
about--this is nice, really, but
not for me. I was wondering if we
could get the money sent back or--

BRETT
No. Look, I'm great at reading
people. But I'm even better at
reading the 'comments' section of
my webpage. Whoever signed you up
sent a message saying you need
this. And I won't let them down.

A very annoyed Joe grabs his bag. Hits the trail.

BRETT (CONT'D)
Glad to have you. And for what it's
worth, you should hit that fucker.

EXT. RIVER BED - NATURE PRESERVE - DAY

The dirt path trails all the way to a wide river bed with a thin log that leans across the wet depths.

Brett stands Akimbo, always assessing the troops.

BRETT

Figure we'll start with some team building. Your campground is on the other side of the water. Unless you want to get wet, I suggest you put your heads together.

A pouting Joe walks past Brett and easily tight-ropes across.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Wow, had no idea Mary Lou Retton was among us. Nice beam work.

The other guys are impressed. They clap and whistle. But Joe doesn't turn back. He just marches on the pathway.

EXT. CAMP - LATER

CLOSE ON: Magnesium shavings hit a ball of twine. Sparks.

The men crowd around Brett. His fire is smoking and flaming.

BRETT

Now, along with some fine shelters, the weekend comes with a goody bag.

Brett gestures to a little camo bag hanging on each of the raggedy pup tents that line the outskirts of the camp.

BRETT (CONT'D)

I am your benevolent but also ruthless God.

The guys grab the bags and unpack a flint stick, some toilet paper, a cigar tube, and a folding buck knife--the basics.

BRETT (CONT'D)

If you want a hot lunch, better get your fires going. And that's all the T.P. you get, so wipe wisely.

The guys turn to go to their fires. Joe's is already going.

BRETT (CONT'D)

When you're done here, I've got some guns we can play with.

EXT. GUN RANGE - NATURE PRESERVE - DAY

A shooting range cut into the tree line. Brett puts a bunch of full beer cans, bowling pins, paper targets, and even a couple of mannequins at different distance points.

He jogs back to the group of guys.

They part, revealing a plastic folding table covered in guns. There are a few .45s, a couple of shotguns, an AR-15, even an antique Tommy gun on display with the huge drum magazine.

BRETT

Guns are not toys. They're really fucking dangerous. But they are also really fucking fun. There is nothing better than going shooting with your friends.

(excitement is palpable)

The only problem is, none of us are friends yet. So, if you want to pop off, you're going to have to tell us a little about yourself. Some things you love, some you hate, and some things you'd change about the world if you could.

This makes the guys all shrink back. Especially Joe.

BRETT (CONT'D)

No one wants to go?

Brett unholsters his Magnum. It's a beast of a firearm.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Hello, my name is Brett. I love chicken parm and your mom's pussy. I hate traffic and the Dallas Cowboys. If I ruled the world, everyone would keep their shoes on when flying on airplanes. And the IRS wouldn't take half the money I make every year in taxes.

He aims at a beer can and fires. BANG! The can EXPLODES in a cloud of foam. He spins the gun on his finger--holsters it.

BRETT (CONT'D)

No one wants to dip their wick?

But still, no one steps forward.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Okay--I'll bring out the big gun.

Brett lifts the AR-15.

BRETT (CONT'D)

I see eyes getting bigger and pants swelling. Who's feeling hard?

STEVE (40s), a slim nerd, shyly steps forward.

STEVE

Hey, I'm Steve. I'm a high school math teacher. I love my job and the New York Times crossword. I hate how all the kids in my classes are so angry at everything. And I hate how they blame me--I don't have any power! If it was up to me, I'd make them put down their phones and talk to someone. Maybe even listen.

Brett hands Steve the AR.

BRETT

You don't pull the trigger, you squeeze. Stock steady in the shoulder. Both eyes open.

Steve steps up and squeezes the trigger. RATATATAT--Bullets spray across the targets. Beers pop, a leg blows off a mannequin, and bowling pins shatter. He empties the clip.

The guys WHOOP.

BRETT (CONT'D)

(to the crowd)

I hear some balls dropping. Who wants to sack up and step forward?

DOUG

Lemme try Al Capone?

Brett hoists the Tommy Gun.

BRETT

The floor is yours.

DOUG

The name is Doug. I love a rare steak and a shower beer. I hate the sweaters my wife buys me, and I hate my boss at Pep Boys. I would get rid of electric cars. The world made sense when it had an engine that ran on gas. I'd get rid of turtlenecks. But keep my wife.

Everyone claps for Doug--even Joe.

Doug aims the Tommy Gun and shoots from the hip. He sprays a hundred bullets and hits...nothing.

The laughter is uproarious. Joe beams. Loosens up.

Doug turns, red in the face.

DOUG (CONT'D)

This is heavy machinery--like to see any of you assholes handle it. Most of ya are afraid to even talk.

BRETT

He's got a point.

(to Joe)

Well, what about you, Marine? You crossed the river. You built the fire. Think you can shoot?

Brett is pulling him out of his shell one way or another.

JOE

I'll tell you what, if I outshoot you, I get my money back, and I get to leave. You can call the cab.

The guys in the crowd share a look. This is good.

BRETT

The cab? We have Uber here, pal. This is big stakes. I like it. I'm in. But you're gonna have to play by the rules I already set. So speak up--Unless you're scared.

JOE

...My name is Joe. You heard that earlier. I work construction. I tend bar. I love the quiet. And I love the look when someone fucks around and then finds out.

Joe shoots a look at Brett. The guys "Ooo" and "Ahh".

JOE (CONT'D)

...I hate how rich people think they're smarter than everyone else-- And I hate how they live in a better world than us--one they stole from people who work harder.

The guys are all very into Joe's message. Especially Brett.

BRETT
How would you change it?

JOE
I'd deliver the consequences to
their actions.

Those words get a genuine smile to cross Brett's face. The guys all crowd forward. Anticipation is thick.

Joe casually walks to the table and picks up one of the .45s. He expertly holds the gun like it's an extension of his arm.

BRETT
You fellas, back up.

No one listens to this advice.

Brett unholsters his gun and reloads bullets from his belt.

BRETT (CONT'D)
First to hit five targets wins.

Brett and Joe walk side by side, guns up, headed down the main track of the gun range.

Joe rolls his shoulders. More nonchalant than Brett.

JOE
You calling them out?

BRETT
I'm calling them out.
(quick beat)
Beer can.

Brett and Joe both fire and each hit beer cans. They walk through the spray. Brett wipes his face, but Joe continues like a Terminator. Steely eyed and determined to win.

BRETT (CONT'D)
Bowling pin.

Brett hits his bowling pin. Then Joe shoots the same pin. It spins in the air, and he shoots it again. It spins again.

The gang of guys softly golf clap behind. This annoys Brett.

BRETT (CONT'D)
Bullseye.

Brett fires at a paper sheet. It hits just off-center.

Joe aims and fires, but--CLICK--CLICK. Empty.

DOUG
What the hell just happened?

BRETT
Shouldn't have wasted that bullet
on your fancy bowling pin shot.

A murmur rolls through the men. Then they clap.

BRETT (CONT'D)
And if y'all are looking for a
lesson, it's somewhere between
always knowing how many are left in
the chamber and placing your trust
in the right person, especially
when there's a gun involved.
(gloating)
Now, I think we can declare me the
winner on all counts. That fair?

An annoyed Joe professionally dismantles his gun, drops it on
the table, and steps back into the throngs of men.

Brett can't help but grin at his victory.

BRETT (CONT'D)
Okay--Who wants to go next?

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

One big campfire rages in the middle. Hot dogs roast on
sticks. Cold beers are passed out from a large Yeti cooler.
Doug has a guitar out and is doing his best Tim McGraw.

Joe uses the buck knife to trim the end of his cigar. Then
tries to light it in the fire. A hand taps his shoulder and
offers a lighter. Joe turns to see Brett.

BRETT
Peace offering.

They sit on an overturned log. Puff their stogies.

BRETT (CONT'D)
I've never seen you at the range.

JOE
Mostly a deer hunter.

BRETT
Glad I'm not a deer.

JOE

Nope. You're a hunter, too. But you go after yuppies and suckers.

Joe's not sure he should have said that. But Brett beams and then they both start laughing.

BRETT

Shit. I'm so used to these cubicle cowboys coming out here in new boots, eating energy goo, blasting Morgan Wallen--it's nice to have a real one among us.

Joe looks at the other guys. Brett's description is accurate.

JOE

You ever wish you could be like them? Only see the happy, safe world in front of you instead of the danger lurking behind?

BRETT

Yeah. But without us, the world wouldn't be so happy and safe.

JOE

Now, that's a good joke.

They share a soft laugh. Keep staring at the fire.

EXT. WOODS - MORNING

Brett stands with a pump-action pellet rifle. There are twelve other similar rifles leaning on trees next to him. The group looks over the stack of rifles with nervous delight.

STEVE

Man, you got a lot of guns.

BRETT

Who are you, the government?

Steve raises his hands in apology and backs away.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Today, we're gonna tap into a foundational part of our masculine ancestry: hunting. These are pellet guns. They're not deadly to you, but they'll fuck up a squirrel.

(off their anticipation)

Each gun comes with ten rounds.

(MORE)

BRETT (CONT'D)

So aim more like Lee Harvey and
less like Rambo. Got it?

(no one moves)

What are you dickheads waiting for?

Everyone looks at Joe, who has his arms folded.

DOUG

We wanna see what he does.

Joe slowly moves forward and grabs his rifle. He checks the scope and shoulders it, then sets off into the forest.

STEVE

Wait for us!

But Joe does not want to wait for them--

EXT. WOODS - VARIOUS

--He wants this to be a solo excursion. So, he takes off running. The other guys are not made for this challenge.

Joe ducks under branches and bramble. He leaps over streams and pays no attention to thorns. He puts feet, then yards, then a literal country mile between him and the other guys.

Soon, their voices fade into nothing. Joe takes a second in solitude and lets the sun hit his face. Deep breaths in and out. Okay, time to hunt. He aims his gun and scans past shadows, birds, and tree knots. He notices a clearing ahead.

EXT. CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

What was once the green forest has been totally excavated. There's one lonely oak still in the middle. Joe takes in the carnage. He struggles to understand why. Then sees a crane carrying the huge sewer pipes we saw at Avedon's.

The path of destruction leads into the distance.

Joe watches as some of the construction guys CHEER as the tree CRACKS under a bulldozer's sheer force.

EXT. BASE CAMP - WOODS - DAY

Joe skulks around the outside of the clearing, sticking to the trees. He comes up to the construction base camp.

All the equipment is there, with no one watching. There are CHAINSAWS, DIGGERS, and assorted HEAVY MACHINERY.

The opportunity for mischief is too tempting to pass up.

Joe shoulders the pellet gun and rushes over to the chainsaws. He begins BASHING them against the side of the dozer. Their chains snap quickly, and their bodies bend.

He rushes from them to a CAT PIPE-LAYER. Joe pries a side panel off and rips wires. Sparks fly as it's incapacitated.

A smile crosses Joe's face as he revels in the destruction. He takes a step toward another machine but hears VOICES and freezes. The MEN are returning from lunch.

Joe looks left and right--guys from each direction. Shit.

Then: a STRONG HAND grabs him from behind, covers his mouth and DRAGS him into the bushes--just as the WORKERS appear.

EXT. BUSHES - DAY

Joe looks up to see Brett. He puts his finger over his lips. "Shhh." They can hear the IRATE WORKERS freaking out over their broken tools--Thousands of dollars down the drain.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

They move with military precision--waiting and stepping with purpose. Hand signals when to go forward and when to stop.

Soon, enough distance has been put between them and danger.

The men exit from the thicket. Joe tries to get away from Brett, but he can't. They stop and face off.

BRETT

You got a vendetta against the sewer I should know about? Or was your penchant for destruction back there an impulsive property crime?

JOE

(pointing)

It's Avedon. That line runs to his house, and then all the way back into town. For what? So he can take a hot shower as far away from the poor people as fucking possible.

They start walking again, this time, on common ground.

JOE (CONT'D)

I moved here because I thought maybe his presence would give my mom and me a chance to start over somewhere new, somewhere good. But everywhere I turn, it seems like he's either tearing something down or sending people like us away.

BRETT

Tell me about it. I was a park ranger for thirty years until Avedon bought this land from the state and then fired my ass. I was supposed to wrap up the camp a few months ago. Been running it under the radar--not anymore.

JOE

...I'm sorry about that. I am.

BRETT

Don't be. Haven't had a rush like that since Desert Storm.

(musing)

I mean, what does that fuckhead even want with this place?

JOE

That's easy. It's perfect.

They emerge from the woods. In front of them is a deep canyon and a large lake in the distance. The view is wondrous.

JOE (CONT'D)

When I was over there--I was told we were 'preserving the American way of life'--keeping us safe. And now I'm home, and I'm realizing the America I almost died for wasn't for me. It was for Avedon.

They sit with this idea for an uncomfortably long time.

JOE (CONT'D)

If we want to eat tonight, we better bag some squirrels, huh?

BRETT

I ordered pizza. In all my time doing this, no one has ever come back with a single squirrel.

Joe rechecks his scope. Pumps his pellet rifle.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: A skinned and skewered squirrel sizzles.

A bonfire rages. A half-dozen squirrels skewered on sticks, roast over coals. The pizza sits untouched. They pick at the dead animals with delight--using their buck knives as forks.

STEVE

I feel like a Neanderthal.

DOUG

This is like the definition of what
it means to be a man.

