

UNTITLED ARIZONA PROJECT

by

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EXT. DESERT - DAY

The camera glides low across the Arizona desert, hurtling over white sand and red rocks. There are no signs of life out there. The heat is relentless.

A nine-foot concrete wall, painted pale pink, rises ominously in the distance. The camera speeds towards it, craning upwards at the last minute and swooping over to reveal a startling oasis of impossibly green lawns, impossibly blue swimming pools, and impossibly big houses. Dozens of identical, newly constructed McMansions sit in perfect, evenly-spaced rows.

TITLE CARD: "Harding, Arizona"

TITLE CARD: "June, 2007"

EXT. HARDING - OPENING MONTAGE

The credits play over a MONTAGE of billboards advertising luxury homes for sale in Harding's dozen gated communities.

The developments have names like "Sunrise Bluffs," "The Colony at Portales," and "Trianda Terrace." They feature homes in French Provincial, Hawaiian Plantation, Tuscan, English Manor, Mediterranean, and Classic Spanish styles.

The houses boast walnut floors, vaulted ceilings, bridal staircases, in-laws quarters, temperature controlled wine cellars, and other deluxe amenities. "Live your dream!" promises one sign. "To buy or not to be," proclaims another.

EXT. MCMANSION - FRONT YARD - DAY

A palatial house sits with a "Bartka Realty" sign planted in it's emerald lawn. A pretty brunette smiles falsely beneath the slogan "Cassie Francis: A House SOLD Name!"

CASSIE (V.O.)
This is the cook's delight floor
plan with exotic granite island and
walk-in pantry.

INT. MCMANSION - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

CASSIE FRANCIS (37) is giving a tour to the BOYCHUKS, a balding middle aged man and his much younger second wife. Cassie is dark haired and attractive. She smiles enough to be described as perky, but only by someone who wasn't really paying attention.

CASSIE
Subzero, of course, Viking...
everything top of the line.

MRS. BOYCHUK is checking herself out in the metal door of an enormous refrigerator. She fixes her hair.

MRS. BOYCHUK
I love the stainless steel.

CASSIE
So sophisticated.

INT. MCMANSION - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

They stand around an enormous, sparkling pool.

CASSIE
The swim-up bar is probably one of
the house's sexier features.

MRS. BOYCHUK
Pool's for the kids, mostly.

CASSIE
Oh. Wonderful. How many do you
have?

MR. BOYCHUK
Two.

MRS. BOYCHUK
He has two. (BEAT) I'm not allowed
any.

There's an uncomfortable silence.

CASSIE
And how great is this yard? The
landscaping for all these units was
designed by an internationally
known architect.

INT. MCMANSION - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Boychuk is looking up at the 25 foot ceiling. A gaudy, glittering crystal chandelier looms over them.

MR. BOYCHUK
It's definitely a lot of space.

CASSIE

It's a lot of space. It's a lot of privacy. Nobody right on top of you.

MR. BOYCHUK

Who are the neighbors?

CASSIE

Well they used to call these towns bedroom communities, but judging from the cars you see driving around, I think it's really more of a "boardroom community."

Mr. Boychuk gives her a look. Cassie blushes.

CASSIE

I'm sorry, Gary makes me say that. It's terrible.

EXT. McMANSION - DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

They're standing by the Boychuk's enormous SUV.

CASSIE

So you'll call if you have any questions?

MR. BOYCHUK

Like why house prices have been dropping?

Cassie smiles, unfazed.

CASSIE

Was waiting for that one. Look, Mr. Boychuk, this town barely existed two years ago. All this from nothing. It's sort of miraculous. And people... everybody got excited. And maybe a little carried away.

MR. BOYCHUK

So the bubble burst?

CASSIE

There's been a slight correction. But honestly, all it means is that there are deals to be had. I just bought a home here in Harding myself, if that makes--

A woman's scream pierces the air, interrupting her.

MR. BOYCHUK
Um...?

They listen, not sure where it came from.

CASSIE
I'm sure it's just--

Another scream. Long and loud. They look out at the house across the street, then back at each other.

MRS. BOYCHUK
Like, creepy.

CASSIE
I know her. That's Mrs... uh...

From across the street, the woman's voice cries out.

WOMAN (O.S.)
HELP!!

CASSIE
And her husband. Shit. They've been in the office. Gary sold them that house.

WOMAN (O.S.)
HELP ME!!!

CASSIE
I'm going over.

Cassie runs out across the lawn.

MR. BOYCHUK
We shouldn't... (CALLING AFTER HER)
Shouldn't we call the police?

Cassie sprints across the street. Mr Boychuk jogs after her, unenthusiastically.

MR. BOYCHUK
Let's just call the police.

Cassie ignores him and bounds up to the front door. She rings the bell. Nobody comes, so Cassie turns and bolts around the side of the house, heading to the back.

MR. BOYCHUK
Now where?

CASSIE
I can get us in.

MR. BOYCHUK

But do we want-- I mean, we can't
just break into houses.

The backyard has a familiar pool with a familiar swim-up bar. Cassie runs over to a sliding glass door. She puts her hands flat against it and, with a quick shove upward, lifts the door off its tracks. It falls back towards her.

CASSIE

(TO MR. BOYCHUK) Take this.

MR. BOYCHUK

How do you even know how to do
that?

CASSIE

They put these shitty goddamn doors
on all these units. Take it!

Mr. Boychuk struggles with the heavy door as Cassie races inside. She sprints past the exotic granite kitchen island, over walnut floors, and up the spiral staircase.

Then she stops dead in her tracks.

In the master bedroom, a man hangs from a ceiling fan, a rope around his neck. A sobbing woman bear-hugs his legs, trying to lift him up to take pressure off his neck. The guy is still breathing, but barely.

WOMAN

Please help me!

Cassie, unsure of what else to do, joins her in grabbing the guy's legs. He's heavy and unsteady, listing from one side to the other. Every time he falls in one direction, the rope goes taught and they try to angle him back the other way.

WOMAN

(HYSTERICALLY) I don't know what
happened. Y'know, the bank was--
but he didn't, and I try not to,
y'know, because I don't, I try to...

CASSIE

Okay, it's okay. We're gonna get
him down.

There's a loud crack. Bits of dry-wall fall on them from above. The fan has pulled halfway out of the ceiling.

WOMAN

Oh god...

CASSIE

No, this is good. It's too cheap to hold him. We just have to--

Before she can finish her thought, the fan rips out of the ceiling. Cassie and the woman can't hold the guy up. He falls to the floor with a thud. The fan comes down right on his head. The sound of the impact is stomach-turning.

The woman screams. Cassie scrambles over and pushes the fan aside. It's a horrifying sight. Half the guy's skull is caved in. His teeth have been knocked out. Plaster rains down on them like snow.

CASSIE

Oh my god.

The man tries to talk, but his jaw is in pieces and his mouth is filling with blood. He's almost incoherent.

MAN

(GARBLED) Kill me.

CASSIE

I'm calling an ambulance.

MAN

(LOUDER) Kill me!

CASSIE

Somebody get help!

The man screams louder. The camera is close on his face. Blood and saliva spray everywhere.

MAN

FUCKING KILLL MEEEEEE!

The screen goes black.

TITLE CARD: "Two Years Later"

INT. CASSIE'S CAR - EVENING

The sun is going down, but it's still 95° out as Cassie drives a dented Corolla through the extra-wide streets of her gated community. She's takes a drag off a cigarette, trying to blow the smoke out the open window. The Dave Ramsey Show plays on the radio.

MALE CALLER (ON RADIO)
...good or bad I have another seven,
it was a ten year interest only
loan, so I have another seven years
before it starts amortizing...

DAVE RAMSEY (ON RADIO)
Mm-hm.

MALE CALLER (ON RADIO)
What I'm looking at right now is,
I'm way underwater, um, and I can't
qualify for any kind of a
refinance.

The car slips past block after block of huge, empty, big-lot
houses, almost all of them for sale. "Foreclosure" and
"Public Auction!" signs sprout like weeds from dead lawns.

DAVE RAMSEY (ON RADIO)
So there's no problem here from the
original deal except the value has
tanked and you woke up and realized
you had a stupid mortgage.

MALE CALLER (ON RADIO)
Correct.

DAVE RAMSEY (ON RADIO)
Okay. You're probably not gonna
like my answer much...

Cassie drives out past the guard shack at the entrance to the
development. It's deserted. The gate-arm that once forced
cars to a stop is permanently raised.

EXT. SPORTS BAR - LATER

Cassie pulls the Corolla into a parking space in front of a
strip-mall sports bar called "Swish!" She frowns at the sign.
Not the most masculine name for a sports bar.

INT. SPORTS BAR - ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Cassie enters the dark and sparsely populated bar.
Diamondbacks jerseys and Arizona Wildcats pennants cover the
walls. Flat-screen TVs play a poker tournament on ESPN.

A middle-aged guy in a Tommy Bahama ensemble waves to Cassie
from a booth across the room. A bit too tan, but otherwise
handsome. This is BURT, her date.

BURT
Cassie?

Cassie smiles back at him, but it's the same smile she had when she was selling houses.

INT. SPORTS BAR - BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

Cassie and Burt are in the booth, enormous ten-page menus on the table in front of them.

BURT

Sorry I didn't stand. Don't want anybody stealing the booth out from under us.

CASSIE

That's okay.

BURT

(RE: BOOTH) This one's the best because you can see both big screens.

CASSIE

(NODDING) Definitely.

An uncomfortable beat.

BURT

Have you had the chicken soft tacos here? (IMPASSIONED) Ridiculous.

The waitress arrives carrying two comically large, sweet looking margaritas.

WAITRESS

Two 'extremos' with salt.

BURT

I ordered you one. They're ridiculous.

INT. SPORTS BAR - BOOTH - LATER

The waitress drops off a fresh pair of 'extremos' and collects two empty glasses. Given how relaxed Cassie seems, they must be on their fourth or fifth. Awkward tension has given way to drunken intimacy.

BURT

...I don't know, she's getting remarried to, like, some old dude she met at Havasu. I'd be bitterer except the guy, y'know, the guy's new-- the new guy's name is Ernie.

CASSIE

So? (THEN) Oh. (POINTING AT HIM)
Burt and Ernie. That's hilarious.

BURT

She's so embarrassed. She won't
even use his name on Facebook. It's
all "with my bf, on our way to
Cancun..."

He trails off. His smile twitches.

BURT

Guy's loaded, though. He bought her
a boat.

CASSIE

Mine's started dating my daughter's
counsellor from fat camp.

BURT

She's fat?

CASSIE

She's a little big. (BEAT) It's
tough.

BURT

I bet. Getting dumped for some cow.

CASSIE

Oh. No. I thought you meant my
daughter.

BURT

What? No. I thought you meant the
new--

CASSIE

(GETTING IT) Kelsey. She used to be
fat. Now she just lords it over
everyone. Like she's an inspiration
because of what she overcame.

BURT

Fat bitch.

Cassie grins. There's a moment of silence.

BURT

Hey, do you want to get out of
here?

EXT. SPORTS BAR - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Cassie and Burt settle into his SUV. He turns the key and the radio jumps to life, blaring Nickelback. Burt shuts it off.

BURT

Sorry. Whoa. (BEAT) Um, right, so...
you want to hit up your place or...

CASSIE

Shouldn't we go to yours?

There's a weirdly long pause. Burt nods.

BURT

My place it is.

EXT. GATED COMMUNITY - LATER

Burt pulls into the driveway of an enormous, estate-size house. He keeps the car running.

BURT

This is it.

A beat. They don't get out.

CASSIE

So...

BURT

I don't live here.

Cassie blinks at him.

BURT

Right now. Anymore. I mean, it's still mine. I own it. I just have to rent it out, to help cover the mortgage. I'm staying in a cheaper place with some buddies.

CASSIE

Shouldn't we... go there, then?

BURT

Yeah, no, yeah. I just wanted you to see my house. So you know I'm not some sort of loser.

There's a pause. Cassie looks out at the building.

CASSIE

Well it's a really nice property.

BURT

(SINCERE) Thank you for saying
that.

INT. BURT'S APARTMENT - LATER

Burt and Cassie enter a shabby, plain-wrap apartment: white walls and beige carpeting. The front door opens directly into the living room, where two middle aged guys (DON and ANDY) sit on a faux-leather couch, watching TV.

BURT

Hey guys.

DON

There he is. (RE: CASSIE) And look
at this!

BURT

Don, Andy... this is Cassie.

Cassie waves sheepishly.

ANDY

Hi.

DON

I know Miss Cassie Francis. She
sold me my house.

CASSIE

Oh. (BLINKS) No, I remember you.
John?

DON

Don. Like Burt just said.

CASSIE

I'm sorry. I'm not-- (BEAT) How are
you liking it? The house.

DON

They took it.

CASSIE

Right. Hence...

She gesture half-heartedly at the room. A moment of silence.
This couldn't be going worse.

BURT

So what are you guys watching?

ANDY
Australia was on HBO.

They all look at a paused image of a rugged Hugh Jackman riding a horse, backlit beautifully.

DON
It's kind of weird. (THEN) What are you two crazy kids up to?

Cassie looks at Burt. She's suddenly feeling a lot less drunk.

CASSIE
I should probably get going, actually. It's late.

BURT
Oh. (BEAT) Really? Because they're not... I mean, I do have my own room. With door.

Burt hears himself and nods sadly.

BURT
Jesus. I wouldn't fuck me either.

EXT. CASSIE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - THE NEXT DAY

Cassie is in the pool, floating on her back. She stares straight up at the sun, burning menacingly in the cloudless sky. Everything is quiet. Then there's the sound of a car pulling up out front.

EXT. CASSIE'S HOUSE - FRONT-YARD - CONTINUOUS

A convertible is parked in the driveway. An overweight teenage girl exits the passenger side as Cassie comes out of the front door, wrapped in a towel.

CASSIE
Hey sweetie.

MORGAN, her 13 year-old daughter, blows right past and goes inside.

MORGAN
Hey.

Cassie watches her go with a raised eyebrow, then turns back to the convertible. Her ex-husband, SCOTT, leans against the car. He smiles at her.

CASSIE

Good weekend?

SCOTT

I'm worried about her.

CASSIE

She's thirteen. (SHRUGS) And the product of a broken home.

Scott's smile flickers but doesn't fade.

SCOTT

She still won't talk to Kelsey.

CASSIE

Does Kelsey talk to her about anything other than dieting tricks?

SCOTT

Kelsey tried talking to her about boys. And clothes. And MTV's True Life: I Have a Summer Share 2.

