

# JIMMY SIX

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EXT. PARKING LOT - DETROIT - EARLY MORNING

A gaudily refurbished DELTA 88 sits at the edge of a precariously cracked and weathered inner-city parking lot.

INT. DELTA 88 - Day

SHUTOV (mid/late 20s, pronounced 'SHOO-tov'), handsome with a dash of scumbag, sits in the driver's seat. He sparks of cocky swagger. Chain smokes. Looks to an UNSEEN PASSENGER in the midst of dispersing wisdom.

SHUTOV

(drags)

... I'm not gonna lie to you, bro.  
Where you're at, they call that a  
*threshold*...

Beat. For intended effect.

SHUTOV (CONT'D)

... I gotta tell you, when you step  
outta this car, right now, from  
this point forward... It's a fight  
to the fuckin' death, bro. No joke.  
You ready for that?

He SNIFFS. Rolls down the window and ashes.

SHUTOV

...Six. Wow. *Time*, bro...

REVEAL: STEVIE (newly 6 years old), innocent, and slightly darker featured than Shutov, sits in the passenger seat. Wearing a Catholic School uniform and clutching a 'Transformers' lunch box.

SHUTOV (CONT'D)

... Six years old. Six years.  
That's intense. You sure I didn't  
get the dates wrong? You sure you  
ain't turnin' four?

STEVIE

(smiles)

Yeah.

SHUTOV

You sure? Can't take it back now,  
you know. This means you're a man.  
Like me. Right? Big man?

STEVIE

Okay.

Shutov SIGHS, mocking hesitation...

SHUTOV  
Alright...

He reaches into the back seat. Grabs a WHITE BAKERY BOX. Looks to Stevie. Grins.

SHUTOV  
Happy birthday.

He hands Stevie the box. Stevie opens it. Inside is a mini-birthday cake. Frosting and all. OPTIMUS PRIME, stenciled in a makeshift frosting design, holds a menacing pose beneath big lettering which reads: "HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BALLER".

Stevie nods in approval. Shutov grins. RUSTLES his hair.

SHUTOV (CONT'D)  
Look good?

STEVIE  
Yeah.

SHUTOV  
Alright. You take this with you. Give a piece out to all the cutest girls in your class, okay? Get some a'that first grade booty.

STEVIE  
(smiles)  
Okay.

SHUTOV  
Go on. Be good.

He RUSTLES Stevie's hair again. Kisses him on the top of the head. Stevie moves to get out. CLOSES the door. Walks off.

Across the way, ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL is exploding with activity. Grizzled and rough-etched DETROITERS drop their KIDS off in blue jumpsuits and rusted-out Fords before heading off to a long day on the line.

Shutov meditates on this from a distance. Beat. He turns. Reaches over to the glovebox. OPENS it. Pulls a SNUB NOSED .38 into view. Begins to load it.

SHUTOV  
(to himself)  
Comes and goes, comes and goes...  
Step up to step out...

**TITLE: JIMMY SIX**

INT. DELTA 88 - WOODWARD AVE - DAY

Inner city Detroit.

Shutov smokes. Drives. Navigates his boat of a car southbound through Highland Park, routinely weaving back and forth across the open road to avoid crater-sized potholes and massive stretches of black ice. His car is spotlessly clean. A ROSARY hangs from the rear view mirror. MUSIC plays.

Out the window, Detroit's industrial landscape passes by. Exquisite brick trimmings and century-old colonial architecture frozen in neglect. All covered in thick blankets of snow. Like broken-down giants dozing through an endless winter.

INT. DELTA 88 - CONANT & MCNICHOLS - DAY

Shutov pulls up and parks. Sipping 7-11 grade coffee. Taps his fingers nervously on the driver's wheel for a second. Thinks...

... And reaches over to the glovebox. Grabs a small bottle of prescription pills. And another. Pounds a few. Mixes and matches. Slams the coffee...

EXT. CONANT & MCNICHOLS - CONTINUOUS

And gets out. Looks around. Shabby brick structures, most of them former store-fronts, line the street.

EXT. GREASY SPOON - DETROIT - DAY

Shutov approaches a sandblasted, run-down dump of a CONEY ISLAND. Faded spray paint adorns every visible wall. Chicken-wire encased glass and steel-barred windows stand out in harsh contrast to the 'open' sign hanging at the door.

RONNIE (50s), a walking wrecking ball with greying tips, stands near the diner. Waiting. He spots Shutov. Shutov nods, approaching. Smiles a million dollar shit-eating grin.

SHUTOV

What's up, bro? How ya' been?

INT. GREASY SPOON - DETROIT - DAY

Greasy sliders and hash browns SLAP and SLIP across a rusty, disgusting flat top. Oxidized steel stained brown with decades of crusted over Detroit-grade coney.

PHIL PETIEVSKI (50s), portly, mans this budding culinary masterpiece with the enthusiasm of an aging whore handing out sexual favors. The restaurant is empty. Not a soul to be seen.

Chinsy BELLS whip sideways as the door opens. JINGLING as they BOUNCE off bullet-proof glass and bad ethnic wallpaper. Shutov and Ronnie enter. Shutov saunters into the room looking left and right.

Beat.

SHUTOV  
... S' fuckin dead in here, Philly.

Phil stops. Turns to look.

SHUTOV  
That's you, right? Philly Phil?  
Philly fat-ass who owns this  
fuckin' dump? Am I right?

PHIL  
... Who're you?

Beat.

SHUTOV  
You don't remember me? You  
recognize me?

Phil's hands move quietly to a SHOTGUN mounted beneath a nearby counter.

PHIL  
... No.

Shutov looks to Ronnie. Takes a drag. Smiles that million dollar grin again. Beat.

SHUTOV  
You know my uncle, though. Johnny?  
Johnny Deegan?

Beat. A moment of realization passes. Phil takes his hands away from the gun...

SHUTOV  
(motions to the food on  
the stove)  
Who's the shit for?

PHIL  
'S my lunch.

SHUTOV  
Yeah?  
(motioning to the food)  
How much you want for that? I got  
twenty on me. Bring it here.

Shutov moves to take a seat. Plops down in a window booth. Pulls out his wallet. He throws out a twenty dollar bill and lets it flutter onto the table. Phil looks at Shutov. Blinks. Okay. He begins serving up the breakfast.

Shutov turns to look at Ronnie behind him. Drags.

SHUTOV  
You hungry man?

RONNIE  
No.

Ronnie takes a seat near the door. Perched forward. He lights up a smoke. Watching.

Phil approaches Shutov. Sets the plate down.

SHUTOV  
(slides him the twenty)  
Here ya' go. Take a seat.

Beat. Phil sits. Shutov smiles. Begins eating.

SHUTOV  
(chews & talks)  
Mm. Breakfast a'sliders and hash  
browns. That's fuckin' nutrition,  
right?  
(beat, points)  
... You sure you don't remember me?  
I met you once, I think. Back  
before I got raised up. I think I  
was runnin' smokes and porno down  
at the Alba.

PHIL  
Maybe. Yeah. Maybe.

SHUTOV  
(waves him off)  
Yeah, well. These days Johnny's got  
me out here to break fingers. How  
you like that?

PHIL  
Congratulations.

SHUTOV  
Thank you.

Shutov takes a long drag. Smokes and eats at the same time.

SHUTOV  
But I'll tell you this. What I do  
isn't shit compared to this  
gigantic sonofabitch. You ever met  
Ronnie?

He points to Ronnie over his shoulder. Chews. Phil shakes his head.

SHUTOV  
I've heard a' this guy here doin'  
some unnatural shit. Fuckin'  
foldin' people up into little  
squares and shovin' 'em down  
garbage chutes. Make your asshole  
pucker-type shit.

Another drag.

SHUTOV  
You ever heard a' Systema?

PHIL  
No.

SHUTOV  
Me either till I saw it. He does  
that.  
(chews)  
It's kinda like this martial art.  
From Russia. Like, cold war-type  
shit. Developed by the KGB for  
Stalin's bodyguards. Engineered by  
scientists, I kid you not.

He takes another bite. Phil shuffles a bit.

SHUTOV  
There's no, like- karate chops or  
kung fu shit. Nothing like that.  
What this cat does, is walk up to a  
dude, *and break his neck like that-*

He SNAPS his fingers. And holds a long, long, silence.  
Chewing. Smoking.

SHUTOV

- and make it look like he just patted you on the back. Fucked up, right? Evil shit. Over and under.

Phil stammers. Shutov looks down and begins going at his hash browns with a knife and fork.

SHUTOV

Me? Fuck it. I'm regular. I just shoot people.

He starts LAUGHING. A loud, annoying laugh. Phil awkwardly smiles. Goes to stand.

PHIL

Y- You want some coffee?

SHUTOV

No man, I'm good. Hey- hey- where you going, bro? I tell you to get up?

Beat.

SHUTOV

(serious, icy)

Sit down, man.

Phil looks to Ronnie. *You better sit down.* Phil sits.

SHUTOV

There we go. Mm. I tell you what. You want some coffee? S'that it?

(stands abruptly)

You want some coffee? I got it. Stay right the fuck there.

Shutov stands. Moves over to the steaming coffee pot sitting idle behind the counter. As he does, he reaches under the handle of the counter...

... and grabs Phil's shotgun. PULLS it free. He turns. Grabs the coffee pot and two mugs.

SHUTOV

(smiling)

So. You wondering why me and Ronnie came by?

Ronnie stands. Walks over to the door and LOCKS it. FLIPS the 'open' sign 'closed'. Phil swallows.

Shutov walks back over to the table. Beat. Pours the coffees.

SHUTOV

My uncle Johnny, right? Who you know. Who runs shit. Goes out to the bingo hall at St. Hugo's a couple times a week these days cause he's old as shit, right?

(walks back to the counter, takes the shotgun)

... So he's macking on this blue haired broad he's been trying to nail since 1842 or whatever, and she tells him a funny story. Cause' she knows what he's all about- all those old bitches down there do.

He smiles. Crosses back with the shotgun. Sits down opposite of Phil.

SHUTOV

So this old chick fills him in on this story. About how her fat niece comes down here, to *this place*, every day after class, and gets a bowl of chili. It's the shame of the family, you know? 'Cause this girl's got a fuckin' problem, right? Well last Thursday, this niece, she watches *you* take a phone call...

And there we have it.

SHUTOV

You want to tell us what that was about? The phone call?

PHIL

I- I don't know-

Casually, Shutov brings the shotgun to rest on his knee. Beneath the table.

SHUTOV

You don't know? You didn't answer the phone that whole fuckin' day?

Beat. Phil swallows. As if searching within himself for the smartest thing to say. Immediately perspiring. He swallows a lump in his throat...

PHIL

I don't. I don't know what you're talking about.

SHUTOV

You sure?

PHIL

... Yeah.

SHUTOV

You're sure you don't got nothing you wanna tell us about a phone call you got last Thursday?

PHIL

Yeah.

Beat.

BLAM.

Without warning, the shotgun EXPLODES in Shutov's hands underneath the table. FIRES. Phil SCREAMS.

PHIL

Gah!

Phil RECOILS backwards. Out of the booth. Onto the ground. HOWLING in pain. SCREAMING. He's clutching his knee. Bleeding and ripped apart. Ronnie STANDS. Jolted. Shutov turns to Ronnie...

SHUTOV

Bro! Bro-

Ronnie looks to Shutov. Shutov winks. *I got it, bro. All good.* Shutov rises out of the booth. Stands.

SHUTOV

Phil, man... I'm telling you...

Shutov moves over to Phil. Crouches down.

SHUTOV

Phil.

PHIL

(writhing in pain)

My leg- my leg-

SHUTOV

Phil! Look at me. Look. I'm sorry bro. I didn't wanna do that- I didn't.

(beat)

But we gotta even out the give and take, bro. See? Now we're all on the same level... You need us as much as we need you.

Beat. Shutov's lost Phil.

SHUTOV

We need you to be honest with us...

Another beat.

SHUTOV

And you... need a ride to the hospital... Right?

He looks to Ronnie for a nod of agreement. Doesn't get it.

EXT. DEQUINDER AVE - DAY

The Delta 88 flies down a two lane blacktop. ROARING along at sixty miles an hour. SWERVING through traffic.

INT. DELTA 88 - DAY

Shutov drives. Still smoking. Ronnie is totally quiet. Looking straight ahead. Phil is in the backseat. Bleeding all over a plastic tarp. Woozy.

SHUTOV

(over his shoulder)

Phil, man- you okay back there? I keep some Vicodin in the glovebox, bro- you want one?

Beat. He looks at Ronnie. Realizes his gaffe.

SHUTOV

... You know. For emergencies-

PHIL

(interrupting)

I- I can't feel my toes-

SHUTOV

(to Phil)

Hey you'll be fine, bro-

Beat.

SHUTOV  
(to Ronnie, under his  
breath)  
Maybe you should grab him one.

Ronnie glares at him. Not impressed by any of this.

EXT. SERVICE DRIVE - LODGE FREEWAY - DAY

The Delta 88 pulls up to a stop. Just across the Lodge, the HENRY FORD HOSPITAL can be seen. Rising like a gothic mansion out of the middle of a ghetto.

INT. DELTA 88 - CONTINUOUS

Shutov turns. Looks back to Phil. He looks considerably worse than before. Pale, sweaty, and woozy. Shutov motions to the Hospital. No more than a few hundred feet away.

SHUTOV  
Alright, fellas. We're here. See  
the Henry Ford hospital, Phil? It's  
right over there.

PHIL  
(breathing heavy)  
... Good... good...

SHUTOV  
But listen... now that we've come  
through on our end, we gotta finish  
our conversation-

Beat. Phil looks at Shutov.

PHIL  
Wh- Wh- I need help, man! You shot  
me!

SHUTOV  
And we're gonna get you right over  
there for some treatment, I promise  
you. But yo, this was the  
arrangement, remember?

Phil droops. Exhausted.

SHUTOV

Now listen, you wanna go the round  
for round on this shit, that's  
totally fine, I got no problem  
letting you bleed to death in my  
back seat. I got a garage off  
Warren I can park you in with a gag  
tie if you wanna be difficult. But  
I'm tryin' to get you taken care of  
here as soon as possible. And the  
hospital's right there, bro... What  
do you want to do?

Long silence. Phil's breathing shallows a bit. He looks to Shutov.

SHUTOV

Now listen. The *little fat girl*,  
who saw you take *the phone call*  
*last thursday*. She says that the  
call you got was from somebody  
named *Jimmy*. And that in this phone  
call, you got to talking about the  
*old days- shit nobody knows*. Like  
early 80's. Brewster & McKenna, my  
uncle, my pops, punkin' out Coleman  
Young, all that.

Phil's eyes flicker. A recognition betrays itself. He knows where this is going...

SHUTOV

And there's only one Jimmy from  
back in the day. Only one who saw  
all that. And that's Jimmy Six.

(beat)

You still talkin' to Jimmy Six?

Even in serious pain, Phil goes totally quiet for a second. Swallowing hard. Trying to. Shutov pulls his pistol into view for Phil to see.

SHUTOV

You better answer me fuckin'  
straight- 'cause if it ain't Jimmy  
Six, then that means you're a rat  
motherfucker talkin' shit to god-  
knows-who over the fuckin' phone  
with little fat bitches everywhere.  
And that means I gotta off you  
right now.

(more)

SHUTOV (CONT'D)

So, gimme the fuckin' truth, Phil-  
or they're gonna find you down in  
Canton all bloated and see through.

A moment passes. Before our eyes, all the dignity and self respect go out of Phil. Guilt sets in.

SHUTOV

(motioning with the  
pistol)

... Hospital's right there, bro.

Beat.

PHIL

... it was him.

SHUTOV

Jimmy Six? You're still talkin' to  
Jimmy Six?

PHIL

Y- yeah. Here and there... He calls  
every year to wish a merry  
Christmas...

Shutov looks to Ronnie.

SHUTOV

Where is he?

(beat)

Where is he, Phil?

Phil stammers again. A swell of sadness comes over him.

PHIL

I don't know, but... This one time,  
he- he called me collect. From St.  
Marquette... some town up North. Up  
on the U.P... I think it's where he  
lives. Needed some cash wired to  
him, so I did...

SHUTOV

You got his address?

Phil shakes his head.

PHIL

I don't even got his number. He  
can't... He can't tell me anything  
'cause of the witness protection...

'Cause your uncle's still lookin'  
for him...

Beat. Shutov eyes him skeptically. For a long moment.

SHUTOV  
You sure that's it?

PHIL  
(heaving)  
I swear...

Shutov looks to Ronnie. Shrugs.

EXT. HENRY FORD HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ENTRANCE - DAY

A hospital built at the turn of the century by Henry Ford for his workers. Refitted dozens of times since. Still in fairly good condition. An OLD BLACK WOMAN, dressed in her Sunday best, is pushed out of the automatic doors by an ORDERLY.

SCREECH.

The DELTA-88 comes ROARING into view. SLAMS on its brakes. The back door FLIES open.

Phil is ROLLED out of the car onto the curb. HOWLING in pain as he goes. Without a word, the Delta 88 peels off again. Out of view.

INT. SHUTOV'S CAR - DAY

HIP HOP BLASTS. We can't place it, but it's all in some foreign language. Shutov's Delta WHIPS down inner city Detroit streets. In the driver's seat, Shutov is throwing his own private dance party.

SHUTOV  
(free-styling)  
Who's a gangsta? I'm a gangsta! Who  
'da gangstas? We da gangstas!

Next to him, Ronnie smokes a cigarette. Staring at Shutov.

SHUTOV  
Hey, yo! You see that shit? You see  
how I shook him down like 'yo, the  
hospital's right there, bro'?  
(lights a smoke)  
I'm fuckin' built for this, I'm  
telling you.

Ronnie is still staring at Shutov.

RONNIE

You look like a fucking jerk. You know that?

SHUTOV

What? Look man, if it's my personal celebration that's frustratin' you here, I'll pull it back, but you gotta admit, bro. That? That was some professional fuckin' shit. Inventive. That's what that was... I stepped up today. From here it's...

(he pauses)

Yo. It's the next level. As of today, I'm in. I'm in like you. Uncle Johnny's gonna shit his pants when he hears what we got outta the guy.