The other men agree, but a voice cuts through them.

JOE

That's not even remotely true.

The crowd falls silent. Joe plays with his knife.

DOUG

Are you gonna enlighten us? What do
you think it means to be a man?

JOE

It means you're alone.

Everyone sits for a beat. The feeling is mutual.

Brett wanders over to a cooler and pulls out a bottle of Jameson and paper cups. Brett pours and passes out shots.

BRETT

Let's toast to that.

They lift their glasses in unison--and suck back the whiskey.

MONTAGE:

The night rages on. No one wears a shirt. Joe tosses his buck knife into a tree trunk. Others try and fail. Brett pulls more alcohol out of coolers. Doug wails on the guitar. Steve, the teacher, gnaws on a squirrel skull. They use the pellet guns to shoot beer bottles--until someone hits a lantern.

SMASH TO BLACK.

EXT. CAMP - EARLY MORNING

Shattered Jameson bottles, beer cans, and squirrel skeletons sit in smoldering ash. Guys are passed out in their tents.

Joe is already awake. He's got a camping percolator for coffee and is uncovering the embers from the fire. Brett, none the worse for wear, appears out of his tent.

BRETT

(points to the percolator)
You know how that works?

JOE

Water in the bottom. Grounds in the middle. Coffee out the top.

BRETT

When the water hits the heat, it can either become steam, and run away, or it can bubble through the muck. And if it makes it through that, there's something special on the other end. Something perfect.

JOE

Yeah. I like coffee too.

BRETT

Not sure if you're paying attention, but we're the water in this metaphor. And the world is boiling people like you and me.
(poking the bear)
So, what do you want the world to look like on the other side?

JOE

How about a place where I'm not hungry and hungover?

BRETT

Come on. If you could have one thing--one thing to make the world a better place, what would it be? Don't think--Just say it. Say it.

Joe boils along with the water. It spills into the fire.

JOE

I dunno--maybe someone puts a bullet in Ethan Avedon's head.

Brett claps his hands in delight.

BRETT

That 'someone' could be you! I mean, why can't you be the person who changes the goddamn world?

JOE

Because I'm nothing.

Joe storms away. A frustrated Brett watches him go.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NATURE PRESERVE - DAY

The guys all exchange high-fives as they get into their cars. Brett walks around, saying his goodbyes and shaking hands.

Liv pulls down the lane. Cathy in the passenger seat. Danny in the back. She exits the driver's side. They awkwardly hug.

LIV

You look like a new man.

JOE

Just got some sun.

Cathy shoots Joe a look. He takes the keys from her.

CATHY

She asked to come. Wanted to know if you were having fun.

JOE

Yes. She's very nice, Ma.

Joe makes sure they drive away before Brett comes around.

I/E. SHITTY SEDAN - MOVING

Cathy in the passenger. Liv and Danny in back. Joe checks the rearview as they drive. Brett waves until consumed by dust.

BRETT

(sotto)

I'll be seeing you real soon.

INT. CHEMO ROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY

Joe is next to Cathy. She's hooked to the drip--eyes closed. Dr. Vakil enters the room. Joe waves his checkbook at him.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - HOSPITAL - DAY

Joe sits at the doctor's desk and fills out a check to the hospital. Dr. Vakil is by the window watching construction.

DR. VAKIL

The day of reckoning is coming. May 26th. 9AM. Grand opening. Avedon is even going to give a speech.

JOE

Outdoors? In front of everybody?

DR. VAKIL

Yes. Should be a memorable one.

Joe nods along with these words. An idea forming.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Joe helps Cathy to the car. He pauses to stare at the new construction. Suddenly, we can hear SHOOTING and SCREAMING. The sound of war without the images. Cathy tugs his arm--He snaps out of it. The sound fades. They continue to the car.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Cathy sleeps on the couch. Joe puts a blanket over her. He removes her empty TV dinner tray and tosses it into the trash along with the Time Magazine with Avedon on the cover.

EXT. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Joe exits and finds a piece of colored paper on his front door. It's an ad for a Realtor offering cash for houses. We ZOOM OUT and see it's on every house in his neighborhood.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

It's packed. The night is not going Joe's way. Another keg kicks and spits foam out--a few patrons snap at him.

JOE

Danny--kegs need a swap.

DANNY

You didn't call me handsome.

An annoyed Danny nods and turns to go toward the fridge. A flustered Joe tries to grab some empty glasses and knocks them over. They shatter, and he curses under his breath.

Liv comes over with a broom. She sweeps the glass.

JOE

Who are all these people?

LIV

Avedon did a book signing and we're the bar that's in walking distance.

Joe scans the crowd--rich entitled assholes. These are not the regulars--Chuck and the regulars have all been relegated to the back by the pool tables. They're not happy about it.

JOE

Surprised Chuck hasn't chased them all out of here by now.

LIV

You know he's all bark. These pricks need a bite. And manners.

Joe turns back to the bar, where two DOUCHE BAGS are drinking boileermakers. One crushes his empty PBR can and tosses it to Danny. Danny instinctively moves away, and the guys laugh.

Liv starts to walk over to them, but Joe beats her to it.

JOE

You guys need another round?

The two douches size Joe up. Feel more confident.

DANNY

He threw a can at me.

Joe pats Danny on the back.

JOE

I'll handle this, handsome.

Two more douches stand behind these guys. Ready for trouble.

DOUCHE #1

Just so you know--I didn't throw the can at him. I threw it to him.

JOE

I know. If I saw you throw the can at him, we wouldn't be talking.

They snicker at his threat. Joe pulls out a six-pack of PBR and begins to break them off. Handing them to the douchebags.

Liv taps Joe on the shoulder.

LIV
You got company.

Joe looks past Liv--sees Brett at the other end of the bar. He immediately rushes over to him. Liv follows.

BRETT
(shakes Liv's hand)
Brett Jones, Alpha Excursions.
(to Joe)
Why didn't you tell me you had such a beautiful boss? Or were you keeping her all for yourself?

Liv shoots Joe a 'come get me' look.

LIV
I'm not totally sure he knows what to do with me.

Brett squeals at her comeback. Joe blushes.

DOUCHE #1 (O.S.)
Hey--waiting on the Jim Beam!

Brett and Joe cock their heads toward the douchebags.

LIV
I'll handle it. You two chat.

Liv heads back to the other end of the bar. Brett whistles.

BRETT
Don't worry, I'm not here to steal her from ya. Cops came by camp. Those Avedon guys didn't appreciate your sabotage.
(off Joe's face)
Don't worry, I told them I had no idea what they were talking about, but they put a permanent end to my glorious male excursion days.

JOE
I'll make it up to you. Somehow.

Brett leans in close.

BRETT

I think you know how you can.

Joe turns away. Brett follows.

JOE

That's not me.

BRETT

Find it hard to believe you don't consider yourself a man of action.

Joe starts to reply when they're interrupted by a COMMOTION.

BRETT (CONT'D)

--Case in point--

--The douchebags continue to toss their cans at Danny. Joe is over there in a flash. He sticks his hand out and catches the can out of the air--crumples it--and drops it. Intimidating.

JOE

Stop throwing cans at him.

The douches stand up. The place goes quiet. Chuck and his crew watch from afar but don't step in.

DOUCHE #2

He already told you, he's not throwing them at him. He's throwing them to him. To throw away.

Joe stands firm. Liv walks next to him. Both pissed.

BRETT (O.S.)

He said to knock it off.

Everyone turns. Brett is behind all six douchebags. He's taller than them. And better looking. And more fit.

But there are still six of them.

DOUCHE #1

You don't want this.

Brett looks past the douchebags to Liv.

BRETT

Liv, I know we just met, but I have to apologize.

LIV

For what?

BRETT

All the shit I'm about to break.

It happens fast. Brett casually smiles, then punches the lead douchebag in the throat. He goes down immediately.

The second douche swings on Brett, but he grabs him by the scruff of his neck and sends him into the jukebox. SMASH.

The other four douchebags tackle Brett. Inspired by the violence, the other out-of-towners, defined by their Ralph Lauren Quarter zips and Lululemon pants, join in.

Joe sees this and looks to Liv.

LIV

You better show him how to fight.

A grin forms on Joe's face. A real, genuine grin. Liv smiles back at him. He hops over the bar and enters the fray.

Joe immediately kicks ass. We have never seen him like this: strong, confident, capable--even calculated.

But there are A LOT of AVEDON FANS there. Liv snaps at Chuck.

LIV (CONT'D)

You pussies gonna let them get
their asses kicked?

In a blink, a good 'ole bar room brawl has broken out. Chuck and a few locals join in. Danny throws cans at the guys from behind the bar. Liv shoves people into the fray.

Our heroes are outnumbered, even with Chuck and friends. But life has hit them enough. They are dying to hit back.

Joe tosses guys off Brett, but takes a punch to the ear. Brett, nose bleeding, sees this and pounds the guy who hit Joe. The melee becomes a cacophony of brutal blows.

After a few belts to the mouth, Joe shakes free and finds the douche who was throwing cans. He grabs him and starts punching. The douche's head snaps back, teeth fly.

But Joe won't stop. His hits become dull thuds--until--

SPLASH! Liv is on the bar with the soda hose, spraying. The water snaps Joe out of it, and he drops the man.

LIV (CONT'D)

ALRIGHT! Alright, knock it off. You
got ten seconds to collect your
teeth and get the fuck outta here.

The douchebags rally around their leader. He's hurt bad. They file out the door without protest--only shame.

Chuck limps up and pats Joe on the back--impressed.

CHUCK

Didn't know you had it in you. Stop by if you wanna pick up a shift. But don't be late.

Brett notices Joe is still shaking from adrenaline.

LIV

Joe--better go out the back. Those dickheads seem litigious.
(points to Brett)
New guy--You owe me a jukebox.

BRETT

Don't worry, I got that covered.

EXT. BAR - LATE NIGHT

Joe hops into his car and twists the keys. It sputters but dies. He slumps, defeated. Then: A SHADOW--a RUMBLE. Brett pulls up in an '88 Ford F-150. Waves some jumper cables.

CUT TO:

Brett sets the cables up on Joe's car. Starts his engine. The two of them just stand there--no one wants to speak first.

BRETT

I told ya, bloodshed can make the world a better place. But it takes a man with some stones to act.

Joe stares at Brett. Makes a decision.

JOE

I got them. Wondering if you got a pair--or if you're all talk?

BRETT

Big brass ones.

Joe ducks into his car and starts his engine. V-ROOM. He gets back out, and they take the jumper cables off.

JOE

Guess it's settled then.

The two firmly shake hands. A solid trust has been earned.

INT. JOE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Joe lies in bed. His laptop is open. He watches an old cellphone video of a group of guys sitting around a campfire.

They're in fatigues. Tents behind them. The video pans to Joe, who is laughing hard as one guy does a funny accent while reading a letter from Cathy. Joe shuts the laptop.

He rolls over to shut his light off. There's an old photo of his Marine Unit. They're crowded around a Humvee.

We hover for a beat, then: blackness.

INT. ATTIC - JOE'S HOUSE - MORNING

The ladder door opens. Light. Joe's head pops up. His eyes scan the area. They settle on a long black case--he grabs it.

INT. KITCHEN - JOE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Ham, cheese, and bread hit the counter. Joe makes sandwiches. Cathy hobbles in and pulls the OJ out of the fridge. She eases into her spot at the table. Her pills are laid out.

CATHY

Cancer is bad enough. Taking 15 pills a day might kill me anyway.

(off Joe)

You extra hungry?

JOE

Meeting Brett. The camp guy.

CATHY

What are you two gonna do?

Joe shifts his weight back and forth before speaking.

JOE

...Plan a murder.

CATHY

(laughing)

You boys have fun.

EXT. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY

Joe stands like a kid waiting for his divorced Dad. Black case string over his shoulder, two brown lunch bags in his fist. He checks his phone. Nervously shifts.

Cathy watches from the bay window, peeking through curtains.

You can hear the RUMBLE of Brett's F-150 from down the lane. An eager Joe walks to the end of his short driveway.

Brett pushes the passenger door open. Joe climbs in.

JOE

Didn't think you were coming.

BRETT

First day in a long time that I was excited to see the sunrise.

I/E. BRETT'S TRUCK - MOVING

Brett drums on the wheel. He's grooving to Luke Combs. Brett eyes the bag but doesn't ask. Joe puts it between his knees.

BRETT

I like to start out all new friendships with a hypothetical: would you rather have a third nipple or an eleventh toe?

Brett shoots Joe a bright, toothy grin. It loosens Joe up.

JOE

...I guess the extra toe may provide balance--could be nice.

BRETT

Wow. Practical. I'm a nipple guy. When I'm at the beach, I want the looks. Plus--conversation starter.

EXT. STORAGE LOCKER - DAY

The F-150 stops in front of a locker. Joe and Brett pop out. Brett takes a key from his pocket and unlocks the unit.

They roll the door up. It's dusty and musty inside.

Brett pulls a string, and a light goes on. There's an old conversion van parked in the back. Old boxes of clothes and trinkets around it. A small cot, a TV, a generator--

--and a jukebox covered in cobwebs.

Brett takes a dolly out of his truck. Rests it by the juke.

BRETT

Welcome to my humble abode.
(off Joe's face)
I know the guy who owns this place.
He keeps quiet, and I keep an eye
on everyone's shit. It's safe here.

Joe gives the area a once-over. Takes in every detail.

JOE

How long have you lived here?

BRETT

Sold my townhome last year and been
here off and on when I wasn't at
the camp. Now it's permanent.