Scott laughs to himself. With maybe a faint touch of bitterness.

SCOTT

They actually have a lot in common. Both being teenagers and everything.

Cassie smiles at this, in spite of herself.

CASSIE

How's that going?

SCOTT

It's... okay. It's good. She's very young. Which can be refreshing.

CASSIE

I bet. After years of me just being so... y'know...

Cassie trails off. There's a beat of silence.

SCOTT

Thirst-inducing. Is the opposite of refreshing. (GRINNING) And that's you. Like a dry cracker.

Scott smiles at her hopefully. Cassie doesn't smile back. He sighs and looks out across the street. The neighbor's house seems to be deserted, but the lawn is bright green.

SCOTT
What's with the grass?

CASSIE
Somebody's been going around spray-painting all the dead lawns green.

SCOTT
God. Painting the roses red.

CASSIE
(SHRUGS) Gotta keep property values up somehow.

Scott gets back into the car.

SCOTT
You should really move back to Phoenix. This place is turning into a ghost town.

CASSIE
I'd think you'd like it. Nobody around to see what you're doing. Great for sneaking around.

Scott nods and turns on the engine.

SCOTT
I'll see ya, Cass.

He backs out of the driveway. Cassie watches him go. Her expression is hard to read, but she stays out there a little too long, watching the convertible disappear down the road.

INT. CASSIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Morgan is in front of the TV, playing Dance Dance Revolution on a roll-out pad on the floor. She's not particularly good at it. Cassie walks in, looking at her cell phone.

CASSIE
Come on, we're late. Where's your bag? We have to pick-up Madison.

MORGAN
But I just started. Kelsey said fifteen minutes every morning.

CASSIE

I thought you didn't like Kelsey.

MORGAN

(SHRUGS) I don't. But she's pretty.

Cassie tries to take this in stride.

CASSIE

Okay, fifteen minutes.

Morgan keeps dancing, clumsily.

INT. CASSIE'S CAR - LATER

Cassie is driving. Morgan and another 13 year-old, MADISON, are in the backseat. Both girls have ipod headphones on. They stare out the windows, lost in their music. Morgan sniffs at the air and removes an earbud.

MORGAN

Were you smoking in here?

CASSIE

I don't smoke.

Morgan sniffs again and puts the headphones back on. They drive along a two-lane highway, past all the gated communities and out into the desert. Distant mountains dot the horizon. The car seems very small.

EXT. BARNES COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL - LATER

Cassie drops the girls off in front of a large high-school.

MADISON

Thanks, Cassie.

MORGAN

Bye mom.

CASSIE

Sweetie, I'm gonna be home late, okay? I have a showing at 5:00.

MORGAN

I know.

CASSIE

And Madison's mom is picking you guys up.

MORGAN

(IMPATIENT) I know.

Morgan starts to walk away.

CASSIE

Hey. What do we say when we get out
of the car?

MORGAN

(RELUCTANTLY PLAYING ALONG) Thank
you, driver.

Cassie smiles.

CASSIE

That's a good girl.

Cassie watches as her daughter disappears into a mass of other teenagers.

INT. CASSIE'S CAR - LATER

Cassie is driving back along the desert highway when her phone vibrates. She checks the caller ID, sighs, and answers.

CASSIE

Hello?

MAN (V.O.)

Can I speak to Casandra Francis?

CASSIE

She's not here right now, can I ta--

MAN (V.O.)

I have this is as her cell.

Cassie pulls to a stop at a railroad crossing. The red lights are flashing.

CASSIE

No, sorry. Office.

The train-crossing bells are clanging loudly. It's not a sound you'd typically hear at an office. Cassie tries to shield the phone's microphone with her hand.

CASSIE

We expect her back super soon,
though.

MAN (V.O.)

And who am I talking to?

CASSIE

This is Ms. Francis' assistant.

MAN (V.O.)
Do you have a name?

A beat.

CASSIE
Phoenix. (WINCES) May I ask who's calling?

MAN (V.O.)
Well, Phoenix, this is Glen with Desert National Bank and Trust. I'm calling about Mrs. Francis's mortgage payment.

Cassie's phone beeps. She looks down. It's an incoming call from "Gary Office"

CASSIE
I'm sorry, sir, I have someone on the other line. I'll have Casandra call you as soon as she gets in.

MAN (V.O.)
Listen, I'm not--

Cassie switches over to the other line, cutting him off.

CASSIE
Gary?

GARY (V.O.)
Where the fuck are you?

INT. REAL ESTATE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

GARY BARTKA (40ish, short, tan, and weirdly buff) sits at his desk in the back of a nondescript strip-mall office.

GARY
No, lemme guess. You're almost here, you just got stopped at the train.

CASSIE (V.O.)
I did.

GARY
Bullshit.

EXT. RAILROAD CROSSING - CONTINUOUS

Cassie holds the phone out so he can hear the clanging bells.

CASSIE
It's coming.

GARY (V.O.)
You're fucking ballsy, I'll give
you that. Usually when people
haven't sold shit for six months,
they try to get in early, maybe
prove to me they're not--

The train is almost on her. It's getting louder.

CASSIE
Train's here.

Gary tries to yell over it.

GARY (V.O.)
--PROBE TO ME THEY'RE NOT TOTALLY
FUCKING WORTHLESS AND I'M NOT--

The freight train thunders past, drowning out Gary and
everything else. We PUSH IN slowly on Cassie as she watches
it go by. The deafening roar builds on the soundtrack.

The train just keeps going and going. An endless parade of
identical red and green cargo containers. It seems absurdly,
impossibly long. It must take a full forty seconds to pass.

Then, abruptly, it's over. The bells have stopped blaring.
The train is gone. And in the gulf of silence it leaves in
its wake, we can just barely make out the small, tinny sound
of Gary still yelling. Cassie brings the phone up to her ear.

GARY (V.O.)
...time. I hired you for two reasons,
and they weren't your goddamn
brains, so get your--

Cassie hangs up on him. She takes a deep breath, then drives
forward, over the tracks.

INT. REAL ESTATE OFFICE - LATER

Cassie arrives at Bartka Realty. It's an unmemorable office
space: gray carpet and dropped ceilings. The front wall is
all glass. Dusty mini-blinds are drawn to hold back the sun.

Gary's desk is towards the back. He looks up from his
computer, closing a browser window with a little too much
urgency. Probably porn, possibly on-line dating.

GARY
You hung up on me.

CASSIE
The train came.

GARY
You look fucking hot.

Cassie's in her business-sexy uniform. Low-cut white blouse, tight black skirt, knee-high leather boots.

CASSIE
For the showing.

He looks her up and down, then rolls his eyes back into his head and makes an orgasmic noise.

GARY
Uurrrhhhh.

Silence. Cassie isn't quite sure how to respond to that.

CASSIE
(BEAT) Cool?

GARY
So why're you late?

CASSIE
I had to drop off Morgan 12 miles away. It's not my fault there's no high school in this town.

GARY
Why'd you move here then?

CASSIE
Because somebody told me it would be a glorious place to raise a family.

A beat. Gary snorts.

GARY
If I didn't feel bad about that, you wouldn't still have a job. Your incompetent ass should be on your fucking knees, thanking me.

CASSIE
I know.

GARY
Good.

CASSIE
I appreciate it.

GARY
You should.

Cassie takes a seat at her desk by the front door. She's just turning the computer on when her cell phone rings again.

CASSIE
Hello?

It's the debt collector again.

MAN (V.O.)
Casandra Francis?

Cassie looks at the phone's display and frowns. The guy used a different number this time.

CASSIE
I'm sorry, she's still not--

MAN (V.O.)
So here's the deal, Casandra, you can play your little games, but I'm gonna keep calling and calling. You may not have all day to deal with me, but I've sure as fuck got all day to deal with you.

Cassie angles her body away from Gary.

CASSIE
I wasn't--

MAN (V.O.)
You've missed six straight mortgage payments, babe. You're lucky it's me and not the police, so let's just cut the crap.

During this, the door to the office swings open and a tall guy in shorts, a "Freedom isn't Free" tee-shirt, wrap-around sunglasses and an Arizona State baseball hat strides in. This is SONNY. He blows past Cassie.

SONNY
Hey Gary.

Gary greets him with obviously false enthusiasm.

GARY
Oh hey! Cool. What's up man?

SONNY
You never called, so I decided to
just swing by. (BEAT) Surprise!

As Cassie watches, the debt collector gets impatient.

MAN (V.O.)
Casandra?

CASSIE
(SOFTLY INTO PHONE) I know, I know.
Look, I'm showing a house later and
this commission would be enough--

MAN (V.O.)
You can't shit a shitter, bitch.

CASSIE
I promise I'm not shitting you. I
wouldn't...

Behind her, Gary and Sonny's conversation gets heated.

GARY
I meant to call yesterday, then I
totally got totally swamped.

SONNY
Are you busy right now?

GARY
I mean, I've got a few things that--

SONNY
You don't look busy.

GARY
(BEAT) Okay. Yeah. No. Let's talk.
Cool. Why don't you sit down.

SONNY
(PETULANT) Why don't you?

Gary's already sitting.

GARY
Okay, look... my guy at bank, and
this is just one guy, but he said
they're not accepting any more
short sales. They'd rather just
hold onto assets and hope it turns
around.

Cassie is half listening to them, half listening to the debt collector. It's all happening at once.

MAN (V.O.)
Am I interested in your promises?
No. Why? Because you're obviously
not a person who keeps her word.
And right now it's my boot on your
throat, so you better--

SONNY
You said it was a slam dunk!

GARY
I said I'd do what I could.

SONNY
Slam dunk. Slam dunk! SLAM DUNK!

CASSIE
(INTO PHONE) Can you just hold on
for one second--

Cassie stands up and starts to head for the door.

MAN (V.O.)
No, I can't fucking hold. I don't
fucking hold. I won't fucking hold.
You better not be--

CASSIE
(WHISPERING) I'm still here, Jesus,
I'm still here. I'm just going
outside for a little privacy.

Cassie exits the front door of the office, leaving Gary and Sonny screaming at each other.

EXT. STRIP-MALL - BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

The office is on the second floor of a two-story strip-mall. All the businesses on the top floor are connected by a long concrete balcony with a battered metal railing.

Bartka Real Estate is the only place still open in the complex. A big "Retail Space For Lease" banner hangs from the railing. Some offices have never been occupied. Others bear the signage of recently shuttered businesses (like "I Pity the Pool" -- a pool cleaning supply store).

MAN (V.O.)
Mrs. Francis?

Cassie looks up at the sun. It must be pushing a 100° and it's not even 10am. She shields her eyes and ducks into an empty office space next door.

INT. EMPTY OFFICE SPACE - CONTINUOUS

The room has the same layout as the real estate office, but no furniture. A few panels have been removed from the dropped ceiling. A visible layer of dust blankets everything. A dozen unplugged office phones are piled against one wall.

She can still hear shouting from Gary and Sonny through the paper-thin plaster walls. The argument is escalating.

There are no blinds, so Cassie has to walk to the back of the office to get out of the sun.

CASSIE

Sorry. I had to get somewhere quiet.

MAN (V.O.)

What, are you embarrassed? You don't want people knowing you're a fucking deadbeat? Well maybe I'll just have to go knocking on doors, then. I'm sure your friends and neighbors would be very interested to know exactly how much money you owe and--

CASSIE

I don't have any neighbors.

MAN (V.O.)

Excuse me?

CASSIE

My development is almost deserted. So have fun.

MAN (V.O.)

I'm sorry, are you getting tough with me? 'Cuz I'm the guy with his boot on your throat right now, and--

CASSIE

I think I'd like to speak to your supervisor.

MAN (V.O.)

Well I think I am the supervisor, Casandy. So you'll fucking talk to me.

Cassie closes her eyes, out of frustration or exhaustion or both. Suddenly there's a loud crash from next door. Her eyes spring open. There's another crash and more yelling.

MAN (V.O.)

I'm trying to help you here, but
don't forget that I can end your
life. Not violently. This isn't a
threat. But I will end your life.
That's not a threat.

Cassie isn't listening to the guy. She's looking at the wall. There's a muffled yell from the other side, then loud, quick foot-steps leading from the back of the office (Gary's desk) towards the front. Cassie follows the sound with her eyes.

Suddenly, through the glass front wall, Cassie sees Sonny burst out of the real estate office, pushing Gary in front of him. With his size advantage, Sonny has Gary lifted off his feet -- his toes barely touch the ground as he's propelled backwards.

Sonny slams Gary's back hard against the railing of the balcony. Gary goes up and over. Sonny lets go and Gary plummets. His scream is immediately cut short by a dull thud.

Cassie's eyes go wide. She drops the phone from her ear.

MAN (V.O.)

Mrs. Francis?

Out on the balcony, Sonny peers over the railing. Cassie is frozen in place. Her breath is caught in her throat.

MAN (V.O.)

Cassandra?

Cassie hangs up on the guy without looking down. She takes a step back, silently.

On the balcony, Sonny realizes something. He spins around and stares into the real estate office. Then he looks off to his right, towards the far end of the balcony. Cassie scans the office around her for somewhere to hide. It's a huge, empty white room.

She looks back at Sonny. He's staring right at her. Their eyes lock.

CASSIE

(SOFTLY) Shit.

Sonny opens the door and storms into the empty office.

SONNY
What did you see?

CASSIE
I'm calling the cops.

SONNY
Don't do that.

CASSIE
I'm calling the cops!

Sonny grabs a discarded office phone from the pile on the floor. Cassie tries to dial 911 on her cell, but there's not enough time. She looks up and Sonny is already on her. He slams the phone receiver down on the side of her head with vicious force.

You'd expect the screen to go black. Instead, Cassie just drops to the ground, clutching her head and moaning in pain. Sonny looks down at her with consternation.

SONNY
Shit.

He raises the phone and slams it down on her head again. It makes a sickening thump. Cassie sobs and curls into a ball.

CASSIE
Please don't kill me.

SONNY
I'm not trying to kill you! I'm
trying to fucking knock you out!
Fuck!!

He flings the phone against a wall in a fit of frustration. It makes a dent in the plaster, leaving a little smear of Cassie's blood.

Sonny pulls out his Blackberry and types something into it. Cassie looks up at him, trying to focus.

CASSIE
What are you doing?

SONNY
Shut up.

There's a pause as he waits for his phone to load something.

SONNY
(BITTERLY) Fucking Verizon.

He looks down at Cassie.

SONNY
Stop looking at me!

He makes a half-hearted attempt to cover his face with his hands.