He looks at Ronnie. Still no response.

SHUTOV

I mean- Jimmy Six, man? Jimmy Six? How long we been lookin' for this cat? How many years? He put me on the tip, and I fuckin' got it...

Beat.

SHUTOV

(to himself)

I stepped up.

EXT. ST. HUGO'S CHURCH & SCHOOL PARKING LOT- LATE DAY

What might as well be a CATHEDRAL rises two stories out of a sea of grimy shotgun bungalows. All brick and stone. Fitted with twenty-foot-high stained glass windows. Luminescent at the end of the day. Glowing. Wrapped thick behind a barbed wire fence.

Shutov's Delta 88 pulls into the tiny church parking lot. A myriad of 12 YEAR-OLDS play street hockey nearby.

INT. ST. HUGO'S CHURCH - NIGHT

Shutov warms his hands by BREATHING into them. He SHUFFLES a bit, sending echoes across the vast expanse laid out before him. He stands in the main aisle, at the very back of the church. Candles light the faces of religious icons placed everywhere.

Near the altar, JOHNNY DEEGAN (70s), a rough-etched man aging like wine, talks to Ronnie. He's nearly 80, but with a smooth finish. Too smooth for his age. He and Ronnie sit in a pew close to the front. Their conversational WHISPERS can be heard faintly where Shutov stands.

After a moment, Johnny turns around. He catches Shutov's gaze. Motions him forward. Shutov steps lightly. Crossing to the front of the church.

UP FRONT

Shutov steps into the pew where Johnny and Ronnie sit. They speak in hushed tones. Very quiet.

JOHNNY  
(not looking at him)  
Kneel down. Say a prayer while I  
talk to you.

Shutov does. Kneels. Beat.

JOHNNY  
Pray.

Shutov blinks. *Okay...* He closes his eyes and begins to do it. Johnny looks down. Thinking.

JOHNNY  
Is it true I gotta be fronting  
hospital bills for that dumbfuck  
Polack now?

Beat.

SHUTOV  
Uncle Johnny-

JOHNNY  
Shut up.

Beat. Shutov does it. Johnny begins fiddling with a wooden rosary.

JOHNNY  
I heard the story. From Ronnie.  
Ronnie who's sitting right here.  
You want to call him a liar? Go  
ahead. Do it.

Shutov doesn't respond. Looks to Ronnie.

JOHNNY

So. Your brilliant plan for shakin' this guy down was to storm in there, run your fucking mouth like an idiot, tell this guy all about the little fat girl that heard the phone call, and then *shoot him...* with a fucking *shotgun*. Is that true?

Shutov swallows.

SHUTOV

Yeah.

JOHNNY

You ever consider just asking someone a fuckin' question? Having a fuckin' conversation? Heh?

(beat)

At what point did *shooting him...* begin to sound like a good idea? Did I tell you to do that?

SHUTOV

No, but-

Johnny CLAPS. The sound carries throughout the church.

JOHNNY

A shotgun sounds like that. Across two city blocks. Everybody hears it.

(beat)

Now I gotta pay this prick's medical bills, and pay him to not report you to the police. All this stress you bring me... I only got a few more years of this, you know.

SHUTOV

I know-

JOHNNY

No you fuckin' don't. You know the idea was to have you runnin' the whole show by now? The *whole thing*? An' here I am throwin' you last chance after last chance just to *stay involved...* How old are you? 29? You know what your father would be doing to you right now? For this fuckin' stunt?

Beat.

JOHNNY

The Polack could'a bled to death  
and told you nothing- when *you*  
*knew*. What he knew. And how  
important it was.

SHUTOV

Well Ronnie was with me-  
(to Ronnie)  
Come on, bro- if I was doin' it  
wrong you could'a said something.

JOHNNY

(mimicking, glaring)

"Bro"? What's this? What are you  
talking like that for? It's not his  
place to tell you shit, Shooey.  
You're the one who's been beggin'  
me for another chance to prove  
yourself, and you fucked it up.  
Again. Look at me.

Shutov does.

JOHNNY

This is Jimmy Six we're talkin'  
about.

SHUTOV

(mimes offense)

*I know.*

Beat.

Johnny looks up. Up to the mural painted at the head of the church. Blinks. Takes off his glasses. Rubs his eyes.

JOHNNY

(almost to himself)

This ain't the way things should'a  
worked out... Your dad should still  
be running this crew. *Not me...*

Shutov nods. Respectfully.

JOHNNY

Take off, I'll figure this shit  
out.

SHUTOV

But. We're gonna go get this guy,  
right? I mean, we know where he  
lives now...

JOHNNY

Ronnie's gonna take care of it.

SHUTOV

W- what about me? I mean, this  
should be *my thing*, Uncle John- I  
mean it's *my* old man this guy  
ratted out, I'd say I got the  
fuckin' right ta'-

Johnny's stare stops Shutov cold. He stares through his  
nephew. Quiet.

JOHNNY

(beat)

*I gave you... a chance to act like  
a professional, and you came back  
to me with stress.*

Johnny holds Shutov's gaze. Hard. A powerful gesture. Shutov  
finally looks down. Clenches his jaw.

JOHNNY

Now get the fuck outta here.

Shutov rises. Johnny watches him go. Eyes him the entire way.  
As if staring down a defiant child.

EXT. ST. HUGO'S - PARKING LOT - LATER - NIGHT

Shutov stands outside in the cold. Smoking cigarette after  
cigarette. Pacing. He waits. Shudders as a cold wind WHIPS  
gusts of scattered snow past. They ring over him like tiny,  
frozen daggers.

Up ahead. Ronnie exits the church. Walking towards Shutov.  
Shutov yells to him as he approaches.

SHUTOV

That's not fuckin' cool, bro.  
Fuckin' ratting me out like that...

Ronnie keeps walking right past.

SHUTOV

Hey! One day. One day,  
motherfucker. *I'm still gonna be*  
*running this shit.*

You heard him say it. So unless you want to start working corners-

Ronnie stops. Turns around. Heads right for Shutov. And it's not a friendly sight. *This is a scary, scary, man.* Coming right this way. Very fast. Shutov steps back as Ronnie walks up.

Ronnie towers over him.

SHUTOV

What?

RONNIE

You calling me a liar?

Beat.

SHUTOV

No. I'm just sayin' -

RONNIE

(leaning in, interrupting)

Shut up.

Shutov does. Waits for Ronnie to say something --

-- but he doesn't. He just stands there. Burning holes in Shutov's face with his eyes. Finally. Ronnie turns and walks away.

Beat.

SHUTOV

(under his breath)

Fuckin'... freak.

INT. SHUTOV'S CAR - NIGHT

Shutov ROARS up the Davison. Pissed off and driving like an asshole. Weaving in and out of traffic. As he goes, he TEARS through his glovebox. Fishes out the bottle of pills. Pounds two different colors...

... And chews them. Like candy.

Beat.

SHUTOV

Fuck it.

Grabs the bottle of pills again. Pours a small fistfull into his hand...

EXT. RED DRAGON STRIP CLUB- 8 MILE - NIGHT

Shutov PULLS up in the Delta. Seedy trimmings drip right into the parking lot, down to the valet service. Twenty dollars to park a rusted out ghetto blaster (think 82' Cutlass Sierras and the like)...

... And the parking lot is full.

A VALET approaches. Korean.

VALET  
(thick accent)  
How you doin'? 20 dollars.

The Valet goes to open Shutov's door.

SHUTOV  
Hey! Did I tell you'ta do that?

Beat. Shutov closes the door. Glaring.

SHUTOV  
I'm parkin' this motherfucker  
myself. You just point, bro.

Shutov forcibly hands the Valet a 20. The Valet takes it.  
Nods. Points Shutov to a far corner.

VALET  
(heavily accented)  
Back there.

Shutov leans closer. As if not hearing.

SHUTOV  
Back *there*?

VALET  
Yes.

SHUTOV  
(Points. Punches the 'th'  
sound)  
There? You mean back *there*?

VALET  
Y-

SCREEECH! Shutov PEELS out. Right in the middle of the parking lot. Cuts the Valet off.

INT. DELTA 88 - CONTINUOUS

Shutov pulls the car into place. Mutters as he backs it in.

SHUTOV  
(to himself)  
Fuckin'... Speak English, bro.

INT. RED DRAGON - CONTINUOUS

Shutov walks in. Looks around. He sizes up the crowd. The place is Korean owned. All the muscle is Korean. So are the BARTENDERS. A bunch of the GIRLS too. The JOHNS range from BLACK DUDES, to WHITE KIDS from the burbs, to PERVS. DIRTY SOUTH HIP HOP shakes every corner of the establishment.

Shutov scans the room for someone. Spots her. MARIANNA (20s), beautiful, tall with long curves, moves from unwilling customer to unwilling customer. Scantly clad.

Shutov approaches. Someone GRABS his arm. It's the MANAGER (30s). Korean, big, and ugly. He speaks in not-so-fluent English.

MANAGER  
Hey bro, what's up? You need help  
with something?

Shutov points to Marianna, across the way.

SHUTOV  
Yo, I just wanna talk to my girl.

He tries to start forward again. Again, he's STOPPED. Two BOUNCERS approach as well.

MANAGER  
(looking to Marianna)  
That's your girl?

Beat.

SHUTOV  
Yeah.

MANAGER  
Aw, she busy right now, bro. Why  
don't you talk to her when she get  
off?

Beat. Shutov stops. Smiles.

SHUTOV

Talk to her when she 'get off'?  
What's that supposed to mean? When  
she's done? When's she's done  
working? I'm not allowed to talk to  
my own girlfriend, is that what  
you're sayin'?

MANAGER

We not saying that, bro. You can  
talk to her anytime you want. Just  
not when she working.

SHUTOV

So that *is* what you're sayin-

MANAGER

(interrupting)

No, we not saying that-

SHUTOV

(leans in close)

Listen asshole, you better get your  
fuckin' hands offa me-

MANAGER

We gonna go outside.

The Bouncers begin to PUSH Shutov towards the exit. He begins SHOVING back. Drawing attention. Across the room, Marianna looks up. Sees the commotion.

SHUTOV

(shoving back)

Oh yeah? Oh yeah? Fuckin' take me  
outside. Let's do that- come on-  
let's see what fuckin' happens-

MARIANNA

(approaching)

Wait, wait, wait!

The Manager looks. Turns to Marianna. The Bouncers stop for a moment. Keeping SHUTOV at arm's length from her.

MARIANNA

(to Shutov)

What are you doing?

SHUTOV

*Me? What am I doing? I came in here to talk with you real quick, and these fuckin' guys start walking up on me like it's the People's Republic of China-*

MANAGER

(interrupting)

He's causing a scene. Got to go.

MARIANNA

No. Wait. He'll be cool. I promise.

She shoots the Manager a look. *Please.*

INT. V.I.P. ROOM - NIGHT

Shutov stands. Dusting himself off. Nearby, Marianna draws the velvet curtains shut. Storms over to Shutov.

MARIANNA

*What are you doing? You tryin' to get me fired? I told you I don't want you comin' up here while I'm working!*

SHUTOV

You give these guys a cut of what you make? Huh? I'm'a tell you- that motherfucker touches me again, I'll roll up here with a fuckin' flamethrower-

MARIANNA

*Stop it! Shooey. You look like you're here to hurt someone. They're tryin' to protect me, alright? That's their job.*  
(beat, looks at his eyes)  
Jesus Christ- what the hell are you on?

Shutov guffaws. Mimes offense.

SHUTOV

What? Me?

(beat)

Nothing. I didn't have nothing...

MARIANNA

Fine. Whatever. What do you wanna talk about?

Beat. Shutov stammers. As if trying to remember...

MARIANNA

*Jesus Christ. You just came up here  
lookin' for a fight, didn't you?  
You're fuckin' doped up-*

SHUTOV

No, no- that's not it-

He pauses.

SHUTOV

*I, uh... I wanted to... to come  
through, and uh, scoop you up.*

MARIANNA

What?

SHUTOV

Yeah.

She LAUGHS. Throws up her hands. Turns. Starts walking away.

SHUTOV

*Look, I had a bad fuckin' day,  
alright? I'm fuckin' pissed off, so  
I came up here to see if you could  
take off early-*

She turns. Stops.

MARIANNA

Are you crazy?

SHUTOV

Why not?

MARIANNA

*Because I can't, okay? Because when  
you work a *real* job-*

SHUTOV

Oh, this is a real job?

MARIANNA

*- you got these things called  
*shifts*. And if you miss a shift,  
you get fired.*

SHUTOV

So what?

MARIANNA

*So what?*

SHUTOV

Yeah. Fuck this place.

She stares at him. Offended now. Confounded by his density.

MARIANNA

You're so fuckin' selfish, you know that? Get the fuck outta here.

She turns. Starts to walk out. Shutov chases her down.

SHUTOV

Hey. Hey. Come here.

(grabs her)

Look at me. Okay? Look at me. Just a second.

(she listens, one last chance)

I'm serious. I had a terrible day... Let's go home, and... just chill, you know? Let's grab Stevie, watch a movie as a family-

MARIANNA

*Stevie's in bed, Shooey. It's ten thirty- how high are you?*

She tries to pull away. He doesn't let go.

SHUTOV

What are you worried about? This place? Let me tell you something. It fuckin' kills me. Knowin' you gotta do this... Alright? Look, soon enough my uncle's gonna bring me in for real, and we'll be set. You don't need this. Alright? Fuck it, let's just split. You'n me.

He stammers. Awkwardly.

SHUTOV

You know?

Beat. Marianna looks over him. Cold. Unreadable.

MARIANNA

Forty.

(he doesn't follow)

For the dance.

Shutov wavers there for a second. He frowns. Reaches for his wallet. Hands her a bill.

MARIANNA  
(turns to go)  
Go home.

SHUTOV  
Make me.

She walks away. Back into the main room.

INT. RED DRAGON - LATER

Shutov watches Marianna on stage as she slithers through her routine. He's sloshed. And getting worse. BEER BOTTLES line his table. Some overturned shot glasses as well. Marianna looks good. Too good. She removes her top. Exposing perfectly formed breasts to the entire bar. WHISTLES. Shutov looks down. SLAMS a full shot glass in front of him. A WAITRESS brings him another round.

SHUTOV  
(to the waitress)  
Don't stop.

WAITRESS  
What?

SHUTOV  
(louder)  
I said don't stop.

She wrinkles her nose. Walks away. Shutov catches the gaze of the Manager in the corner. Staring him down. Bouncers are watching too. Shutov stares right back... Then toasts the manager with his beer. Smiles maliciously. Pounds another shot.

On stage. Marianna straddles a pole. Climbs it. Spins downward. Hanging upside down. A DIRTY OLD MAN near the stage inserts a crusty five into Marianna's g-string. SLAPS her ass quick. Turns around and WHOOPS. Marianna shakes it off. Continues the dance. More customers raise singles.

Shutov STANDS. KNOCKS his table. Bottles go sliding off and ROLLING across the floor. Shutov stumbles over to the stage and drunkenly crash-lands in a chair.

Reaching into his wallet, he pulls out a hundred. Holds it up. No one seems to be paying attention to him. Not even her. After a moment, he STANDS. Stares contemptuously at the competition for Marianna's attention.

Behind Shutov, the Manager and Bouncers are watching close.

SHUTOV  
(at Marianna)  
Hey!

Marianna looks over. Hearing Shutov. Catches his eye. The look she betrays, for a fraction of a second, is a lopsided mixture of pity and disgust. She looks away. Continues accepting the bills that have been offered to her. Each hand tries to lay palm or grab one of her curves.

Shutov turns. Begins SHUFFLING down the side of the stage. PUSHES his way through the other onlookers. Gets within a few feet of her. Holds out his bill, and SHOUTS over the loud music --

SHUTOV  
Hey! You blind?!

Marianna still ignores him. The song ends. She doesn't turn to face him. Gets off stage as quick as possible. Avoiding his gaze.

A FAT OLD MAN across the way signals her as she steps onto the main floor. Marianna LAUGHS. Flirty. Moves over to him.

Shutov watches this. Still holding his bill. Marianna takes the Old Man by the hand, leading him into the VIP room...

... Shutov starts after them. Following. Fumbling.

Marianna guides the old man along, closes the curtain behind them. Shutov, right behind her, reaches for the curtain --

-- and never makes it.

WHAM. He's struck from the side. SHOVED --

-- right through a service door that's been held open. Waiting for him. In a second we realize what's happened. He's walked right into a trap set by the Bouncers. Sending him sailing right through the open door.

Inside the club, nobody even notices the commotion.

The service door CREAKS, closing...

... As it does, we hear the coarse sounds of GRUNTS and PUMMELLING.

EXT. BACK PARKING LOT - RED DRAGON - NIGHT

FIVE KOREAN BOUNCERS are kicking the living shit out of Shutov. He's already on the ground. Shielding his head the best he can. KICKS and FISTS are flying at him in every direction.

Trying to SCRAMBLE away, he crawls, but can't get far. There's ice everywhere. Everyone is SLIDING.

Shutov GRABS the closest pair of legs. SWINGS hard. Up. Holds tight to the ankle. Clumsily PUNCHES. Forces himself to his feet. Throws the Bouncer backwards, SLIPPING on the ice. Shutov, drunk, falls with him. LANDS right on top of the guy.

It doesn't stop him, though. In a second, Shutov's throwing PUNCHES. WHACK. WHACK. WHACK. Connecting. But not for long.

A SAILING KICK comes out of nowhere. Hitting Shutov on the back of the head. More follow. Shutov COLLAPSES sideways under the brunt of the hits. Quickly CRAWLS to avoid getting pinned again.

He STRUGGLES. Rising to his feet. He's almost there --

-- just as a flying KICK clocks him in the back of the head. Shutov YELPS. HITS the ground like a sack of potatoes. In disbelief. Dizzy.

The Koreans are on him again. Gang STOMPING him. The scene becomes downright frightening. Shutov does what he can to shield his head and face.

The BEATING goes on...

And on...

Finally, out of exhaustion, the Koreans stop. Catching their breath. They stand around for a second, looking at each other.

Beat.