Joe pokes around the boxes, looking through old furniture and
knick-knacks. It's aimless but thorough.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Careful--one of those boxes
contains my unmentionables.

Joe finds a photo album. Yellow-stained photos Brett as a
teen, then on a tank. Hunting trophies. Young Brett in a tux.

JOE

Got family?

BRETT

No kids. Ex lives in New Hampshire.
In the mountain house I bought her.

JOE

Where'd you get the jukebox?

Brett bites his lip and plays embarrassed.

BRETT

Always been pretty impulsive with
money. Probably why she left me--
that and our sexy mailman, Rob.

Joe puts the album back and stares Brett down.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Keep going. I'm an open book. Well,
open storage locker.

JOE

Why do you want to do this?

BRETT
Make a friend?

JOE
Kill a man.

BRETT
We're getting spicy at the top.

Brett sucks his tongue. A crazed look in his eyes. He grabs a cooler--motions for Joe to snag a chair. They sit.

BRETT (CONT'D)
When I was packing up camp, I thought about how no matter how loud I screamed, no one was going to care. Like you said, I was alone. No one could hear me. Avedon and his buddies are fucking the country six ways from Sunday, and no one's voice is ever going to be loud enough to make him stop.

JOE
...But a bullet might be.

BRETT
Yeah. A fucking bullet might be.
(off Joe's nod)
Well, what about you? Why now?

JOE
Been thinking about it for a long time. But this is the first time it feels like I have a real shot.

Brett sits with Joe's words. Unsure what's behind them.

BRETT
Okay, Marine. Walk me through how you want to do it.

I/E. TRUCK - MOVING

Brett and Joe are on the road headed toward the hospital.

JOE (V.O.)
May 26th. 9AM. Memorial Day
Weekend. Avedon's gonna open his new hospital with a big speech.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

The F-150 pulls around the back of the hospital--toward where the new structure is being built. Workers pay them no mind.

JOE (V.O.)
He'll be at a podium. Standing
still. So all we gotta do is just
pick our spot...

The truck cruises around the lot. Joe points his spots.

BRETT (V.O.)
Which do you think is the best?

JOE (V.O.)
None of these. They'll be covered.

I/E. TRUCK - MOVING

The truck pulls down the road and drives straight for half a mile. There's an old apartment complex. It's abandoned.

JOE (V.O.)
We gotta be where they don't think
anyone can fire from.

They pull into the lot. Grass grows through pavement. It's quiet. Not a soul in sight. Glory days are way behind it.

EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

Brett follows Joe up the stairs to a door with a broken lock.

BRETT
Been here before?

JOE
I like to plan ahead.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The door creaks. The place is empty--just dust and grime.

BRETT
Who owns this place?

JOE
Avedon Holdings.

Brett is confused.

JOE (CONT'D)

You told me about your spot, so I got to Googling. This is one of the many properties they bought in the area. Set for demo late summer.

Joe motions for Brett to follow him through another door.

INT. BEDROOM - APARTMENT - DAY

As empty as the rest of the place. There's a balcony with a glass sliding door. Joe pushes back faded curtains.

They walk out onto the balcony. Trees with no leaves obscure them from the street view, but you can see the entrance of the new hospital from here, in the distance.

Brett whistles.

BRETT

Jesus. How far away?

JOE

1000 yards. Give or take.

Joe heads back off the balcony and into the bedroom. Brett follows. As he passes the loose curtains, he finds himself face to face with a worn Remington 700 with a rusty scope.

Brett puts his hands up. But Joe lowers the gun with a smile.

BRETT

That's a fine piece of hardware.
But I don't think it has the range.

JOE

She will.

Joe gets down on his belly and sets the scope.

Brett gets down on all fours next to him.

SCOPE POV: We can see a WORKER attaching doors to the new addition of the hospital. Joe scans the area. Clear.

BRETT

What do we do now?

JOE

See who really is the best shot.

EXT. WOODS - LATE AFTERNOON

BANG! The rifle shakes into Joe's shoulder. A tuft of smoke exits the snout of the weapon. He pulls the bolt back to eject the spent cartridge. Brett holds spotter's binoculars.

BRETT

Low.

BINO POV: About 1000 yards away, we see a photo of Avedon tacked to a tree--A large bullet hole a foot below it.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Lots of scars on these timbers.
How'd you find this place?

JOE

On a hunt. Kinda became my secret spot. I don't always shoot. Sometimes I just sit and think.

Brett looks around. It is peaceful here. But then he scans the other trees, they have old bullet holes in them.

JOE (CONT'D)

You're the only person other than me that's ever been out here.

BRETT

I'm honored.

Joe takes a bullet from his pocket. Holds it up.

JOE

You want another go?

BRETT

My first shot didn't even hit the tree. I'll put my hope in you.

JOE

We need to figure out a way to dampen the sound for the getaway.

BRETT

Add it to the checklist.

Joe reloads the rifle. Brett uses the binos.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Okay, so...would you rather kill Avedon and then flee to Mexico for unlimited tacos with the hot gal from the bar or drink wine and eat cheese with her in France?

JOE

I don't have time for all that.

BANG! This one is a foot high. Joe reloads again.

BRETT

Might be nice to get laid in case you get life in a federal prison.

JOE

I've been laid before.

BRETT

From the way you walk, not recently. Okay, cowboy. How about this: If I hit the tree this time, you take Liv out on a date. Deal?

Brett takes the gun. He aims. BANG!

I/E. TRUCK - MOVING

Brett sulks behind the wheel. Joe laughs and can't stop. Eventually, Brett joins. They both are laughing now.

BRETT

Never much of a rifleman. I prefer to see the whites of their eyes.

JOE

I'll be our shooter. You can spot.

A bond has been formed.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Joe and Brett unload the jukebox. It's hard work.

BRETT

You seem like a smart and capable guy--why the fuck don't you have a real job that pays good money?

JOE
After I got out of the Marines,
I...had some trouble adjusting.

BRETT
No offense, but not sure that
monkey is off your back yet.

Joe laughs at this quip. Takes over the dolly.

JOE
Want to come in for a beer?

BRETT
This is the only jukebox I had, so
I better not press my luck.

Joe turns to go, but Brett's words cause him to pause.

BRETT (CONT'D)
Look, what we're doing--killing
someone--it's complicated. But it
shouldn't stop you from living.
Otherwise, what was this all for?

A gulp. Joe had never thought of this before.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Liv feeds a dollar bill in and then punches numbers on the
new jukebox. It starts playing Zack Bryan, and she "yahoos."

The other patrons in the bar love the sound. They dance with
each other. All the locals are enjoying themselves.

Liv struts over to the bar, where Joe is cleaning glasses.

LIV
Wooo! We're back in action. Some
friend you got there, Joe.

JOE
Yeah. Some friend.

LIV
Alright, who's gonna spin me?

Danny comes out and dances with Liv. Then he moves on to
someone else, and Liv is left out there alone.

A drunk Chuck claps at the bar. Elbows Joe.

CHUCK

If you don't get out there, I will.

Joe watches Liv. The light hits her just right. His heart pangs. She's grooving alone. Doesn't notice his eyes on her.

And then, Joe finds his courage. He struts around the bar and goes right up to her and holds his hand out.

JOE

Hey--uh--do you want to dance?

LIV

Yes.

Liv grabs it, and they dance. They move quick. Turns out, there's some life in Joe after-all. His moves surprise everyone. Especially Liv, who he spins.

Chuck stumbles to the jukebox. He selects "Tennessee Whiskey" by Chris Stapleton. He winks at the couple.

The mood in the bar changes immediately. Couples attach.

Joe and Liv look away, sensing the romance. She starts to let go, but he pulls her close. She nuzzles into him.

They sway back and forth. Both of their eyes closed.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - JOE'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

Joe enters. Cathy is still on the couch. A TV dinner sits in front of her. She hasn't touched it. He sits next to her.

CATHY

You smell like perfume.

JOE

There was dancing tonight.

This should excite her, but she has worry on her face.

CATHY

Better than another fight.

Joe's shoulders sink. She's pissed.

JOE

They were messing with Danny--

CATHY

Every time a good man stands up for what's right, he risks winding up on his back, six feet down.

Cathy picks a book up off the table.

CATHY (CONT'D)

Remember this book? "I'll Love You Forever". It's the one where the mom sneaks in to rock her kid to sleep, even when he's grown. We're at the part where I can't rock you anymore. I need you around to rock me. I can't see you go away again.

She opens the book to the end. It's a picture of the adult son cradling his old mother and singing to her. Real sad.

CATHY (CONT'D)

You think the mom is dead on the last page?

Joe gets up without answering. Comes back from the kitchen with a pill sorter and water. Pours out her daily dose.

JOE

You take them. I'll read.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Joe works on the foundation. Takes a beat. Looks upward at the frame--gets an idea. He climbs the frame like a ladder. He steadies himself at the top. He extends his tape measure, aims it like a gun--tracks the people below like a sniper.

He hears the rumble of Brett's truck as it pulls onto the lot. He lowers his fake gun. A smile crosses his face. Brett pops out. He shakes hands with Chuck. Then waves at Joe.

BRETT

You feel like a cheeseburger?

INT. GREASY BURGER JOINT - LATE AFTERNOON

Joe is mid-laugh. They each have large burgers and beers in front of them. Brett is emphatically telling a story.

BRETT

So, I get this buck--twelve point--day one, hour one. I'm elated.

(MORE)

BRETT (CONT'D)

I'm still in my gear, still holding my rifle--I walk in the front door, run up the stairs, and fling open the door to my bedroom...and see Angela and Rob fucking their brains out on the new sleep number I bought not even a month prior.

JOE

What did you do?

BRETT

I leveled my rifle and said, "Rob, would you rather take a new fucking mattress home or lose your life?" Long story long, takes him forty fucking minutes to drag the thing outside, strap it to his fucking Prius, and take off. I haven't slept on a mattress since.

JOE

(mind wandering)

Mattresses...mattresses would work.

Brett shoots him a confused look. Then he understands...

"Courtesy of the Red, White, & Blue" by Toby Keith plays:

EXT. GOODWILL - DAY

Brett and Joe load a dozen mattresses into the back of the truck. Brett slaps some cash into a WORKER's hand.

I/E. TRUCK - MOVING

Joe and Brett goof around in the truck. They pass a bag of beef jerky back and forth. Laugh. Very fraternal.

INT. BEDROOM - APARTMENT - DAY

Brett and Joe take a sledgehammer to the sliding glass doors that separate the balcony from the apartment. They shatter.

They leave, and each comes back with a mattress. They stack them sideways to cover where the glass used to be. They go back and forth the window is covered. Amateur soundproofing.

Joe drills a hole in the center of the mattresses. They set up the gun and aim through the hole--a perfect line drive.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

The house is further along. Joe sips water. Chuck waves him down. Joe joins the other guys and is handed a cold beer.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Brett and Danny play pool in the corner with Chuck. Joe and Liv pour beers together. She hip-checks him, and he whips her with a bar towel. It's flirty. Cathy loves what she sees.

INT. STORAGE LOCKER - DAY

Joe smokes a cigar while working on modifying the rifle. He's blueprinting the action, pillar bedding the stock, all while Brett tosses a baseball against the wall like Steve McQueen.

Brett occasionally looks over to watch Joe, intently.

INT. JOE'S HOUSE - VARIOUS - NIGHT

Joe, Brett, Liv, Cathy, and Danny have a family dinner. After they finish, they settle in and watch 'Shane' on TCM.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

The house is almost complete. Landscaping is being put in. Chuck approves of this works and heads inside.

INT. AVEDON'S HOME - DAY

TRACK WITH CHUCK as we see the interior still needs a lot of work. He stops to watch Joe install drywall--nods approval.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Brett shows Danny how to shoot pool while Liv and Joe flirt.

INT. CHEMO ROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY

Joe next to Cathy. She leans on him. Brett enters with coffee and some cafeteria food. Cathy kisses his hand in thanks.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

They both walk Cathy to the car. Share a look as they examine the hospital construction that's almost finished.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The rifle now has a larger scope and barrel. Brett uses the binos while Joe fires. He obliterates the photo of Avedon.

EXT. ROADSIDE - LATER

A jovial Joe and Brett emerge from the woods after shooting. Brett's truck is parked on the side of the forest-lined road.

The Toby Kieth ballad FADES OUT as the truck pulls away.

INT. TRUCK - MOVING

The guys ride in relative silence. Brett looks over to Joe.

BRETT

If you had a billion dollars, what do you think would be different?

JOE

I think my mom would live longer.

BRETT

Don't think she'd live better.

These words warm Joe's heart.

EXT. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Brett stands by his truck. Joe lingers beside him.

BRETT

I should be getting back.

JOE

Come on. Would you rather lie on a cot stinking like the woods, or take a shower at your friend's?

BRETT

Fuck you. Do I smell? You gotta tell a guy that kinda stuff.

INT. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Joe and Brett enter. Danny, Liv, and Cathy chat on the couch. Danny watches WWE Smackdown--a pizza box on the coffee table.

CATHY
There's my boys.

BRETT
You having a party without us?

LIV
Cathy volunteered to watch Danny while I ran a few errands today.
(to Danny)
Let's go get some dinner, bud.

DANNY
We already ate pizza. And Smackdown's not done.

CATHY
Yeah, I fed him. Why don't the young people go grab a bite?

Liv looks to the guys. Joe stutters. Brett takes over.

BRETT
If it's alright, with everyone, I'd rather take a shower here. And let the two of you get dinner together.