SONNY
(RE: PHONE) Come on. Come on. Okay.
(READING) Blah blah blah, knee
bent, right arm down... blah blah
blah... let out a mighty scream?
(BEAT) Shit.

He looks down at Cassie.

SONNY
You have to be standing for this to
work.

Cassie just lays there, clutching her head.

SONNY
Stand up!

Cassie looks up at him.

SONNY
Don't look at me! Close your eyes!
Stand up and close your eyes!

He grabs Cassie by the arm and yanks her to her feet. She wobbles, so he shoves her up against a wall to steady her.

He consults his black-berry, then assumes a boxers stance. Right knee forward, left knee back.

SONNY
(READING) Stay loose. Aim for the
chin. Unleash a mighty scream.

He slips the Blackberry back into his pocket, then drops his right hand and twists at the waist. He unleashes a mighty scream. It sounds like a dog being strangled.

SONNY
Aiigghhhhh!

He punches Cassie hard on the side of her chin. She drops to the ground again, writhing in pain but not blacked out.

SONNY
Fuck!! Seriously?

He takes a deep breath. There's a pause.

SONNY

Okay. Let's go again.

INT. SONNY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Cassie lies on her back, on a brown leather sectional sofa. Her wrists are duct-taped together. So are her ankles. It takes an enormous effort to open her eyes.

She's in a living room not that different from her own: IKEA furniture, recessed lighting, built-in speakers, and a giant flat-screen TV mounted on one wall.

There's a bag resting on her head, wet with condensation. It was once frozen. It's now melted.

CASSIE

Hello?

Nothing. Cassie tests her jaw. She winces in pain.

CASSIE

(LOUDER) Hello?

Quick footsteps from the direction of the kitchen, then Sonny steps into the room.

He's wearing a black, hooded, Arizona State Sun Devils sweatshirt. But it's on backwards. The hood is up over his head, completely covering his face, except for two eye holes which have been cut out so he can see.

He tries to disguise his voice, making it deeper. Like Christian Bale as Batman.

SONNY

How do you feel?

Cassie says nothing. She's not all there yet.

SONNY

Let me get that.

He reaches down. Cassie flinches, but Sonny just grabs the bag off her head.

SONNY

Frozen margarita mix. (THEN) You know how when you make margaritas it's mix, tequila, and ice? With this stuff, the ice is the mix, so it saves a step.

(MORE)

SONNY (CONT'D)
(BEAT) Plus you're not gonna
realize at the last minute that you
didn't buy enough ice and...

He trails off. Cassie's not sure what to say.

SONNY
Anyway...

He points to the hood over his face.

SONNY
Sorry about this, but I can't let
you see my face. I have a ski mask
from when I lived in Denver, but I
seriously can't find where I put
it. So many closets.

Sonny plops down opposite her into a leather La-Z-Boy. Cassie tries to sit up, but it's too hard with her ankles duct-taped together. She gives up and just lies there.

An adorable golden retriever wanders into the room with a tennis ball in it's mouth. It tries to get Sonny's attention by dropping the slobbery ball in his lap. Sonny ignores it.

SONNY
So... I'm just gonna say it out loud.
(PAUSE) Gary is dead.

CASSIE
Oh God.

SONNY
I know. I still can't believe it.

Cassie closes her eyes. Her head is throbbing.

SONNY
The whole thing was an accident. We
just had a fight. (THEN) He ruined
my life.

He waits for Cassie to ask how. She doesn't.

SONNY
He sold me this house. Which I
love. It's amazing. But Gary said -
- it was a promise -- he promised
that an adjustable-rate would be
fine. And I know he's not a finance
guy, but a promise is a promise.

The dog picks up the ball in it's mouth and drops it on Sonny's lap again.

SONNY

(TO DOG) Lefty! Come on. (TO CASSIE)

Then he promised me, after it'd all gone to shit, he promised me the bank was taking short-sales. He knew a guy. He said he'd make a call.

Cassie nods stiffly.

CASSIE

Slam dunk.

SONNY

You heard that. (BEAT) Now I'm embarrassed.

Cassie is starting to get her wits about her.

CASSIE

Don't be.

SONNY

I'm a grown man. I shouldn't have hissy fits. But my business is fucked. My wife left me. My new wife. And this house... y'know, so I'm under a lot of stress right now. (BEAT) And I have a temper. Which is good in business. You gotta be a shark. But it's still my bad. Gary was a friend.

Sonny pets his dog. The deep voice he had been affecting is almost entirely gone.

SONNY

He just went over the railing. I tried to catch him.

CASSIE

What do you want from me?

Sonny looks at her for a moment. The backwards hood slips down over his eyes a little. He adjusts it.

SONNY

First lemme give you a tour.

INT. SONNY'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Sonny, with the backwards hood still covering his face, leads Cassie on a tour of his McMansion. Her hands are bound, her ankles aren't. They're trailed by Lefty, the golden retriever, wagging his tail boisterously.

SONNY

We got a refi and did a bunch of work to, y'know, customize the standard plans. This was Vicki's "dream bathroom." Italian tile. His and her sinks.

He gestures out the window.

SONNY

I didn't care about that stuff, as long as we were by the golf course.

Cassie looks out the window. The entire development is built around a golf course, but it's unfinished. Instead of rolling greens, there's just a sea of dirt. Trenchers, excavators, and other digging machines dot the landscape, gathering dust.

SONNY

They're never gonna finish it. I say it's breach of contract, but turns out it wasn't actually in the contract. That's my bad, again. Stupid. Do you golf?

CASSIE

Not really.

SONNY

I love it. More than anything. I'm not supposed to play anymore, because of my back, but I do anyway.

Sonny smiles broadly, trying to get her to like him. Then he remembers that he has a hood on and she can't see his face.

SONNY

It's the only thing that keeps me sane.

INT. SONNY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

They're standing in the big bedroom.

SONNY

Master bedroom, obviously. I turned Vicki's precious walk-in into a gym.

He opens a closet door, revealing an enormous closet. It's empty except for a weight lifting bench and a treadmill.

SONNY

Revenge!

He laughs a little. His cell phone rings. He checks it, gives a snort, then pockets it. Cassie is distracted by a photo on the bedside table. It's of Sonny, a woman, and two boys.

CASSIE

Are these your sons?

SONNY

Yeah, that's me and my ex-wife -- my first ex-wife, I guess I have to say now -- and our boys. Chase and Penn.

There's a pause as Sonny realizes she's looking at a photo of him. He awkwardly removes the backwards hood.

SONNY

I'm letting you see my face as a sign of trust. Okay?

CASSIE

Okay.

Sonny gestures to a set of built-in dressers along one wall.

SONNY

We had the built-ins added. And I had them install this.

He opens a hidden panel next to the closet, revealing a huge safe. Sonny punches in a combination and it swings open, revealing two dozen guns. Everything from handguns to assault rifles. He pulls out a rifle and inspects it lovingly.

SONNY

Had to keep them out of the way of the boys.

He looks down at the gun then up at Cassie.

SONNY

Don't want anybody accidentally getting shot.

The air has gone out of the room a little. Cassie shifts her weight ever so slightly.

SONNY

(BRIGHTLY) You want to see the pool?

INT. SONNY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

They're looking out the kitchen window at the pool, which has floating basketball nets on it.

SONNY

I swim every morning. It's easier on the back than golf so...

His phone rings again. He looks down at it, rolls his eyes, then sends it to voicemail. He turns back towards the kitchen. The countertops are just plywood, still under construction.

SONNY

Sorry the kitchen is such a mess.
We started to redo the counters,
but, y'know, the best laid plans...

He holds up two jagged samples of polished granite. One is a slightly warmer shade of gray, one slightly cooler.

SONNY

Just to settle an argument, which one of these do you like better?

CASSIE

What's the point of this?

SONNY

For the counters.

CASSIE

All this. The tour.

SONNY

I wanted to show you my house.

CASSIE

Why?

SONNY

I don't know. Just... this is my home. It's who I am. (BLUSHES) That sounds stupid. I just thought you should see it. You understand, right?

She doesn't.

CASSIE
I do.

SONNY
If they foreclose, I lose my kids.
You can't keep custody if you're
financially unstable.

His phone rings in his pocket. This time he doesn't even look at it before sending it to voicemail.

SONNY
(RE: PHONE) Jesus.

CASSIE
I have debt collectors calling me too. I'm totally underwater on my house. I know how stressful it is.

SONNY
(MEANINGFUL) Thank you, Cassie.

Cassie wasn't sure he knew her name. He shrugs.

SONNY
Gary used to talk about you. (THEN)
And I looked in your wallet. Sorry.

CASSIE
That's okay.

SONNY
I just want you to know that I'm not a bad guy. And if you promise to keep this whole stupid thing to yourself, I'll let you go.

CASSIE
I don't think you're a bad guy.

SONNY
Don't talk to the cops. If they ask, tell them you were off... y'know, showing a house today or whatever. You never went in to the office.

CASSIE
I promise I won't tell anyone.

SONNY
Okay. Good.

There's a pause. Sonny nods to himself.

SONNY
I don't believe you.

CASSIE
I won't go to the police.

SONNY
You have bruises all over your face. How are you gonna explain that?

CASSIE
I won't go to the police.

SONNY
Why not? I would if I were you.

CASSIE
No, but... I wouldn't. I don't want to help them take your kids.

SONNY
I know you were in love with Gary. You must hate me.

CASSIE
What?

SONNY
I know about you two.

CASSIE
We weren't. I'm not-- I'm single. Very single.

SONNY
Well, whatever. Sexually.

CASSIE
That's not true.

SONNY
So you're calling Gary a liar?

CASSIE
(BEAT) I don't know.

SONNY
You don't know?

CASSIE

Yes. If he said we had sex. Which sounds like him.

SONNY

Bitch.

CASSIE

No, this is good. It's good news. I wasn't in love with Gary, so I'm not mad and I'm not going to tell the cops on you, okay?

SONNY

Don't talk to me like I'm ten. You think I'm stupid? You think you're the first woman to ever lie to me? (WOMAN'S VOICE) "No, you've got it all wrong... We didn't have sex...Nothing happened between us."

CASSIE

Nothing did happen between me and Gary.

SONNY

(YELLS) Don't call my friend a liar!

CASSIE

(YELLING BACK) You killed him!

SONNY

That was an accident! I TOLD YOU THAT ALREADY!

Sonny is shaking in anger. Cassie tries to compose herself. She needs to calm him down.

CASSIE

I know it was. I know that. I'm so sorry.

SONNY

I'm not ten, Cassie! I'M NOT A FUCKING CHILD!!

He grabs a huge kitchen knife from a drawer and points it at her chest.

SONNY

Sit down.

CASSIE

Okay.

Before she can sit, he pushes her down into a kitchen chair. He grabs a roll of duct tape and tapes her ankles to the chair legs. Then he uses the knife to slice the duct tape around her wrists. Cassie flinches.

Sonny slams the knife down on the kitchen island, pulls her arms behind her back, and duct tapes them each to the chair.

SONNY

I have to take the dog for a walk.

He walks over and opens the freezer. It's filled with hundreds of bags of frozen margarita mix. He holds one up.

SONNY

You need another one of these?

Cassie shakes her head. Sonny tosses it angrily back into the freezer.

SONNY

Whatever. (CALLING OUT) Lefty!

The golden retriever enters, wagging his tail feverishly.

SONNY

Scream if you want. There's not another occupied house for two or three cul-de-sacs. (TO DOG) Come on, buddy. Yeah, who's a good buddy?

EXT. SONNY'S DEVELOPMENT - GOLF COURSE - CONTINUOUS

Sonny stands on the unfinished golf course, hitting a tennis ball with a driver. His form is perfect. The ball soars off into the distance, Lefty sprinting after it.

As Sonny waits for the dog to return with the ball, his phone buzzes in his pocket. He takes it out and checks the caller ID, but doesn't answer.

He kicks angrily at a weed peeking out of the dirt.

INT. SONNY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Cassie eyes the knife that Sonny left sitting on top of the island. Its handle slightly overhangs the edge.

Her feet can touch the ground, and she manages to turn the chair around so that her back is to the knife.

The counter height is too high for her hands to reach. She has to try to knock the knife off.

Going up on her toes, she shoves the chair backwards. It knocks into the knife, which goes shooting across the island and falls off, clattering to the ground. But now Cassie has to make it all the way around to the other side.

As she starts the arduous journey, she hears a key in the front door. She freezes, then tries awkwardly to maneuver back to where Sonny had left her.

But it isn't Sonny who comes walking into the kitchen. It's a 30-something blonde woman in a pink Juicy track suit. Cassie recognizes her from some of the photos upstairs. It's Sonny's second ex-wife, VICKI.

VICKI

Who the fuck are you?

The front door opens and slams shut as Sonny comes sprinting in, followed by Lefty.

SONNY

What are you doing, Vick? You can't just let yourself in anymore.

VICKI

Me? What am I doing?

Sonny clenches his fists and closes his eyes. The stress of the situation is starting to overwhelm him.

SONNY

Oh, fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck.

VICKI

What is this?

CASSIE

(TO VICKI) Please call the police.

SONNY

Don't do that!

VICKI

Then tell me who she is!

SONNY

Okay, okay. There was an accident.

CASSIE

He killed somebody!

SONNY
(TO CASSIE) Shut up.

VICKI
You fucking killed someone?

SONNY
Gary.

VICKI
Gary the real estate guy?

SONNY
It was an accident. You know I
wouldn't ever hurt anybody.

Vicki laughs in disbelief.

VICKI
Are you crazy? If it was an
accident then--

SONNY
I AM NOT CRAZY!

CASSIE
Please help me.

SONNY
Look, I'm not going to hurt her. I
don't even know her. I just have
her... retained so I can make sure
she's not going to talk to anyone.
If she promises, I'll let her go.
(TO CASSIE) That's our deal, right?

Cassie looks at Sonny, then at Vicki.

CASSIE
Call the cops.

SONNY
(HURT, TO CASSIE) Why would you say
that?

VICKI
I can't be here.

Vicki starts for the door, but Sonny grabs her from behind.

SONNY
No.

VICKI

Fucking let me go, Sonny.

SONNY

You can't leave.

They struggle. Sonny has her in a bear hug. Vicki manages to kick him in the shins.

SONNY

Ahh!

He picks her up and throws her against one of the counters. Her back hits it with a wicked impact. She crumples to the floor. Sonny looks at Cassie, fire in his eyes.

SONNY

You're an evil little bitch. Thanks a lot!