On the ground, Shutov isn't moving.

The Koreans look at each other. Uh oh.

One of the Bouncers asks a question to another. In Korean. Something probably along the lines of: *Is he dead?*

No one responds. As if waiting for Shutov to answer...

Finally, one of the Koreans sticks his foot out. Like a child testing pool water. He pokes at Shutov lightly...

... Shutov GROANS. Thrusts an arm into the air. Plants it firmly on the ground. As if holding on for dear life. The Koreans try not to show it, but everyone heaves a sigh of relief.

Finally- one leans in close to Shutov. Gripping him firmly by the top of his head.

BOUNCER  
Don't come back here, motherfucker.  
Next time we'll kill you.

He lets go. The Koreans walk away. Leaving Shutov's crumpled form a practical stain on the sidewalk. He lies there. Motionless. Not responding...

EXT. SHUTOV'S CAR - NEARBY - MINUTES LATER

A BLOODY HAND reaches into view. SLAMS down on the trunk. SMEARING crimson on candy paint. Shutov rises into view. Face swollen. Eyes bloodshot. A heaving, bloody, mess of pure anger.

Slowly. Very. Slowly. He manages to inch his way into a turn...

... He turns to face the Red Dragon strip club. Still there. DIRTY SOUTH HIP HOP still blaring. Heard thumping through cinder-block walls.

Shutov drools some blood. Turns back around. Fishes through his coat pocket. For his keys. Uses the remote opener to UNLOCK the car.

ANGLE:

The glove box. Shutov's bloody mitten reaches into view. UNLOCKS it with a manual key. It COLLAPSES open. His gun, the .38 we saw earlier, PLOPS into view.

EXT. RED DRAGON - NIGHT

Shutov is STUMBLING right back into the club. His pistol exposed for the world to see. Gripped tight in bloody knuckles.

The DOORMAN storms towards him.

DOORMAN

Hey, where you think you're going,  
chief-

BLAM.

Without a word, Shutov FIRES a warning shot right past the Doorman. The Doorman turns heel and RUNS. Runs away.

Shutov THROWS open the strip club door. Walks right in. The COAT CHECK GIRL can be seen SCREAMING as the door closes...

Beat.

GUNSHOTS are heard...

CUT TO:

INT. RED DRAGON - DAY

SCREAMING. Waitresses SCATTER. The music STOPS. Shutov is STAGGERING into the middle of the room. Gun aimed upward. FIRING into the ceiling. In every direction, scantily clad women and customers BOLT for the exits. Ducking.

SHUTOV

(woozy)

Who wants to throw me out now?!  
Huh?! Who wants to-

CLICK.

Shutov's six-shooter runs out of ammunition. Beat. He looks at it. Begins rifling through his pockets as people SCURRY everywhere around him. He WOBLES.

SHUTOV

(playing it off)

That's fuckin' right!

He PULLS a fistful of change, pills, and bullets into view. Begins sorting through. Reloading his pistol as a STRIPPER runs past him. SCREAMING.

SHUTOV

You motherfuckers... You know who  
the fuck I a-

SLAM. Before he can finish his sentence. Or reload. From the left, an UNSEEN BOUNCER TACKLES Shutov-

INT. 6TH DISTRICT DETROIT POLICE STATION - DAY

Shutov sits in a holding cell. He looks like the walking dead. Someone's given him an ice pack.

The swelling has subsided substantially, but the picture isn't much prettier than what we saw earlier. Two black eyes, a swollen nose. Cuts and bruises everywhere.

JINGLING can be heard. A GUARD walks in. Opens the cell.

INT. JOHNNY DEEGAN'S HOUSE - DETROIT - DAY

A modest bungalow. Shutov sits in the far corner of a tastefully decorated living room. Still looking like shit. A bizarre mix of decorative themes line every wall, shelf, crack and crevice: *The Blessed Mother* and *Lighthouses*.

A display case curiously filled with BOBBLE HEADS occupies the far corner. Johnny enters. Brings a cup of tea and a saucer with him. Sets himself down on a couch across from Shutov.

And GLARES at him. Says nothing. Just glares. Beat.

SHUTOV

... I don't know what you want me say.

(pauses)

I'm there, I come down to have a word with Stevie's mother, next thing I know I'm in the parking lot gettin'- literally- fuckin' ninja-kicked in the face.

Johnny CHUCKS his tea at Shutov. Shutov DUCKS. Clamors to his feet. It SHATTERS against the wall right next to his head.

JOHNNY

You want to know somethin', you fuckin' ingrate?! If you don't like seeing your girl getting her ass patted by niggers and gooks, then stop dating fuckin' strippers! You know what you're lookin' at?? Assault with a deadly weapon!

SHUTOV

I didn't kill anybody-

JOHNNY

(interrupting)

I told you! Yesterday! How expensive it was gonna be to put the Polack in the hospital! Now I've gotta pay off a bunch a Chinamen, and a fuckin stripper?? What the fuck is wrong with you?! Dumbass. Sidden!

SHUTOV

Look, if you're gonna be throwin' shit at me, I'm in real delicate position-

JOHNNY

Sit! The fuck! Down!

Shutov crosses back over to the chair he just DUCKED out of. Beat.

JOHNNY

You know what you're fuckin' problem is? You must not be your father's kid. That's it. Your fuckin' mother. God rest her. Must'a screwed up, and banged her gay uncle or something, cause that's the only place you could'a come from... You ain't related to me, that's for sure. And you sure as fuck ain't nothin' like your father... And now I got Nik- down at the *impound*, tellin' me you had Vicodin in your car? What are you, a fuckin' Soccer Mom?! How the fuck did you get hooked on Vicodin? Are you takin' Vicodin now?

Shutov says nothing. Clenching his jaw.

JOHNNY

How is it possible. That you fuck up this much?

SHUTOV

(meek)

These guys down there, they came at me- I was just... Tryin' to conduct myself with a little dignity.

Johnny looks at him. Holds an icy glare.

JOHNNY

Dignity comes... *in not dating whores in the first place...* This is the girl with the kid, right? The kid that ain't even yours? That ain't even your responsibility?

SHUTOV

Yeah, but-

JOHNNY

Yeah but *what?*

SHUTOV

Well- The kid, you know? I just don't want him growin' up without an old man-

JOHNNY

(ignoring him,  
interrupting)

Dignity comes in dating a woman *who raised right*. Here. With us. In *this neighborhood*. And marrying her. In a *Catholic* fuckin' church! And having *your own son*. Dignity comes in keeping your mouth shut, and stayin' out of danger unless you absolutely have to. You... you're a fuckin' time bomb, Shooey. You're a liability to me.

Beat.

JOHNNY

And we're done. You and me. I wash my hands of this.

SHUTOV

What?

JOHNNY

You heard what I said. I've put people in trunks for pissing me off as much as you, know that? Go get a fuckin' job.

SHUTOV

No, no, no- wait-

Johnny's already standing. Moving over to the kitchen.

JOHNNY  
Grab your coat. Get the fuck out.

SHUTOV  
No, no- wait!  
(no response)  
Wait!

Shutov boils. Musters a strength we haven't seen yet.

SHUTOV  
You're gonna turn around, an'  
listen to me Uncle John!

Johnny stops. Beat. This is new. We can see it. Looks at Shutov. He's either going to rip this kid's head off, or God knows what. Shutov wavers a bit. Swallows a lump in his throat.

SHUTOV  
Now the only reason I was so pissed off last night, the only reason I was actin' so stupid- is 'cause you cut me outta this Jimmy Six shit.

JOHNNY  
(waves him off)  
Get the fuck outta here-

SHUTOV  
(interrupting)  
This is my fuckin' birthright, and I will not leave! Not until you hear me out...

Beat. Johnny stops. Lets Shutov speak. Recognizing the humbled sincerity. Perhaps even a *recognition of someone else*.

Shutov wavers. Swallows a lump in his throat.

SHUTOV  
An' you know what, with all due respect, I can't believe you're down there at that church talkin' to me about this guy like I don't even know who he is- I known the name Jimmy Six since the day my dad went away, alright? And I always knew that it was me.  
(MORE)

SHUTOV (CONT'D)

*Me! Who was gonna do this. Once and for all. And I fucked up last night, an' I'm sorry. You cut me outta this thing- this thing I been waitin' my whole life to do, and I went out lookin' for a fight- somethin'--*

He searches for words. Trying to articulate something that's almost beyond him.

SHUTOV

I've been... gettin' stacked up to my old man all these years without ever askin' for it- by you, everybody down at the Alba, the church, god bless, whatever... At least for that, for livin' a whole life in this guy's shadow, I can do this one fuckin' thing to earn *my right*- ta even be there...

He stammers. A flash of water and desperation leaking into his expression. He forces it back.

SHUTOV

*It's mine. Okay?*

He holds the silence for a long moment. Johnny is still staring at him...

SHUTOV

And I love you, uncle John, and I respect your word as much as...

(points upward, catches his breath)

... But I *already know* where this guy is...

(beat)

Alright? I found St. Marquette on a map a'upstate, and I can go there with or without your permission...

So you can either let me go, and do this *one thing* right...

(beat, musters strength)

... or maybe I'll just do it myself.

Johnny blinks. An ultimatum. *Did this kid really just say that?*

A myriad of mixed emotions trade back and forth in Johnny's eyes. Everything from offense, to anger, to sympathy...

INT. JOHNNY'S CAR - DAY

Johnny drives a '67 Boat of a LINCOLN up Grand River. Shanty homes and crack dens pass by on both sides. MUSIC FROM THE OLD COUNTRY blasts out of the CRACKLING stereo.

SHUTOV

(elated)

You ain't gonna regret this, Uncle John. I swear. I swear to god. I'm gonna keep my mouth shut, no causing scenes, nothing. I'll back up Ronnie the whole way, I promise you.

Johnny turns. Looks at Shutov funny.

SHUTOV

What?

JOHNNY

Nothing.

SHUTOV

Uncle John. You don't got nothing to worry about. Look at me. I'm completely fucking smooth. I grew ten years today. I'm a'old fuckin' man now like you. Wise. I'm wise.

Johnny looks over at Shutov. Two black eyes, a fat lip, and a permanently crooked nose.

SHUTOV

See that? I'm a zen master over here.

Beat. Johnny looks Shutov up and down.

JOHNNY

I'm sending you to a doctor when you get back.

SHUTOV

Why?

JOHNNY

You sound funny. Like your nose is broke.

Shutov pulls down his visor. Checks the makeup mirror.

SHUTOV  
You think so?

EXT. RONNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Johnny's car pulls up. The brakes WHEEZE to a stop. Ronnie is packing the trunk of a '72 MALIBU out front. Walking down the front steps of his house holding a LARGE DUFFLE BAG. Smoking. Johnny and Shutov get out of the car. Approaching.

JOHNNY  
Ronnie.

Ronnie turns around. Sees them.

JOHNNY  
Come here.  
(to Shutov)  
Wait.

Shutov stays put. Johnny approaches Ronnie. Speaking in hushed tones.

CLOSER: Just Ronnie and Johnny.

JOHNNY  
Eh...  
(sighs)  
Bring him with you.

Ronnie looks at Johnny. Beat. Not happy to hear this.

JOHNNY  
It's the last thing I'm gonna do  
for him... My brother probably  
would'a wanted it. But. It's the  
last thing. I don't need someone  
like him around putting us at risk.  
So. If he can't grow the fuck up...  
(quiet)  
... If he screws this up... I don't  
want you bringin' him back here.

Johnny holds Ronnie's gaze with intended significance.

BACK TO SHUTOV:

Ronnie turns. Looks at Shutov. Walks back up the front walkway to the house. Johnny goes to leave.

JOHNNY  
Drive safe.

SHUTOV  
Uncle John. Thank you.

Johnny stops. Beat. Looks at Shutov. As if searching for something meaningful to say...

JOHNNY  
He'll take you by your place to pack. Don't make me look like a fuckin' idiot.

He turns. Heads to his car.

INT. RONNIE'S CAR - DAY

Ronnie and Shutov drive down the Lodge Freeway. Ronnie drives. POT HOLES SLAM and SCRAPE against the tires almost non stop. Ronnie, pretty much unreadable, seems clearly annoyed by Shutov's presence.

SHUTOV  
Hey, yo. I just want to say I'm really excited about this, and to thank you for lettin' me roll with you. I just. Want to show my appreciation for that.

Ronnie looks at Shutov. Smoking. Beat.

SHUTOV  
I know we minced words, the other night, about my sensitivity to being left out of this, but as far as I'm concerned, that's a done issue. I'm glad to be here, and I wanted to say that.

Ronnie looks at him another second. Then turns his attention back to the open road. No response.

Beat.

Shutov motions to the radio. Turns it on. It flickers to life for a fraction of a second --

SHUTOV  
How 'bout some music.

-- before Ronnie abruptly SLAPS it off. Shutov looks at him.

Ronnie looks right at Shutov. *Don't fuck with me.*

RONNIE  
S'not your fuckin' car.

EXT. OFF RAMP - CONTINUOUS

Ronnie's and Shutov ZOOM past.

EXT. SHUTOV'S HOUSE - DAY

Shutov's home is a weathered and greyed two-story duplex sitting in a row of similar looking abodes. Dead leaves, rotting into mulch, litter the front lawn. Peeking out beneath partially melted snow.

Shutov UNLOCKS the front door. Pushes... SLAM. The deadlock has been thrown from the inside. Beat.

SHUTOV  
(muttering)  
Shit.

He looks back to Ronnie. Standing nearby. KNOCKS. LOUD.

A long moment passes. Finally, Marianna, dressed down, looking remarkably normal in a bathrobe and bare feet, descends the stairs just beyond the door into view. She peers through the dirty glass. Sees Shutov.

SHUTOV  
What's this?

Beat.

MARIANNA  
I got fired, you know that?

Shutov smiles. Uneasy. Tries to play it off.

SHUTOV  
Babe- look-

She turns. Starts to walk back up the stairs again. He starts POUNDING on the door.

SHUTOV  
Hey! Hey! Where you goin'? Open the door- Mari!

She turns. Moves back into view. Cheeks flushed red.

MARIANNA

(through the door)

*You hear what I said? You hear what I said? I said you got me fired! Thank you. How're we supposed to make rent now? With what you bring in? Huh? I'm done with you! Go away. That's it.*

SHUTOV

Mari- open the fucking door, don't make me scream at you-

MARIANNA

Go stay at your Uncle's!

She turns around and walks away.

SHUTOV

(pounding again)

Hey! Hey! Marianna! Marianna! I swear to God- Hey!

(beat)

Look, I just need some stuff, then-

He stops. She's gone. It's no use. He turns. Looks back at Ronnie. Standing on the sidewalk waiting for him. Shutov regains his composure. Shoots Ronnie a smile. *I got this.*

Beat.

CRASH. Shutov KICKS open his front door. SPLINTERING the dead-bolt into a thousand pieces. He storms up the stairs into his home.

MARIANNA (O.S.)

Don't come up here! Don't come up here! Go away!

SHUTOV

This is my fuckin' house! Don't think you're gonna fuckin' lock me outta this-

He makes it to the top of the stairs. Stops.

At the far edge of the hallway, Stevie stands there. Clutching an OPTIMUS PRIME action figure.

Stevie looks at Shutov. Marianna continues YELLING somewhere off screen.

SHUTOV

Hey bro. You alright?

MARIANNA (O.S.)

Stevie go to your room!

Beat.

SHUTOV

You heard your moms. I'll be right with you. You doin' good? How was that cake?

STEVIE

Good.

SHUTOV

Alright bro- I wanna hear all about it, k?

Stevie nods.

SHUTOV

Okay. Go on. Be right there.

Stevie turns. Walks into his bedroom nearby. Mimes the motion of disappearing from view. As soon as Shutov has turned away, Stevie peers back into view. Watching Shutov as he walks down the hallway towards the master bedroom. Marianna has barricaded herself inside.

MARIANNA (O.S.)

Get out, Shooey! Get out!

Shutov POUNDS on the door.

SHUTOV

What's wrong with you?! Look, I'll do it, okay? I just gotta get some stuff-

Stevie continues watching. Shutov opens the bedroom door a little...

SHUTOV

I'm comin' in...

An alarm clock WHIZZES at him. EXPLODES against the frame right next to his head. He ducks back.

SHUTOV

Jesus fuckin' Christ!

Stevie winces. Watches the guts of the smashed alarm clock come SKIDDING down the hall towards him.

MARIANNA (O.S.)  
Get out! Get out!

SHUTOV  
Hey!

Shutov continues pleading with Marianna through the cracked doorway. Unaware of Stevie...

SHUTOV  
(calm, rational)  
Baby- I'm not gonna do that- look.  
I came to say goodbye, cause I got  
this business thing-

A vase is HURLED at him. CRASH. Again. Striking the doorway.

SHUTOV  
Hey!! You know how expensive that  
was?!

Stevie watches as Shutov THROWS open the door to his room. STORMS in. SLAMS it shut behind him. The NOISE is jarring. Spreads through the house.

Beat.

Stevie continues watching the closed door. Shutov and Marianna's voices, now MUFFLED, begin a horrible SCREAMING match. Which grows LOUDER...

LOUDER...

Glass can be heard SHATTERING. The sounds of STOMPING.

Stevie continues watching. Frozen. A swell of confusion and fear rising into his expression...

More SCREAMING. The sounds of Marianna SOBBING as she YELLS...

Stevie takes a step towards the closed door. Another. As if looking to enter the room and negotiate peace...

Something else catches Stevie's attention --

-- he looks over. Up...

... Ronnie is there. Having entered the house. Quiet. He stands over Stevie. Towers over him. Unreadable...

Beat.

Ronnie looks over the small child. Stevie stares back. Clutching his Optimus Prime as the ARGUMENT off-screen continues to escalate.

Ronnie looks down the hall to the sounds of the FIGHT. Looks back at Stevie-

-- and picks Stevie up. As if handling broken glass.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ronnie carries Stevie out the back door of the bungalow. Descending the stairs into the back yard. Grabbing Stevie's coat and winter boots as he goes. Handing them to Stevie.