LIV
I'll get my coat.

Cathy grabs Brett's arm with happiness. He winks at Joe.

EXT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Joe and Liv share a candlelit dinner in a booth. It's one of those u-shaped ones that force them to be next to each other. They sip red wine. Then they both awkwardly laugh. Nervous.

LIV
So...Brett's a nice guy.

JOE
The best. Real fun to be around.

LIV
You two are good for each other.

JOE

Been so long since I made a friend,
forgot how nice it was having them.

LIV

You don't think we're friends?

JOE

No. I just think I have a little
crush on you. That's all.

This takes her by surprise. Joe takes a gulp of wine. But Liv leans into the candlelight now that she knows this is a date.

LIV

The feeling is mutual.

Their free hands meet in the middle of the table. It's cute.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Cathy is passed out on the couch. Danny is, too.

HALLWAY

A newly showered Brett walks down the ranch home's hall, peeking in doors. He's wrapped only in a towel.

JOE'S ROOM

Brett enters. He flips on a light and immediately sees how empty it is. He picks up a lonely picture from the end table: Joe and his Marine unit. Brett immediately feels guilty. But as he turns, Brett sees a wall we haven't seen before.

It has a metal desk with a typewriter on it...and the entire wall is papered with photos of Avedon--info on his holdings, interviews, and whereabouts. Very worrisome. Brett whistles.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A waiter takes away their finished plates. Joe pours the last of the bottle of red wine into his and Liv's glasses.

LIV

This is nice, so I don't want to
ruin it, but you've been a
different guy over the last weeks.
(she means it)
It's good to see you smile.

JOE

When I moved here--I was so lost. I had fucked up so much--And now, I feel like I can handle anything.

LIV

From where I sit, seems like you've always been the cowboy riding in on a white horse to save everyone.

JOE

I dunno. So much of my life has been people telling me I'm a hero for serving. Or for taking care of my mom. But those are just things I knew had to be done. I want to be a hero for doing something no one expects me to do.

LIV

That sounds like it could be an Ethan Avedon quote.

Joe grips the empty wine bottle tightly.

JOE

It's not. I hate that guy.

LIV

Oh, totally--fuck him.

Liv is a little buzzed, pontificating.

LIV (CONT'D)

At the beginning, I was excited he built his warehouses here. But I've been talking to some other small business owners about it--Unless there's some big changes, I don't know how long people like us can afford to stay here. You involved in any of the protests at all?

JOE

Uhh--I am. In my own way.

LIV

Guys like that--they think they have to own everything to make an impact. When really, they've gotta just give their money away.

(jokingly)

Or die.

(MORE)

LIV (CONT'D)
 (sips her wine)
 Sorry. Was that too much?

It was not too much for Joe.

JOE
 Can I...Can I kiss you?

LIV
 Been waiting for it.

They kiss. It's soft, deep, and doesn't stop. The passion continues as they move into a genuine make-out.

We PULL BACK from the kiss, out through the bay window.

EXT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

We continue to PULL OUT--all the way across the street where:
 FLASH! A MAN in a BLACK TAHOE takes a PHOTO OF THE COUPLE.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - FBI OFFICE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: A black-and-white photo of Liv and Joe kissing.

MACK (O.S.)
 She's squeaky clean. A divorcee who
 seems on track to get her heart
 broken again. But that's for Dr.
 Phil to sort out, not us.

PAN TO more still photos of Joe walking around the hospital with Brett, Joe on the construction site, and the two of them making bullets, eating burgers--everything they've done.

MACK (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Joe was in Fallujah during the
 worst of it. Got himself a Purple
 Heart and an honorable discharge.
 But then did 18 months in prison
 after he punched out an off-duty
 police officer in a bar brawl.

Our PAN stops on MACK (20s), an eager agent who was a member of the Young Republicans at Yale. He's in a suit and tie--an FBI lanyard around his neck. TROY (30s) is next to him. He's in similar attire but did Teach for America before his badge.

MACK (CONT'D)

After he got out, he moved here
with his mother from Philly.

Standing across from them is GARRETT SULLIVAN (60s), an
arrogant jackass in a black suit. He peruses the photos.

TROY

We found him through a technique we
call gold panning: we set up an
event to attract people with a
psychological makeup that may be
radicalized and let the shiny
nuggets stand out on their own.

MACK

With his history of violence,
personal trauma, and gun ownership,
Joe is shining up real nice.

Garrett taps the 'kissing' photo.

GARRETT

Whose idea was it to encourage him
to get his dick wet instead of
committing more federal crimes?

A door opens behind Garrett. They turn to see...

BRETT

That would be me.

Brett is in a clean suit and wears an FBI lanyard. He looks
like a completely different person to us--cool and collected.

GARRETT

I thought they put you on leave
when your wife died?

The question is shitty, but Brett won't let it shake him.

BRETT

They did. I came back to set the
individual arrest record.

Brett sits with Mack and Troy. Mack pats his back. Troy is a
little more composed but proud of his boss.

Garrett packs a Zyn. He's unimpressed.

GARRETT

A lone shooter seems like a job for
the local police, not the FBI.

BRETT

That's because you're looking at a small corner of the mural we're painting. This all has to go beyond conversational violence. The friendship I'm building has to be everything to him before I push him into making a much bigger splash.

An overly eager Mack tries to help.

MACK

With the right time and effort--
This could be a career-maker.

This piques Garrett's interest. But he hard-lines.

GARRETT

I'm aware this unit has cuffed a bunch of angry, autistic Muslims in the past. But I'm in charge now, and patience isn't my virtue. So make some progress and make this worth my time. You're dismissed.

INT. KITCHEN - FBI OFFICE - LATE NIGHT

Brett uses a Keurig machine. Troy enters behind him. He has a manila envelope under his arm. Brett makes him a coffee, too.

TROY

You smell like lavender.

BRETT

I used an old lady's soap.

TROY

Thank god. You're out there every night. Going feral on me?

BRETT

If you catch me howling at the moon, put a bullet in my skull.
(subject change)
Where's the kid?

TROY

Kissing the new boss's ass.
(hands him the envelope)
That's phase two. Sounds like we need to push it hard and fast.

BRETT

That'll end well. What do we know about this Garrett guy, anyway?

TROY

Lots of promotions--limited fieldwork. He's a talking head the bureau likes to put on the TV.

(tentative beat)

I know I pushed to arrest Joe right away--but I'm glad you made us wait. If they assigned Garrett to the case, it means they must think this is as big as you do.

BRETT

Suppose I should be glad they're listening to me upstairs.

(artful subject change)

So, what--we cuff him, and Garrett smiles for the cameras? Seems fair.

TROY

Don't worry, Joe is your horse. We're here to watch you break him.

Brett lets that fact rush over him. It gives him chills.

I/E. SHITTY SEDAN - NIGHT

Joe and Liv make out in the front seat. Lots of groping and heavy petting. They break apart for a moment.

LIV

Can we go inside?

JOE

If you saw my bedroom, it might change things.

She laughs at this notion, but if she knew, they would.

LIV

Okay--don't want that. And if we get Danny and drive to my place, it might kill the mood.

(she thinks)

Shit--How big's your back seat?

The two of them open their doors, run around the car, and enter the back seat. They immediately pounce on each other.

They're rolling around for a second before they break apart.

LIV (CONT'D)

What?

Joe tries to find his words.

JOE

I--I never thought life could be this good after so much has gone so wrong. Didn't think I deserved it.

LIV

Prove to me that you do.

It heats up again real quick. The foreplay is hot and fast. Shirts rise. Chests are kissed. Joe's back is covered in SCARS, but they go unmentioned as pants come off completely.

The car shakes. The windows fog up. And the two of them find the love that's been in front of them the whole time.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. WAWA - NIGHT

Brett wipes the fog off a convenience store cooler. He sees his reflection in the glass. He takes a good, long look. Doesn't like what he sees. Brett ruffles his hair and takes off his tie. Unbuttons his shirt. Slips off his jacket.

CUSTOMER (O.S.)

Yo--can I grab an iced tea?

An embarrassed Brett turns to see an impatient customer behind him. He nods politely and opens the fridge for them.

I/E. TRUCK - WAWA PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Gas pumps into Brett's truck, but he's not pumping. He's in the cab, peeling off the rest of his suit and putting on his hunting gear. He takes out his wallet and removes a picture of his wife. She's smiling on the beach. He bites his lip. Then zips it all into a duffle bag. Transformation complete.

EXT. STORAGE LOCKER - NIGHT

Brett sits on his cooler, sipping a beer--all alone. He burps. Spits onto the pavement. Has some heartburn. As he leans back to look at the stars, he sees an Avedon billboard.

BRETT

You gotta be fucking kidding me.

INT. STORAGE LOCKER - NIGHT

Brett is on his laptop. He types in "Is Ethan Avedon bad?" into Google. The first thing that pops up is a YouTube clip of Avedon on The Joe Rogan Experience. He presses PLAY.

JOE ROGAN (ON YOUTUBE)
Is that real? Jamie, pull that up.

ETHAN AVEDON (ON YOUTUBE)
Yes--That's my real return. I paid zero dollars in taxes. Zero.

I/E. TRUCK - DAY

Brett drives past farmland. 'SOLD' signs line the road.

ETHAN AVEDON (V.O.)
People are mad at me about it, but like, what has the government ever done for you? I'm seriously asking.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

Brett pulls over. Watches as a pipe shits sludge into a pristine river--The giant Avedon warehouse in the distance.

ETHAN AVEDON (V.O.)
Only 10% of the federal budget is set aside to help the poor.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

TRACK WITH Brett through town. He walks past homeless tents, then turns the corner, and it's basically Rodeo Drive.

ETHAN AVEDON (V.O.)
You don't want me wasting my cash on taxes because people like me keep the entire economy afloat.

EXT. APARTMENTS - DAY

Brett pokes around the abandoned apartments. There are so many signs of past lives--picture frames, carpets, artwork.

ETHAN AVEDON (V.O.)
I'm your employer. I own the homes you rent--the social media you bitch on. I hold real power.

INT. BEDROOM - APARTMENT - DAY

Brett is alone. He sits on the floor with binoculars and looks through the mattress hole. He eyes the new hospital.

ETHAN AVEDON (V.O.)
If I'm not rich, that all goes
away. You'll be on your own.

INT. STORAGE LOCKER - NIGHT

Brett closes out the Rogan link. Goes BACK. Clicks on a "r/Avedon" Reddit forum--posts about Avedon threatening unions, market manipulation, and military dealings.

Finds an article titled: "Gold Star Families Lose Avedon Lawsuit." A few words jump out: "--equipment failure--eight dead--not liable." Brett's eyes focus on a familiar photo inside the article. It's of the squad of soldiers affected...

It's an identical photo to the one on Joe's bedside table.

BRETT
...Holy fucking shit.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Bottles of beer are handed over to the workers. Everyone is in a great mood. The place is packed. Cathy claps as Chuck and Danny dance. Liv plays a good host, chatting to tables. A shaken Brett makes his way through the throngs of people.

BRETT
This crowd is wild.

JOE
Apparently, Chuck unlocked a hefty
bonus finishing part of the house
early--using it all on Coors Light.

BRETT
I guess that's trickle-down
economics. But all money spent at
the bar is good money. Reminds me
of a guy from my unit...

Joe looks out to Chuck, who is blasted. Waves to him.

JOE
Sorry--wasn't listening--could ya
grab another case from the fridge?

INT. FRIDGE - BAR - NIGHT

It's quiet. Brett rests his back on the wall. Unsure how to proceed in this situation.

The fridge door opens. It's Liv. Brett straightens.

LIV
You get lost?

Brett gestures to the cases.

BRETT
Just deciding how many of these things I can carry out at once.

LIV
We stay this busy, and I can hire you too--if you want? Joe mentioned you've been doing job interviews--

BRETT
No--no. I'm good. I actually have a few leads--but thank you. Really.

Liv lingers. Brett makes a move for the beer boxes.

LIV
I just wanna say, I don't know what you did that weekend, but thanks. That man seems whole again. And his happiness is saving his mom's life.
(choked up)
Don't know what we would have done without you. You're like an angel.

No compliment has ever hurt anyone more.

BRETT
Don't mention it. Seriously.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

"A Bar Song (Topsy)" by Shaboozey plays on the jukebox.

Brett places two boxes of beer on the bar. He begins stocking them in the fridge, eventually then handing them to thirsty patrons with Danny's help. He watches as Liv and Joe dance with Chuck and Cathy. This is a party, and he's the pooper.

Joe waves for Brett to join, but he doesn't. Instead, he takes a cigarette out of a pack left on the bar and lights.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Joe breaks down boxes using the buck knife Brett gave them. Brett sees that and it sends him into a bit of a spiral. He grips a box tight, and squishes it with animosity.

JOE

You good? Been quiet all night.

Brett tosses the box and turns to talk.

BRETT

...A role reversal, huh? I think I just haven't gotten enough sleep.

JOE

You can use my bed if you want. Spending the night at Liv's again.

BRETT

You dog. Proud of you.

JOE

Just trying to live. Like you said.

Joe looks bashful. Brett forces a smile.

BRETT

Look--was thinking about the shot.

JOE

The gun is ready. And I'm hitting consistently now.

BRETT

Totally. But...what if we didn't have to fire at all? A well-placed device, we wouldn't even have to be in the state when it went off.

JOE

Don't want to hurt anyone innocent.

Brett goes back to the trash. Joe helps him.

BRETT

Yeah, but what if you miss, or god forbid, hit the wrong person?