EXT. SONNY'S DEVELOPMENT - DAY

We see a series of shots of the deserted development. Empty pools. Abandoned living rooms. A flyer taped to a street lamp reads "Recession 101: It's a Test, Not a Final."

INT. SONNY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Cassie is still duct-taped to the chair, but now Vicki is taped to a chair next to her. Sonny stands over them with his arms crossed.

VICKI

What are you gonna do, Sonny? If anything happens to me, you don't think you'll be the first person they look for?

SONNY

Nothing's gonna happen to you. But you're in this with me now. And if you try to back out, I'll tell everyone you were an accomplice.

VICKI

An accomplice you had to tie to a chair to keep her here!

SONNY

Prove it. Duct tape doesn't leave bruises.

VICKI

Where'd you get that from?

SONNY
It doesn't.

VICKI
Says who?

SONNY
It was on some reality show.

VICKI
Some reality show about kidnappers?

SONNY
Mythbusters. I don't know. Dirty
Jobs. Does it really fucking
matter?!

Sonny is getting agitated. He's playing with one of the
granite samples. Turning it over and over again in his hands.

SONNY
God! You pick and pick and pick.
But you're not my wife anymore,
remember? So that means I don't
have to listen to you.

VICKI
(SCOFFS) Because you always
listened so good before.

SONNY
Just shut up, okay? Here's the
plan. Our plan. (RE: CASSIE) We
kill her.

CASSIE
No.

SONNY
I'm not talking to you right now,
believe it or not. We get rid of
the body. Then we leave her keys in
her mailbox. (PROUD) Get it?

VICKI
How are you going to get rid of a
body?

SONNY
That's not the point. Just-- do you
see why it's perfect?

CASSIE
Sonny...

SONNY

(TO VICKI) Great. Good. Now she knows my name. Awesome. But it doesn't matter, because our plan is perfect, because every day in this town, people who are underwater on their homes just leave their keys in the mailbox and walk away. They disappear. The last thing anybody would suspect is, y'know... (UNDER HIS BREATH) murder.

VICKI

What if she's not underwater?

SONNY

She is. She told me. (PROUD) I got her to tell me.

VICKI

And you don't think somebody will miss her?

SONNY

Her boss is dead. No wedding ring. She told me she's single.

CASSIE

I have a daughter.

A beat.

SONNY

What?

CASSIE

I live with my daughter. Please...

SONNY

WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THAT!?

Vicki starts laughing at him.

VICKI

You're fucking unbelievable. Smart people don't get away with murder, Sonny. Rich people. So you, Mr. GED, I don't think you--

SONNY

Shut up.

VICKI

Okay. No, you're right. You've clearly got this situation under control.

SONNY

I didn't plan this. I'm just trying to make the best of a shitty situation.

VICKI

Oh, poor Sonny. He tries. He tries so hard. Who cares if he fucks everything up.

CASSIE

My daughter's only 13.

Sonny's not paying any attention to Cassie.

SONNY

I fuck everything up? That's bullshit. I always provided for you. We went to fucking Bermuda. I bought you a house.

VICKI

This house? The one they're about to take from you?

SONNY

Just leave me alone!

VICKI

How's the margarita mix business these days?

Suddenly and without warning, Sonny takes the granite sample in his hand and smashes Vicki in the face with it. The force of it knocks her chair over.

CASSIE

Oh my God.

Sonny leaps on top of his ex-wife, pummeling her face with the jagged stone. Blow after blow. Blood spurts everywhere, getting all over him. He's a man possessed. He continues to pound her face into pulp, long after it's clear she's dead.

Lefty is barking. Cassie struggles against her duct tape. Sonny finally stops, breathing heavily. He collapses on the ground in tears, then looks up at Cassie. His face is dripping with blood.

SONNY

Were you telling the truth?

CASSIE

About what?

SONNY

Do you have a daughter?

CASSIE

No.

Sonny looks upset. He looks down at Vicki. A dark red pool is slowly spreading from her head.

SONNY

So this was for nothing then?
Because you're a fucking liar?!

CASSIE

She's only 13.

Sonny looks at her, then nods. He stands up and walks out the door, dropping the bloody hunk of granite on the floor.

The door to the garage opens and slams shut. A car starts up. Cassie peaks over at the base of the kitchen island. The knife is still there, on the floor.

She starts maneuvering her chair over to it, except the pool of blood has now reached her feet. The floor is slick and sticky. The chair leg slips and Cassie falls forward.

CASSIE

Oh shit.

She slams face first into the ground. This time the screen does go black.

EXT. CASSIE'S HOUSE - LATER

Sonny pulls his SUV into Cassie's driveway. He's managed to wipe Vicki's blood off his face, but not his shirt. He double-checks the address on Cassie's license.

He approaches the house and rings the bell. After a beat, the door opens, chained from the inside. Morgan peers out.

MORGAN

Hello?

SONNY

Are you Cassie Francis's daughter?
(BEAT) You're so pretty.

MORGAN
What's going on?

SONNY
Your mom's been in a terrible car
accident. She sent me to get you.

Morgan looks at the blood on his shirt.

SONNY
We don't have a lot of time.

MORGAN
Hold on.

She takes out a cell phone and hits a speed-dial button. There's a ringing from Sonny's pocket. It's Cassie's phone. He takes it out, a little sheepishly.

SONNY
She gave it to me so I could call
you.

MORGAN
But you didn't call me.

A beat.

SONNY
In case I got lost. We really have
to go. Her life depends on it.

Morgan thinks about it for a second.

MORGAN
I'm gonna call my dad--

Even chained, the door is open wide enough for Sonny to reach his arm in and grab at Morgan's wrist. He misses, but manages to knock the cell phone out of her hand. It hits the floor and splinters into pieces.

Morgan screams and runs upstairs. Sonny tries to reach in and unlock the chain, to no avail. He thinks for a second, then walks around to the back of the house. Locating a sliding glass door, he uses Cassie's trick from the beginning of the movie and pops it off it's rail.

INT. SONNY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Cassie's eyes snap open. The chair is on it's side. Her head is resting in a pool of blood slowly seeping from the almost headless dead body next to her. Lefty laps at the blood hungrily.

Cassie looks for the knife. It's lying on the ground fifteen feet away. She tries to maneuver over to it, pushing with her tip-toes, but she's just spinning around in circles.

Thrusting her hips, she realizes that the cheap IKEA chair she's tied to is starting to break - the seat is pulling away from the back. She starts thrashing about, ripping the home-assembled chair apart, little by little.

Lefty saunters over to see what the commotion is. He starts licking at her face, leaving slimy, bloody streaks.

CASSIE
Stop, Lefty.

The dog keeps licking. He's being playful.

CASSIE
GET AWAY FROM ME!!

She head butts the dog, who jumps back, slipping and landing on his side in the puddle of blood. He pops back up and runs out of the room, his golden hair matted and red.

INT. CASSIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sonny tiptoes to the front hall of Cassie's house, where Morgan's cell phone lies on the ground in pieces. He picks up a cordless phone sitting on an end-table. He hears a dial tone, then stands there quietly, peering up the stairs.

Suddenly, there's beeping from the phone in his hands. Morgan is dialing out on another handset from somewhere in the house. 9-1... but just before she dials the second "1" Sonny manages to hit '9' on his handset.

He listens for a moment. After a beat of silence, he talks into the phone.

SONNY
(SOOTHING VOICE) 911. What's your emergency?

ANGLE ON: Morgan is in Cassie's bedroom, frantically rummaging through her mother's drawers, looking for something to protect herself with.

MORGAN
(WHISPERING) There's somebody in the house.

SONNY (V.O.)
Okay, an intruder. And you're at 84 Sunset Lane, is that right?

MORGAN
Yeah. Please come.

SONNY (V.O.)
And where are you right now?

MORGAN
I'm in my mom's room.

Morgan finds a box of condoms, a pack of cigarettes, and a plastic lighter hidden in her mom's underwear drawer. She makes a face and shoves the lighter into her back pocket.

ANGLE ON: Sonny, cupping his hand over his mouth so he can keep his voice from carrying upstairs.

SONNY
And where is that?

MORGAN (V.O.)
What?

SONNY
Specifically. Where in the house is it? So I know where to send the officers.

ANGLE ON: In the bedroom upstairs, Morgan stops what she's doing. She looks a little confused.

MORGAN
Upstairs. On the second floor.

SONNY
To the right or left, at the top the stairs.

MORGAN
The left. All the way at the end of the hall.

ANGLE ON: Downstairs, Sonny smiles, pleased with himself.

SONNY
Well okay then. You just stay where you are. Don't move. Someone will be there in a second.

He hangs up, then silently climbs the stairs, turning left at the top and walking to the closed door at the end of the hall. He puts his hand on the door knob, pauses for a second, then kicks the door open. It's not Cassie's bedroom.

Behind him, at the other end of the hall, Morgan throws open the actual door to Cassie's room and sprints out, heading for the stairs.

Sonny turns. His eyes go wide. She tricked him. He starts to run after her, but she has a head start. She's already at the stairs.

And then, for no good reason, Morgan trips over her own feet. She tumbles to the ground and face-plants on the wooden floor, her head bouncing painfully off the ground.

She groans and looks up at Sonny, now standing over her.

SONNY

What if your mom was really in a car accident? She could be dead by now.

INT. SONNY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Cassie is furiously jerking her body back and forth, up and down, slamming the chair against the tile floor. Finally, it comes apart into pieces.

Cassie is able to pull her hands free, though they're each still duct-taped to unwieldy pieces of chair. She rips the tape off her ankles and then her wrists.

She walks over, a little unsteady, and grabs the knife off the ground. She heads into the house.

INT. SONNY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Cassie hurries through the McMansion, looking everywhere.

CASSIE

Come on. Shit. Where the hell is a fucking phone?

She freezes when she hears the garage door open. She hurries back into the kitchen and bolts out the back door.

EXT. SONNY'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Cassie runs past the pool, through a gate in the back fence, and onto the unfinished golf course. She sprints out across the ocean of dirt without looking back.

A moment later, she comes to the edge of a ten foot drop - a "cliff" where desert winds and summer thunderstorms have eaten away at a hill of dirt. Cassie is able to stop just in time, but the loose dirt underfoot gives way.

As the ground crumbles beneath her, Cassie falls, landing awkwardly on her ankle and almost stabbing herself with the knife.

She swears, but gets up and keeps going, limping slightly.

INT. SONNY'S HOUSE - FRONT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Sonny enters the house, dragging Morgan by the wrist. Lefty scampers over to greet them, happily.

SONNY

Hey buddy. (TO MORGAN) This is Lefty. Named him after Phil Mickelson. He's not really a puppy anymore, but he still thinks he is.

Morgan looks down at Lefty. He's covered in blood.

SONNY

He likes it when you scratch his butt.

Sonny looks through the hallway into the kitchen. He spots the broken pieces of chair on the floor.

SONNY

Oh fuck.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - CONTINUOUS

Cassie is still running across the golf course when she comes to the nine foot tall, pink, concrete wall from the beginning of the movie. She looks right and left. The wall seems to encircle the entire development.

Cassie checks behind her. Seeing nobody, she drops her knife, then jumps up and grabs onto the top of the wall with her fingertips. She's able to pull herself up and swing one leg over. She takes a breath, then leaps down to the other side.

She looks out at the vast desert all around her. It's hot and big and empty. So she starts running along the outside of the wall, following it back around towards town.

INT. GUARD SHACK - LATER

Inside the guard shack at the entrance to Sonny's development, a pimply faced 18 year-old security guard named SHANE is playing a game on his iPhone. A Rottweiler lies at his feet, wheezing in the heat.

Cassie, bruised and sticky with blood and dust, knocks on the window behind him. Shane, startled, almost jumps out of his chair. He spins around, white as a ghost.

SHANE
Oh my God! What the fuck!

The dog is barking loudly and bearing it's teeth. Shane has to hold him back.

SHANE
Down. DOWN! (TO CASSIE) What's going on?

CASSIE
I need to use your phone.

SHANE
What for? Why?

CASSIE
There's been a murder.

SHANE
Holy shit. (THEN) They're not paying me.

CASSIE
What?

SHANE
They haven't paid me for, like, two months. I don't think I should have to do anything, y'know, dangerous because--

CASSIE
(SHARP) I need to use your goddamn phone!

EXT. SONNY'S DEVELOPMENT - MAIN GATE - LATER

Cassie crouches in a shadow by the front entrance to Sonny's gated community. A stone sign with gold metal letters reads "Welcome to the Las Casas de Oro Luxury Experience. Where Life Imitates Vacation."

Shane stands by the guard shack, staring warily into the development, his hand on his tazer. Cassie dials a number on the iPhone. She's sent straight to voicemail.

MORGAN (V.O.)

Hi, this is Morgan's cell phone. If you don't know what to do after the beep, I guess you're screwed.

CASSIE

Shit.

She hangs up and dials again.

MORGAN (V.O.)

Hi, this is Morgan's cell phone. If you don't know--

CASSIE

Shit!

She takes a deep breath, then dials a new number.

SCOTT (V.O.)

Hello?

CASSIE

Scott?

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Scott, Cassie's ex-husband, is on the couch next to his young, blonde, perky girlfriend KELSEY (24 and wearing a "Shut up and Sweat" tee-shirt). He's paying bills on a laptop while she watches "For the Love of Ray J" on VH1. She lies with her legs in the air, draped over the back of the couch.

SCOTT

Hey Cass, what's up? Who's number is this?

CASSIE (V.O.)

I borrowed it from some kid. I think something happened to Morgan.

Scott walks towards the kitchen to get away from the TV.

SCOTT

What?

There's a police siren from Cassie's end.

SCOTT

What's going on?

CASSIE (V.O.)

I'm not sure. The cops are here. I have to go. Can you come?

SCOTT
Of course. I'm coming. But tell me
what happened.

EXT. SONNY'S DEVELOPMENT - CONTINUOUS

A battered police SUV screeches to a halt in front of Cassie, siren blaring.

CASSIE
I'm at the Las Casas de Oro
development. Just get here. I don't
have my cell. I don't know where
I'll be.

SCOTT (V.O.)
Okay, but it's rush hour. It'll
take me forev--

CASSIE
I really need you, Scott.

She hangs up the phone.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

In the kitchen, Scott looks at his phone for a moment, then over at Kelsey who's now standing in the doorway.

KELSEY
Like, what did Princess want?

EXT. SONNY'S DEVELOPMENT - CONTINUOUS

COBURN, an older police officer, gets out of the car. He wears snake-skin boots, a cowboy hat, and has the creased, weather-beaten face of a sheriff from the Wild West.

COBURN
(TO SHANE) You called in a
homicide?

