

ANIMAL KINGDOM

The Pilot

Teleplay by Jonathan Lisco

Based on the film by David Michod

5/7/15

ANIMAL KINGDOM

FADE IN:

INT. CHEAP APARTMENT - DAY

JOSHUA "J" CODY, 17, but could pass for older, sits on a worn couch watching a TV GAME SHOW. His mom, JULIA CODY, 30s, sits a few feet away. She seems to be asleep. Chin on her chest. SUN angles in through the windows and onto a coffee table strewn with bills, old tabloids, junk food wrappers. J stares at the TV, its inane babble filling the room as TWO PARAMEDICS with kit bags bang on the screen door. J lets them in. They go to Julia like they've been here before.

PARAMEDIC

What's she taken?

J

Heroin.

The paramedic checks her pulse. The other injects her with Narcan. J watches, stealing looks back at the game show. A CONTESTANT WINS BIG. The studio audience cheers. Colored lights begin to swirl and we hear bells and whistles.

INT. CHEAP APARTMENT KITCHEN - DAY

J is at the worn linoleum table, high school text books and a pad of paper spread around him. The counters and cupboards are all but bare. A couple of plates, a glass, knife and fork. Clearly Julia didn't give a shit -- or sold their appliances to feed her habit. *

J reads from a textbook, then scratches out equations with a pencil. TRIGONOMETRY stamped on the spine of one textbook, CHEMISTRY on the spine of another. J tries to concentrate, working HARD, stares at what he's done, then erases it in frustration. Tries again, suddenly, he stops. Just sits there, motionless. We hear a PHONE LINE RINGING, before the other end picks up -- *

INT. CHEAP APARTMENT KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

J leans against the sink, his Mom's ancient, pink Hello Kitty iPhone to his ear. A WOMAN'S VOICE picks up: *

WOMAN'S VOICE (OS)

Hello... Yes?

J

It's J.

WOMAN'S VOICE (OS)

(wary)
J? J who?

J

Josh.

A beat. The woman's voice fills with syrup.

WOMAN'S VOICE (OS)
 Josh... What's it been, Baby, ten,
 eleven years? How are you?

J
 Good. Um... Mom OD'd and y'know,
 she died...

EXT. CHEAP APARTMENT LANDING - DAY

JANINE "SMURF" CODY, still sexy, 50s, with a happy-go-lucky
 air that tends to mask how smart she is, comes puffing up the
 stairs and sees J waiting with his school backpack and small
 suitcase. She smiles, nods down the stairs to the street --

*
 *

SMURF
 That's a hike. If your mom'd had
 better habits, she'd be fit as a
 butcher's dog.

J nods awkwardly. Smurf steps closer and gives him a once-
 over that's both pitiful and impressed.

SMURF (CONT'D)
 (then, the bags)
 That all you got?

J
 And my bike, downstairs. If you
 can't fit it, I can ride it.

SMURF
 Brought the pick-up, no problem.
 Why don't you go toss it in back?
 I'll catch up in a jiff.

J nods and starts off, but Smurf stops him, gives him a firm,
 slow HUG. J does his best to hug her back. Her eyes seeming
 to say... *It's gonna be okay.*

INT. CHEAP APARTMENT JULIA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Smurf is going through her daughter's drawers, hunting for
 something. She comes across crumpled dollar bills mixed
 haphazardly with the panties, some syringes in plastic, a
 length of tubing for tying off a vein. Finally, she finds
 it... a GREEN SILK BLOUSE, nicer than the clothes around it.

She pulls it out. *I knew it.* Smurf takes in the dingy room.
 Endures a sudden wave of disgust mixed with regret. We watch
 her bite it back. Smurf shoves the blouse in her purse.

INT. CHEAP APARTMENT PARKING LOT - DAY

J leans in the cool shadows of the apartment building's
 staircase, waiting for Smurf. A few feet away, Smurf's
 pickup sits, J's suitcase and bike already in the back.

TOMMY
 Julia up there?

Worn board shorts, flips and a Billibong tank top, TOMMY. He's clearly trouble J's mind spins, he doesn't want this guy going upstairs and getting near "grandma" -- she might not want J to live with her if she knows the shit she could have to deal with.

J

No.

*

J's eyes flick to the stairs, praying Smurf doesn't appear.

TOMMY

Your moms owes me two hundred bucks. That taste I gave her yesterday wasn't a handout. You got two hundred bucks?

J

No.

Tommy shoves J, pulls J's pockets inside out, hunting for cash. Doesn't find any. Above, J hears the apartment door closing, footsteps on the metal stairs. Tommy steps out to look, only sees some old lady. Gets back into J's face.

TOMMY

Tell her I don't get paid, I'm coming back tomorrow and dragging her out to the corner by her hair.
I want my money.

*

Tommy goes. Smurf arrives at the bottom of the steps. Clocks Tommy leaving, is immediately suspicious.

SMURF

Who was that?

J

Nobody. A neighbor.

J heads for the truck. Smurf watches Tommy disappear.

INT. SMURF'S PICK-UP TRUCK (MOVING) - DAY

Smurf drives J along Route 76. Rising out of the parched hills of Oceanside, high above the houses, we see huge electrical towers with thick lines extending down to the ocean, which glints in the distance. Smurf checks out J's bike rattling in the back, its seat wrapped in duct tape.

SMURF

You've put a few miles on that clunker, huh?

J

Gotta get around. Bus takes forever.

SMURF

Your mom didn't have a car?

J
 She did when she used to work.
 Broke down a year ago or so.

Smurf watches J stare out the window.

SMURF
 She have a bank account somewhere?

J
 No.

SMURF
 Secret hiding place for cash?
 (J shakes his head)
 How'd you two make ends meet?

J
 I'd get jobs when I had to, y'know.