ANGLE:

Out the back window. Ronnie and Stevie move down the last few stairs outside. Ronnie helps Stevie put on his coat as they go. All the while, the SOUNDS of Shutov and Marianna's fight reach a horrifying climax.

Ronnie, still holding Stevie, moves into the cramped, modestly framed back yard. A frozen, rusted, swing-set sits covered in ice.

Ronnie carries Stevie to the far end of the back yard, and stops. Waiting there with him. Waiting for the fight to end. It's a strangely sad, yet poetic image...

SHUTOV'S ROOM

Marianna sits in the corner now. Crying. Nearby, Shutov is angrily packing a bag. Points at Marianna as he turns to the closet.

SHUTOV

I don't know what it is with you.

Marianna is quiet. Her makeup is smeared. Mascara runs in jagged scars down her face. We can see lines that weren't there before. Neatly hidden behind posh concealer. She's aging faster than she should.

SHUTOV

(motions to Stevie's room)

You freak out on Stevie like this?

When I'm not around? Huh?

She says nothing.

SHUTOV  
You aughta' be ashamed of yourself.

He grabs a shirt out of the closet.

MARIANNA  
(quietly)  
At least I'm around-

He SLAMS the closet door closed. Marianna jumps. Visibly.

Beat. Shutov looks at her. Having seen the flinch. He stops. Gazes at her for a long minute. She stares right back. Her expression a mixture of sadness and regret.

Regret twinges in Shutov's eyes. He stammers for a second. As if trying to figure out what to do. Turns. Head down, he storms out of the room. SLAMS the door shut once more.

EXT. SHUTOV'S BACK YARD - DAY

Ronnie, holding Stevie, looks up to Shutov's house once more. It's quiet. He looks to Stevie.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Shutov is putting the finishing touches on a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Ronnie enters with Stevie. He smiles at the sight of the boy.

SHUTOV  
(glad to see him)  
Hey-

He moves over with a sandwich in his hands. Takes Stevie from Ronnie.

SHUTOV  
(to Ronnie)  
Thanks man.

Ronnie leaves without a word. Shutov carries Stevie over to the kitchen table, which is scattered with cigarette butts and bills.

SHUTOV  
Here. Take a seat.  
(motions to the table)  
Look at this. Lemme just- clean up  
here-

He grabs everything on the table in a sweeping, clumsy move. Walks over to the trash. DUMPS it in.

SHUTOV

I leave for two days, ya know...

He turns to Stevie. Walks back over. Crouching in front of him. Shutov TUSSLES Stevie's hair. Offers him half the PBJ.

SHUTOV

You hungry? Take this.

He forces half the sandwich into Stevie's hands. Stevie puts the sandwich up to his mouth. Shutov watches him do it. Forces a smile.

Beat. Shutov tries to voice the millions of things he should be saying in this moment. He looks up the hall. Back to Stevie.

SHUTOV

You're handsome. You know that?  
Fuckin'... Good lookin' guy over here.

Stevie nods. Reluctant.

Shutov smiles. Looks at Stevie again. CLASPS his gigantic hands around the small boy's spare mitt. Mimes a fake punch to Stevie jaw. Stevie tilts his head. Miming the blow. An old custom. Finally-

SHUTOV

I gotta go up north for a few days, alright? I'll be back though. Soon as I can.

Stevie nods.

SHUTOV

But.

(thinks)

Ah... I'll get you something. Okay?  
You want a transformer?  
(Stevie nods)  
You ah, you want a autobot, or a,  
uh- deceptecon?

STEVIE

Autobot.

SHUTOV

You got it.

Another beat. Shutov looks to his bag. Waiting by the door.

SHUTOV

Alright, bro.

He stands. Turns away. THROWS the bag over his shoulder. Looks to the closed door of his bedroom. Marianna is just beyond.

Total silence. Water and mashed flowers mesh with shattered bits of pottery on the floor.

Shutov leaves. Locks what's left of the door on his way out.

INT. RONNIE'S CAR - DAY

Ronnie and Shutov drive. As they go, Ronnie lights up another cigarette. Shutov is quiet. Ronnie doesn't look at him. Finally-

RONNIE

That your kid?

Beat.

SHUTOV

It's uh... complicated.

Shutov looks down.

SHUTOV

Real one's... in the wind, bro. So.  
Guess that leaves me.

He dwells on that. Says nothing else. Ronnie keeps driving.

EXT. I-75 - DAY

Ronnie's car drives up the freeway. Past Chrysler HQ in Auburn Hills. The gateway out of Detroit. The Industrial landscape grows sparse, then disappears entirely out of view.

EXT. FREEWAY - LATER

Ronnie drives. Shutov sleeps. His bunched up designer coat serves as a pillow. Out the window, nothing but evergreens and snow can be seen. Stretching out as far as the eye can see.

EXT. MACKINAC BRIDGE - DUSK

A BUMP shakes the car. Shutov opens his eyes. Looks up. The HUM of the road below sounds different. He looks around. They're driving across the MASSIVE Mackinac bridge, the connector of Michigan's upper and lower peninsulas.

Massive green support cables climb skyward, meshing with the bridge's two highest support points. Rising like steeples out of the icy blue water below.

Lake Michigan, spreading out for hundreds of miles west, looks as though it might as well be an ocean. An epic vista dozing in a frozen tundra. The water is complete ice, with an exception of the thin freighter channel which has been cleared by plow boats. Trailing right under the bridge.

Massive FREIGHTERS loom like tilted-over skyscrapers in the distance. Drifting nearly motionless on the horizon. Slowly making their way to Chicago from the east coast.

Shutov looks to the other cars on the road. ICE FISHERS, MILL WORKERS, BUMPKINS and REDNECKS.

SHUTOV

Holy shit. This the Mackinac Bridge?

Beat.

SHUTOV

I never been this far North...

(re: other drivers)

Look at all the white people, bro.

He peers out the window. Over the edge of the bridge. Into the icy channel.

SHUTOV

Fuckin' long way down... Hey, yo.

I'm always hearing stories about the wind up here, you know...

Fuckin'- blowin' little smart cars right off this motherfucker... I heard this bridge kills eight vegan yuppies a year, bro.

He CHUCKLES. Looks to Ronnie for a response. Nope.

SHUTOV

... eh.

INT. BAY DINER - ST. IGNACE - DUSK

Shutov and Ronnie sit in a window side booth at a waterside diner. The trimming is ornate, but clumsily rustic. The Mackinac Bridge can be seen out the window. This is a tourist town, and everything appears to be closed for the winter.

A WAITRESS, (50s), thickly spectacled, hair in a perm, rounded, freckle-faced, all smiles, and as white as you can possibly be, stands over them with an order pad in her hands. Shutov is holding a menu. He looks confused.

WAITRESS  
We have Pasties.

SHUTOV  
Pasties. What's that?

WAITRESS  
It's like a pot pie, but different.  
It's carrots, peas, potatoes and  
onions cooked with gravy into a,  
uh... a bread casing... and your  
choice of beef or chicken.

SHUTOV  
Sounds like a pot pie.

WAITRESS  
Yup! Just a leeeeetle bit  
different.  
(motions with her thumb  
and index finger)  
Just a little.

SHUTOV  
No. I mean. That sounds *the exact  
same* as a pot pie.

WAITRESS  
Yep. But it's not.

SHUTOV  
It's not?

WAITRESS  
Yep.

SHUTOV  
How?

WAITRESS  
There's just a little difference.  
Pasties are native to this region.  
They're a specialty.

SHUTOV  
How's it special if it's just like  
a pot pie?

Long beat. She stands there. Sizing him up. Smiling the whole time.

WAITRESS

So what can I get ya'?

SHUTOV

Do you got anything else?

WAITRESS

Other than pasties?

SHUTOV

Yeah.

WAITRESS

No.

LATER:

Shutov and Ronnie have ordered. Preparing to wolf down a thick U.P. (Upper Peninsula) meal. They each sip coffee. Waiting for their food.

SHUTOV

So what's up with you, man? How come you never talk or nothin'?

Ronnie, smoking, drinking coffee, looks to Shutov.

RONNIE

I talk.

SHUTOV

You sure?

(beat)

Like this Systema shit. Is that for real? I hear everybody talk about it, but I ain't never seen you do it. Is that a real thing, or just some spook story nonsense?

RONNIE

Yeah.

SHUTOV

Yeah what? Yeah, it's real?

Another beat.

RONNIE

Yeah.

SHUTOV

You gotta show me that shit some time.

Ronnie looks out the window.

SHUTOV

Look man, I know you don't like me. That's cool. But like, if we're lookin for this guy, an' I see you lift up a big rock on some Fred Flinstone shit, and I already lifted that motherfucker up, I gotta be able be like, yo. You're throwin' your back out on some dumb shit, bro. You know? That's like-the art of communication.

Ronnie just stares at him. Beat.

SHUTOV

Okay. One more question, then I'll let you be, promise.

Shutov continues.

SHUTOV

Jimmy Six, man...  
(scratches his head,  
pauses)

Like, I got a whole, like... *Mythos* built up around this cat in my head, you know? Like. When I was nine. When my pops first got taken away, I'd remembered hearin' this motherfucker's name all over the place... Like. Jimmy Six took the stand. He pointed right at him, in the courtroom, you know? And disappeared.

He takes a sip of coffee.

SHUTOV

And then I remember- two years later, when my old man got knifed in his cell... I was at the service, and I asked about this guy. About Jimmy. If he had anything to do with my old man actually getting killed.

He shrugs.

SHUTOV (CONT'D)

And. Somebody tells me they were in deep years ago. That Jimmy used to do hits for my pops. As a little kid, I'm hearing this. So, while probably not, who knows? I mean... when you're that young... you start connectin' these dots. True or not, right?

Shutov's eyes trail a bit. As if playing something out in his head.

SHUTOV

Then I started havin' all these nightmares. Eleven years old. Gettin' this picture of a guy in my head, Jimmy Six, lookin' something like Freddie Kruger. And I'm runnin' down those alleys in Corktown, you know. Right around old Tiger Stadium... Tryin' to find my dad before Jimmy Six gets him...

Beat. Shutov SNIFFS. Waves it off.

SHUTOV

S'fuckin' cold man, you feel that draft? It's these fuckin' windows-

Ronnie's still looking at Shutov. Steely eyed.

RONNIE

You get him?

SHUTOV

What? Save my dad?  
(thinks)  
... Actually yeah. Sometimes I saved his ass.

Shutov grins at the thought. Then it fades.

SHUTOV

... Then though, you gotta wake up...

Beat.

SHUTOV

Anyway. You were around for all that shit back in the day. You ever know this guy? Jimmy Six?

Ronnie shrugs.

RONNIE

Yeah.

SHUTOV

What'd he look like?

RONNIE

He's big, like me.

SHUTOV

Yeah? Big as you?

(he smirks)

That's a big motherfucker, bro.

Ronnie shrugs again. Looks out the window.

RONNIE

We're all big in my family.

Shutov looks at Ronnie. Stops ashing his cigarette. Beat. The Waitress re-appears before Shutov can say anything. Holding two platters. A pastie on each.

WAITRESS

Here ya' go!

She sets the trays down in front of Ronnie and Shutov. We get our first look at the pastie. It's a plate size ball of burnt dough. Quite possibly the most unappetizing thing you've ever seen in your life.

EXT. BAY DINER - ST. IGNACE - DUSK

Shutov and Ronnie exit the diner. Looking off to his right, Shutov spots a WALMART.

SHUTOV

Hey, yo. Hold up.

INT. WALMART - DUSK

Even in the middle of the boonies, Walmarts look exactly the same. It's frightening. Shutov walks through the store. Notices that people are staring at him. Awkward.

ANGLE: Shutov is definitely out of place. His inner-city ethno-gear and bruised and welted face are clashing hardcore with the world of whitebread plaid, denim, Fruit of the Loom, and Carharts. *If there ever was a fish out of water...*

... It's Shutov. A bruised and mangled tough guy making his way through a *yooper* (slang for 'Upper Peninsula') Walmart.

He catches the gaze of an OLD WOMAN in a Walmart uniform wheeling a cart of plastic flowers out of the stock room.

SHUTOV  
Excuse me. Miss.

She looks at him. Gets an eyeful. Jaw drops a bit.

SHUTOV  
You got Autobots?

OLD WOMAN  
Excuse me?

SHUTOV  
An Autobot. Like a Transformer? You know what those are?

OLD WOMAN  
Well, I can't say that I do.

SHUTOV  
Like a... like a action figure?

Beat.

OLD WOMAN  
Oh. Oh yes. Follow me.

She leads him off towards the other end of the store.

OLD WOMAN  
(as they go)  
You mean one of those... those *robot men*, don't you?

SHUTOV  
Yes exactly... How're you today?

OLD WOMAN  
I'm doing well, and yourself?

EXT. WALMART - SUNSET

Shutov exits the Walmart. Moving across the parking lot to where Ronnie is waiting with the car. Nearby, a view of the sun setting over the Great Lakes is a vision to behold. Shutov walks by it without even noticing.

He jumps into Ronnie's car, clutching a plastic bag. We're able to make out the obvious form of a boxed action figure inside.

SHUTOV  
Thanks, bro.

They drive off. Pulling out of the parking lot and heading up the road.

SHUTOV (O.S.)  
Hey bro. How 'bout we turn on the radio?

INT. RONNIE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Ronnie considers. *Okay.* Reaches down. Turns it on. Begins scanning the bar. TELEVANGELISTS and COUNTRY MUSIC. Nothing else...

CLICK. Ronnie turns it off again.

Beat. Shutov looks at Ronnie.

SHUTOV  
What?

RONNIE  
Nothin' good.

Another beat.

SHUTOV  
Well yeah, but- yo, I mean-  
something's better than nothin'...  
How're you gonna know if somethin'  
good comes on when the radio's off?

RONNIE  
Check later.

Shutov stares at Ronnie. *Are you serious?*

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

It's dark. We're deep into the Upper Peninsula now. Shutov and Ronnie drive along. Shutov's clutching a map. Smoking.

SHUTOV  
Should be comin' up...

There. A SIGN: "ST. MARQUETTE - 3 MILES - EXIT # 648"

SHUTOV  
There we go. That's us.

## EXT. MALIBU INN - NIGHT

A drive-in motel with the lamest 'tropical' theme you've ever seen in your life. Silhouettes of lime-green palm trees are painted onto the sides of log cabins in the middle of what might as well be the North Pole. Ronnie pulls in.

## INT. SHUTOV'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Shutov UNPACKS. Lays out his shirts. Smooths them over. Pulls the action figure he's bought for Stevie into view. Looks at it...

LATER:

Shutov paces. Cell phone to his ear. Beat. BLEEP. No service.

## EXT. MALIBU INN - NIGHT

Shutov moves over to a pay phone booth. Smoking. He takes a hard drag on his cigarette. Picks up the phone. Puts it to his ear. Stops.

SHUTOV  
Fuck me.

SLAM. He hangs up the receiver. Walks away. Turns around. Picks it back up again. Drags. Exhales. Jingles his keys nervously. Picks through his pocket for change.

SHUTOV  
(tough)  
Hey, yo... Hey yo.

Finds quarters.

SHUTOV  
(sensitive)  
Hey, yo.  
(beat)  
Hey, yo... it's me.

He pushes three dollars worth of coins into the machine. Quarter, after quarter, after quarter... Starts dialing.

SHUTOV  
(non-chalant)  
Hey yo. Hey yo. Heyyy...

RINGING can be heard on the other end. Shutov shivers. Looks around.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(Shutov's voice)

Hey, yo. You've reached the home  
a'the most ballin'ist ballin'  
family this side a'the west coast!  
Shutov, Marianna, an' Stevie.  
(whispering)  
... Say it, bro!

Stevie's voice can be heard in the recording.

RECORDING OF STEVIE

West siiide!

Beat. On the recording, Shutov's voice can be heard SNICKERING in the background...

RECORDING OF SHUTOV

... So leave a message!

BEEP. Shutov's on. He stammers. Takes a breath.

SHUTOV

Uh... Marianna, it's me... Listen,  
please don't delete this right away  
without listening to it, cause I  
know you got your finger right by  
the button... Just. Hear me out...

(he exhales, lightens)  
This, ah- this's an expensive phone  
call, I'll tell you that... I'm up  
here in like twenty feet a'snow.  
Got... no service on my phone  
either so, I gotta call you this  
way...

He stammers. Despite himself.

SHUTOV

Anyway, I, um... Listen.

(deep breath)

I'm really sorry about last night  
at the club. And this mornin'...  
'Specially this morning.

He COUGHS. A nervous tick.

SHUTOV

My uncle says the same thing you, you know? I got a big mouth, this hot head, an' sometimes people think I'm fuckin' stupid... Sometimes I think I'm fuckin' stupid, the way I act... And uh. There's. There's no excuse for it, so.

He SIGHS.

SHUTOV

Look. Uh. I just wanted to say sorry... And, I'm gonna make this whole thing up to you as soon as I see you.

He puffs up his chest. Proud.

SHUTOV

So look, I got sent up here on an important thing, you know? And, I had to do a bit of convincing a'my uncle to let me jump in, but he let me. And. I'm gonna take care of this thing, and then I'm sure- like- I know. He'll bring me in for real. Let me start workin' good jobs. Right? We'll have more money, get some new cars, new place...

He stops.

SHUTOV

I'm'a take care of you. And Stevie. I know I been sayin' that for a while-

AUTOMATED OPERATOR

(interrupting)

You have. Thirty. Seconds. Of time remaining.

SHUTOV

And- uh- I love you. I'm sorry. Hey, so. Stay by the phone tomorrow night, cause I'm gonna call again, okay? We'll fix this. I promise. I love you.

CLICK. He hangs up. Pumps two fists up in the air. Not unlike Rocky mounting the steps of Philly's City Hall. *Apology over.*

INT. SHUTOV'S HOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Shutov UNSCREWS the prescription cap to the bottle of Vicodin. Sets two capsules on the sink. Ready to go. Begins BRUSHING his teeth...

Stops. Looks at the pills for a second. Dashes one of them down the drain. Leaves the other.

INT. SHUTOV'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Shutov, shirtless, stands smoking a cigarette. He's clutching his .38. We get a look at the expansive set of tattoos that stretch across his upper arms and chest. They're actually pretty badass.