CASSIE
A guy in there has my daughter.
He's already killed two people.

COBURN
A man has your daughter? And
they're in there right now?

CASSIE
Yes. I think.

COBURN

You think he has your daughter or
you think they're in there right
now?

CASSIE

Both.

Coburn sizes her up thoughtfully.

COBURN

Okay. Now this--

Shane interrupts him, holding his hand out towards Cassie.

SHANE

Can I have my phone back?

CASSIE

What?

SHANE

My phone. My iPhone.

Cassie stares at him in disbelief.

SHANE

It cost, like, \$400.

CASSIE

Yes, you can have your iPhone back.

She hands it back to him.

SHANE

(POINTED) You're welcome.

Coburn smiles at Cassie, unfazed.

COBURN

Now this man you think has your
daughter, do you know him?

CASSIE

No, but his name is Sonny. I don't
know his last name.

COBURN

Do you know where Sonny lives?

CASSIE

I don't know the address. But I can
find it if we drive past.

COBURN

(TO SHANE) How many exits does this... "luxury experience" have.

SHANE

This is the gate. It's the only way in or out. Unless you, like, go over the wall.

COBURN

And do you know this Sonny?

SHANE

They stopped, like, paying me, like, months ago.

Cassie is getting agitated by the pace of this conversation.

CASSIE

(SNAPPING) So why are you still in uniform you little prick?!

Coburn takes off his sunglasses.

COBURN

Ma'am.

SHANE

Fuck you lady. If I work, like, a job all summer, my dad's buying me a truck. So I'm not fucking gonna quit.

COBURN

Did you know this Sonny before they (GENTLY MOCKING) like, stopped paying you?

SHANE

I don't know any of these assholes. Do you think any of them know my name?

Cassie closes her eyes, trying to contain her anger.

CASSIE

Oh my God.

COBURN

Would it be asking too much for you to look it up on that PC of yours?

SHANE

No, okay. Whatever.

He types something into a computer. Then something else.

SHANE
We don't have a "Sonny."

COBURN
Might be a nickname.

CASSIE
He did business with my boss. If
you send backup, they could pull
the name from the computer.

COBURN
There's no backup, Ma'am.

CASSIE
Why? Why not?

COBURN
The entire Harding police force is
already on the case.

He gestures to himself with his thumb.

CASSIE
Are you kidding me?

COBURN
Four years ago, this was a small
agricultural community. 800 people
plus 300 illegals. We weren't even
incorporated.

CASSIE
And in four years of massive
population growth, nobody thought
it might be a good idea to expand
the police force to, I don't know,
two fucking people?!

COBURN
Do you know how long it takes a
state task force to perform a
(MOCKING THE JARGON) mandatory
study necessary to establish proper
levels for allocation of
supplemental government services?

CASSIE
(THROUGH GRITTED TEETH) Four years?

COBURN

Three. 'Cept by the time they were finished, you people were suddenly fleeing just as fast as you came. So they ordered a new study.

CASSIE

So what are we gonna do?

COBURN

You said where you could find where he lives?

Cassie nods. Coburn puts his sunglasses back on.

COBURN

Then hi ho silver.

INT. SCOTT'S CAR - LATER

The convertible is stopped in traffic on a freeway onramp leaving Phoenix. Scott is getting frustrated. A Katy Perry song plays on the radio. Kelsey sings along to herself.

KELSEY

...you change your mind, like a girl changes clothes. Yeah you PMS, like a bitch, I would know...

SCOTT

(IRRITATED) Where are all these people going?!

He snaps the radio off. Kelsey shoots him a huffy look.

SCOTT

I'm sorry. Just... stress.

KELSEY

We can't, like, call Cassie and ask what's going on?

SCOTT

She doesn't have her phone.

KELSEY

And she only had five seconds to talk?

SCOTT

I don't know. She had to go.

KELSEY

Like, who calls someone up and say there's this huge emergency and then, like, doesn't give any details and stops answering their phone?

SCOTT

The cops came. I'm sure it was serious.

KELSEY

Whatever. It's always serious when she needs your help.

Scott looks at her wearily. They've had this fight before.

SCOTT

My daughter is in trouble.

KELSEY

I know. And you have to go, obviously. But if something's wrong, it's, like, mean of her to not tell us anything. And if nothing's wrong, then it's, like, mean of her to scare us like this.

SCOTT

You don't seem all that scared.

KELSEY

Scared of what?! Are we, like, just supposed to sit here in silence, looking sad?

She makes an exaggerated pouty face. Scott sighs and looks out the window. They sit silently for a long beat. Then Kelsey reaches down and turns the radio back on.

KELSEY

(SINGING) Cuz you're hot then you're cold, you're yes then you're no...

INT. POLICE SUV - LATER

Cassie and Coburn drive through Sonny's development.

COBURN

How many of these houses have people living in them?

CASSIE
Maybe one in ten.

Coburn grunts disapprovingly as he eyes the enormous houses.

COBURN
Privacy. Isn't that what they came for?

Cassie really doesn't want to have this conversation, she's studying the houses, looking for Sonny's.

CASSIE
I think it's down one of these streets.

Coburns reads passing street signs, disdainfully.

COBURN
Bee Balm Road? Whispering Wind Lane? Pink Savory Way?

He looks at Cassie, who's not amused.

COBURN
Ma'am, if someone has your daughter, we'll find her. I promise you that.

CASSIE
Turn here.

Coburn turns onto a street that dead ends in a cul-de-sac.

CASSIE
There. On the left.

Cassie points to a big, gray McMansion. Coburn pulls over.

COBURN
How can you tell? They're all identical.

He's right. The other houses have all been built from the exact same plan.

CASSIE
The lawn's green.

COBURN
We saw other green lawns.

CASSIE

But not right on the golf course--
Look, I'm a real estate agent. I've
showed houses in here. I know my
way around.

COBURN

(NODS) You wait here.

He gets out of the SUV. Cassie does too.

CASSIE

I'm coming with you.

Coburn looks at her for a beat.

COBURN

Stay ten paces back.

CASSIE

Paces?

Coburn unholsters his handgun and approaches the front door silently. Cassie tiptoes behind him.

CASSIE

(WHISPERS) He has a lot of guns.

COBURN

That's alright. (SMILES) So do I.

With one swift motion, he kicks in the front door. The shoddy construction gives little resistance. The front foyer is quiet and empty.

COBURN

Hello?

There's no answer.

COBURN

(TO CASSIE) Wait out there.

Cassie stays put. Coburn steps silently into the house, gun drawn. He's done this sort of thing before. Coburn surveys his surroundings, then leans cautiously into the living room.

Suddenly, a middle aged WOMAN pops out from the other side of the wall and pepper sprays him in the face. Acting on pure reflex, Coburn pulls the trigger, shooting her in the chest. She exhales sharply, like somebody being punched.

WOMAN

Ooff.

She falls to her knees. Coburn is already on the ground, hunched over and clawing at his red, swollen eyes.

COBURN
Godammit. Godammit! Who did I
shoot?!

Cassie comes running in. She freezes when she sees the furniture in the living room.

CASSIE
This isn't the house.

COBURN
You said you could tell! You're a
goddamn real estate agent!

CASSIE
All these units look exactly the
same!

The woman slumps over on the ground. She looks up at Cassie through glazed eyes. Blood pools in the corner of her mouth.

CASSIE
Oh my God.

COBURN
Did I kill her?

CASSIE
No. Shit. I don't think so. But we
have to get my daughter. Shit. I'll
call an ambulance, you just-- Can
we-- shit!

Coburn is kneeling now, rubbing his eyes.

COBURN
Hold on. Just hold on. I reckon I
can still see.

He blinks. Then blinks again.

COBURN
God in Heaven. I've never been--

There's a gunshot from out of nowhere. A bullet rips through Coburn's head. He's dead before he hits the ground. Cassie stumbles backwards. She looks up at the front door to see Sonny standing there, holding a handgun.

SONNY
Wow. That was really loud.

He looks down at Cassie.

SONNY

You drove right past my house. I couldn't believe it. I mean, who even lives here?

He looks down at the woman lying on the ground. She's not breathing.

SONNY

Oh. (THEN) See? Other people kill people too. Shit happens, right?

CASSIE

Where's my daughter?

Sonny walks over and points his gun right at her.

SONNY

I was bringing her back to you so we could work something out. But now, since you lied to me about not going to the cops...

CASSIE

If you've hurt her, I swear I'll--

SONNY

(TOUGH GUY) You'll what? What're you gonna do, Cassie?!

Sonny raises the handgun up over his head in a violent backswing. He's about to bring the butt of the gun down on Cassie's head when he freezes.

SONNY

Oh crap.

He winces in pain and grabs the small of his back with his other arm. The gun hand is still raised.

SONNY

My back, my back, my back. Oh fuck.

Cassie eyes the gun lying on the ground in Coburn's stiff hand. It's maybe seven feet away.

SONNY

Oh god, oh god. This is not good.
Fuck!

Cassie inches towards Coburn's body. Sonny sees her.

SONNY

Uh uh. Don't even think it.

He points the gun at her, though the act of bringing it down obviously causes him considerable pain.

SONNY

I can still, ow--motherfucker! I
can still end this.

He stands there for a long beat, aiming the gun right at her forehead.

SONNY

Shit. This is gonna screw up
everything.

He drops the gun to his side.

SONNY

I guess I need your help. Welcome
to Team Sonny.

INT. WOMAN'S HOUSE - GARAGE

They enter the woman's garage. Sonny hobbles stiffly behind Cassie, his gun in her back. He grimaces with each step.

SONNY

Ow. Ow. Ow. Ow. Ow.

There's an enormous red Chevy Suburban parked in one spot and a jet-ski on a trailer in the other.

SONNY

Open the garage door.

Cassie locates the control panel. She presses a button and the garage door opens.

SONNY

Catch.

She turns just as he tosses a set of keys at her. She catches them, then looks down. They're covered in blood. The key-chain has a small pepper-spray canister attached to it. It came from the dead woman's hands.

CASSIE

What do I do with these?

SONNY

You're driving.

Cassie looks at him questioningly.

SONNY

Back her out, park her on the street, pull the cop car in. Can't leave that baby sitting out there in plain sight, and my fucking back can't take it. Getting in and out of cars is the worst.

CASSIE

Okay.

SONNY

You thinking about driving off without me?

CASSIE

I promise I wouldn't--

SONNY

I'm not interested in your promises anymore.

CASSIE

But--

SONNY

Trusting people is what got me into this fucking mess. So just know this: if you drive off, I'll kill your daughter. I'll make her suffer, then I'll slit her goddamn throat.

CASSIE

How do I know you even have her?

SONNY

Big girl, isn't she?

There's a beat. Cassie nods. Sonny's phone buzzes in his pocket. He looks down at it.

SONNY

Oh, hey, this is my son. I'm gonna take this. (ANSWERING) What's up Buddy? (THEN) You did? That's super awesome.

Cassie gets into the Suburban and puts it into reverse. Sonny watches, pointing the gun at her with one hand, holding the phone with the other.

SONNY
(INTO PHONE) Well I promised I
would, didn't I? (BEAT) I'll buy
the tickets today.

Cassie backs out and parks on the street. Before turning off the car, she looks over at Sonny. He's walked out to the edge of the garage, still talking on the phone.

He looks up at Cassie and gives her a throat slit gesture.

Cassie turns the engine off. In doing so, she tests the pepper spray container on the key-chain. Nothing comes out. She leaves the keys in the ignition and gets out.

INT. SCOTT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Scott and Kelsey are sitting in bumper-to-bumper traffic on the freeway. Scott is agitated. Kelsey cups her hand in front of her face and breathes, trying to smell her own breath.

KELSEY
Do we have mints?

She checks the cup-holders then opens the glove compartment.

KELSEY
OMG.

She pulls out a small .22 caliber pistol.

KELSEY
I thought you, like, never ever
wanted to see me with this ever.

SCOTT
I don't.

He takes it from her and shoves it back into the glove compartment.

KELSEY
I, like, grew up shooting. You're
the one who's, like, never even
fired a gun.

SCOTT
I know.

KELSEY
So why can't I hold it?

SCOTT
Because I said so.

KELSEY

Please?

SCOTT

No.

KELSEY

Pretty please?

SCOTT

No.

KELSEY

I'll give you a blow job.

Scott just looks at her. She crosses her arms.

KELSEY

(POUTY) It's my gun. (THEN) Why did you even bring it?

SCOTT

I don't know. Cassie doesn't usually sound scared like that. So just-- in case, I guess.

KELSEY

In case you need to gun some motherfucker down.

SCOTT

In case I need to protect my family.

(BEAT) My daughter.

KELSEY

You never even told me where you hid the bullets.

Scott gestures to the back of the car with his thumb.

SCOTT

In the trunk.

KELSEY

What? You know they could go off back there if it gets hot enough.

SCOTT

Really?

KELSEY

(GIGGLING) No. You're such a dork.
(THEN) God help us if you actually
have to shoot somebody.

INT. SONNY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Sonny leads Cassie into the living room. Morgan is lying on the couch, bound with duct tape.

MORGAN

Mom?

CASSIE

Morgan. Oh my God.

She goes over to her daughter. Sonny leans against a wall in obvious pain.

CASSIE

Are you hurt, sweetie?

MORGAN

Why is this happening?

CASSIE

It's gonna be okay.

MORGAN

How?! Where's dad.

CASSIE

Dad's not here. He's not coming.

MORGAN

Why not?

Cassie glances at Sonny.

CASSIE

I didn't want to call him.

SONNY

Look, here's the deal. We need to wait 'til it's dark. Probably another hour. So lets all sit, make believe we're friends, and watch some TV, okay?

CASSIE

What are we waiting for?

SONNY

Let's just watch TV.

He picks up a remote and turns the TV on. He navigates the DVR menu to HBO.

SONNY
How about Australia?

No response from Morgan or Cassie. Sonny shrugs.

SONNY
Kind of a chick flick.

He turns it on. The movie plays for a beat. Nicole Kidman stares into the thoughtful eyes of an aboriginal boy.

SONNY
(RE: TV) Great picture, right?
(THEN) You should see a Blu-Ray.

INT. SONNY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

They're all watching a Blu-Ray of Troy. Cassie and Morgan are on the couch, both bound with duct tape. Sonny lies on the floor, flat on his back. Next to him is his gun, a little orange bottle of pain medication, and his cell phone. It rings. He sits up, stiffly.

SONNY
There we go, feeling a little better.

He checks the caller ID on his phone but decides not to answer. He looks out the window. It's totally dark out.