JOE

I'd turn myself in--face the consequences.

This answer catches Brett completely off guard.

BRETT
--Don't be stupid--

JOE
(this is his code)
It's not stupid. I only want to do
this if we punish the right person.
That's justice. Besides, I don't
even know how to build a bomb.

Brett digs in his pocket and takes out some wrinkled plans.

BRETT
I do. Got them from the Anarchist
cookbook. Seems simple enough.

He holds them out to Joe like a stranger with candy.

BRETT (CONT'D)
I know it seems drastic. But I
think it's what Avedon deserves.
Just...think about it--okay?

JOE
Uh--Of course. Good looking out.

Joe takes the plans from Brett. Pockets them.

INT. TRUCK - MOVING

Brett texts a group thread with Troy and Mack.

BRETT (TEXT)
Tell Garrett we're in phase two.

Mack sends a CONFETTI EFFECT. Brett tosses his phone away.

INT. SHITTY SEDAN - MOVING

Joe drives Liv home. Danny and Cathy are asleep in the back.

LIV
I want to show you something.

Joe looks over his shoulder, then back to Liv.

LIV (CONT'D)
Not that kind of something. Well,
not right now, anyway. You free
tomorrow morning?

JOE
I'm supposed to hang with Brett.

LIV
Can you cancel?

Joe thinks about it, then nods. It makes Liv's night.

EXT. TRUCK STOP - MORNING

A stack of cash next to a box of donuts. Troy & Brett sit in the bed of his F-150. Brett smokes and counts. Troy snacks.

TROY
I thought Angela made you quit like twenty years ago?

BRETT
You never really quit. You just wait a little longer between them. Mack with Garrett again?

TROY
Don't take it personal--Garrett told him he thought he'd be good on camera, and it devolved from there.

BRETT
We're not buying materials yet. Cash could have waited. You should be at home with your wife.

TROY
I'm here on her orders, not the FBI. Wanted to make sure you're doing okay with everything else...

BRETT
Peachy. Came to the realization today that I spent my whole life working, and all the people I got closest to are in prison or dead.

TROY
Maybe it's time to think about what to do after all of this.

BRETT
Or maybe it's just time to start really smoking again.

Brett uses his dying butt to light another cancer stick.

EXT. FIREHOUSE - MORNING

Joe's sedan pulls into the local firehouse. There's a lot of cars parked out front. Liv takes his hand. Guides him inside.

INT. MAIN ROOM - FIREHOUSE - MORNING

The main room of the firehouse has a circle of chairs inside it. Sitting in those chairs are farmers, blue-collar workers, teachers, a priest, a rabbi--a cross-cultural brain trust. They all seem to know Liv. Joe sits next to her--Bashful.

JOE

What is this?

LIV

We're a committee formed to deal with Ethan Avedon and the town--I know you said you hated him. So I did a little research and there's a bunch of other people here that feel the same way. We have a plan to work with other local business owners to protect our interests.

JOE

Did anybody think of putting a bullet in his head?

This gets a lot of laughter from the room. He wasn't kidding.

LIV

Believe me, it's come up. But we think we have enough evidence of collusion and price fixing to work against him in court. We even contacted someone from NPR who wants to cover the story. We're writing her testimonials.

JOE

Like the radio station?

LIV

I thought you could tell her your mom's story. What do you think?

Everyone looks at Joe expectantly. He turns pale.

JOE

...I gotta go.

Joe stands and rushes out.

EXT. STORAGE LOCKER - DAY

Brett sits alone. Listens to a Phillies game on the radio. Whittles a stick with his pocket knife. Joe parks. Pops out.

BRETT
Almost sent out the search party.

JOE
I was with Liv. It got weird.

BRETT
I'm no sex expert, but you're lucky anyone wants to fuck you. If she's doing something funky, play along.

Brett puts his whittling down.

BRETT (CONT'D)
You bring the gun?

Joe shakes his head, "no."

JOE
Did you know there were local business owners who were going to potentially sue Avedon?

BRETT
I hope they can get some money out of him before he becomes a corpse.

JOE
You could be one of them. You could talk to NPR. Write them a letter.

This gets Brett to lean forward in his chair.

BRETT
NPR? Like Terri fucking Gross?

JOE
I don't know who that is.

Brett crosses his arms. Sizes Joe up.

BRETT
Are you getting cold feet?

JOE
I just don't want to shoot, okay!?

Brett holds his hands up--no offense here.

BRETT
What do you want to do instead?

JOE
....Was thinking I'd visit the guys
from my Marine unit.

This piques Brett's interest. He pivots motives in his brain.

BRETT
Want company?

I/E. SHITTY SEDAN - MOVING

Joe drives. Brett tries to figure out where they're headed. They wind down I-95 toward Washington D.C. He's confused.

EXT. ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

Brett carries a map, but Joe knows the way. He passes crowds and tour groups. Brett has to walk faster to keep pace.

EXT. TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER - DAY

If you've been there, you know the power of this place. The neoclassical, white marble sarcophagus stands atop a hill overlooking Washington. A MARINE walks his guard.

Brett and Joe watch the solitary marching Marine. It's quiet until Joe decides to speak. They remain staring forward.

JOE
It was a routine stop--then BANG. I was hit first, knocked me down. When I looked up, my guys had circled around me. The next volley hit our rear--it should have bounced off their armor, but the backplate was manufactured by Avedon Holdings. It snapped in two.
(chokes tears)
They all fell around me. One by one. And the bullets kept coming.

Joe finally turns to face Brett. His face is white. Haggard.

JOE (CONT'D)
That's where me and Avedon's lives diverged. He became a billionaire, and I grabbed the guy closest to me and started dragging.
(MORE)

JOE (CONT'D)

But I got hit again. And again. And again. They never found all their bodies. But they found me. I woke up in a hospital. Been alone ever since.

(tears flow)

I want there to be an important reason I'm here, and they're not. Or a real good reason to give my life so I can be with them again--

Brett places his hand on Joe's shoulder. They both cry.

JOE (CONT'D)

--Lord knows I've tried. Spent time swinging at anyone who looked at me sideways. But when I woke up today I realized, maybe I do want to live. And then I felt like a bad friend...Am I a bad friend?

BRETT

No.

Brett gives Joe a bear hug. They weep in each other's arms. No one around bothers them. And the Marine keeps marching.

INT. DINER - LATER

One of those nostalgic joints where waitresses call you "sugar". Brett and Joe sip coffee. Barely touched their food.

JOE

It ached inside me for so long. Sometimes it hurts so bad I wanted to scream. But I never did.

BRETT

Why not?

JOE

My problems never felt big enough to wake the neighborhood.

Brett twirls a spoon in his coffee cup. Takes it all in.

BRETT

Where do you want to go from here?

Joe shrugs. He thought he'd carry this forever.

JOE

Part of me wants to walk away. Not
let him take anything else from me.
(a worried query)
But, would that fuck us up?

Brett shakes his head, "no." He takes a sip of his coffee.
Uses his mug to pose his typical question.

BRETT

I think you gotta ask yourself,
would you rather be able to see
twenty minutes into the future, or
twenty years?

(off his face)

If you took twenty minutes, maybe
you'd see me annoyed we fired a
thousand rounds into maple trees
for the last six months. Although,
I got a mean tan out of it. But if
you took twenty years, and saw me
making steaks on the grill while
you and Liv chased your kids
around, you'd see me smile.

Brett finishes his coffee and places the mug down.

BRETT (CONT'D)

No matter what you decide, I'll be
there. That's a promise.

Brett's words puts Joe at ease. He knows he means them.

EXT. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Brett waves to Joe from his truck as Joe heads inside.
There's a pep in Joe's step--he's noticeably lighter.

But an ominous look on Brett's face.

I/E. TRUCK - MOVING

Brett speeds through the neighborhood. As soon as Joe's house
is out of sight, he SLAMS the brakes and rips open his door.

He VOMITS on the grass. Wipes his mouth. His phone vibrates.

TROY (TEXT)

You're late. Garrett is pissed.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - FBI OFFICE - NIGHT

A photo of Brett and Joe hugging is tacked to the board. Troy and Mack stare at it. They turn to the long table.

Brett sits. Garrett looms over him.

GARRETT

Christ--We sent a cowboy out in the field, and he came back an Indian--what's this peace-pipe bullshit?

BRETT

We should back off. I'll do a slow-go. Joe Malone is not a danger anymore. This is a success.

GARRETT

The fuck it is. Money--man hours--I even talked to a few reporters--

Troy bites his lip. That's very bad news.

BRETT

No one told you to do that.

GARRETT

I have a narrative and a brand to protect, and you're out there hugging this asshole instead of shoving him over the edge.

Brett's patience has worn thin. He stands--they square off.

BRETT

I didn't need to push him. Life did. Life keeps pushing. He soared.

Troy stands beside Brett. But Mack stands next to Garrett.

GARRETT

Then shoot him out of the sky!

BRETT

Let me ask you a hypothetical: who's the better person--the veteran who gave everything he had for this country, or the billionaire he's plotting to kill, who keeps stealing from her?

GARRETT

Are you fucking serious right now?

BRETT

Down here, away from the desk jobs,
we don't let questions fluster us.

Troy grabs Brett's shoulder, tight. He shuts up.

TROY

Let us regroup and reassess. We'll
come back with a plan of action.

MACK

We want this, sir. I promise you.

GARRETT

If this case doesn't go, you're
fired. No pension, no healthcare--
FIRED. I'll see to it myself.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Joe pulls beers. Liv walks past without flirting. He notices.
Hands over a frothy mug and motions to Danny.

JOE

Handsome--Watch the bar for a sec?

Danny happily takes over as bartender.

INT. FRIDGE - BAR - NIGHT

Joe enters the fridge. Liv is taking inventory.

JOE

How was the rest of the meeting?

LIV

Short. Woulda went longer, but I
had no explanation for where the
guy I was dating ran off to.

JOE

Got overwhelmed--not used to anyone
understanding or wanting to know
what I think. Talked to Brett and--

LIV

--I like Brett. But I wish you
talked to me like you talk to him.
You can talk to me about anything.

Joe never considered that option.

JOE
You wanna stay over tonight?

LIV
Like at your place?

JOE
Yeah. I wanna show you something.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Danny sleeps on the couch. Liv puts a blanket over him. Joe watches her. Loves what he sees.

JOE
Now--you just wait here a sec.

Liv turns as Joe races back to his room.

INT. JOE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Joe peers at his Avedon wall. Takes a deep breath.

JOE
Okay. I'm ready.

Liv creaks the door open. Her eyes hit the wall--go wide.

LIV
...Whoa...

Liv traces her hand over all the news clippings and photos. It takes her a long time to process. Eventually, she finds her way to Joe, who is very vulnerable.

LIV (CONT'D)
When you said you hated him...

JOE
I meant it. I guess you could say I let it get me a little overboard.

LIV
What were you going to do with all of this stuff?

JOE
I dunno...I was thinking maybe we could give it to Terri Gross with the letters.

LIV

You know who Terri Gross is?

JOE

Spent all day listening to NPR. She seems nice. And I like her voice. ...Are we gonna be okay?

LIV

Yes.

She kisses him and they fall backward onto his bed.

I/E. LEXUS - MOVING

Troy drives Brett. Lights race by the windows.

TROY

I know you don't want to hear it, but you gotta start thinking of your career, your future--

BRETT

Been working seventy-hour weeks for thirty years. Fuck this career. And what about Joe's future?

TROY

If you care about his future, get him to build the bomb. We can close the case and get him into a psychiatric hospital after sentencing. The story may even help other vets--you never know.

(poking the bear)

How's his mom? Maybe with a little prodding, you rile him up again?

BRETT

I don't need to rile him up. And make sure none of those fuckers in the office try to either.

TROY

Look, you've been my boss--my mentor--for a decade. I will always side with you. But I don't want to lose my job. So work with me here.

Brett smacks Troy's dashboard.

BRETT
Just buy me some time, goddamnit!
(cools off)
I'm sorry--Avedon gives us a new
reason he deserves to die every
day. It'll happen. I just can't be
the one who does it, okay?

A somber Troy nods to Brett. They drive on in silence.

FADE TO:

"Tourniquet" by Zach Bryan plays over...

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Joe and Liv dance. Chuck pulls his own beer. Danny squirts him with the soda gun. They all laugh. Joe texts Brett.

JOE (TEXT)
You coming out?

INT. STORAGE LOCKER - NIGHT

Brett tosses his phone away without answering. Lights a cig.

INT. CHEMO ROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY

Cathy gets her treatment. She's looking very frail. Joe lets her lean on him while he reads her "I'll Love You Forever."

INT. STORAGE LOCKER - NIGHT

Brett smokes another cigarette. Ignores a call from Joe. There are dozens of butts on the cement floor around him. On a small TV, Brett has an Avedon CNBC interview playing.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - JOE'S HOUSE - DAY

Joe, Liv, and Danny play the board game 'Sorry.' Cathy watches, frail but having fun. She can still smile.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Brett wanders their shooting spot--ripping down the tattered Avedon photos off their trunks. Crumpling them.

INT. FIREHOUSE - AFTERNOON

Liv and Joe talk to her support group. Joe shares his story. He passes around the photo of his unit. They empathize.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Brett, alone, walks through the Avedon warehouse parking lot. There's not a car in sight. He finds some wet sidewalk concrete. Uses his finger to scrawl "Fuck you" in the cement.