He wavers. Gun at his side. Cigarette dangling from his mouth. He points it at his reflection in the mirror. Sucks in his slightly protruding gut. COCKS it.

SHUTOV

Hey, yo... You know me?

He stops. Starts the process again. Looks in the mirror with his best fuck you face. Takes a long drag on his cigarette.

SHUTOV

You know who I am? Mm?

(listening)

Well I know who you are. They used to call you Jimmy Six, right?

(beat)

You remember Deegan Smalls? Well that's my pops... I look just like him, don't I?

He listens to his fake adversary.

SHUTOV

Yeah? Well guess what, mothafucker?  
You killed my father, and now I'm here to kill you.

Another beat. He follows an invisible target with his gun.

SHUTOV

What? What? Look at you, bro-  
seventeen years outside a'the D,  
you're fuckin' soft now, man...  
Shit's pathetic... Get down on your  
fuckin' knees.

Beat. He holds his icy stare with startling certainty.

SHUTOV

... Do it.

EXT. SHUTOV'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

ANGLE: We're looking at Shutov's room from outside. His curtains are drawn, but we can see his silhouette. Waving a gun around like a madman.

SNOW has begun to fall. Falling in tiny WISPS. The night is without wind. Everything is still.

ANGLE: The camera moves. Backwards. Someone's in the parking lot. It's Ronnie. Smoking. He heads to his car. Takes the duffle bag from the trunk. CLOSES it. Stops. Looks to Shutov's silhouette through the window. Beat. Unreadable.

INT. SHUTOV'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Shutov is in the shower. He scrubs down. Washes under his arm pits.

SHUTOV

(rapping to himself)

Nigga, who started this gangsta  
shit... and this the motherfuckin'  
thanks I get?

He grabs the shampoo.

SHUTOV

(to himself)

S' funny how time flies... I'm just  
having fun just watchin' it fly by-

EXT. MALIBU INN - PHONE BOOTH - LATER

Shutov is on the phone.

SHUTOV

No, it's fine. We're gettin' ready  
to head out right now. Just wanted  
to check in.

(looks to Ronnie's room-  
no sign of him)

... Can I ask you something? How  
come nobody told me this Jimmy Six  
cat was Ronnie's brother?

INT. JOHNNY DEEGAN'S HOUSE - DETROIT - CONTINUOUS

Johnny eats breakfast in front of the morning news. Eric Smith is on the tube. Interviewing senior citizens.

JOHNNY  
I thought everybody knew that.

SHUTOV (O.S.)  
No. I mean... No. I never heard  
that. And he don't talk much, you  
know? I'm fiendin' for a good  
conversation up here...

JOHNNY  
Huh. Well, the way it worked out...  
I can see why he wouldn't talk  
about it much.

SHUTOV (O.S.)  
He don't talk about anything much,  
to be honest with you.

EXT. MALIBU INN - PHONE BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Shutov watches as Ronnie comes out of his hotel room. Shutov  
nods to Ronnie. Ronnie shoots him an unreadable look.  
Carrying the duffle bag we saw earlier.

JOHNNY (O.S.)  
Ronnie and Jimmy Six used to come  
as a package. They did all their  
work for your old man together...  
Ronnie used to go by Ronnie Six,  
Jimmy was Jimmy Six. But Ronnie  
dropped the whole 'six' thing when  
his brother testified against your  
dad... Word always had it the D.A.  
offered Ronnie a package too-  
instead he took ten years in  
Jackson.

Shutov watches Ronnie. He moves over to his car with the  
duffle bag. Tosses it into the trunk.

SHUTOV  
Really? That's loyalty right  
there...  
(Ronnie closes the trunk.  
Looks to Shutov)  
Alright. He's ready. We're gonna  
head out. Bye.

Shutov SLAMS down the receiver. Approaches Ronnie. Ronnie  
looks up. Sees Shutov approaching. Shutov smiles. Nods.

SHUTOV  
Let's find this motherfucker, yo!

EXT. ST. MARQUETTE - MAIN STREET - MORNING

Ronnie's car ROLLS into town.

The sleepy main drag of this blip-on-the-radar small town. Tiny mom and pop shops covered in snow. STORE OWNERS shovel snow off their sidewalks, opening up for the day. Everyone is bundled thick, often wearing mittens and scarves. Concealing their faces.

INT. RONNIE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Ronnie and Shutov drive through this. Looking through foggy windows at what might as well be Mars. Or a fifties sitcom.

SHUTOV

Look at this place, bro. Fuckin' nuts. Norman Rockwell shit up here.

It's true. This town is so cute it makes you want to puke. Families are everywhere. MOTHERS tug CHILDREN along carrying back packs and lunch boxes. Everyone waddles. A by-product of the sheer amount of layers they're wearing.

EXT. ST. MARQUETTE - MAIN STREET - MORNING

Ronnie and Shutov park. Getting out. Looking around.

INT. ANTIQUE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

A quaint establishment. Rickety, dated furniture and framed renderings of clever, domesticated sayings line the walls. Doilies, creepy-looking china dolls, and collector plates are everywhere. This isn't so much an antique store as it is a redneck crap shop.

The STOREKEEPER, a whitebread Christian woman that looks to be about a hundred years old, stands at the counter as they come in. Smiling. Unsure of what else to do.

STOREKEEPER

Hello!

SHUTOV

(smiling)

Hello ma'am.

(puts on his best white-guy impression)

My friend and I are passing through and we're looking for an old friend we haven't seen in many years, we were wondering if you might be able to help us find him.

STOREKEEPER

Well, I'd certainly be glad to try.  
What's his name?

SHUTOV

Jimmy.

STOREKEEPER

Jimmy what?

SHUTOV

Well, we're not sure about that.  
But, ah-  
(looks to Ronnie)  
We brought a picture with us, I  
think. You got it, bro?

Ronnie fishes through his pockets. Pulls out a picture that's at least twenty years old. Shutov looks at it...

*The man pictured is out of focus, shirtless, smoking a joint, obviously drunk, and has long, thick hair and a bushy beard.*  
This is the worst picture ever. Beat. Shutov looks at it.  
Steps closer to Ronnie.

SHUTOV

(whispering)

Yo. You got another one?

RONNIE

No.

Shutov shoots Ronnie a look. SIGHS. Turns. Shows the picture to the elderly storekeeper. She takes it. Looks at it.

STOREKEEPER

(repulsed)

Oh my.

RONNIE

(trying to lighten the  
tone)

Let me tell you-

(awkward laugh)

- he was, ah, quite the miscreant  
in his youth. It's, uh... It's a  
good thing he found Jesus and  
cleaned up his ways, I'll tell you  
that.

STOREKEEPER  
(still repulsed)  
Well, I should hope so. Is he  
smoking marijuana?

EXT. ANTIQUE SHOP - DAY

Shutov and Ronnie exit the store. Shutov turns to Ronnie.

SHUTOV  
Look, man. I'm not trying to critique you professionally, but dog- this is the only picture you got? Motherfucker looks like a drunken unibomber, man! We can't be showing this to people up here, they'll fuckin' freak out.

Ronnie looks at him square in the eyes.

RONNIE  
That's the only one I got.

SHUTOV  
You serious?

Ronnie walks away. To the next door. Shutov EXHALES.

INT. DINER - DAY

A Northern version of a greasy spoon. MILL WORKERS chow down on lunches. Shutov shows the picture to a snarky, bird-looking WAITRESS.

SHUTOV  
No. Well. You see, this was actually a Halloween party. All of this-  
(points to the picture)  
- all of this is fake.

EXT. MILL - DAY

Burly REDNECKS in hard hats march in and out of an ANCIENT STEEL MILL in the distance. Shutov and Ronnie stand at the front gate, talking to men as they move back and forth.

SHUTOV  
... and we were on our way back from a business trip-

MILL WORKER  
Where were ya?

SHUTOV

(stammers)

Where were we? Oh. Canada. Just.  
Way up there. You know. Just.  
North. Way up there in the North.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

An Evangelical creep-fest. The type of Christians that hate gays, Jews, Blacks, Democrats, and tofu. Shutov is speaking to a PREACHER who's eyes keep darting back and forth over his shoulder.

SHUTOV

So have you seen him?

PREACHER

No.

SHUTOV

Maybe he's a member of your congregation?

PREACHER

I doubt that.

EXT. MILL - DAY

We return back to the Mill Worker conversation. The Mill Worker is eyeing Shutov suspiciously.

MILL WORKER

(to Shutov)

What're you?

SHUTOV

What'm- excuse me?

MILL WORKER

What race are you?

SHUTOV

I'm. Well. Macedonian, Albanian, mostly eastern European with a little-

MILL WORKER

Is that Muslim?

SHUTOV

(blinks, huh?)

Excuse me?

MILL WORKER

*Jew?*

INT. DINER - DAY

Back to the Diner. Shutov is still talking to the snarky Waitress.

WAITRESS

*I think you should go.*

Shutov looks at her. Looks around. Not sure how to take that. He goes to speak, but she cuts him off before he can speak.

WAITRESS

You're making the customers nervous.

EXT. INTERSTATE - DAY

The FREEWAY roars nearby. Ronnie and Shutov are eating McDonalds from a truck stop/gas station. Semi-trucks RUMBLE past. They stand around outside. Smoking and eating cheap burgers. Huddling in the cold.

SHUTOV

What the fuck was that?

(mimes)

Oh. "You're making the customers nervous..."

(beat, stews)

... Bitch looked like a canary.

Made me fuckin' nervous... That's a whole town a'assholes up there, bro.

He drags. Takes a bite. Looks up the road.

SHUTOV

Should'a thought this shit through more. How're we supposed to find this motherfucker? Walkin' around here with a polaroid makin' Jimmy Six look like Sasquatch holdin' a blunt-

(he assumes the 'Sasquatch' pose and grunts)  
- fuck, man.

Shutov stops. Sees it. Ronnie's *smiling*. At Shutov. *Ronnie just laughed at Shutov's joke.*

SHUTOV

What was that? What was that? Did I just see you show an emotion, motherfucker? Did I just see you smile?!

Ronnie pushes it back. Shakes it off. Eats.

SHUTOV

I knew it! You and me... As compadres, yo... we're getting somewhere. That's good news. This other shit...

He looks off in the direction of the town. Beat. He thinks. Another beat.

SHUTOV

I don't know. I'm out. That's all I got. What do we do? Go knockin' door to door with a phone book? We don't even know what his assumed name is...

They eat and smoke in silence. A long moment passes. Then. Ronnie speaks.

RONNIE

Let's wait until dark. Go to a bar. Ask around after people got a few in 'em. Maybe they'll loosen up and talk more.

Beat. *That's the most Ronnie's said up to this point.* Shutov looks to Ronnie as if he's just been handed a beautiful gift...

But decides not to say anything. He shrugs. Nods.

SHUTOV

Yeah. Good call. Let's do that.  
(smiles to himself)  
Good call.

INT. THE ROYAL INN - NIGHT

A swampy aired Midwestern symphony of a bar. Beers on tap include Miller, Molson Canadian, Labatt Blue Light, and Budweiser varieties. Same with the bottled selections. Rounds of whiskey traditionally accompany each glass.

Everything is authentic wood. Not smoothed or polished. A bar fight in this dump is guaranteed to give you splinters.

Shutov and Ronnie enter. The cold wind that blows in with them rustles napkins across the room.

A few REGULARS loiter in the area, with another two shooting pool against the far wall. At the end of the bar, SEVEN MEN gather in a tight-knit circle. Not of the typical yooper variety. These are coarse, tough, grimacing, red neck badasses. They're gathered around a tattooed giant, JACKIE (40s), chewing tobacco.

They're LAUGHING. As Ronnie and Shutov enter, a few of them look up. Sizing up the new arrivals.

MAGGIE (30s), a beautiful yooper woman, is tending bar.

MAGGIE  
How's it goin'?

SHUTOV  
Good, how 'bout you?

Shutov and Ronnie move over to a booth. Ronnie takes a seat. Shutov tosses down his coat. Moves over to the bar.

MAGGIE  
What can I get ya?

SHUTOV  
Two Batts.

Maggie tosses two Blue Lights onto the counter.

MAGGIE  
Looks like you got roughed up, fellas.

SHUTOV  
Oh, yeah. I got in a scrabble with some Chinamen.  
(smiles, joking)  
What about you, what happened to your face?

Maggie grins.

MAGGIE  
Five even.

Shutov tosses a ten onto the bar. Takes the beers. Nearby, Jackie and his cronies are shooting him looks.

SHUTOV  
(right at them)  
What's happenin'?

One of Jackie's cronies, a BURLY BALD GUY, mutters something. We can't hear it, but the whole posse erupts into LAUGHTER. Shutov looks back. But doesn't say anything. Jackie smiles at Shutov. Nods. Mocking.

Shutov moves over to the booth with Ronnie. Grabs a seat. Slides him the second beer. Starts rustling through a bowl of peanuts. Looking over Jackie and his crowd of followers.

Across the room, Jackie gives an instruction to the Burly Bald Guy. The Bald Guy nods, and moves over to a JUKE BOX that's been turned off. He plugs it in. It WHIRLS to life. Immediately, a WHINY, dated HANK WILLIAMS LOVE BALLAD begins blasting out of the speakers.

Jackie's posse LAUGHS again. Joking amongst themselves. Shutov tunes them out. Looks back to the bowl of peanuts. Chomps down on a few.

SHUTOV

You wanna start asking around?

RONNIE

Give it a bit.

SHUTOV

Right on.

(beat, looks around)

So... I was talkin' to my uncle earlier. He said you used to go by the name of *Ronnie Six*. That's pretty fucked up, man.

Ronnie sips the beer.

RONNIE

Don't usually mention that.

SHUTOV

Yeah, but. I mean. We're up here, talkin' about your brother. *Your brother*, man.

RONNIE

Yep.

SHUTOV

What happened with that?

I mean. You don't gotta say nothin', I guess... Just curious.

Ronnie goes quiet. But not to end the conversation. *He's thinking*. Finally...

RONNIE

... There was this one thing. With the Greeks. Back when Greektown was still Greek.

He SIGHS deeply.

RONNIE

Jimmy didn't want to. And. We got the orders, so... This guy. His wife and kid...

He gestures. Makes an 'offing' gesture. Beat.

SHUTOV

(quiet)

No shit.

Ronnie nods. Sips his beer.

RONNIE

His kid was... This. Boy. Really young.

(stops)

... Jimmy didn't feel right about it, but he did it. After that.

Started acting funny. Fought a lot. He was...

Beat.

RONNIE

He was different. Then... prints got found. On the throats of the wife and son, you know? Went right back to Jimmy.

He ashes. Stares down at the table for a long minute.

RONNIE

I always think about that... 'Cause we wore gloves, you know? Why'd he take his gloves off? Maybe. Maybe he wanted to get caught.

SHUTOV

No shit.

Ronnie exhales. Nods.

RONNIE

Didn't get a answer, though. He was gone. Ratted us all out. Me. Your dad. Everyone he could.

SHUTOV

No shit... That's heavy bro.

Ronnie nods. And stops. He snuffs out the cigarette and folds his hands. Looks away to the Keno machine at the corner of the bar. Silence. Shutov is still looking at him.

SHUTOV

How old was the kid? The little boy?

Ronnie stands abruptly. Walks away. Goes over to the Keno machine. Shutov watches him. Not sure how to take that.

LAUGHTER from the other side of the room breaks out again. Shutov looks. Jackie's crew is sizing him up once more. Cracking jokes in Shutov's direction. Shutov looks over to Ronnie. Ronnie grabs a Keno pad, comes back over. Sits down.

SHUTOV

You win anything?

RONNIE

Gotta fill the numbers out.

SHUTOV

You see these fuckin' guys, bro? At the end of the bar? Throwin' some looks over here.

Ronnie doesn't seem to care. He fills out the Keno card. Shutov looks over to Jackie's posse again. Makes eye contact with Jackie. Nods to him. Jackie back.

JACKIE

(overheard)

Aw. Look at that, he's flirtin' with me.

More LAUGHTER. Shutov smiles.

SHUTOV

(to himself)

That's right. Smile motherfucker.

RONNIE

Leave 'em alone.

SHUTOV

Oh don't worry about me, bro. I'm  
fuckin' chillin. It's these  
motherfuckers pickin' a fight.

RONNIE

Leave 'em alone.

Beat. Finally-

Shutov stands. Walks over to the bar. Pulls the picture of  
Jimmy Six out of his pocket. He taps a LOCAL on the shoulder.

SHUTOV

Hey. S'cuse me. You seen this guy  
around? He live around here? Might  
not have the beard anymore...

LOCAL

No.

SHUTOV

Thanks.

Shutov moves to the next person at the bar. A RATTY COUGAR.

SHUTOV

Miss-

He shoots a look to Jackie and his boys. They're no longer  
paying attention to him. Good.

SHUTOV

(to the Cougar)

You ever see this guy around here?

LATER:

Shutov sits back down in the booth across from Ronnie. Still  
playing Keno.

SHUTOV

Nobody in here recognizes this guy.  
I didn't ask them over there,  
though.

He motions to Jackie and his goons.

SHUTOV

You win anything?

Ronnie shakes his head. At the back of the bar, the Hank  
Williams tune finishes playing... And starts over again.

SHUTOV

That's the third time in row with  
this song...

Beat.

SHUTOV

Fuck it.

Shutov stands. Moves over to Jackie and his goons. Puts on a fake smile.

SHUTOV

What's up fellas? Got a second?

Jackie's goons look over their shoulders at Shutov. Beat. Sizing him up. Jackie looks up. Stands upright, towering over the rest of his crew.

JACKIE

(smiling)

Well sure, buddy. How can we help you?

SHUTOV

(going with it)

Well, uh. Me and my business partner over there, we're in town looking for an old friend. Maybe one of you guys knows him?

He hands the picture to Jackie.

JACKIE

(looks at the picture)

Whoa!

(laughing)

Have a look at this fuckin' asshole!

He passes the picture around.

JACKIE

Looks like a couple pictures I've seen a'your wife, Bill! Complete with the beard!