SONNY
Let's hit the golf course.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - LATER

It's pitch black on the unfinished golf course. Cassie and Morgan are struggling to carry the body of Vicki, Sonny's ex-wife. Morgan has the feet. Cassie has the shoulders. What little remains of Vicki's head dangles limply from her neck. Two shovels rest precariously on the body.

Sonny walks behind them, a gun in one hand and a huge, police-grade Maglite in the other.

SONNY
Bodies are heavy, right? Sorry to make you carry her, but I can't risk it with my back. One time I was in bed for eight days from tying my shoes.

Walking backwards, Morgan trips over an exposed irrigation pipe. She stumbles and lets Vicki go, landing on her hands and knees. The body and shovels tumble to the ground.

SONNY
Jesus H. Christ.

Cassie kneels down beside her daughter.

CASSIE
Are you okay sweetie?

Sonny shines the flashlight on Morgan's face. Tears are streaming down it. Sonny sighs.

SONNY
Well I guess this seems like a good enough place.

CASSIE
For what?

SONNY
Haven't you ever seen a movie?
You're gonna dig me a grave.

CASSIE
(RE: VICKI'S BODY) Just for her?

SONNY
Her and Gary. The cop can stay where he is. (BEAT) Unless you think someone else is gonna end up dead.

Cassie doesn't say anything.

SONNY
Oh come on, Cassie. Have a little faith in me. My back is royally fucked. I can't dig. I can't carry bodies. You're doing me a big favor.

Cassie looks down at the gun, then back to him.

SONNY
And your reward for that favor is that I won't kill you.

He gestures back and forth with the flashlight.

SONNY
Now get digging.

Cassie lifts her shovel and starts digging. Sonny pops off the top of the Maglite and attaches it to the bottom, exposing the bulb. It creates a broad area of light.

SONNY
Candle mode. Cool, right?

He puts it on the ground by his feet. Morgan isn't digging.

SONNY
You too, kid.

Morgan looks tearfully at Cassie.

CASSIE
(TO SONNY) She's a child.

SONNY
Right, and children can't be expected to do anything anymore. Do you know I had a job when I was ten?

CASSIE
(SHARPLY) She's scared.

MORGAN
Mom, it's okay.

SONNY
See mom, it's okay.

Morgan starts to dig, but she's bad at it. The shovel doesn't get very far into the ground, and doesn't come up with much.

There's a strong gust of wind. Dirt blows everywhere.

SONNY
Goddamn hot wind. I never get used to it.

Cassie says nothing. She just keeps digging.

SONNY
So, just ballpark, how long do you think this is gonna take?

CASSIE
I don't know. I've never dug a grave before.

SONNY
Have I? I'm just saying, twenty minutes? Forty?

CASSIE

How long does it take in the movies?

SONNY

They always cut away.

Cassie and Morgan continue to dig. We don't cut away.

SONNY

(IMPATIENTLY) What's the girl's name again?

CASSIE

Morgan.

SONNY

Do you think you could dig just a little faster, Morgan?

Morgan is already a little out of breath.

MORGAN

I'm going as fast as I can.

SONNY

I think we both know that's not true.

Morgan tries to dig faster. It's a little spastic. Cassie tries to calm her.

CASSIE

Just do the best you can, sweetie.

SONNY

No, see, no. That's the attitude that probably got her into this... shape.

CASSIE

I'll dig. You leave her the hell alone!

SONNY

(MOCKING) She's fat, but it's not her fault. She just got that way randomly. And it's awesome if she tries to lose weight, but it's also awesome if she doesn't. No judgment. Do the best you can, sweetie.

Throughout all of this, Morgan has been digging faster and faster. She's not getting much dirt out, but she's moving quickly. Too quickly. She's seems a bit crazed.

CASSIE
It's okay, baby, it's okay. Stop.

Morgan starts to cry. She crumples to the dirt, sobbing and panting. Then she throws up.

SONNY
Jesus.

CASSIE
(SHARP, TO SONNY) I told you to leave her alone.

SONNY
Well that's the miscommunication here, because I have a gun, so you don't tell me--

Sonny's cell phone rings.

SONNY
Jesus. (RE: PHONE) These guys really don't give up. You have to admire that, don't you?

He sends it to voicemail.

SONNY
Anyway, I just thought you might want baby here to get a little exercise.

His phone rings again.

SONNY
Seriously?

He sends it to voicemail.

SONNY
I've had to change this number, like, eight times. I don't even know what it is anymore.

The phone rings again. He sends it to voicemail.

SONNY
(ANGRY) God. Leave me alone. (AT CASSIE) How much longer?!

CASSIE

I don't know. Two hours? Three?

They look down at the modest hole in the ground.

SONNY

You'll be done in an hour and a half. I don't care how you do it.

CASSIE

How am I going to do it except by shoveling?

SONNY

(SHARP) Ninety minutes.

Cassie, still looking at the hole, notices a bit of white PVC pipe peeking out of the dirt. It's the irrigation pipe Morgan had tripped on earlier.

CASSIE

I'll do the best I can.

Cassie resumes digging. Sonny's phone rings again. He looks exasperated. As he looks down, Cassie raises her shovel high, then brings the point down on the pipe as hard as she can. Water explodes out of it, spraying in every direction.

SONNY

Whoa--

Before Sonny can react, Cassie swings her shovel towards him, releasing it so it goes flying. It misses him, but he ducks and the sudden movement sends pain shooting from his back.

SONNY

Ahhh! Fucker.

As Sonny doubles over in pain, Cassie lunges for the flashlight on the ground, knocking it over and shattering the bulb. Darkness envelopes them.

There are running footsteps, rustling clothes, a thump, and a gunshot. The flash from the gun briefly illuminates Sonny. Then there's nothing but blackness and the sound of rushing water.

Sonny, hunched over awkwardly, fumbles with his cell-phone and tries to use it as a flashlight. He can only see two feet in front of him. He spins around, disoriented.

SONNY

Shit.

The camera tracks back into the darkness and down one of the "cliffs" we saw Cassie tumble off of earlier. She and Morgan are now crouching, hiding against the base of it. The cliff is ten feet high and more eroded at the bottom than the top, so they're shielded from above by an dirt overhang. If Sonny were to walk over and peer down the side, he wouldn't see them beneath him.

Cassie has her hand over her daughter's mouth.

CASSIE
(WHISPERS) Shhh.

Sonny is completely turned around. He can't hear anything but the sound of the water. He stares off into the blackness.

SONNY
(SHOUTING) Cassie! Why are you doing this? I told you I was gonna let you live!

Cassie and Morgan look at each other, silently.

SONNY
(SHOUTING) Okay, fuck it, now you're dead. You and your fat slob of a daughter are fucking dead!

His phone rings.

SONNY
Leave me alone! Leave me alone!
Leave me alone!

He answers violently.

SONNY
(INTO PHONE) Look, you prick, if I had the money, I'd pay you! I'm not a crook! You think I don't know how much I owe? You think I need somebody to call me every five seconds to remind me?! It's all I think about! Every minute of every fucking day! Your job is to scare me, make me feel shitty? Well I feel plenty shitty and scared on my own, so you can just LEAVE! ME!
ALONE!

He hurls the phone off into the night, back in the direction of the houses. It lands in the dirt, the light from it's screen still visible off in the distance. Sonny takes a deep breath.

SONNY
Shit.

He walks off after it, slowly and painfully. Cassie breathes a silent sigh of relief and removes her hand from Morgan's mouth. But above them, the geyser from the irrigation pipe has formed a huge pool of water. Under the weight of it, the dirt overhang gives way.

CASSIE
What--

She barely has time to stand up halfway before an avalanche of dirt falls on her head. It comes down all around them.

We cut wide. Where Cassie and Morgan had been crouching, there's now just a pile of dirt.

INT. SCOTT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Scott and Kelsey are exiting the highway at the Harding exit. Kelsey has the GPS unit out.

KELSEY
Now where?

SCOTT
She said to go to the... one of the developments. Shit. The something... something Spanish.

KELSEY
Okay. But what do I put in the GPS?

SCOTT
I don't remember.

KELSEY
Like, seriously?

There's a gas station on the other side of the street. Scott jerks on the wheel and makes a dangerous U-turn. Kelsey is thrown back against her seat.

KELSEY
Jesus.

INT. DIRT PILE - CONTINUOUS

Pitch blackness. We can't see anything. All we can hear is Morgan breathing heavily.

CASSIE (V.O.)
Oh my God. Morgan?

MORGAN (V.O.)
Mom?

CASSIE (V.O.)
Are you okay? Can you breathe?

MORGAN (V.O.)
Wait, hold on.

There's a rustle, then the sound of Morgan trying to spark a plastic lighter. On the third attempt a flame appears. It sheds light on the scene.

They're buried alive.

Morgan lies on the ground. Cassie leans over her, bent at the waist, her arms up by her face. She props up a ceiling of dirt with her head, arms and back -- like Atlas with the world on his shoulders. It creates a tiny cave: an air pocket between mother and daughter. All around them is dirt.

Cassie tries to push up with her back, but the weight of the dirt pressing down on her is too much. She dips her head and shoulders to try to get more force, but all that does is bring more dirt down on them. Some falls into Morgans mouth.

MORGAN
Oh, ffhha... ugg.

Morgan lets the lighter go out. It's completely black again.

CASSIE (V.O.)
Morgan!

Morgan relights it, though it takes several attempts.

MORGAN
Are we trapped?

CASSIE
I don't know.

MORGAN
Yell for help.

CASSIE
No, what if he--

But Morgan is already screaming at the top of her lungs.

MORGAN
Help! HELP! HELLLPPP! HELLLLLP!

We cut outside the cave. With the thick wall of dirt surrounding them, you can't hear their screams at all.

INT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Scott approaches the counter as a young, Mexican ATTENDANT looks up from his magazine.

ATTENDANT

What's up, man?

SCOTT

Hey. I'm looking for a housing development around here. One of the gated communities.

ATTENDANT

Which one?

SCOTT

I don't remember. That's the problem. I know it's something Spanish.

ATTENDANT

The developments all have Mexican names. (SMILES) And no Mexicans living in them.

SCOTT

I guess they just think it sounds fancy.

ATTENDANT

Because what says fancy like Mexico?

The attendant grins at his own joke. Scott's look says he's not in the mood for banter.

SCOTT

How many developments are there?

ATTENDANT

Nine or ten. Was it something "de Oro"?

SCOTT

Yes! Yeah, totally.

ATTENDANT

There's five of them. Villa de Oro,
La Costa de Oro, Las Casas de Oro,
Rancho de Oro, and... (THINKING) wait
for it... Vista de Oro.

Scott blinks at him in disbelief. The attendant shrugs.

ATTENDANT

Used to be gold mining country.

INT. DIRT CAVE - CONTINUOUS

Cassie is still holding up the dirt ceiling. Morgan is freaking out, hyperventilating.

CASSIE

Calm down baby. Calm down. I'm gonna get us out of here.

MORGAN

We're buried alive. We're gonna die.

CASSIE

I just need to think.

Cassie closes her eyes. Then she reopens them. A strand of her hair, hanging down over her face, is blowing slightly. There's a breeze in there.

CASSIE

Wind.

MORGAN

What?

CASSIE

Hold the light by the wall.

Morgan holds the lighter up against the back wall of the tiny cave, the original cliff face they had been hiding against.

There's a small round hole - the opening to a tunnel. Cassie moves her head slightly, maneuvering so her mouth is right by the hole. More dirt rains down from the ceiling onto Morgan.

MORGAN

Mom!

Cassie feels the breeze on her face.

CASSIE

It goes outside. We have air.

MORGAN
Yell out it for help!

CASSIE
No, it means we don't have to
panic. We're not gonna suffocate.
We can at least wait to make sure
he's gone.

Cassie puts her mouth right up to the hole and inhales.

CASSIE
Just take deep brea-- aggh. Uchh--

Cassie gags and jerks her head back. A desert squirrel (halfway between a chipmunk and a gray squirrel) pokes its head out of the hole. The flame from the lighter reflects off its beady black eyes. Morgan freaks out.

MORGAN
Ahhhh!

The squirrel jumps down onto her. She lets the lighter go out as she tries to get it off. In the darkness, the only sound is of Morgan screaming.

CASSIE (V.O.)
Morgan, the lighter.

MORGAN (V.O.)
Ah! AHHH! Ah! AhHH!

CASSIE (V.O.)
The lighter!

Morgan is thrashing around in the blackness.

MORGAN (V.O.)
Mom! Ew! Mom! There's two.

CASSIE (V.O.)
I can't see! Use the lighter.

Morgan tries to strike the lighter. It takes four attempts. When there's finally a flame, another squirrel is making its way out of the hole. It jumps down onto Morgan. It's followed by another squirrel. Then another.

CASSIE
Oh god.

The squirrels keep coming. An endless stream. The small cave is filling up with them - a writhing, teeming mass of fur and claws. Twenty squirrels. Then thirty.

CASSIE
Cover your face.

The lighter goes out. Morgan relights it. The hand with the lighter, held aloft, is now the only part of her that's visible. The rest of her is buried in squirrels. Her screams are lost in the cacophony of squeaking and clawing.

CASSIE
Get away from her!

Cassie tries to kick at them, but the squirrels just keep pouring out of the hole. There must be fifty of them now, jammed into the tiny space.

Morgan is struggling to hold the lighter aloft above the rising tide of squirrels. It goes out and she lights it again. She gets it on the first try this time, but she also lights a strand of Cassie's hair on fire.

As the flames spread up towards Cassie's face, she screams. Several of the squirrels catch fire as well. Their fur burns with brilliant orange flames.

Cassie pulls her hands down to slap at the flames. Removing her hands causes the roof to completely cave in. Dirt comes down all around them. The screen goes black.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - CONTINUOUS

We cut outside the collapsed dirt mound. Everything is still. After what feels like an eternity, a squirrel comes burrowing through the dirt, poking its head out and scampering away.

Suddenly another squirrel appears, burrowing a different hole. Then another. Then another. They're streaming out of the dirt pile like rats fleeing a sinking ship.

Finally, with the mound weakened by all the holes, Cassie is able to stand up, emerging from the dirt like a zombie rising from the grave. She stumbles backward, gasping for air, and lands on her back.

She immediately runs back to the dirt pile, digging for Morgan. She finds her daughter's hand and pulls her out. The two of them collapse in a heap, panting and gagging.

From all around them, squirrels continue to burrow out of the dirt and flee into the night.