EXT. TOWN - NIGHT

Joe, Liv, Cathy, and Danny walk the main street. They eat ice cream. Joe gives some cash to a homeless man. He passes a poster of Ethan Avedon and doesn't give it another glance.

INT. LIV'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Joe and Liv have soft, passionate sex.

EXT. TOWN - LATE NIGHT

Brett passes down the same main drag. He sees the Avedon poster. Bends and picks up a loose rock nearby. SMASH.

INT. JOE'S ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Liv sleeps. Joe spoons her. It's peaceful.

The Zach Bryan FADES OUT as we...

FADE TO:

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

The house is finished. Chuck assembles everyone out front. The guys crowd around, nervous excitement in the air.

CHUCK

This is the closest any of us will
ever be to being rich. So, pretend
like she's yours. Keep her clean
while we look at her one last time.

They file in and tap the doorway, like a sports team. Joe is in the middle of them. They are very buddy-buddy.

INT. VARIOUS - AVEDON'S HOME - DAY

Mouths agape. Chuck conducts a tour. Plastic shoe-guards on.

1. The kitchen has a Le Cornue range and quartz countertops.
2. A dining room with a Sonneman Constellation chandelier.
3. The master bedroom contains a modern gas fireplace.
4. The master bath has a soaking tub and rainfall shower.

Everyone gathers back in the equally ornate living room.

CHUCK

You did great work. Be proud.

JOE

I am. I really am.

Chuck pats his back, and turns to address the guys.

CHUCK

Listen up, dickheads. Not sure what tomorrow brings, and nothing is on the horizon. But crewing with you has been the highlight of my life. If this is the last time, know it really was the best time.

The men erupt in CHEERS. Joe exchanges hugs and high-fives.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

I fucking love you guys.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Joe and Cathy walk across the parking lot. The new building is basically done. Dr. Vakil meets them in the parking lot.

DR. VAKIL

Today, we're inside the new place.

It's a two-story building with a parking garage attached.

INT. NEW ADDITION - HOSPITAL - DAY

Joe and Cathy walk with Dr. Vakil throughout the state-of-the-art new place. Joe's head is on a swivel. Taking it in.

CATHY

It's all so impressive.

DR. VAKIL

We're still getting deliveries and putting the final touches, but you're looking at the best and newest hospital in the state.

JOE

So...where's the chemo room?

DR. VAKIL

That stuff will be administered in private facilities, which are great for families--But before we get into any of that, I want to chat in my new office first...

INT. NEW OFFICE - NEW HOSPITAL - DAY

Dr. Vakil's office is modern and colder than previous. Joe and Cathy take a seat in plastic chairs. It's less homey than his previous office. No real windows to the outside either.

JOE

They took away your view.

DR. VAKIL

I'm thinking about getting a painting. Or maybe a tapestry.

Cathy clears her throat--wants to cut to the chase.

CATHY

Doc, why am I not already hooked up to the poison drip?

Joe swallows hard. Dr. Vakil tries to remain professional.

DR. VAKIL

As you know, with these treatments, we're looking for signs the medicine is working and it's not.

JOE

If the chemo isn't taking, maybe it's the perfect time to try out all the new gear in this place.

DR. VAKIL

That's why I called you in here. This new hospital--well, we're actually calling it the 'Avedon Health Care Center'--is going to be for concierge medicine only.

JOE

I don't understand.

DR. VAKIL

I'm leaving my practice to run this place. Got an offer I couldn't refuse. I'll no longer be Cathy's doctor--but I want to tell you how much you both mean to me, and I wanted to discuss next steps--

JOE

--The bills are all paid. All up to date. She's got insurance--

DR. VAKIL

--We're not going to take insurance. We're going to focus on servicing other members of the community who want medical care without the middleman.

JOE

So...You just built a better hospital next to the old one that only rich people could use?

Dr. Vakil hasn't heard it put that bluntly. He makes excuses.

DR. VAKIL

From what I've heard, that was a governmental zoning issue--

JOE

Fuck you, you fucking sellout. You gotta be kidding me.

DR. VAKIL

--I know this is difficult--

Cathy tries to comfort Joe and get answers at the same time.

CATHY

It's okay. Congrats on your new job. But...what do we do now?

Dr. Vakil swallows, and then gives the worst news possible.

DR. VAKIL

You see your friends. Eat your favorite foods. And enjoy life. I'll make sure your next physician does whatever it takes to make these next weeks comfortable.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Joe cries. Cathy pats his back. Liv and Danny are on the loveseat. They're also emotional. An empty chair beside them.

LIV

I don't know how they can do this.

CATHY

If we're being honest, I was sick of wasting time there anyway. Whatever I've got left, I want it to be with all of you.

(to Joe)

Where's Brett? We could use some levity in this situation.

An irate Joe grabs his phone and walks out of the room.

JOE (TEXT)

Where are you?

(new text)

We need to practice.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - FBI OFFICE - NIGHT

Brett looks like warmed-over shit in his raggedy hunting gear. He shows this text message to Garrett and a room full of FBI suits. Troy flanks him. Mack stands with Garrett.

TROY

Our suspect reached out on his own, so we're going to let him drive.

MACK

And he's pressing the gas.

GARRETT

Nice to see you back on track.

Brett just nods to Garrett. Doesn't have the energy.

TROY

We've got a plan to take him in a controlled environment--away from the speech. Relatively safe.

GARRETT

But feel free to get a little rough with him. He is a terrorist.

The agents approve. Brett seethes.

MACK

I can't stress how happy we are to have your support. Cuffing him together is a big win for us all.

Garrett grins and nods. Too proud of himself. In that moment, Brett makes a decision that Mack and Troy don't see coming.

BRETT

Well, actually, we do have one final box to tick if we want to make this front-page news.

(off their faces)

Garrett, I actually need your help. And I was wondering if you'd be open to going undercover?

The agents look to Garrett, who knows he can't be a pussy.

GARRETT

Uh--yes. Of course.

BRETT

This is what I've got in mind...

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Joe is firing fast. He's reloading while Brett uses the binos. He gets off five shots--Each bullet hits a different tree 1000 yards away--all photos of Avedon are obliterated.

BRETT

Hit. Hit. Hit. Hit. Hit.

Joe lets out a breath. Very composed.

Brett stands. Helps Joe up.

JOE

My mom wants to have you over for dinner. Say her goodbyes.

BRETT

...I'm sorry I haven't been there--been interviewing for jobs.

An uncomfortable silence between them. The sun is low in the sky. Joe packs up the rifle.

Brett picks up all the shells they've fired.

Joe slings the black bag around his shoulder, and they walk on a trail back through the foliage.

Brett decides to try to break the tension.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Would you rather live happily ever after, knowing your mortal enemy would too? Or take a shot at him, and spend the rest of your life looking over your shoulder?

Joe tries to get a good read on Brett. They keep walking.

JOE

Why can't I have both?

BRETT

I'm just saying--there's like three thousand billionaires in the world. What's one more?

JOE

Maybe this is just the first to go.

They turn the corner toward the roadside.

EXT. ROADSIDE - CONTINUOUS

They emerge from the trees still walking and talking. Brett's truck is parked about ten yards in front of them.

BRETT

What if the reason to live isn't to kill, maybe it's just filling up the quiet moments with the voices of the ones you love? That's gotta be louder than a bullet, right?

Joe is about to speak when:

STATE TROOPER (O.S.)

What are you fellas up to?

A State Trooper emerges from the side of the truck. but it's not really a trooper--It's GARRETT in disguise. His police car is parked on the other side of the truck.

Joe and Brett slow to a halt.

Brett feigns worry, and Joe hardens to the situation.

BRETT

Yo, officer. Saw an eight-point buck and had to pull over to mark where for white-tail season.

Garrett looks at the bag on Joe's shoulder.

GARRETT

I heard multiple gun shots.

BRETT

You sure? Because we're not carrying anything back. So even if you did--no harm. Maybe we can forget all this shit and--

Garrett takes his pistol out. He's shaky.

GARRETT

Put the rifle down.

Brett's hands hit the air. Joe lays the bag on the gravel.

GARRETT (CONT'D)

Shut up. Walk toward me.

They comply. Brett tries to shoot Garrett a look. He ignores.

GARRETT (CONT'D)

(to Joe)

You the silent type, fucker?

JOE

Didn't seem to be a reason to talk. I know you're just doing your job.

GARRETT

You're goddamn right I am.

The guys are by the truck. Walking closer to Garrett.

JOE

Whatever you need. Sorry to keep you from your dinner and your wife.

Garrett looks down at the ring on his finger. Like he just remembered it was there.

By the time he looks back up, Joe is on him. His gun is knocked away, and he is punched in the solar plexus.

Garrett drops to his knees. Wheezes.

GARRETT
Oh, god--Don't kill me.

Joe looks to Brett.

Brett can't help himself--looks at the blubbering Garrett.

BRETT
I think you should do it. He's seen
our faces. We can't risk it.

Garrett chokes on his words. Nothing will come out.

BRETT (CONT'D)
We can hide the body.

Garrett literally pisses his pants. He cries.

JOE
It's okay--I would never hurt you.

Joe uses his cuffs to latch his hands behind his back.

GARRETT
I--I don't believe you.

Garrett looks directly at Brett--then: SIRENS. Joe and Brett
jerk toward the approaching police.

JOE
Shit.

GARRETT
Don't--Please--Bre--

Brett socks Garrett before he can finish. He's out cold.

INT. TRUCK - MOVING

Brett and Joe pull speed from the scene. Empty rearview.

JOE
Did he recognize you? Or me?

BRETT
No--no way. I'm gonna get on the
interstate. No one is following us--

Joe checks the mirror, then realizes...

JOE
FUCK--My gun--I left my gun!

EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT

Garrett is uncuffed by Mack. He's fuming. Nose bleeding. Mack gives him a towel for his wet pants. Garrett snatches it.

GARRETT

I think you know this, but your boss is a certified asshole.

Troy ignores this chaos. He walks past to the black gun bag-- bends and picks up the gun. Grins.

TROY

But he's also a great agent.

EXT. STORAGE LOCKER - NIGHT

Brett pulls the truck in. Joe's shitty sedan is parked there. They get out and catch their breath.

BRETT

Truck's gotta go. Let me dump it. You should get outta here.

Joe paces while Brett breaks down the situation.

JOE

We can't get another gun--He's here in a week! We only have a week! It's not supposed to go this way--

BRETT

--Maybe we call it off--

JOE

No.

(spiraling)

The bomb--do we have enough time to make the bomb?

Brett's heart shatters.

BRETT

Are you sure that's what you want?

JOE

There's too much at stake. He has to pay--Avedon has to die.

BRETT

Okay...I'll make a grocery list.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - OFFICE - NIGHT

Garrett sits with an ice pack. Mack and Troy talk with FBI Agents. Brett enters. There's a clear division.

GARRETT

You almost got me killed. What happened to pulling your punch?!

BRETT

That's what you get for almost blowing my cover.

(sneers)

No wonder you pissed your pants, fucking desk jockey.

Garrett springs up from the table. He goes for Brett.

Big mistake.

Brett sidesteps his lunge. He grabs Garrett's jacket like he's a hockey enforcer and yanks it over his head.

A cloud of business cards scatter. Garrett turns beet red.

GARRETT

--I'll have your goddamn badge--

The Agents and Mack hold Garrett back. Troy makes sure Brett can't get close, either. But Brett is too busy laughing.

BRETT

You couldn't have my dick if it was velcroed on, pussy.

INT. HALLWAY - FBI OFFICE - NIGHT

Brett storms down the hallway. Troy jogs after him.

TROY

He's filing an official complaint.

BRETT

We're a week away. He'll fall in line. Or he'll fuck his career.

TROY

You're being removed as the arresting officer.

BRETT

Fine. Rather not be there.

Troy grabs Brett and finally stops him.

BRETT (CONT'D)

He's a fucking hero. And I turned him into a fucking terrorist.

TROY

I like him too. But there's no such thing as a good guy with a gun.

INT. JOE'S ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: A schematic for a bomb. Joe scans all the parts. Making a shopping list. His phone vibrates. He grabs it.

LIV (TEXT)

Did you want to come over tonight?

JOE (TEXT)

Can't. Something came up.

INT. LIV'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Quaint and feminine. Liv lies alone--Wasted lingerie.

INT. HALLWAY - JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Cathy watches Joe through the door. She's very worried.

BRETT (V.O.)

I know the directions seem complicated, but know this--

EXT. STORAGE LOCKER - DAY

Brett backs the van out of the locker. Joe guides him.

BRETT (V.O.)

--Making a bomb is easy.

INT. HOME DEPOT - DAY

Joe and Brett fill a cart with fertilizer. And then buy some empty plastic gas cans. They grab wiring and a light switch.

BRETT (V.O.)

You only need two things--An accelerant and a trigger.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Joe and Brett fill the cans with diesel fuel. Pay with cash.

BRETT (V.O.)
Accelerants are readily available.
And we can access them cheaply.

INT. STORAGE LOCKER - DAY

Brett hands the soldering gun to Joe, who works attaching the light switch to an alarm clock, whose guts are on the table.

BRETT (V.O.)
Triggers require more finesse.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Brett drives--Joe sits shotgun. They look out the window. A construction crew is assembling the stage for Avedon's event.

BRETT (V.O.)
Once flipped, the device will blow
in a few seconds. So set and run.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - DAY

Top floor. The van overlooks the hospital addition entrance.

BRETT (V.O.)
Then the bad guys will die, and the
good guys ride off into the sunset.