LAUGHTER. BILL (40s), huge, off to the right, pipes up.

BILL

Lemme see!

BURLY BALD GUY  
(looking at the photo)  
I don't know man, I've never seen  
Bill's wife lookin' this good...

BILL  
Man, gimme that motherfucker!

A small game of keep-away ensues. Jackie's entourage is LAUGHING.

SHUTOV  
Please be careful with that- if you don't mind. That's the only picture we have...

BURLY BALD GUY  
Hey!

Jackie's boys are ignoring him. ROUGH-HOUSING.

BILL  
Lemme see!

BURLY BALD GUY  
Think I might take this motherfucker into the pisser and crank one out!

More LAUGHTER. SHOVING.

SHUTOV  
That's. That's very funny-

BILL  
Who is he?

BURLY BALD GUY  
I don't know, but he's bearded, fat an' ugly as hell- just like your wife!

*That's it.* Shutov reaches forward. GRABS the photo from the Burly Bald Guy.

SHUTOV  
If you can show a little respect for other people's property-

Beat. The looks that follow Shutov's snatching of the picture are not happy. A tense silence follows.

SHUTOV

... Have any of you seen him?

Eerie silence.

JACKIE

Is there something else we can help  
you with, buddy?

SHUTOV

Just wondering if-

JACKIE

(interrupting)

*Then fuck off. Faggot.*

Beat. Shutov looks at Jackie. Sets his jaw. Stares at Jackie for a long minute. Points at him. Shoves his index finger right in Jackie's face...

... And stops himself. Turning, he walks away.

JACKIE

Hey! What you pointin' at, buddy?  
Come on back over here, I'll show  
you what to do with that finger!

Shutov doesn't respond. Just goes back to his seat.

JACKIE

That's right! Motherfucker misses  
his papi shoving a thumb up his  
asshole every night.

Shutov PLOPS into the booth. Staring Jackie and his boys down. Ronnie is still playing Keno.

SHUTOV

Bro. I'm gonna fuckin' kill these  
motherfuckers.

RONNIE

Don't do nothing.

SHUTOV

What if *they* do?

RONNIE

They're full of shit.

SHUTOV

I dunno, bro. These redneck  
motherfuckers, man. Might be good  
to put 'em in their place. Fuckin'  
send a message around here.

RONNIE

Don't do nothing.

Jackie and his cronies are still talking shit. They LAUGH amongst themselves. Shutov watches them bitterly. Anger building.

In the far corner, the Hank Williams song ends. And starts again for the FOURTH time. Shutov hears this.

SHUTOV

And the same fuckin' song. Again.

The Burly Bald Guy points to Shutov. Sees that this is getting on his nerves.

BURLY BALD GUY

(laughing)

Look at him! Look at him!

Shutov's had enough. He looks up. Right at the Burly Bald Guy.

SHUTOV

Is that the same song?

JACKIE

Machine's broke, faggot.

Shutov abruptly STANDS. Ronnie looks up. STANDS as well. Blocking Shutov.

RONNIE

Hey. Hey.

JACKIE

Just plays one song-

Shutov's glaring at Jackie over Ronnie's shoulder. Jackie motions to Shutov. *Come on. You want to come over here?*

RONNIE

Sit down. Sit down.

SHUTOV

No. Fuck this, man. Let's go.

(louder)

Or else I'm gonna kill these  
motherfuckers.

Jackie and his boys ROAR WITH LAUGHTER. Ronnie turns to look at them as well. Jackie steps forward.

JACKIE  
I'm right here, faggot- I'm right  
here-

Maggie, standing behind the bar, tries to intervene.

MAGGIE  
Hey! Knock it off, Jackie!

SHUTOV  
(exploding)  
You better watch your fuckin'  
mouth!

JACKIE  
What, you want to do something?  
Walk right over here, faggot-

Shutov SHOVES himself free of Ronnie. Turns around. Walks right out the front door. *Leaving.*

BURLY BALD GUY  
There he goes! There he goes!

BILL  
Bye, bye!

JACKIE  
Aw. Looks like we gotta fight  
ourselves tonight-

ANGLE: The front door. We can faintly hear noises from the parking lot. Shutov CUSSING. The sound of a car trunk OPENING. METAL being tossed around. The sound of a car trunk CLOSING...

Shutov's FOOTSTEPS approaching...

The front door to the bar is THROWN open. There's Shutov. Standing in the doorway, gripping a TIRE IRON. He storms over to the jukebox and begins SMASHING the living fuck out of it.

JACKIE  
Hey! Hey!

Jackie and his boys RUSH Shutov.

Shutov keeps SMASHING. Hank Williams' raspy WHINE warps into a hideous DROLL before the machine EXPLODES in an array of SPARKS and busted GLASS.

WHACK. Before Jackie can touch Shutov, he's STRUCK by Ronnie. The BLOW lands so hard that Jackie's head SMACKS the ground before the rest of his body.

Jackie's boys are rushing in. From all sides. Shutov SWINGS wide with the tire iron. MISSES. Gets TACKLED by the Burly Bald Guy. Throwing PUNCHES.

Nearby, for the first time, we get to see Ronnie in action. And it's something to behold. His movements are fast. Snakelike. He's a BLUR of fists and elbows. He SMASHES a beer glass into an attacker's face. SHARDS spray. WHIRLS. SOCKS another in eyes. Both men FLAIL. SCREAMING.

Jackie, still on the ground after the blow he took from Ronnie, is GAGGING. GASPING for air. One of his buddies STEPS on him accidentally.

Shutov, scrappy, takes a hard SWING at the Burly Guy's nose. CRACK. Shutov hits him again. Crack. Again. CRACK. The Burly Guy YELPS. Again. Tears are streaming down his cheeks. Another of Jackie's goons jumps in. PUNCHING Shutov in the back of the head.

A CHAIR is THROWN at Ronnie. Hitting him from behind. He picks it up. THROWS it right back. Ten times HARDER. Off to the left, another attacker rushes in. Ronnie STEPS in before the man has his footing...

BREAKS the attacker's knee backwards. It SNAPS. CRACK. The attacker's leg inverts. He COLLAPSES. SCREAMING in horror.

Shutov is towering over the last of Jackie's cronies in the corner. SOCKING him.

Finally, he stops. Catching his breath. Blood is practically pouring out of Shutov's nose now. He stands up...

Looks around. Maggie and the other regulars are staring at them in wide-eyed amazement. On the ground, Jackie and his boys are GROANING.

Shutov looks over to Ronnie. HEAVING. Catching his breath. He looks at the damage Ronnie's done.

SHUTOV  
Holy shit, bro...

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Shutov and Ronnie FLY down the snowy road.

SHUTOV

Holy shit, bro! Fuckin' systemma!?  
How many guys did you take out?  
What was that? Like twenty? Twenty  
redneck motherfuckers laid the fuck  
out by my man Ronnie!

They approach the Malibu Inn. POLICE FLASHERS can be seen as they draw near.

SHUTOV

Oh shit. Oh shit, bro.

The Inn comes into view. Two SQUAD CARS are parked in the parking lot of the hotel. Ronnie sees it too.

SHUTOV

Oh, fuck.

RONNIE

Gimme your gun.

Shutov hastily hands Ronnie his pistol. Ronnie pulls up a removable section of the carpeting at his feet. Shoves Shutov's gun inside. Then his own. Replaces the carpet. Keeps driving. They pass the hotel by. Shutov watches.

SHUTOV

Yeah. Fuck it, man. Let's just  
fuckin' bail. Good call.

*Not so much.* As they drive past, the local SHERIFF (50s), a good ole' boy, looks right at them. These two stick out like a sore thumb. They can't be missed. The Sheriff rushes to jump in his car.

RONNIE

Fuck.

SHUTOV

He saw us bro! Punch it!

Ronnie slows down. Under the speed limit.

SHUTOV

What are you doin'?

The squad car appears in view behind them. Approaching with its SIRENS wailing.

RONNIE  
Told you to leave 'em alone.

Beat. Shutov looks up in the rear view mirror.

SHUTOV  
Fuck. Fuck! What about Jimmy Six?  
How're we gonna find this guy now?

The squad car is tailgating them. Ronnie hits his blinker. Starts to pull over. Shutov EXHALES. Rests his head in his hands. Trying to think.

RONNIE  
Told you to leave 'em alone.

INT. HOLDING CELL - ST. MARQUETTE POLICE STATION - NIGHT

A small town police station that looks directly descended from those you've seen in movies about the wild, wild, west. An upgrade, but similar enough. Shutov and Ronnie sit in the middle of the holding cell, staring off into space.

A desk sits nearby, complete with a spectacled, balding DEPUTY. This is GENE (late 30s). He clicks away on his computer and fiddles with paperwork.

Shutov is dwelling on something. His nose has begun bleeding again. He SNIFFS. Notices it. Wipes it with his sleeve.

Across the way, a tiny questioning room with a phone has been set up. The Sheriff, SHERIFF BRANDT, whom we saw a bit of earlier, is inside. He's skeletal, with deep set eyes and sand-blasted mug. He paces, holding a cordless phone to his ear. The door to the room is closed. We can't hear what he's saying.

Finally, he hangs up. Exits the questioning room. Walks over to the holding cell. He motions to Gene as he passes.

SHERIFF BRANDT  
How's it comin' Gene?

GENE  
Almost there.

He grabs a chair from a far wall. Pulls it into place next to the jail cell. Perches at the end of the chair. Holds a long, menacing, silence. Staring through piercing blue eyes. He takes them in with a long breath. *This guy is one menacing country cop.*

BRANDT

So. Fellas. You were... up and down  
main street all day showin' a  
picture around.

Beat.

BRANDT

What're you guys doing here?  
(looks from Ronnie to  
Shutov)  
Hmm? You can tell me. This ain't  
official questioning.

SHUTOV

We're in town looking for a friend.

BRANDT

Lemme see the picture.

Hesitant, Shutov fishes into his pockets.

BRANDT

Where'd you get the bruises?

SHUTOV

(handing the picture over)  
From the bar. We got attacked.

BRANDT

What about the older ones?

SHUTOV

Up North. In Canada.

BRANDT

(looking over the picture,  
expressionless)  
Where in Canada?

SHUTOV

Way up there.

Brandt looks up from the picture at Shutov. Impossible to  
read. He looks back down once more. Silent.

BRANDT

You fellas are from Detroit.

SHUTOV

Yeah.

Brandt remains looking at the picture. He's got a poker face that matches Ronnie's. Without a word, he hands the picture back to Shutov. Stands. Walks away.

SHUTOV  
Hey, yo! Can I get my phone call?

EXT. POLICE STATION HALLWAY - NIGHT

Shutov shuffles through a handful of pocket change. He picks out the last of the quarters. SLIDES them into the pay phone. Dials. The number rings. And RINGS. And RINGS.

SHUTOV  
... Come on... Pick up.

Someone answers.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Hello?

Beat. Shutov freezes. Confused.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Hello?

Shutov looks at the phone dock. Checks the number he just dialed. *Yep. That's his house.*

SHUTOV  
Who's this?

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Who's *this*?

Beat.

SHUTOV  
This is the guy that lives in the  
house you're at, asshole.

Silence. Quiet SHUFFLING can be heard on the other end. The Man's Voice can be heard talking to someone else.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
That's him.

MARIANNA (O.S.)  
What time is it?

MAN'S VOICE  
2:45.

MARIANNA (O.S.)  
Jesus.

Beat. Her voice comes in clearer now.

MARIANNA (O.S.)  
(drowsy)  
Shutov?

Shutov doesn't respond. He just wavers there. Dumbstruck. Marianna can be heard breathing. Nervous.

MARIANNA (O.S.)  
... I know you're there. I can hear  
you...

SHUTOV  
What're you doin'?

Another beat.

MARIANNA (O.S.)  
We're movin' out. Me and Stevie.  
This is our last night in the  
house. I got a friend here helpin'  
me move... You still up north?

Fear is racing through Shutov's expression.

MARIANNA  
You are... Well. I left all your  
stuff here. Don't worry, I'm not  
takin' nothing that ain't mine...

A long pause follows. Her voice flutters. Emotional.

MARIANNA  
I don't ever want to see you again,  
you *hear* me? I don't ever want to  
see you. Ever. I want *my son* to  
grow up into a *real* man.

SHUTOV  
You can't...  
(stammers)  
You can't do that, I-

MARIANNA  
Yes I can.

Water flickers in Shutov's gaze now. Mixing hard.

MARIANNA (O.S.)

(forcing back emotion)

You treated me like shit, and this  
last time- getting me fired. *That's*  
*it...* On and off. Seven years of  
getting treated like shit... And  
now I'm out for real.

(pause)

You wanna wave your uncle in my  
face now, Shooey? Go on. Tell me  
all about how much money you're  
gonna make. Like that means a  
fuckin' thing to me-

She stops. Her voice can be heard wavering over the phone  
now.

AUTOMATED OPERATOR

You have. Twenty seconds. Of time.  
Remaining.

Another beat. She's waiting for his response.

MARIANNA (O.S.)

You there?

He is. His expression is racing. But no words come out. Time  
passes.

AUTOMATED OPERATOR

You have. Ten seconds. Remaining.

Beat. Heartbreak shows clear in Shutov's eyes. It's  
paralyzing him. He's locked up.

MARIANNA (O.S.)

Shutov? Say someth-

CLICK. The line goes dead. Shutov doesn't move. Frozen. The  
sound of QUARTERS jingle as they're deposited into the pay  
phone's lock box.

Still, Shutov has the phone to his ear. Standing there like  
an idiot. With water in his eyes.

GENE (O.C.)

(to Shutov)

That's it. Let's go buddy.

INT. HOLDING CELL - ST. MARQUETTE POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Shutov is lead back into the holding cell. Ronnie looks at him, but Shutov's vacant. He sits. Without saying a single word. Beat.

BAM. BAM. BAM.

A KNOCKING is heard. Shutov looks over. It's coming from a FIRE EXIT across the room. A back door to the Police station.

Brandt re-enters view. From across the way. He crosses the room towards the fire exit. Shooting Shutov a steely look as he passes. He opens the door. Nods to someone off screen.

BRANDT  
Come on in, fellas.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Hey, Brandt.

BRANDT  
How ya' feelin?

It's Jackie. Bruised and sore. Looking like shit. Very eager to settle a score.

JACKIE  
Been prettier, that's for sure.

SHUTOV  
(to himself)  
Shit.

Five of Jackie's cronies are there as well. All of them looking very, very pissed off. They make their way into the holding area. Glaring. Jackie walks over to Shutov's cell.

JACKIE  
(all smiles)  
Hey buddy. Remember me?

He fishes around his coat pockets.

JACKIE  
Guess I forgot to show you  
something over at the bar... Where  
is it here?  
(finds it)  
Oh. There it is.

Jackie pulls out a POLICE BADGE. Shows it to Shutov.

JACKIE

Did I forget to mention this?  
(he grins, malicious)  
Or maybe that Sheriff Brandt here's  
my older cousin?

... Shutov does his best to not look scared. It's a noble attempt.

EXT. IMPOUND LOT - NIGHT

Snow is falling. The wind chill has to be at least fourteen below. It WHIPS in GUSTS and BURSTS at Shutov's face. Ronnie and Shutov are pushed out the fire exit. Still in cuffs. Sheriff Brandt leads the way through the expansive lot. Jackie and his crew follow in tow.

Brandt leads them to the rear of the parking lot. Shutov and Ronnie are shoved into the center of the circle. They shiver a bit in the cold. Brandt, Jackie and the others, well bundled, don't seem to mind.

Brandt, holding a shotgun at the ready, motions to Shutov and Ronnie.

BRANDT

Take off your shoes.

Beat. Reluctantly, Shutov and Ronnie do it. The ground is frozen straight through. Their pale white feet touch soft on the hard, salted asphalt. The effect is immediate. This is paralyzingly cold.

BRANDT

Welcome to the orientation center.

The Burly Bald Guy steps forward, setting up two steel folding chairs behind Shutov and Ronnie.

BRANDT

Nobody can see what goes on back here. Not from the interstate or any of the nearby roads. It's where we like to bring rowdy outsiders in need of an introduction to the community at large.

Members of Jackie's posse step forward with eight sets of handcuffs. Shutov and Ronnie are shoved into the seats at gun point. Cuffed by their hands and feet to the chairs.

BRANDT

What'd we find in their car?

Gene steps forward. He's holding Ronnie's duffle bag, and the Transformer that Shutov bought for Stevie.

BRANDT  
(re: Transformer)  
What's this?

GENE  
It's a toy.

Brandt pulls back the plastic bag. Takes a look at the action figure.

BRANDT  
Anybody want this?

BURLY BALD GUY  
My kid might like it.

Shutov watches Brandt hand Stevie's action figure over to the Burly Bald Guy. His jaw clenches.

But he doesn't say anything. Brandt turns to Ronnie's duffle bag. UNZIPS it. Stops. Begins tossing the contents of the bag onto the cold pavement at his feet:

*A pump shotgun, several rounds of ammo, a silencer, a half gallon of gasoline, bolt cutters, duct tape, a portable shovel, and a hacksaw.*

Brandt looks around at Jackie's entourage. Some of them aren't quite sure how to take this. Beat. Brandt SIGHS. Turns to Shutov and Ronnie.

BRANDT  
What's all this for?

SHUTOV  
Hey, all that was in the trunk man.  
You can't go in there without a  
warrant-

Brandt smiles. Steps forward. WHACK. He PISTOL WHIPS Shutov in the side of the head with his shotgun. The blow lands so hard that Shutov's chair goes CRASHING sideways. He lands straight down on his head. Bleary. Groaning.

SHUTOV  
(heaving)  
F- fuck!

Brandt resets his jaw. Massages his temples. Moves over to Shutov. Leans in. Laying on the ground. Bleary.

BRANDT

You are. A *thousand miles...* from anyone that will miss you. You know that? Mm?

He takes aim at the side of Shutov's face. COCKS. Shutov heaves. BREATHING heavy.

BRANDT

(whispering)

Aw. Look at that. Look at you, tryin' to man up. Pretend this doesn't scare you...

He presses the barrel even closer into Shutov's temple. Shutov winces at the pressure.