EXT. VISTA DE ORO - FRONT GATE - CONTINUOUS

Scott and Kelsey pull up to the guard station of the Vista De Oro. It looks incredibly similar to all the other developments we've seen. A GUARD stops them.

GUARD

(DRY) Hello and welcome to Vista De Oro. A great place to call home.

SCOTT

Hey. Was there a woman here who called the police and they showed up? Like maybe two hours ago?

GUARD

Nope.

SCOTT

Are you sure? She might have had a teenage gi--

GUARD

Man, this job is boring as shit. I can tell you, to the minute, exactly what time the mail-guy showed up today. I'm not gonna forget the cops coming.

SCOTT

I'm just trying to--

GUARD

12:52.

SCOTT

(BEAT) Okay, thank you.

GUARD

(DRYLY) No, thank you for visiting Vista De Oro. A great place to call home.

Scott backs up and turns the car around.

KELSEY

So what, like, Cassie made a mistake?

SCOTT

She didn't make a mistake, I just forgot what she said.

KELSEY

But I thought the gas station guy
told you--

SCOTT

I didn't know every development
would have the exact same name!

They drive in tense silence for a moment.

SCOTT

It's my fault, not Cassie's.

KELSEY

I know. Nothing's ever her fault.

SCOTT

I didn't listen. I fucked up! I
made a mistake!

There's a moment of silence. Kelsey looks at him. Her eyes
start to well with tears.

KELSEY

Do you like her more than me?

SCOTT

Are you thirteen?

KELSEY

Do you?

SCOTT

You really want to have this
conversation right now?

KELSEY

I just feel like you don't even
like me. And then Cassie calls and
you jump right in the car and--
like, do you still love her?

SCOTT

First, this is about my daughter,
okay, not you. Or Cassie. Second,
love isn't... we were married for a
long time. You don't have any
complicated feelings for your exes?

Kelsey is crying now.

KELSEY

No.

SCOTT

That's because you're 23. Your last boyfriend was named Reno.

KELSEY

So I'll understand when I'm older?
Awesome. Thanks, Dad.

SCOTT

The age thing with us is hard,
okay?

KESLEY

Like, yeah! You think I want to go to bed at 10:30? You think I liked telling my parents how old you were? You think I know what to do with a thirteen year old daughter?!

SCOTT

What do you want me to say?

KELSEY

Like, seriously? I want you to say no. I don't still love her. What else would I want you to say?

There's a long pause.

SCOTT

No. I don't still love her.

They drive in silence past a billboard reminding you that melting down pennies is a federal crime.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - CONTINUOUS

Cassie and Morgan hurry across the golf course. They're dripping wet, having washed most of the dirt off in the water from the irrigation pipe. Morgan clutches her side, cramping badly. She's breathing hard, but also exaggerating a little.

CASSIE

(WHISPERING) Come on, baby, it's okay. Look. You did it. Look.

They've reached the the big pink wall surrounding the development. The one Cassie scaled earlier. They're near a few McMansions again. The street lamps shed some light on the scene, though the houses are still dark and silent.

CASSIE

We're almost safe.

Cassie struggles to pull herself up onto the wall the same way as before. She swings her leg up, straddling the top, then reaches down for Morgan.

CASSIE
Give me your hand.

Cassie takes Morgan's hand and tries to pull her up. But the girl is too heavy and Cassie isn't strong enough. Morgan is pulling her mother off the wall.

CASSIE
Hold on, hold on.

Cassie lets go. Morgan falls, and even though it's just a foot, she lands awkwardly on her ankle. She collapses to the ground and starts to snivel. Cassie holds out her hand again.

CASSIE
Here, Morgan.

Morgan doesn't take it.

CASSIE
(SHARP) Morgan!

MORGAN
(PETULANT) What? You can't lift my fat ass.

CASSIE
Please, sweetie, just give me your hand.

MORGAN
I want Dad.

CASSIE
I'm getting us out of here, but I need you to give me your hand.

MORGAN
I had squirrels in my mouth!

CASSIE
Morgan get up.

MORGAN
I can't. I'm too tired. I'm lazy, remember. I hate exercise.

CASSIE

Morgan, I'm not nagging you right now. A man out there is trying to kill us!

MORGAN

I want Dad.

CASSIE

Stop saying that.

MORGAN

I want Dad.

CASSIE

(YELLS) What is Dad gonna do?!

Cassie realizes how loud that was. Her voice echoes off something in the distance. She stares nervously into the silent blackness all around them.

MORGAN

He makes fun of Kelsey all the time. Behind her back.

CASSIE

Your dad does lots of things behind people's backs.

MORGAN

I know he had intercourse with someone else.

A beat.

MORGAN

He said it was his fault and that I should be pissed at him, not you.

CASSIE

He shouldn't have told you anything.

MORGAN

I think you should forgive him. I really want you to.

A beat. Cassie sighs.

CASSIE

If I told you that I think about it every single day, will you please stand up?

Just then, a gun shot rings out from somewhere in the night. Not that close, but not that far off either. As Cassie looks out from her perch atop the wall, something catches her eye. They're right by the house where Sonny shot the policeman. She can tell from the red Suburban parked on the street.

CASSIE

Screw this. I got a better idea.

INT. SUV - MOMENTS LATER

Cassie opens the door to the Suburban and reaches for the keys in the ignition. They're still there, still sticky with blood.

As Morgan hustles to the passenger side, Cassie starts the engine. She peels out, speeding towards the end of the cul-de-sac. She swings around in the opposite direction.

CASSIE

Here we go.

They turn right at the first intersection.

CASSIE

It's gonna be okay, baby.

As she says this, she realizes the street they turned onto dead-ends in another cul-de-sac.

CASSIE

Whoops.

She turns the car around and heads in the opposite direction. Where she had turned right before, she goes the other direction. But after a few moments, that street ends in a cul-de-sac, too.

CASSIE

Where's the main street?

She takes the cul-de-sac curve going 35. The tires squeal. The whole thing threatens to tip.

MORGAN

Mom!

CASSIE

I'm getting us getting out of here.

She speeds back in the opposite direction, then comes to a stop at a main drag. She looks right and left. Nothing but big, empty houses in both directions. She decides to go left.

CASSIE
I think this way.

After a moment, they hit another cul-de-sac.

CASSIE
God dammit!

INT. SCOTT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Scott and Kelsey pull up to the Costa de Oro development. The gates are locked.

The sign reads: "The Costa de Oro. A luxurious residential community featuring intimate botanical gardens, walking trails, and tranquil lakes. Coming Spring 2008." A happy couple holds hands while gazing out on a computer generated rendering of a swan-laden lake.

Inside is just an unfinished construction zone.

SCOTT
Strike two.

He puts the car into reverse.

KELSEY
Are you sure?

SCOTT
I'm not sure about anything.

KELSEY
Yeah, like, I'm definitely getting that sense.

They drive off silently.

SCOTT
I still love her.

Kelsey looks hurt.

SCOTT
It has nothing to do with you--

KELSEY
(SHARP) Lets just find your daughter. That's what this is about.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Cassie and Morgan are hurtling around a corner in the red Suburban. Suddenly the main gain is in front of them, just 400 feet away.

CASSIE
Oh thank god.

A light is on in the guard shack and the gate arm is down. Cassie guns the engine.

MORGAN
Mom. The gate.

CASSIE
We're not stopping.

The security guard steps out of the booth, into their path.

CASSIE
(YELLING) Out of the way!

He doesn't blink. Instead he calmly points a handgun at them.

CASSIE
What--

Peering over the barrel of the gun is not the pimply faced kid from earlier. It's Sonny. The guard's uniform is three sizes too small on him.

CASSIE
Shit.

Sonny opens fire. Cassie and Morgan duck as the bullets shatter the windshield. Cassie keeps her foot on the gas. Sonny keeps firing.

He shifts his aim from the windshield to the tires. His first shot clangs off the front grill of the SUV.

CASSIE
(TO MORGAN) Stay down!

Sonny takes a deep breath and steadies his aim. The car is less than 100 feet from him now. Sonny waits for what seems like forever, then calmly squeezes the trigger.

The right front tire bursts. The Suburban lurches suddenly to the left, slamming into a curb and going up and over. It careens into an empty fountain. The airbags deploy, throwing Cassie and Morgan back against their seats. The car comes to a stop, it's hood crumpled, smoke rising from the engine.

A huge smile sweeps across Sonny's face. He gives a dorky fist-pump, like somebody watching a game at a sports bar.

SONNY

Yeah!

He does the full body Tiger Woods fist-pump.

SONNY

Yeahhhh!

It hurts his back.

SONNY

Crap, crap. Ouch.

Inside the SUV, amid smoke and shards of glass, Cassie pushes the airbag away from her face.

CASSIE

Morgan? Are you okay?

MORGAN

I think I broke my nose.

CASSIE

We have to get out of the car.

Cassie struggles out of the vehicle and limps her way over to the passenger side. As she opens the door, she sees Sonny standing next to the guard station, watching her, his gun at his side. The Rottweiler, in a cage next to him, is going crazy -- barking and snarling and gnashing his teeth.

SONNY

(TO CASSIE) Well well well.

Cassie can't hear him over the barking of the dog. She's pulling Morgan out of the SUV.

SONNY

(AT DOG) Shut up! Down boy!

(YELLING AT CASSIE) Well well well!

Cassie hears him this time. Seeing the gun, she grabs Morgan by the wrist.

CASSIE

Baby, we have to run.

They take off. Sonny sighs and raises his gun. But holding his arms up causes him extreme pain. He grabs his back.

SONNY

Ow. Ow. Shit.

The dog is throwing itself against the bars of it's cage -- a terrifying whirlwind of teeth and rage. Sonny looks down at it and smiles.

SONNY

There's a good boy.

Cassie looks back in time to see Sonny reach down and grab the latch of the dog's cage. Morgan, hardly a fast runner, is struggling to keep up.

CASSIE

Hurry, baby. You have to hurry!

Sonny releases the latch on the Rottweiler's cage. It bursts out ferociously. But instead of chasing after Morgan and Cassie, the dog turns and leaps right at Sonny.

SONNY

No! Them--

The force of the huge dog knocks him to the ground. He drops the gun, which clatters to the pavement and lands a foot away. The dog tries to tear at Sonny's neck while he struggles to hold it back with his left forearm, feeling for the gun with his other hand.

Cassie looks back, then grabs her daughter's arm.

CASSIE

This way.

She pulls her down a side street as Sonny wrestles with the Rottweiler. The dog's teeth are just inches from his face. Suddenly, a shot rings out. Blood splatters on Sonny. The dog stops thrashing. Its jaws go still.

Sonny pushes the Rottweiler off him. It flops to the ground like a sack of potatoes. Sonny stands up painfully, holding the handgun. He looks at the dog with pity.

SONNY

I'm sorry, buddy. It wasn't your fault. I didn't give you a choice.

He tucks the handgun into the back waistband of his pants, then bends over stiffly and grabs the dog's hind legs.

SONNY

Lets get you out of the street.

EXT. DESERTED STREET - CONTINUOUS

Cassie and Morgan tiptoe down a street of darkened, quiet McMansions, doing their best to avoid the pools of light created by the street-lamps.

MORGAN

Mom!

Morgan points at a house across the street from them. It's boarded up with plywood, but there's a small white light shining between a crack in two pieces of plywood.

CASSIE

Must be squatters.

MORGAN

If they have power they might have,
like, a phone.

They run up to the house. The front door is padlocked. A posting declares that the property has been foreclosed on.

The pin-point of light shines from a boarded-up window next to the front door. Cassie raps lightly on the plywood. It's met with silence.

Cassie tries to pull one of the sheets of plywood away from the window. No luck. It's been nailed to the house. Morgan nervously eyes the empty street behind them.

MORGAN

Hurry up, mom.

CASSIE

I'm hurrying.

She grabs the plywood again and, bracing one foot against the wall, pulls with all her might. It gives a loud crack.

EXT. LAS CASAS DE ORO - GUARD STATION - CONTINUOUS

In his too-small guard uniform, his back killing him, Sonny is dragging the dog's body behind the guard shack. Hearing the sound of the plywood crack, he looks up with a start.

He unceremoniously dumps the dog next to Shane, the guard from earlier. Shane's been stripped down to his underwear. There's a bullet hole in his forehead.

A pair of headlights suddenly appear behind Sonny. He spins around to see Scott's convertible driving towards him. He quickly steps away from the dead dog and the dead teenager.

INT. SCOTT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Scott looks at the sign for "Las Casas de Oro." Where life imitates vacation.

SCOTT

Good. At least this one has a guy.

EXT. MCMANSION PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Making a considerable amount of noise, Cassie pries the plywood away from the window. She manages to pull two nails out of the wall, allowing her to bend the plywood far enough away from the window for a person to slip in between.

A bright white light pours forth from inside. It's almost blinding.

CASSIE

What the hell?

EXT. LAS CASAS DE ORO - GUARD STATION - CONTINUOUS

Scott rolls down his window. Sonny greets him with a smile.

SONNY

Hey there. Welcome to Las Casas de Oro.

Scott is distracted by the sight of the still smoking SUV.

SCOTT

What happened?

SONNY

Oh. Tiger Woods and his wife live in the neighborhood.

He smiles at this joke. Scott and Kelsey share a confused look. Sonny's smile fades.

SONNY

Some guy got hammered and plowed into the curb. Just went up and over and right into the fountain.

As Scott and Kelsey stare at the wreck, Sonny untucks his shirt so that he can cover up the gun sticking out of the back waistband of his pants.

But doing so accidentally pulls the gun out. It clatters loudly to the ground. Scott looks up at him. Sonny tries to act nonchalant.

SONNY
At least nobody was hurt.

Scott eyes Sonny's shirt, which is splattered in dog's blood.

SONNY
Oh. I meant-- nobody else. The guy
broke his arm. Bone sticking out
and everything. I had to pull him
out of there.

SCOTT
When was all this?

SONNY
Ambulance left 20 minutes ago. I
wanna go change, but I gotta wait
for the tow-truck.

SCOTT
Where are the police?

SONNY
Damn if I know. There's only one
cop in the whole town. So if he
gets two calls at the same time...

SCOTT
Well that might actually-- I'm
looking for my wife.

Kelsey snorts angrily.

SCOTT
My ex-wife. And my daughter.

SONNY
Does she live here? What's her
name?

SCOTT
Her name's Cassie, she doesn't live
here. But she might have been here
earlier, with a policeman.

Sonny acts like he's thinking really hard. He puts a finger
to his chin.

SONNY
I see. I see. Interesting. When was
this?

SCOTT
Three hours ago.

SONNY

That was before my shift.