EXT. STORAGE LOCKER - LATE AFTERNOON

Brett sits on his cooler. Joe across from him. Both with beers--mirroring our earlier conversation.

Joe takes in what he's heard. Brett probes.

BRETT
Sound like a plan?

Joe's shoulders slump. This is not what he wanted.

JOE
...Saddle up.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Joe is back to internalizing his angst. He quietly tends bar. Liv tries to catch his glance, but cannot. Despite the circumstances, Liv decides to break the ice.

LIV

I collected a bunch of the NPR letters from the other group members. Did you start yours?

JOE

Couldn't find the words.

Joe moves away and keeps cleaning. She follows.

LIV

I spent my first marriage shut out. It's why I'm looking for my second, now. And I won't do it again.

Joe turns--the stress of the world on his face.

JOE

Would you love me if I rode a different colored horse?

LIV

...Do you love me?

Joe emphatically nods.

JOE

Yes. But I'm worried I'm about to fuck it up. My life right now, I've made choices to take care of people, and the blowback could be--

Liv takes his hands in hers. Joe settles.

LIV

--Joe--stop. No matter what happens with your Mom--or our little campaign, I'll be by your side. You will never change in my eyes. And I don't think you can change in her eyes either. It sucks, but we will get through this as long as we're truthful and open. Okay? Now, let's find the right words together.

She hugs him--And he hugs her back, albeit limply.

INT. STORAGE LOCKER - NIGHT

Brett has the door closed but the light on. Troy is across from him. He's inspecting the bomb in the van.

BRETT

I made a call to the D.C. Office. I told them after we're done, I was recommending you get your own team. Least I can do after the spot I put you in. Would recommend Mack, but I think Garrett has him covered.

TROY

His head's so far up Garrett's ass he could pick his nose.

BRETT

There's no way this can really blow, right?

TROY

No. It's a glorified alarm clock.

Troy flips the switch ON. We see it SPARK, and then a clock begins to count down. He flips the switch OFF. It resets.

TROY (CONT'D)

Garrett wanted me to remind you that to get a clean arrest, Joe has to flip the switch and engage the device himself. Without that, it's entrapment. And...you're fired.

Brett waves off that last tidbit. They morbidly laugh.

BRETT

Don't worry. His mother is doing worse. The town is shit. And his anger is growing. He'll flip it.

INT. JOE'S ROOM - DAY

Joe clears off the last of his Avedon wall. Puts it all in a shoe box. He gets a typewriter out and begins to write.

JOE (V.O.)

How much do you know about a man while he's alive? Is anyone ever really honest about the living?

I/E. SHITTY SEDAN - MOVING

Joe cruises through town. He sees cops moving the homeless off corners and wrecking balls taking out old homes. G-Wagons next to Jalopies. Avedon's face on billboards and bus stops.

JOE (V.O.)

What if the measure of a life can only be found in death?

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Joe watches his construction friends, including Chuck, file in like ants. A worker buffs something out of the sidewalk.

JOE (V.O.)

If I was Ethan Avedon, I'd worry about what my obituary would say.

EXT. WOODS AROUND AVEDON'S HOME - DAY

Joe drives the concrete outer wall. Gazes at the glass on the outside. As he speeds up, the colored glass blends together.

JOE (V.O.)

Has anything he's done in his lifetime made the lives of anyone else on this earth any better?

INT. JOE'S ROOM - DAY

Joe plays with his buck knife as he scans his letter. He sighs. Done. He folds the letter. Puts it in an envelope.

JOE (V.O.)

Maybe rich people. But I'm not one of them. I'm just a guy asking for a little justice in this world.

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

Joe and Liv put that letter, along with a few others, into a blue mailbox. A BLACK TAHOE on the corner watches them.

JOE/BRETT (V.O.)

These billionaires have enough money to fund generations of personal prosperity. Their money will outlive their names. But will any of their good deeds?

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - FBI OFFICE - DAY

Brett holds the manifesto in front of him, reading. Troy, Mack, Garrett, and the FBI hang on every word.

BRETT

A person can't solve the world's problems unless they're willing to give up everything they've got.

(looks up)

...I am. Are you?

Brett lowers the letter.

GARRETT

This is a direct threat. It's a fucking manifesto that Mack caught him trying to mail to goddamn NPR.

(to Brett)

Did you know about this?

BRETT

...No.

Troy takes the letter to examine it.

BRETT (CONT'D)

I've been doing this for twenty years, and I'm telling you, this guy is on a razor's edge. He's unpredictable and dangerous.

TROY

Brett did his job. And in light of recent information, I think we should just take Joe quietly now.

BRETT

He needs help. Let's do the right thing here and get it for him.

GARRETT

I appreciate you sharing your concerns, but this is going to be big--lead story on every network. "FBI Heroes Save the Day."

MACK

I agree with Garrett. We're gonna be famous. Maybe a Netflix-series.

Brett doesn't have the emotional fortitude to send an annoyed look at Mack. But Troy does. Mack doesn't care.

BRETT

How the hell do you want me to proceed? The speech is tomorrow.

GARRETT

If you don't wanna be there--don't be. Drop the van off and go home. I'll deal with your firing and possible criminal charges for obstruction of justice later.

BRETT

I'll be there. I owe it to him.

GARRETT

(shit-eating grin)

Great. That's great. So, let me tell you what I had in mind...

EXT. STORAGE LOCKER - NIGHT

Brett pulls the van out and exits. Troy shuts the door--then hops in a black Tahoe. Several other black Tahoes follow.

EXT. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The van is noisy as it enters the driveway. Brett gets out--looks down the block toward a rather conspicuous black Tahoe. Shakes his head. He walks in past Joe's shitty sedan.

We can see a handgun tucked into the back of his pants. Brett loosens his flannel to cover the weapon as he heads inside.

The Tahoe shuts its lights off and sits there.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Cathy has moved from the couch to a La-Z-Boy. Danny watches more SmackDown on the TV. Liv holds her hand.

Joe enters with a cup of ice chips.

JOE

How are you feeling?

Cathy can't muster words. Just a tired smile.

LIV

She ate all her ice chips.

CATHY

(croaks)

Wish they were floating in vodka.

There's a KNOCK on the door. Joe walks over and answers. It's Brett. And he has a six-pack of beer with him.

BRETT

I heard somebody wanted to have me over for dinner. Now, if it's not too much to ask, get your apron on and chicken fry me a steak, please.

(off Cathy's laugh)

Too tired? Guess we can order in.

Brett whistles--and a PIZZA GUY appears. Those with keen eyes will recognize him as a non-speaking AGENT we've seen before.

Danny takes the pies. Places them on the coffee table.

BRETT (CONT'D)

I tipped him a lot for that.

Cathy mouths "thank you" to him. Brett lets tears form in the corners of his eyes. Can only nod back to her.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Pizza fixes everything. Dated an Italian lady who told me that. She never lied--Except when she promised she'd make me happy.

Brett takes his tacky van keychain and puts it on the table. Liv comes in from the kitchen and passes out paper plates.

DANNY

I like eating together.

BRETT

Food always tastes better when you can hear someone else chewing.

Cathy starts coughing. Joe goes over to help. She finishes.

CATHY

I know this isn't fun. But I want to thank you all for being here. Let me tell you, if you can plan your own death, I recommend having people you care about around. Makes it easier saying goodbye, knowing you'll all have each other.

Joe and Liv take Cathy's hands.

JOE

You're not ready for all that yet.

CATHY

Alright. Talk about something else.
Brett--Make everyone laugh, please.

This catches Brett off guard. They all look to him.

BRETT

Okay--Question for the room: would
you rather be sticky all the time
or itchy?

Danny cracks up at this. Brett puts his arm around him. Liv
leans back into Joe's chest, but his face wears worry.

DANNY

Sticky or itchy? That's crazy.

BRETT

There are pros and cons to both.

CLOSE ON: Brett's shirt. He's wired for sound.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI TAHOE - SIMULTANEOUS

Troy, Mack, and Garrett listen to the conversation in a
tricked-out surveillance SUV.

GARRETT

I think itchy makes sense...

MACK

I'm team itchy, too.

Troy tries to hide his disdain.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - JOE'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

Joe and Liv clean up the room.

Brett sits on the couch next to Danny, who is asleep. Cathy
is tired but motions to Brett to lean close.

CATHY

I want to make one of those dying
requests. Humor an old woman.

Brett takes her hand.

CATHY (CONT'D)

I know--I know you two are cooking something up. A son should always protect his mother--But I want you to promise he's gonna be okay. Promise that you have his back.

Joe returns to the room.

JOE

(to Cathy)

Ready for bed?

Cathy looks back at Brett. He kisses her hand.

BRETT

You have my word.

Cathy lets go of Brett as Joe picks her up. Easy to lift.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Goodnight, Cathy.

Joe carries Cathy down the hall--just like at the end of "I'll Love You Forever."

Liv raises Danny. She takes him with her.

Brett is left alone for a soft beat. Swallows the lump.

Joe makes it back. Settles in the La-Z-Boy. Exhausted.

JOE

Thanks for swooping in.

BRETT

Shoulda been here sooner.

There's a beat of silence. It just hangs there, grieving. In that moment. Joe laughs to himself. Finds his smile.

JOE

I'm just happy you're here now.

That lump in Brett's throat appears again.

BRETT

I--I have a...confession.

Joe tightens. Brett clears his throat.

BRETT (CONT'D)

My wife's dead. Been dead about a year.

(MORE)

BRETT (CONT'D)

I came home one day, and she was just gone. No goodbye. Just...lying in a heap on our mattress. Bad ticker. I had been at work. And I wasn't in the habit of checking in. Still trying to get into the habit.

This is hard.

BRETT (CONT'D)

After she died, I just went right back to work. Right fucking back. And now I have no idea what I'm supposed to do with my life.

JOE

You're supposed to be here with us. With your best friends.

BRETT

The best friends I've had in my life, and there have been only a few--they bring out the best in me.

(choking up)

I'm sitting across from someone who it seems like can do anything he puts his mind to--and I'm worried I didn't push you to be the best.

JOE

That's not true.

(beat)

We're good for each other.

Brett nods. The weight on his heart is immense. He starts to talk but can only croak.

JOE (CONT'D)

It's okay. You don't have to say anything. Really.

A cowardly Brett nods, and swallows his bigger confession.

Liv pokes her head back down the hallway. She's aware she's breaking up a serious conversation but doesn't care.

LIV

Want me to take the first shift?

JOE

Nah. I got it. Go to sleep.

Joe nods to Brett--then exits the room. Once alone, Brett begins to silently weep.

INT. FBI TAHOE - LATE NIGHT

Garrett, Mack, and Troy listen to sobbing. Garrett uses a Leatherman to slice open a Zyn pack as they eavesdrop.

MACK

Who's the pussy, now--Right boss?

Garrett laughs--pushes past an angry Troy, and exits the SUV.

GARRETT

I gotta take a piss.

INT. CATHY'S ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Joe holds Cathy's hand as she sleeps. Liv sits next to Joe.

JOE

Do you like it here?

LIV

Like in this house?

JOE

Was thinking--you and Danny--no use renting. I'd like you to move in here. It's not much, but we own it.

LIV

I'd like that very much.

She leans on Joe. Laughs to herself.

JOE

What?

LIV

Nothing. I just feel like we both need something to look forward to. And this is the perfect thing.

JOE

Yeah. So much of my life revolved around tomorrow. It's good to have something that comes next.

Liv hears these words but doesn't get it.

LIV

...What's tomorrow?

JOE

A day of reckoning.

INT. FBI TAHOE - LATE NIGHT

Mack and Garrett sleep. Troy watches the house--At the ready.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - JOE'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

Brett lies on the couch on his back. He can't sleep. He sits up. Sees Liv exit the hallway. She sits on the couch.

LIV

Are you awake?

Brett sits up next to her.

BRETT

Not sure how to sleep. Feels like something awful is about to happen.

Liv nods. She's scared.

LIV

I can feel it, too.

BRETT

When she goes--It's going to be hard for him, but we'll be there--

LIV

That's not what I'm scared of.
(gets real)
You don't have to tell me anything. I know he's doing something else. I know it's bad. But I--I love him. And I'm scared that my love can't get past the hate inside him...no matter what tomorrow brings.

Brett sucks his tongue. Takes Liv's hands.

BRETT

My wife used to tell me love isn't meant to fix broken people. It's just supposed to let them know they should pick up the pieces because their life is worth living.

LIV

What if they don't know that?

BRETT

You run. And never look back.

This hits Liv like a ton of bricks.

INT. VARIOUS - JOE'S HOUSE - TIME LAPSE

Joe kisses Cathy's head as she sleeps in bed. Liv stands in the doorway, watching him.

Brett paces in the living room, going through the most hellish night on Earth. He's punching his fist. Clearly frustrated with what's about to happen.

Cathy sits by Joe on the bed. She stroke his back, warmly.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. NEW ADDITION - HOSPITAL - TIME LAPSE

A stage is erected by WORKERS. Mics are installed. Balloons and grandstands are fixed into place. This takes time.

As the work is finished--WE SEE NIGHT BECOME DAY.

Crowds begin to file into their seats. Dr. Vakil among them.

One worker goes up the the mic, and before they can speak--

There is a BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM. But it's not from here.

INT. FBI TAHOE - MORNING

The SCREAM echoes in metal. Garrett and Mack jerk awake.

TROY

Does anyone have eyes inside?

Troy has the door open and his gun out before they can adjust. He races toward the house. The screaming continues.