BRANDT

(whispering)

It's okay... It's alright to be afraid... 'Cause the truth is, little man... You're never going home. The light a'day from the one just past is the last of it you'll ever see...

Brandt smiles.

BRANDT

It's okay... go ahead.

SHUTOV

(venom)

Hey, *fuck you.*

BRANDT

We could start there.

Brandt rises. Jackie and his boys come at Shutov and Ronnie. BEATING THE LIVING PISS out of them with bare fists and steel-toed boots. It's horrifying. Relentless. Ronnie and Shutov struggle to shield themselves from the blows, but the handcuffs prohibit them from even raising their hands in defense.

It's ugly. Disturbing. Ronnie's chair is KNOCKED over backwards as well. He SLAMS the back of his head onto the pavement behind him. The Burly Big Guy stands over Ronnie. Stepping on his neck --

-- while nearby, Jackie is KICKING Shutov repeatedly in the side of the head. They're pulling back bloody fists and boots.

Brandt WHISTLES. Signals the stop. Jackie and his boys stop. Brandt steps forward again. Smiling. He crosses. Taking aim at Ronnie's face as he passes to Shutov. Ronnie flinches. GASPING through a mask of blood, sweat and tangled hair. The falling snow dots his mangled face. Staring straight up into the heavens.

BRANDT

Just look at that... *Look at 'em, Jackie. You see 'em? Brave...*

JACKIE

I'll give 'em that.

BRANDT

... And you should.

(sniffs)

... But there's all kinds of  
brave... You see, what we're  
lookin' at here, is what they call  
the- *condescending kind*... The type  
of bravery bred by- ego, and...  
vanity...

(crosses from Ronnie to  
Shutov)

... You get it from a different  
breed of people. A different *kind*.  
A... *big city*, 'take-whatever-you-  
want-when-ever-you-want-it' kind.

*Types like these...* hold a  
destructive view towards plain,  
little city people. Like us...

(looks back at Jackie and  
the boys)

... So. Make no mistake about  
*bravery*, and bravery alone. It's  
not always something to be  
respected. These two- are the other  
kind of American, the other kinda'  
human being... No better than...  
your Nigger, your Jew, Slope, or  
Wetback... And *they will take what*  
*they want. When they want it. Until*  
*our country, as we know it, is all*  
*but gone...*

(beat)

Or, that is- until they're stopped.

He moves back over to Shutov. Crouches down. TAPS him on the forehead.

BRANDT

I'm gonna tell you something,  
*little man...* I did two. *Two.*  
Marine tours in Vietnam. One more  
in Korea. In that time, *I saw,*  
*learned, and did...* Unspeakable  
things... And you know what  
happened after? I came *right back*  
*here.* To *my town.*

He leans in closer.

BRANDT

You want to know why?  
(beat)

Because the world is something to  
be *fearful of*, my friend. It  
possesses an ugliness beyond that  
of hell itself. *God.* Is a sick, and  
demented creature for what he's  
done out there... And when you see  
that as I have, it makes you want  
to hold on to what's left- *what's*  
*yours-* for as long as possible...  
So. I protect. This place. Because  
there is no God out there watching  
over us. I protect this place,  
these people, from *you...* And  
eventually, your kind might win  
out. One day... people like you  
might spread across the world. *But*  
*you're not gonna live to see it...*

He reaches into his back pocket. Pulls out... a tiny pair of  
PLIERS. Shutov is SEETHING now. His expression, entirely  
covered by smeared blood and swelling, is nearly impossible  
to read.

BRANDT

(re: pliers)  
You know what these are?

Beat.

BRANDT

I picked these up during my time in  
the service. These are... one stop  
shopping when it comes to a  
conditioning device.

He leans in closer.

BRANDT

Let's take a look at your feet.

SHUTOV

No- no-

Shutov begins squirming. Jackie's men rush over. PINNING Shutov down. Holding his bare foot in place.

SHUTOV

Wait- wait-

Brandt GRIPS Shutov's little toe nail in the jaws of the pliers...

BRANDT

You ever felt *real* pain, son?

He RIPS it off. Shutov WAILS. FLAILING. Anything he can. His bare foot bleeding crimson red into powder white. Jackie and his cronies start LAUGHING.

Brandt stands. Motions to Ronnie. Shutov is SCREAMING.

BRANDT

Him next.

Ronnie, bleary, is doing whatever he can to inch away from Jackie and his men. He's maybe cleared six inches. They pin him. Grabbing his foot... Brandt leans in. RIP. Ronnie SCREAMS. It's staggering. SHUDDERING. Jackie's men are forced to step back.

JACKIE

Holy shit, man. Look at him.

BURLY BALD GUY

Look at his eyes.

They do. It's eerie. The anger channeling through Ronnie is downright scary right now. These guys are lucky he's chained down.

JACKIE

... Tough motherfucker.

BRANDT

Looks like he needs to lose another one.

Brandt motions them forward again. Ronnie begins GRUNTING. But still, he doesn't say anything.

ANGLE: Shutov. Face first on the ground. He's stopped screaming now. His face half obscured. He stares off into nothing. Bloody. Gasping...

Behind Shutov, they RIP another of Ronnie's toe nails free. Ronnie's SCREAM is so loud, it makes Shutov FLINCH. But he doesn't snap out of it...

JACKIE (O.S.)  
Wow... Holy shit. Do one more?

BRANDT (O.S.)  
Sure.

A slow stream of water comes into Shutov's eyes. He doesn't flinch. Motionless. Tears begin to stream down his cheeks. Behind him, Brandt RIPS another of Ronnie's toe nails off. Ronnie SCREAMS again. Even louder. Pleading.

RONNIE (O.S.)  
No! No! No!

Jackie can be heard LAUGHING.

JACKIE (O.S.)  
Look at him! Look at him!

BRANDT (O.S.)  
(re: Shutov)  
How's he looking? Ready for more?

JACKIE  
Let's see.

Their footsteps can be heard approaching. They grab Shutov by the collars. LIFTING him up --

-- into a sitting position. Tears are streaming down Shutov's cheeks. Jackie and Brandt look him over. Seeing the tears. It gives them pause. They hesitate.

JACKIE  
Well, look at that-

Jackie begins CACKLING.

JACKIE  
He's cryin', fellas... He's cryin'!

CAT CALLS echo out.

BRANDT  
Shut up.

Jackie and his buddies go quiet.

Brandt raises his shotgun one last time. Levels it at Shutov's face. COCKS it. Takes aim...

Brandt, leering over Shutov, looms closer. Looks over Shutov's utterly wrecked disposition...

BRANDT  
(quiet)  
Are you ready to die?

Beat. Shutov opens his mouth. As if mustering the strength to speak.

SHUTOV  
No.

BRANDT  
You sure?

Shutov nods softly. Brandt considers this. Finally --

BRANDT  
(quiet)  
Then I'd suggest you stop stepping  
in front of trains.

Brandt holds Shutov's gaze with an icy glare.

BRANDT  
Get out.  
(low growl)  
Get out of this town. Get out of  
this county. Do not. Come back. Or  
I will hang your headless carcass  
from the off-ramp of the  
interstate.

EXT. ST. MARQUETTE - POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Shutov and Ronnie, clutching their shoes and socks, covered in blood, and missing toe-nails, are SHOVED out the front door. Into the cold. Beat.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Ronnie's car is parked nearby. Shutov and Ronnie stumble towards it. Shutov, moving along in his bare feet, no longer grimaces at the biting cold or ice. He turns. Looks back as he walks. Catches sight of the police station. One of his eyes is swollen entirely shut...

... Just sitting there. Illuminated from within by flickering fluorescent lights.

He clenches his jaw.

Shutov turns back. Continues shuffling towards Ronnie's car. They close the distance, with Shutov looking back once more at the station. Enraged. Angry...

They reach the car. Ronnie GRUNTS. Bends over and begins to put on his shoes. Wincing. Shutov has other plans. He moves around to the driver's side door. OPENS it. Reaches down to the floor boards. PULLS the carpeting aside.

His pistol is there. Stashed by Ronnie before they got picked up. Shutov grabs it. Rises. COCKS it.

Looks up at the police station. Begins walking back towards it...

STEP.

STEP.

STEP.

Shutov limps along. Still dragging ice and snow with bare, bloody feet. His entire disposition simmering with rage and hate.

RONNIE  
Shutov.

Shutov stops. Looks back. Ronnie's looking at him. His gaze is pleading. *Don't.*

RONNIE  
Ain't worth it.

Shutov glares at Ronnie for a long moment. Turns back towards the station. Dragging himself along. Gun in hand. He takes a few more steps.

... Something sparks in his eyes.

He's slowing now. Debating this.

Shutov comes to a stop.

... Toys with the gun in his hand. Up ahead, the police station is unchanged. Unaware of what he's about to do. Shutov remains there. Trembling. From head to toe.

Glaring at the police station. Debating. Humiliation rings loud and clear in his eyes. *Pride*.

A long silence follows.

Nothing moves. As if the world waits with bated breath. Shutov's one open eye is heavy. Locking up. Water wavers thick in his angered and humiliated complexion.

RONNIE  
Shutov.

A long moment passes. Shutov swallows a thick lump in his throat. Forces the swell of emotion back. He turns. Starts making his way back over to Ronnie's car.

INT. RONNIE'S CAR - COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Shutov and Ronnie drive across a vast expanse of snow and moonlight. Dead trees WHIP by in a foggy haze. Both of these guys look like death rolled over twice by a cement mixer.

Neither says a word. Shutov looks out the window. Lost in thought. He looks up at the clouds in the night sky. Clearly visible. As well as the stars just beyond.

Shutov watches them for a long moment.

SHUTOV  
You can see everything, man. The stars up there, everything...

Beat.

RONNIE  
Yup.

They continue riding for another long moment, and then, as if on cue, Ronnie's car SPUTTERS.

Both men shift their attention to the hood. Right out the front window. A dreadful moment passes. It SPUTTERS again. And AGAIN.

SHUTOV  
Oh no. Oh shit, bro...

SLAM. Something dislodges itself inside the hood. Ronnie's car begins VIBRATING. SMOKE comes pouring out of the hood.

SHUTOV  
What the fuck?

Shutov looks to Ronnie. Panicking.

SHUTOV  
You think those motherfuckers  
fucked up your car?

Ronnie doesn't respond. Gripping the wheel intently and  
glaring at the smoke pouring into the cab.

SHUTOV  
You think they-

RONNIE  
Shut up.

Shutov does. SNAP. The engine dies. The headlights drop a  
level in brightness.

SHUTOV  
Fuck!

Ronnie's car begins DRIFTING. A corpse on wheels. Slowly, it  
comes breaking to a stop at the side of the road. Both men  
sit in an astonished silence. In awe of their horrible luck.

EXT. MIDDLE OF NOWHERE - NIGHT

Ronnie's car sits motionless in the middle of an open stretch  
of road. The setting is completely barren. No signs of  
civilization can be seen as far as the eye can see. Just snow  
and frozen, dead trees.

INT. RONNIE'S CAR - MIDDLE OF NOWHERE - NIGHT

Ronnie says nothing. He kills the headlights to save battery.  
Throws on the hazards. FOOSH. Out the front windshield,  
Ronnie's engine has CAUGHT FIRE.

SHUTOV  
Shit!

Both men scramble out into the cold. Ronnie reaches for the  
hood, but yanks his hand back from the intense flames. Shutov  
tears off his coat. Uses it to throw the hood open. It  
catches fire.

SHUTOV  
Dah!

Shutov throws his coat into the snow. Begins jumping on it.  
Meanwhile, Ronnie is SWATTING at the flames. He turns. Begins  
tossing snow on the engine. Shutov joins in...

CUT TO:

INT. RONNIE'S CAR - MIDDLE OF NOWHERE - LATER

Both men are freezing. Huddling under burnt and tattered coats. They visibly shiver in the cold. SHAKING to pieces. Beat.

SHUTOV

Bro. We could fuckin' freeze to death out here.

(beat, examines his coat)  
Look at this coat, bro. Four hundred dollars, this thing cost me. It's designer, bro. *Designer*.

Shutov motions to the blackened hole in the center of it. Flaking and crusting.

SHUTOV

Look at this motherfucker.

Ronnie grins. Stops. Reaches into his mouth. Pulls out a tooth. Tosses it onto the ground. A quiet moment passes.

Shutov's smile drifts away. Preoccupied.

SHUTOV

Seriously, though. We could freeze out here. I don't know. I seen it a couple times back home... People get their heat cut off- Families, you know? Think- no problem- just one night. One winter night. Wake up in the morning and you got... Kids, man. Fuckin' kids. Frozen to death. One night. It could happen.

Beat. Shutov looks down. As if avoiding something... When he looks up, he's got tears in his eyes.

Ronnie sees it. Looks at him. As if unsure how to react.

SHUTOV

I- I don't know, man... I ruined this, bro.

He CHOKES out a chuckle. Looks knowingly out the front windshield....

SHUTOV

Me and my big fuckin' mouth, man- I did it again.

(sighs, looks up)

Fuckin' Stevie- I made him so many promises, you know? My uncle's fuckin' right, you're right, my ex... I'm fuckin' stupid. I'm fuckin' stupid, and I'm fuckin' worthless...

He swallows. Wipes tears off his cheeks. Nods to himself with certainty.

SHUTOV

I deserve this, bro. I deserve to freeze to death out here. You don't, but I do.

He LAUGHS. It's choked and bittersweet, but it's a laugh.

SHUTOV

You're a good man, bro. I'm sorry if I was a pain in your ass, I didn't mean it.

Beat. Ronnie looks at him. Shivering behind his coat.

RONNIE

You're alright.

Shutov smiles. Thrown a lifeline. Beat.

Then. As if by miracle, a set of HEADLIGHTS appears on the horizon. Shutov looks. The headlights are coming from behind them.

SHUTOV

Hey, yo- is that a car, bro?

Ronnie looks. It's impossible to tell.

RONNIE

Could be a cop.

SHUTOV

Fuck that. I'm'a lay down in the middle of the road if I gotta. This motherfucker is giving us a ride.

Shutov looks back to the approaching set of lights.

SHUTOV

Stay here. Keep your piece close,  
right? Be ready to jump in.

Shutov turns. THROWS open the passenger door.

EXT. RONNIE'S CAR - MIDDLE OF NOWHERE - CONTINUOUS

Shutov SLAMS the passenger door shut. He hobbles right into the middle of the road. Waving both arms at the oncoming vehicle. It slows as it approaches...

... coming to a stop. Shutov takes a BREATH. Approaches the driver's side door.

He raises his hand up, blocking the glare of the headlights. The car, a rusted out Toyota Tercel, HUMS softly in the dead of night. He stumbles over...

... We're able to make out a face. It's MAGGIE. The bartender. She rolls down her window as he approaches.

MAGGIE

What the hell happened to you?

SHUTOV

(recognizing her)

Bartender? Bartender lady?

She grins a bit.

MAGGIE

... You smashed my jukebox.

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - NIGHT

Maggie drives down the open road. Her heater is blasting. Both Shutov and Ronnie are nursing the radiator vents.

MAGGIE

My boyfriend works for a snow plow company. When he gets up this morning, I'll have him bring you back. He knows guys who tow for the interstate.

SHUTOV

What'd you say your name was?

MAGGIE

Maggie.

SHUTOV

(flirting)

Maggie, I love you. And I love your boyfriend, though I gotta say that it's personal disappointment for me to hear that you're taken.

MAGGIE

It gets worse, sorry. I've got kids, too. So when we get back to the house you gotta be quiet.

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Maggie pulls up a long driveway. We're in a truly secluded location. The private drive opens up to a teeny bungalow perched at the edge of a beautiful frozen lake.

SHUTOV (O.S.)

This is nice. *Removed.* Very zen.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

Thank you.

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A homey display of hand-made furniture and antique tapestry. The type of place you'd love to retire into if you're from the Midwest. The cozy feeling is all encompassing, and defines Midwestern hospitality.

Shutov and Ronnie sit at a dining room table, dipping their feet into massive tupperware bowls of warm water. GRIMACING in pain as they do. Maggie stands nearby. Nursing a horrible frown.

MAGGIE

Jesus Christ...

SHUTOV

Believe me, I know.

He unscrews the top of a bottle of Tylenol. SLAMS a mouthful of pills. Hands it to Ronnie. Who GRABS it hastily and repeats the gesture. Downing half the bottle.

SHUTOV

I don't mean to impose, but you wouldn't happen to have any hard liquor, would you? Anything?

MAGGIE

Lemme take a look.

She turns. Retreats into the kitchen.

MAGGIE (O.S.)  
Jackie and his buddies, the guys  
you were fighting... They're  
complete assholes. They come into  
the bar, they don't pay... Just  
'cause Jackie's a cop and his  
cousin's the sheriff. They pick on  
anyone they can, say horrible  
things to women-

SHUTOV  
I don't doubt it...

MAGGIE (O.S.)  
Yeah. I know nobody said anything  
at the outset, but it was really  
good to see him get his ass kicked.

She walks back into the room. Holding two shot glasses and  
tall bottle of Jack.

MAGGIE  
On the house. For a job well done.

Shutov grabs the bottle. Goes to work pouring as many drinks  
for himself and Ronnie as he can.

SHUTOV  
Thank you.

Maggie nods. Checks her watch.

MAGGIE  
If you guys wanna take showers  
you're welcome to.

Without a word, Ronnie stands. Begins drying off his feet.  
Maggie points up a nearby hallway.

MAGGIE  
Last door on the left. Use the blue  
towels. I was gonna throw 'em out  
anyway.

Ronnie moves off down the hallway into the bathroom. Maggie  
watches him go.

MAGGIE  
... Your friend doesn't say much.

SHUTOV

No. Good guy, though. Good in a fight, that's for sure.

She smiles. He reaches back to the whiskey. Pours another shot.

SHUTOV

You want one?

MAGGIE

No thanks.

Shutov proceeds.

SHUTOV

So. How long you lived here?

MAGGIE

In Marquette, my whole life. In this place, since I met my boyfriend, had kids. Ten years... I think.

SHUTOV

How'd you meet him?