SCOTT

Well could you call whoever was
working and--

SONNY

I don't know his number. We're not
friends. (THEN) He slept with my
wife.

He smiles at Kelsey and winks.

SONNY

Ex-wife.

There's an uncomfortable pause.

SCOTT

But--

SONNY

I tell you what, if your ex-wife is
in here, we'll find her. She can't
have gone far.

SCOTT

In three hours?

SONNY

We'll find her.

INT. McMANSION - CONTINUOUS

The camera sits in the brightly lit McMansion, facing the front window from inside. Cassie's hand, wrapped in a shirt, punches through the window. Glass goes everywhere.

CASSIE (O.S.)

Hello?

No reply, so Cassie reaches in -- pushing aside the shards still stuck to the frame -- and feels for the catch. She unlocks the window and lifts it open.

A second later, Morgan wedges herself between the plywood and the window. There's not much room for her.

MORGAN

Ow. Ow. Mom. The nail. Mom!

CASSIE (O.S.)

Sorry. I can't-- can you fit?

Morgan squeezes into the open window. Between her size, her general lack of coordination, and the plywood pressing on her from outside, it's not a graceful maneuver. She manages to get through, but falls awkwardly, getting her arm out just in time to keep from hitting the ground face first.

She lands on broken glass and gives a yelp, then sits there, looking at a small gash on her hand.

A second later, Cassie -- in a bra, with her shirt still wrapped around her hand -- squeezes into the room. With nobody holding it from outside, the plywood snaps shut behind her.

CASSIE

Are you okay, baby?

MORGAN

I cut my hand.

CASSIE

You're okay.

MORGAN

It hurts, like, really bad.

Cassie is distracted by the blinding light. We see the room from her POV. The entire house is filled with potted marijuana plants. Bright white hydroponic lights hang from every inch of ceiling. Small paths run between the plants, winding from room to room.

MORGAN

What is this?

CASSIE

It's nothing.

MORGAN

It's weed.

CASSIE

How do you know that?

MORGAN

("DUH") Mom.

CASSIE

Do they even call it "weed" anymore?

MORGAN

Is anybody in here?

They survey the room for a beat.

CASSIE
Do we want anybody to be in here?

EXT. LAS CASAS DE ORO - STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Kelsey and Scott are driving down the deserted streets of the development. Sonny drives 15 feet ahead of them in the security guard's golf cart. He pops pain-killers from the little orange bottle.

Scott yells out the windows at the top of his lungs.

SCOTT
Cassie! Morgan! CASSIE!

His screams echo off the empty houses.

KELSEY
This guy creeps me out.

SCOTT
Everything about this place creeps me out.

KELSEY
He's covered in blood and his pants don't fit.

Sonny turns back to look at them. He smiles too broadly.

SONNY
Keep yelling!

SCOTT
Cassie! Morgan!

One house they drive past does have lights on. A neighbor watches them from the front door.

NEIGHBOR
What's going on?

SONNY
Just get back in your house, sir.

The guy recognizes Sonny.

NEIGHBOR
Sonny?

SONNY
Oh, hey Dave. What's up?

NEIGHBOR

Why are you... are you a security guard?

In their car, Scott and Kelsey share a look.

SONNY

Well, you don't have to judge me, Dave. Times are tough, as I'm sure you know. But you take whatever jobs you can get. A paycheck is a paycheck is a paycheck, am I right?

NEIGHBOR

(AWKWARD) Um, you're right.

Sonny nods.

SONNY

You gotta do what you gotta do to stay alive.

INT. McMANSION - CONTINUOUS

Cassie pokes around the house, looking for a phone hidden somewhere among the pot. With the tall plants, it's like she's wading through a corn field.

Suddenly, she hears Scott calling out from the street.

SCOTT (O.S.)

Cassie! Morgan! CASSIE!

Morgan's ears perk up as well.

MORGAN

Dad?

CASSIE

Morgan, stay here...

Cassie climbs out the window, pushing aside the plywood.

EXT. PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Scott's car is driving past. Cassie calls after it.

CASSIE

Scott!!!

The car stops suddenly, 20 feet past the house. Cassie takes a step, then notices Sonny in the golf cart, watching her.

CASSIE

No. (YELLING) Hit him! Hit him! Run him over!

In the car, Scott and Kelsey are looking back at her.

SCOTT

What's she saying?

KELSEY

Why isn't she wearing a shirt?

Scott puts the car into reverse. Suddenly there's a gun shot. The window explodes and Scott's head jerks back. Blood spurts into the back seat. Kelsey screams.

Sonny is standing in front of the car, holding a smoking handgun. He looks up at Cassie.

CASSIE

Scott!!

SONNY

(TO CASSIE) Why aren't you wearing a shirt?

Sonny points the gun at her. Inside the car, Kelsey is crumpled on the floor at the foot of the passenger seat. She's sobbing and shaking, looking up at Scott's bloody, lifeless face.

CASSIE

(TO SONNY) How are you going to get away with any of this?

SONNY

How can it get any worse for me, Cassie? I can kill... (THINKING) four people and leave behind a witness who can positively identify me. Or I kill seven people and maybe still get to Mexico before the cops put out an alert on my license.

CASSIE

I'll tell them I never--

SONNY

Eight people. Forgot about your daughter. (COUNTS, TO HIMSELF) One, two, three... four, five, six... seven, yeah, eight.

In the car, Kelsey can hear them talking. Through her tears, she looks over at the gas pedal under Scott's feet.

CASSIE

I didn't do anything to you.

SONNY

You want me to feel bad for you, Cassie? Did anyone feel bad for me when my life fell apart? The banks? The government? Or did I get lectures about personal responsibility?

Sonny is standing right in front of the car. He's only fifteen feet from the front bumper. Kelsey reaches over and puts her hands on the gas pedal.

SONNY

And, quite frankly, I think you're getting exactly what you deserve. You and Gary both, you looked honest, hardworking people in the eyes and you told them this was a great investment. Can't miss! You told th--

Kelsey pushes down hard. The car jumps backwards. She forgot that Scott had set it into reverse.

SONNY

Jesus.

The car flies backwards, turning sharply with Scott's dead weight slumped against the wheel. It slams into a street lamp, which snaps in half and comes down on the roof, crushing the car.

Sparks go everywhere. The dead lawn of one McMansion catches fire. All the other street lamps go black, plunging the scene into darkness. Cassie quickly pulls back the plywood and climbs into the house.

INT. MCMANSION - CONTINUOUS

Cassie tumbles into the pitch black room. The hydroponic lamps were killed with the rest of the power. A bit of moonlight comes shining down from a skylight in the foyer.

CASSIE

Morgan?

Nothing.

CASSIE

Morgan?

MORGAN (V.O.)

Mom?

CASSIE

where are you?

MORGAN (V.O.)

Over here.

A light clicks on. Morgan is standing by some plants, holding a flashlight. She shines it underneath her face.

MORGAN

I found this.

She shines the flashlight on a pair of botanical clippers.

MORGAN

And these.

EXT. MCMANSION - PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Sonny walks up to the front of the house. He pries open the plywood over the window like he saw Cassie do. Then he gives it an angry jerk. The wood cracks.

INT. MCMANSION - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sonny climbs through the window and is confronted by pitch blackness. He takes out his cell-phone and holds it in front of him for light.

Sonny sneers at the marijuana plants, illuminated by the pale glow of the cell-phone.

SONNY

Fucking criminals.

He raises his gun and looks around, waiting for his eyes to adjust. There's a creak from the other room.

INT. MCMANSION - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Cassie and Morgan crouch as they cut a path between marijuana plants. Cassie has the flashlight on, but pressed firmly against her palm. The skin of her hand glows red.

She occasionally spreads her fingers a little, letting out just enough light so she can see where she's going.

Behind her, Morgan clutches the pair of clippers tightly.

INT. McMANSION - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sonny picks his way through the marijuana jungle, his head on a swivel. He holds the gun with his right hand, the cell phone with his left.

He thinks he hears something off to his right. He whips around in that direction, brushing the top of several plants with the gun.

The marijuana plants flutter in the cell phone light. It might be Cassie and Morgan, or it might just be because he brushed the leaves. The cell phone suddenly goes black.

SONNY

Shit.

He wakes the phone up from sleep mode. He shines it out over the plants again, which are now totally still.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Scott's car sits smoking and crumpled beneath the lamp post. The dead-lawn fire is much bigger now. Several shrubs have gone up in flames, and it's spread to the house as well. A hot wind whips through and the fire surges and jumps to the dead lawn of a neighboring McMansion.

The passenger side door of the car swings open with a loud creak. Kelsey falls out. She stumbles to her feet, woozy. In her hand is the .22 caliber pistol.

INT. MARIJUANA HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Cassie and Morgan crouch amidst the plants. Sonny calls out from the darkness.

SONNY (V.O.)

Cassie! I know you're in here.

Cassie tries to locate Sonny's voice.

SONNY (V.O.)

(SING SONG) Come out, come out,
where-ever you ar--

Before he can finish, there's the sound of him tripping on a potted plant and tumbling to the ground. His gun smacks loudly against the floor.

SONNY (V.O.)

Godammit.

Through a forest of pot leaves, Cassie can see the light of his cell phone. She gestures to her daughter to head in the opposite direction.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Kelsey, still unsteady, tries the trunk. It's locked. As the fire burns ferociously behind her, she walks over to the driver's side door. The window is shattered and Scott sits slumped over against the wheel. His head is a bloody mess.

She tries the door. It opens a half inch, but only a half inch. The top is jammed where the weight of the fallen street lamp has crumpled the metal.

Using a small LED light attached to her keychain, Kelsey leans in and sees the trunk release lever on the inside of the door, at the bottom.

KELSEY

Shit.

She has to put her arm down through the open window to try to get at the trunk release. But it's out of reach. So she leans her torso all the way in, her face just inches from the bloody back of Scott's head. She tries not to sob.

In the darkness, her fingers feel for the trunk release. For several agonizing seconds she can't find it. There's a loud crack from the burning house behind her. She jumps. Her face brushes against Scott.

Finally she finds the release, pulls up on it and stumbles back, away from the car. Blood is smeared across her face.

The trunk pops open.

INT. MCMANSION - CONTINUOUS

Cassie makes her way through the plants silently, occasionally letting a little bit of light beam through her fingers. Each time, it illuminates a patch of ground, then she presses the flashlight against her palm again, plunging the scene into darkness. She and Morgan walk forward for ten or fifteen feet before using the light again.

It goes on like this. A brief second of light followed by several seconds of black. Illuminated ground. Darkness. Illuminated ground. Darkness.

The final time she flashes her light at the ground, there are a pair of feet right in front of her.

Cassie gasps and points the light upwards. Sonny stands there, aiming his gun at her forehead. He flicks on his cell phone, casting a blue glow over Cassie and Morgan.

SONNY

Oopsy.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The fire is raging. As the winds continue to blow, several other McMansions are burning.

Kelsey opens the trunk of the car, the gun still in her hand. It's a mess in there. Some old issues of Sports Illustrated. A sweatshirt. A half-full box of Clif bars. But no bullets. She doesn't know where Scott hid them.

She starts frantically digging through the junk.

KELSEY

Where are they?

INT. MCMANSION - CONTINUOUS

Sonny has the gun pointed right at Cassie. He takes a step towards her. She reaches back with one hand, as if to protect her daughter. Behind her back, she makes a little "give it to me" gesture with her fingers. Morgan presses the clippers into her Mom's open palm.

CASSIE

(TO SONNY) Please don't.

Sonny shrugs his shoulders.

SONNY

You gotta be a shark.

His finger tightens on the trigger. Behind her back, Cassie squeezes her hand around the clippers. Morgan whimpers.

An incredibly loud gunshot rings out. Blood sprays from Sonny's neck. He crumples to the ground. Morgan screams. Sonny's cell-phone drops from his hands, shattering on the ground. The scene goes dark.

Cassie spins her flashlight in the direction of the shot. Standing there is a 25 year-old hispanic guy with tattoos on his arms and neck. He's holding a gun.

They stare at each other for a beat.

HISPANIC GUY
Silent alarm. In case anybody
breaks in and tries to rip us off.

Cassie nods.

HISPANIC GUY
You see my face?

Cassie shakes her head "no." The guy nods. There's a long pause.

HISPANIC GUY
You want to buy some weed?

Cassie shakes her head, "no."

With that, the guy walks off, disappearing into the pot bushes. Morgan is sobbing. Cassie hugs her.

CASSIE
It's okay, baby. It's done. I've
got you.

There's the crash of someone climbing in through the window.

KELSEY (O.S.)
Morgan?

Cassie spins her flashlight over towards the window. Kelsey points Scott's pistol at her.

CASSIE
No, Kelsey, it's me. It's Cassie.
It's over. It's over.

Kelsey doesn't drop the gun. She just holds it there, aiming it right at Cassie. Nothing happens for what seems like an eternity.

Then we cut outside to a wide shot of the street. As the fire has jumped from dead lawn to dead lawn, half the houses on the street are engulfed in flames.

The screen goes black.

TITLE CARD: "Six months later"

EXT. HARDING - DAY

The sun beats down mercilessly on the McMansions of Harding.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Cassie is showing an enormous house to a Mexican family. A mom and dad, three little kids, a young baby, and two older women. The dad wears jeans and a battered "Colorado Avalanche 2001 Stanley Cup Champions" tee-shirt.

CASSIE

And this kitchen: you're not going to find a lot of places for rent with this, um, floor plan -- the cook's delight -- and the granite island...

The little kids are running around the island, screaming. The mother yells at them.

MOTHER

Carlito! Callaté!

The children don't stop running.

FATHER

How many bedrooms?

CASSIE

Six to eight, depending on if you want an office or a screening room. How many of you are there?

MOTHER

(AT KIDS) Callaté!

FATHER

We're twelve.

CASSIE

Wow. That's a lot of people.

She smiles.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

It should be perfect.

INT. CASSIE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Cassie unlocks the front door of a modest apartment. It's nice, but not nearly as big as her old house.

CASSIE

Hi baby.

MORGAN (O.S.)

Hi mom.

Cassie rounds the corner into the living room. Morgan is playing Dance Dance Revolution.

MORGAN
Want to play?

Cassie smiles at her daughter.

CASSIE
Sure.

MORGAN
Cool.

As Cassie takes off her shoes, Morgan restarts the game. She selects Franz Ferdinand's "You Could Have It So Much Better."

Cassie steps onto a pad next to her daughter. It's quiet for a moment, then the song starts.

They dance in perfect unison.

THE END.