Garrett and Mack race to follow him.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - JOE'S HOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS

Brett stands with his back to the door. He has a gun drawn. And he's SCREAMING at the top of his lungs.

Joe, Liv, and Danny all rush out of the back rooms.

Brett has a few tears running down his cheeks. He wipes them as he finishes his ANIMALISTIC BELLOW.

They stare at him--willing him to give them a reason.

BRETT

I'm sorry. I just--I can't fucking take it anymore. And this is the only way I figure you'll be okay.

Joe turns his head to the side.

JOE

I don't follow.

Brett reveals the gun from behind his back. Hands shaking.

BRETT

I need you to slowly put your hands in the air, and stay where you are.

CRASH! The front door breaks off the hinges as Troy, Mack, as Garrett all spill into the room.

Liv sees the words FBI on the newcomers' shirts and loses it.

LIV

What the fuck is going on?!

BRETT

Stay back. Hold Danny.

Joe solemnly nods toward Liv and Danny. Back to Brett.

JOE

So, was any of it real?

Brett's lip quivers. He tries to hold back.

BRETT

Yes. And that's why I'm doing this.

(a soft beat)

Joe Malone, on behalf of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, I'm placing you under arrest for conspiring to kill Ethan Avedon.

The words hit Liv and Danny like a ton of bricks. Joe's shoulders sink, he knows the jig is up.

Brett looks over to Liv and Danny. Consoles them.

BRETT (CONT'D)

I'll get him the best lawyer, he didn't do anything wrong--

Brett takes a step forward to cuff Joe, who has his arms out.

But he stops as Garrett fumes:

GARRETT

He didn't do anything wrong? The
fuck are you saying? You blew it.
The case is fucking toast--

Garrett now takes a step toward Brett. Brett turns, and the men square off. Each of them glare.

GARRETT (CONT'D)

I'm relieving you from duty. You're
fucking done--piece of shit--
(turns)
Mack, take his gun.

This act of cowardice makes Brett smirk.

Mack walks over to Brett, sheepish. Brett nods to him and offers his gun. Mack takes it loosely.

GARRETT (CONT'D)

What a fucking mess.

Troy is the only one with a gun up, covering the whole situation. And he's shaken to his core as well.

Garrett smugly takes a step toward Joe and attempts to shove him against the wall. Takes his cuffs out.

GARRETT (CONT'D)

Alright, you fucking terrorist--you
have the right to--

A voice from the hallway stops everyone in their tracks.

CATHY (O.S.)

Joe, baby--why?

They all turn to Cathy. She's pale, feeble, gripping onto the wall for dear life as she tries to understand the situation.

CATHY (CONT'D)

--I don't understand why--

Cathy wobbles, then slides to the floor.

BRETT

(to Troy)
For god sakes, call an ambulance!

Troy reluctantly lowers his gun and gets on the radio.

Joe tries to go to his mother, but Garrett grabs his arm. Joe hauls off and socks Garrett in the face. Garrett's body crashes backward into Mack. They fall to the floor in a heap.

Joe lifts Cathy's limp body, cradles her in his arms.

CATHY

I just want you to be okay.

JOE

I'm okay, Mom--I promise I'm okay--
just stay with me--please--

She nods, small smile. He caresses her face--she fades away.

Then: BANG!

Joe's shoulder sprays blood, and he falls forward.

Garrett points a smoking pistol at Brett now.

BRETT

--You fucking asshole--

GARRETT

--Give me a reason--

*

SMASH! A lamp hits Garrett and shatters. His gun skids onto the ground. Brett snags it. Points it at Garrett.

All eyes turn to Liv, who hurled it. She looks to Joe. Their unspoken eye contact activates something in him.

In that brief moment, Joe scoops up Cathy's body and sprints out the front door.

EXT. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY

The van power slides out of the driveway. Brett exits in time to see it screech up the block--just as a bunch of FBI cars come from the other direction.

The van passes them without interruption.

Brett looks down at the tires of Joe's shitty sedan. They've been slashed. His shoulders sink. Shakes with disbelief.

BRETT

Holy Mary, Mother of God.

Troy exits. Sees the tires and shakes his head.

Brett takes off toward the SUV.

TROY

(into walkie)

Van on the move!

Brett makes it to the Tahoe. He's behind the wheel seconds later. Keys in the sun visor. Then into the ignition. VROOOM.

I/E. TAHOE - MOVING

Troy bangs on the window as Brett drives.

TROY
--Don't do this--

But Brett doesn't let him in. He just speeds after the van.

Garrett and Mack make it outside to see him fly up the block.

EXT. NEW HOSPITAL - DAY

The crowd is in seats and on stage. A HELICOPTER lands beside the new hospital building, in a coned-off part of the lot.

It's the kind of windy spectacle these people appreciate.

Ethan Avedon exits, waving like a politician. He beams at the sycophants below. They erupt in cheers.

Press are everywhere. Their cameras flash.

Everything that happens next will be caught on live TV.

EXT. VARIOUS ROADS - DAY

Brett's Tahoe gains on the van as they careen through backstreets and onto the main drag.

They each try to out maneuver the other, weaving through traffic and ignoring stoplights.

At one point, Brett is able to pull his SUV next to the van. He and Joe look at each other while driving 70mph on public streets. There's no smile exchanged. Only coldness.

Then Joe SPINS the wheel and breaks off from the engagement.

The van SCREECHES around the corner, headed for the hospital. It's a straight shot now. The apartment complex behind it.

Brett's Tahoe is close behind.

Ahead of them, FBI AGENTS are frantic. They roll out a spike pad and point their revolvers and shotguns.

They brace for impact.

I/E. GARRETT'S TAHOE - MOVING

Troy drives. Garrett and Mack hang out windows.

TROY

When did you slash the tires?

Garrett has recently lost his mind. His soul left long ago.

GARRETT

Fuck him, that's when. Keep your eyes on the road.

I/E. VAN - MOVING

Joe SMASHES the gas pedal. The spike strips are ahead. Agents point their guns at him. Nothing slows him.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

A flurry of bullets hit the van.

It keeps moving forward.

POP! POP! POP! The wheels of the van hit the spikes, but it keeps going. Sparks shoot from the metal rims.

EXT. NEW HOSPITAL - MORNING

The sounds of the onslaught finally reach the people in the crowd. Ethan Avedon looks out from behind the microphone. He sees the van entering the lot. A few hundred yards away.

Suddenly, he's GRABBED by FBI agents and ushered away. That's when SCREAMS arise from the crowd. They scatter.

Press film the chaotic happenings with greedy fervor.

The crowd is almost fully dispersed as the van rolls to a stop outside the new hospital building entrance.

Only a few yards away from the actual stage. It winds up skidding to a complete halt adjacent to Avedon's helicopter.

Two modes of transportation for two kinds of people juxtaposed--one smoking and creaking--full of bullet holes. the other pristine and shining in the daylight.

The driver's door of the van cracks open.

Joe exits with Cathy's body. He's WAILING--stumbling toward the entrance of the medical facility.

He has flesh wounds from shattering glass and some cuts. But nothing is going to slow him down.

Not even the bullet in his shoulder.

Instead of a medical staff ready to help, Joe is faced with FBI agents, guns drawn.

Cathy is limp in his arms. Her time has long passed.

Brett's Tahoe veers into the lot. He's out, frantically waving his hands in the air.

BRETT
FBI! DO NOT SHOOT!

Brett makes it to Joe as the agents surround them.

Troy, Garrett, and Mack park and are out, too. They bring up the rear, guns drawn.

Brett faces Joe. Sees Cathy's limp body in his arms.

BRETT (CONT'D)
--I'm sorry--I'm so sorry--

Brett takes Cathy from Joe. Cradles her. Her eyes are closed.

Joe can only muster one word:

JOE
...Why?

BRETT
...I don't know anymore.

THUMP--a sea of bodies tackles Joe. His face is pressed against the concrete as people fall atop him.

Garrett is there to zip-tie him, like he promised.

Blood oozes from Joe's shoulder, but no one cares.

A stretcher is wheeled to Brett. He gently places Cathy on it. The medics pull a sheet over her, confirming the worst.

Joe watches this happen and hangs his head.

Garrett struts around, a psychotic smile on his face--mugging for the cameras.

The NEWSPEOPLE surround him. He turns on the charm.

GARRETT

The situation is under control. The FBI has thwarted a potential act of domestic terrorism. It's safe now.

Garrett looks over to Avedon, who is fixing his suit. He ignores Garrett, his eyes are on Joe.

Troy and Mack hold a bloodied and handcuffed Joe up. They drag him toward one of the Tahoes.

An irate Avedon walks toward them.

Brett sees this interaction and jogs over to Avedon. He gets between him and Joe--forming a natural barrier.

ETHAN AVEDON

So, this guy is crazy? What did I ever do to him?

BRETT

Not sure where to start.

Avedon looks past Brett to Joe.

ETHAN AVEDON

Yeah--well--fuck you!

Avedon retreats from Joe and heads toward his helicopter. His pilots are not there, he arrives alone.

He swings the door open and gets inside. Bangs on the window at his pilots, which are still being debriefed by the FBI.

ETHAN AVEDON (CONT'D)

Come on! Let's get out of here!

While the commotion happens, Garrett slinks back to the van.

It's sitting in a pool of its own fluids.

Some NEWS CAMERAMEN film him from a distance. Zoom in on his actions. Even Avedon watches from the helicopter.

Garrett opens the side door and looks inside.

The device has not been activated.

Garrett checks over his shoulder. Blocks the view.

The tanks of diesel gas leak all over the van. Fuel everywhere. It seeps all over the fake bomb. But none of that matters to Garrett, who flips the switch without a thought.

POP! POP!! POP!!!

We see SPARKS under the alarm clock as it ticks on.

ELECTRICITY SIZZLES.

The liquid immediately flames.

An ignorant Garrett confidently turns back toward the group.

GARRETT

(shouting)

Hey guys--the switch was flipped. I
think the dead mother was a ruse--

KA-BOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

The van explodes. It shatters the glass in the front of the new building and blows everyone backward.

Brett, Mack, and Troy are blown off their feet.

Garrett's body is consumed by fire.

The flames and debris extend from the van and careen into the helicopter. It shakes, glass cracks, rotors snap--Avedon's helicopter EXPLODES in its own fireball, cooking him inside.

Harsh black smoke billows into the sky.

The hospital is a disaster area.

The FBI claws for some semblance of control.

Brett rolls on the ground, shaken. He struggles to stand. Helps Mack and Troy off the pavement.

They're coughing. Some scrapes and cuts from the debris.

BRETT

Are you both alright?

They check themselves--only superficial wounds. Then their attention goes from themselves to the burning copter.

All three watch as the silhouette of Avedon turns to ash.

Brett's eyes drift to a nearby SUV. Joe's face presses against the glass, tears falling down his cheeks.

In that moment, Brett lets his own tears fall, too.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. WAITING ROOM - FBI OFFICE - DAY

WE PAN ACROSS young recruits (20s) in suits. At their center is Brett--But we haven't seen his face--it's obscured by a TIME MAGAZINE in a sea of IPHONES and declassified reports.

On the cover? A glamour shot of Joe in his prison jumpsuit--like a folk hero. The subscript--"Good Guy With a Gun?"

The TV in the corner plays an interview of Mack on CNN. He's doing okay, assuming his natural position away from danger.

A hand taps Brett on the knee. He lowers the magazine, and we finally see him. Freshly showered and shaved--a new man.

The hand belongs to Troy. He's in a tailored suit. Badge around his neck. Gun at his side. He holds a cardboard box filled with desk items and knick-knacks. Hands it to Brett.

BRETT

You could have had your assistant bring it out.

TROY

Not sure when I'll see you again, so I didn't want to waste an opportunity. So...what are you gonna do with your life now?

BRETT

(slight smile)
Thought I'd go get a beer.

Troy lets himself grin as Brett exits the office.

INT. BAR - DAY

WE TRACK WITH Brett as he walks into familiar territory. Chuck and his cohorts stop playing pool the minute they see him. Danny stops clearing tables and rushes into the back.

Brett walks past everyone and takes a seat at the bar.

Joe walks out of the cooler. He wears a blinking ankle monitor. He looks up and is a bit surprised to see Brett there. Grabs a wet rag off the bar top. Folds his arms.

Liv pokes her head out of the back. Eyes them.

LIV
Everything okay here?

Joe waves her away. She blows him a kiss. Everyone else in the bar goes back to what they were doing prior.

BRETT
Spoke to your lawyer. He thinks you got a good shot--better than that. And I went to Cathy's grave. Left flowers. You got a nice one.

Joe keeps cleaning bar glasses with a rag. Ignores Brett.

BRETT (CONT'D)
You're all over the news. Like assholes, everyone's got an opinion. They want me to write a book. Maybe I should. I mean, you got me fired after all.

There's a long silence. Joe pulls a beer into a large mug.

BRETT (CONT'D)
Okay. How about a hypothetical? Would you rather sit in silence while some jerk-off talks at you, or actually get to know each other?

A smile peeks through Joe's lips. He hands Brett the frothy beverage. Brett drinks deeply. It's like old times.

JOE
Hey. My name is Joe. I like hunting, I love my friends and family, and I hate rich people.

Brett sticks his hand across the bar. It hangs there.

BRETT
Nice to meet you, Joe--Name's Brett. And I think you and I have a whole helluva lot in common.

Joe grabs Brett's hand. They shake and stare for a long moment. Then they both laugh--it grows. So do their smiles.

"White Horse" by Chris Stapleton plays as we...

FADE OUT.

THE END.