MAGGIE

As a kid. An angry one, you know?  
(smiles, sweet)

He just- had good answers to a lot of questions I was asking. Back then I was pretty pissed off, you know? He just kind of... wandered in, fit nicely.

Shutov toasts that.

SHUTOV

Salu.

MAGGIE

You got kids?

Beat. Shutov is thrown a little. He stops himself. Thinks on it...

SHUTOV

Yeah. Pretty much.

MAGGIE

How's that?

He smiles.

SHUTOV

(sighs)

I think... I'm beginning ta' think  
I could be doing better at that  
whole thing, you know? Just  
recently.

MAGGIE

I get that. With kids... you  
just... gotta have a steady hand.  
Eye on the prize.

SHUTOV

What's the prize?

She shrugs.

MAGGIE

To build 'em into better people  
than we are. A good parent'll do  
that.

Beat. Shutov nods. *She's right.*

MAGGIE

Alright. You guys need some new  
socks and boots. I'm gonna go dig  
around the basement... See what  
we've got.

SHUTOV

Thank you.

She leaves. Shutov pours himself another drink. SLAMS it.  
Thinks...

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

The sun is almost up now. In the kitchen, Maggie is prepping a modest country breakfast. Shutov puts on an oversized pair of boots. Trying them out. He WINCES noticeably as he slides them on. Ronnie sits nearby. Fiddling curiously with a kid's toy.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

How do they fit?

SHUTOV

Nice. They fit nice. I wish- I wish  
I didn't have a jacked up toe...

FOOTSTEPS can be heard upstairs. Maggie looks up.

MAGGIE  
He's up! 'Bout time, lazy....

She dishes up two plates and brings them out to the dining room. Scrambled eggs, Bob Evans sausage, and waffle fries substituting hash browns.

MAGGIE  
Here. Eat up. As soon as he comes down, I'll send you guys off.

She eyes the clock on the wall. Goes to the fridge. Grabbing OJ. She re-enters the dining room. Setting down two coffee mugs and the juice.

MAGGIE  
(yelling upstairs)  
Honey! Come on down here!

VOICE  
Just a sec!

Maggie heads upstairs. Up to the landing. Shutov, watching her as she goes, can see her feet at the top of the landing. A set of heavily worn BOOTS comes into view. Joining her.

BOYFRIEND  
You didn't come to bed-

MAGGIE  
We had these two hold-overs in the bar last night. Good guys. They had got stranded out on the 17.

BOYFRIEND  
Oh...

MAGGIE  
Yeah, so I gave 'em a ride back here. Told 'em you help 'em get their car towed?

BOYFRIEND  
Yeah, sure.

Maggie and her BOYFRIEND come down the stairs into view. He's a big dude. Handsomely approaching middle age. Tanned skin, but with a rustic, up north disposition.

MAGGIE  
Guys, this is my boyfriend.

Shutov rises. Brushing a napkin away from his face. He offers his hand. Maggie's boyfriend shakes it.

BOYFRIEND  
Hey. James.

SHUTOV  
Shooey. This is my friend-

Shutov motions to Ronnie. As he does, something in Ronnie's expression makes him STOP --

- COLD. It's in Ronnie's eyes. Astonishment. Sadness. Confusion. And anger. All at once. Shutov looks at Ronnie --

-- but Ronnie's not looking back. Ronnie's transfixed on Maggie's boyfriend.

BOYFRIEND/JAMES  
Ronnie?

Shutov's stomach drops. No. It can't be. A brief, crackling silence follows. Both men, James and Ronnie appear frozen.

MAGGIE  
You guys know each oth-

BLAM.

Ronnie has drawn his pistol from inside his coat and FIRED.

Maggie SCREAMS.

A lamp, dangling from the wall next to James' face EXPLODES into copper colored shards of flying glass.

SHUTOV  
Jimmy? Jimmy Six?!

James ducks. Falls. In one fluid motion, he HURDLES one of the dining room chairs at Ronnie. SMACK. Ronnie's gun goes flying backwards. SKIDS across the floor away from him.

Shutov is already drawing his. Too slow. James GRABS Shutov by the arm. SHOVES it sideways --

-- BANG.

Maggie is SCREAMING. The bullet WHIZZES right past her. A calendar filled with pictures of kittens bites the dust...

... Ronnie is clamoring for his gun. He grabs it. Stands. FIRES again. Plaster next to James and Shutov's face EXPLODES. Shutov ducks.

SHUTOV  
Jesus, man!

James falls. Tripping backwards. Clamoring. RUNS full tilt towards the front door. Practically on his hands and knees. Maggie is still SCREAMING. Ronnie FIRES again at James. Wood flooring SPLINTERS into a cloud of sawdust.

Ronnie OVERTURNS the dining room table. Breakfast goes FLYING. China SMASHES against the wall. Ronnie literally piles through it. All adrenaline. SHOVES past Shutov. RUSHING after James.

Maggie RUNS as well. Towards the stairs. Shutov RUSHES. TACKLES her.

James has made it to the front door. He barrels outside.

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

James rushes out the front door. STUMBLING to his feet as he runs to his TRUCK. Sitting in the driveway...

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ronnie BARRELS through the living room. Towards the front door. Already gone.

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ronnie throws open the front door. STORMS outside. Gun aimed. He OPENS FIRE on James. RUMMAGING through his truck. The bullet pings off the front windshield. SPIDER WEBBING it.

INSIDE THE TRUCK

James pulls a BLANKET from beneath the driver's seat. RIPPING a shotgun free. Extra SHELLS spring everywhere. Spraying across the interior of the car. James ducks around the corner of his truck. FIRES back. BLAM.

A tuft of snow at Ronnie's feet EXPLODES into the air. He ducks behind a nearby tree. In the truck, James is grabbing at all the spare shells he can find. He pockets a fistful. Turns. FIRES again.

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Shutov GRABS Maggie. She's on the ground and SCREAMING. Paralyzed with fear. Raising her up, he GRIPS her tight.

SHUTOV  
Stand up. Stand up!

She does. Sobbing.

MAGGIE  
Please- please- the kids are  
upstairs-

SHUTOV  
They'll be fine-

Cupping her by the neck, he puts the pistol to the side of her head.

MAGGIE  
Please-

SHUTOV  
Go to the door. Go to the door.

He PUSHES her forward towards the front door of the house. KICKS open the screen. Steps outside. Careful to use her as a shield.

SHUTOV  
Jimmy!

Hiding on the other end of the truck, James sees Shutov. Freezes.

SHUTOV  
Throw down the gun, bro... Or I'm gonna do some sad shit to your girl.

Everything slows. James, standing behind the truck, looks at Maggie...

BLAM. James shoots Maggie. Right across the side of her knee. She SCREAMS out in pain. Collapses. Shutov blanches. Caught totally off guard.

He looks back up to James --

-- who planned that. *He shot Maggie in the leg so that he could take a clear shot...*

BLAM. James SHOOTS Shutov. The blow RIPS across his upper chest, sending him flying backwards.

SLAM. Shutov lands flat on his back. Staring straight up at the sky. The wind kicked completely out of him. The world is spinning. Somewhere nearby, Maggie is CRYING. SCREAMING.

More gunshots are heard. Shutov doesn't move. Slivers of blood begin to etch out beneath his clothes, and across the left side of his face. He's been hit good. With birdshot. But it missed his chest. He's been plugged in the shoulder.

Shaking... Shutov raises his right hand up. Scattered, he pats his chest... No. *No big holes...*

He EXHALES sharply. In disbelief.

Nearby. James FIRES again at Ronnie. Reaches into the truck. STARTS it up.

He DIVES halfway in. SLAMS down on the gas pedal with his left hand. Throws it into DRIVE with his right. The truck PLOWS forward. Straight up the driveway. SLAMS into a line of shrubbery, and practically SAILS into the backyard, taking several uprooted bushes along with it. Rolling along in its wake like tumbleweeds in the desert.

Ronnie, ducking out behind his cover, takes aim. Can't get a shot. He RUSHES after James. LEAPS over the hedge-line in pursuit. HUFFING.

Up ahead, James is off-roading across his own back lawn. Kicking up snow and dead grass. Sitting up into view. Gaining control of the truck. Ronnie aims carefully...

BLAM.

PEGS James through the back windshield of the cab. In the distance, the truck CURVES a sharp left --

-- and SLAMS into a tree at the edge of the yard. The truck HISSES.

Beat. James stumbles out. Hit. But still moving. He ducks into the woods at the edge of his property line. Ronnie FIRES again. No good. The bullet PINGS off a nearby evergreen.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

James RUNS. Away from the house. Bleeding. Leading Ronnie along. Tree brush and snow slow him down a bit.

BEHIND JAMES

Ronnie gives chase. Clearing the length of the back yard. He takes aim with his pistol. BLAM. BLAM. James is too far ahead. Ronnie RUNS. Runs with everything he has.

Up ahead, James is making his way through dense forest towards the frozen lake which lies just beyond.

Ronnie FIRES again.

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Shutov GRIMACES. Forces himself into a sitting position. His ears are RINGING. He settles himself. The world is still spinning...

... And STOPS. A few feet away, Maggie, her leg bleeding, has GRABBED Shutov's pistol. She's pointing it at him. Shaking to pieces.

MAGGIE  
(trembling)  
Don't you- don't you even-

Shutov swallows. Fighting back a wave of nausea. He clears his throat.

SHUTOV  
(bleary)  
I think I might be sick...

Maggie wavers. Unsure. Keeps the pistol trained on him. Scared shitless, but focused. A long moment passes.

Finally, Shutov nods. Looks her over. Her finger right on the trigger. Shutov puts his good arm to the ground... Starts forcing himself to his feet. He stands. Achingly. Looks to Maggie. She's still got the gun trained on him.

Beat. He turns. Hobbles off. Off into the direction of the gun fire. Without a weapon.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Shutov DRAGS himself through the woods. He follows the noises of sporadic GUNSHOTS as they're fired between Ronnie and James in the distance. He's bruised, cut, bleeding, limping and shot. You've never seen a human being in a more miserable state.

Every now and again. He stops. Waiting for the next GUNSHOT to ring out. Alters course. Keeps moving.

MOVEMENT catches Shutov's eye. Off to his right. Down at the frozen lake:

James can be seen running across the slippery surface. Another GUNSHOT echoes out. The bullet CLIPS him in the back. He collapses. Face first into the ice. His shotgun goes SLIDING away from him.

Everything goes quiet.

Shutov watches. Frozen. Nothing moves. He starts forward again. Headed towards the lake.

EXT. LAKESIDE - DAY

Shutov hobbles down to the water's edge. Ronnie is there. Standing at the edge. His gun still aimed at James' fallen form.

Shutov looks out into the frozen water. In the distance, James is crawling. Slow. It's impossible to tell how bad he's been hit.

Shutov looks at Ronnie. There's something in his eyes... *Hesitation. Sadness.*

Shutov steps out onto the frozen lake bed. Slow. Ronnie follows. Moving carefully along the ice. Slipping a bit as they go.

Neither man says a word.

James grows closer. And closer. Finally, they're on top of him. Ronnie aims his gun. James stops. His shotgun is too far away to reach. Shutov moves over to it. Picks it up. Checks it. Still loaded. He takes aim at James. Looks at Ronnie.

Ronnie isn't looking back. He's entirely focused on his brother. Slowly, James rolls over. Looks right back at Ronnie. Neither man says a word.

A trail of blood is left behind by James. Ronnie hit him good alright, but it's hard to say where. Shutov hobbles over to Ronnie's side. James looks briefly at Shutov... And looks back to Ronnie.

His eyes stop there. Dwelling on his brother's gaze for long minute. Emotion rises briefly in James, but he pushes it back. Looks down. Puts himself back together. Looks back up.

JAMES

Don't hurt my kids, alright Ron?  
And tell Maggie... Tell her I'm  
sorry I shot her. Just. Can't have  
her getting used as a human  
shield...

He sobers. Holds a long, sad silence.

JAMES

... I'm sorry, man. I never meant  
to hurt you.

But Ronnie is unreadable. Unmoved. He stays there. Looming  
over his brother. Gun aimed.

Finally-

JAMES

(softly)

I'm ready... Go ahead. I'm ready.

Certainty fills James's eyes. Serene. Resigned. Ronnie takes  
aim...

BLAM. BLAM. BLAM. CLICK.

GUNSHOTS ripple across the wide expanse. It's LOUD. Firing a  
pistol across an open area like that. The sound carries.  
Birds can be heard FLAPPING away in the distance.

James, unharmed, opens his eyes. Looks up to Ronnie. Wide  
eyed. Doesn't utter a word. Neither does Ronnie. Ronnie just  
stares at his brother. Frowning. HOLES, scattered in the ice  
around James, have appeared. SLOSHING with water...

After a moment, Ronnie looks to Shutov.

RONNIE

Do what you want.

Ronnie turns. Begins walking back to the shoreline. James  
watches his brother. STUTTERS something. Stops himself. Beat.

He looks up to Shutov. Standing there. Cradling James'  
shotgun. Beat.

SHUTOV

... You know who I am?

James looks at him. Still catching his breath.

JAMES  
Smalls' kid.

Beat. Shutov wasn't ready for that. James nods.

JAMES  
You look just like him. Same voice  
and everything...  
(breathes a bit, smiles)  
Makin' him proud today, huh?

SHUTOV  
He ain't around any more.

JAMES  
I know.  
(beat)  
Still makin' him proud, though.  
(another beat, breathes)  
That was... That was never the  
plan, you know.

Another beat. James smiles.

JAMES  
He was... a good friend. Just. Hard  
headed. Bad temper. I had... wanted  
him to come with. Bring you  
along... They made him an offer,  
you know. To get out. But he  
wouldn't turn over. Just took the  
hard forty. Loved the life too  
much, I guess.  
(his smile fades)  
Your father. I don't know how you  
do it... All this never backing  
down...

He looks once more to Ronnie's retreating form. Stiffens a bit.

JAMES  
It was asking too much.

He stops. Goes quiet. Shutov dwells on that. Dwells on it for a long time. Silent.

ANGLE: Shutov. He looks over Jimmy's form. Aiming the shotgun at him. We move closer. Closer. Closer still. Until. Slowly. Shutov raises the shotgun in James' direction --

CUT TO:

BLAM.

Angle: Across the lake. Nothing moves. No wind. Nothing.

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - DAY

Shutov approaches. Ronnie sits in the driver's seat. Waiting. His demeanor is impossible to read once again. Shutov opens the passenger side door. GRIMACES as he gets in. Both men look like death. Shutov buckles his seat belt. Ronnie STARTS the car. It ROARS to life. He shifts into drive.

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - MIDDLE OF NOWHERE - DAY

Shutov watches the world as it WHIPS by his window. The sun is up now. It's early morning in the middle of nowhere. Shining bright. Melting icicles on frozen bark into droplets of silver water. Gathering into small pools which promise to freeze over once again when night comes.

But for now... *right now...* every surface is shiny. Reflective. Passing Shutov by out the window of a car. He EXHALES. Points to his head.

SHUTOV

I got a lot a shit going on up  
here, bro.

Beat.

RONNIE

Did you do it?

SHUTOV

You wanna know?

Ronnie looks to Shutov. Considers that. Scans Shutov up and down.

SHUTOV

... Maybe I did.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE - DAY

Maggie rushes out onto the lake bed. Stumbling. Limping. Her eyes flooding with tears. She heads toward something off screen. RUSHES with everything she has.

SHUTOV (V.O.)

I upped it. Raised the stakes, you know? Here we are. Out here in the middle a'nowhere cause he did this thing. Back in the day... Years pass, somebody opens their mouth, and here we are. Coming at him. Raisin' the stakes.

James, Jimmy Six, is alive. Maggie reaches him, clutching him furiously. Kissing him on the side of the head. Beside herself with teary relief. He smiles at the sight of her. Grips her back. WHISPERS something to her.

SHUTOV (V.O.)

And... that's all... I feel like that's all I've been doin'. Every day, all day... Just. Raise the stakes, raise the stakes...

Beat.

SHUTOV (V.O.)

Now... I don't know.  
(exhales)  
You keep that up, and at the end a'the day you're what?

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

A squad car, followed by an ambulance, FLIES down the open road. SIRENS wailing. Brandt is behind the wheel.

SHUTOV (V.O.)

... Just dust, bro. Buried in the ground or out to sea. That's it.

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

The squad car and ambulance pull into Maggie's driveway. Brandt gets out. Looks out to the frozen lake bed. In the distance, we can see Maggie and James. Maggie holds James close. The PARAMEDICS prep a stretcher.

SHUTOV (V.O.)

Makes me tired...

EXT. SHUTOV'S HOUSE - DAY

Marianna packs Stevie into a car that's weighed down with the trimmings of domestic life. Boxes, pillows, video games, and coffee cans.

INT. MARIANNA'S CAR - DAY

Marianna and Stevie drive to an unknown location. To a new beginning. In his hands, Stevie's clutching a familiar OPTIMUS PRIME action figure. He looks out the window at the city as it flies by.

SHUTOV (V.O.)  
Makes me want to go home. Fix a few things...

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - DAY

Shutov looks out the window. Lost in thought for a second. He looks back to Ronnie.

SHUTOV  
So. Yeah, bro. I shot him. If that's what you want to hear, what everyone wants to hear, fuck it. What else would Shooey Deegan do?

Beat. Shutov lingers on that.

SHUTOV  
I'll never say otherwise.  
(sniffs)  
Just...

Ronnie looks to the road ahead. Staring out into the snowy landscape beyond. He nods. Searching.

SHUTOV  
... Take me home.

Beat.

In Ronnie's eyes, we see a sense of relief coming into focus. Ronnie grins. Almost. To himself. Says nothing else. Instead, he reaches to the radio. Turns it on. Fiddles with the dial --

-- a SONG snaps in. Marvin Gaye. Or something of the like. A meditative MOTOWN SLOW JAM.

Ronnie hesitates on it. Leaves it going.

Shutov watches this. Turns back to the passenger-side window. Looks out at the northern landscape as it drifts by.

Still shiny. Still glowing. Nearly blinding at the start of the new day. Shutov goes quiet. Just watches. Listens...

FADE OUT.