SMURF
 Yeah, doing what? No offense but I
 don't see you making Frappuccinos.

J looks at her. She holds his eyes a beat, no stranger
 herself to the sort of childhood he's had. They veer off the
 highway onto residential streets.

SMURF (CONT'D)
 What'd it be mainly? Car stereos?
 Hubcaps? Little shop-lifting here
 and there?

J tries not to admit this with his eyes, but fails. Smurf
 nods, enjoying their first moment of real connection.

SMURF (CONT'D)
 I'm so sorry you had to live that
 way, Sweetie.

With the sun starting to set, they pull up to a MIDDLE CLASS
 HOUSE that's barely visible from the street, covered on all
 sides by a bunker of lush foliage. Though we can't make out
 the ocean (except from the roof, or by looking down a few of
 this neighborhood's uneven streets), we can *feel* it all
 around us. The salt, the grit, the taste of it in our lungs.

SMURF (CONT'D)
 Home sweet home.

Smurf gives J a smile as they turn through a bougainvillea
 hedge into the driveway.

EXT. CODY HOUSE DRIVEWAY/FRONT YARD/GARAGE - DUSK

Smurf parks the pick-up. J and she get out. STAY WITH J as
 he takes in this new world. We see it through his eyes:

If the house, with its weathered exterior, says "middle
 class," the stuff around it screams money. Disposable dough
 like J has only dreamed of.

Angled in front of the pick-up are a shiny black Jaguar XJ sedan, not new, but well cared for, and a yellow Jeep Wrangler with surfboards in the back. Parked off on the lawn are two super-cool ATVs (a Prowler XTZ and a Wildcat 1000), both caked in mud, one with a full-on "crash cage."

J follows Smurf into the GARAGE and slows upon entering. On one side is a Mustang Fastback, circa 1970, candy apple red with white racing stripes. Tools are laid out around it -- clearly a work in progress. The other side is filled with more outdoor sporting gear than J has ever seen: mountain bikes, kayaks, snowboards, skis, skateboards of all sizes, what looks to be sails for "kite-surfing" -- even climbing ropes and carabiners hanging off one wall.

But what J sees next really stops him. In two big bins are probably 50 PAIRS OF MEN'S SHOES. Thousands of bucks' worth. From flip-flops and sandals to shit-kickers and cowboy boots, as well as the priciest Nikes -- at least last year's models.

J finally looks up and sees Smurf watching him with a pleased expression. One of pride, almost victory. She subtly indicates a door to the house. J follows her inside.

INT. CODY HOUSE - LAUNDRY ROOM / KITCHEN - DUSK

Smurf and J pass through a laundry room filled with MEN'S CLOTHES, some in dirty heaps, some neatly folded. They come into the KITCHEN on a SHRILLY BEEPING TIMER, Smurf batting away SMOKE. Pissed, she yanks open the bottom oven and pulls out a tray of BURNT CUPCAKES, as J looks around in a daze.

It's like the set of a TV cooking show: Viking range, Sub-Zero fridge, cast-iron pots and pans. Not to mention all the smaller appliances like a waffle maker, hibachi thing, high-speed blender, what J thinks might be for "paninis."

It's also a lot like a supermarket, though one stocked by wolves: Baskets of breads, snacks, sweets are piled high in one corner. Another corner's lined with 23 different boxes of cereal. Fresh fruit is all around. Given how J's been living, it's like he's been beamed to another planet.

BANG! Smurf throws the smoldering cupcakes pan in the sink and flicks on the faucet -- STEAM mixing with the smoke -- as J's eyes fall on something else that's foreign to him: CASH. Amidst the baking supplies sit 4 tight bundles of it, maybe 10 GRAND EACH. J can't believe his eyes, but then Smurf cuts sharply in front of him and grabs a NOTE off the fridge. One apparently she wrote that's gone *completely ignored*.

Smurf mutters something under her breath, then moves for a set of GLASS DOORS. Not sure what to do, J awkwardly follows.

EXT. CODY HOUSE BACKYARD - DUSK

J follows Smurf across a sizable lawn toward a surprisingly sweet POOL AREA. Nice tile, high-end chaises. A raised, party-size hot tub, a gleaming outdoor fridge next to a bamboo "Tiki Bar." In the pool float two bright rafts, with drink holders at each arm. A remote-controlled battle ship, able to launch "missiles," drifts under a net for playing water basketball.

Past the pool on more grass, backed by a stone wall, J sees an archery target set up with several arrows shot into it. An awesome compound bow leans up against a tricked-out BBQ.

This place is a goddamn wonderland.

SHWANG! CRAIG CODY, 28, lean and muscular with tats, does a flip off the diving board and SPLASHES into the pool. DERAN CODY, 24, Smurf's "baby" in an Abercrombie shirt, and BARRY "BAZ" BROWN, ruggedly striking, 30s, crouch near a Jet Ski that's flipped on its side. Baz in a tank top, cut, wearing cool shades, has tools and is trying to fix the engine. Deran's ostensibly helping him, holding a wrench on part of it while at the same time smoking a joint.

J hears snippets of them talking as Smurf and he approach:

BAZ
Tighter, man, c'mon.

DERAN
You ran over the kelp. Just buy us
a new one, bro.

BAZ
Okay, let go. 'See if it spins.

Baz pulls out the choke and hits the IGNITION BUTTON. The engine noisily cranks to life but spits out chunks of muddy crud -- mostly all over Deran. Baz quickly shuts it off.

BAZ (CONT'D)
(laughing)
Well, least it spins.

DERAN
Asshole!

Deran grabs him, but not for long. Baz wrestles him into a pin before Deran can do much grappling.

Smurf strides up, J coming self-consciously after her. She glares at her sons like they're 5-year-olds --

SMURF
My cupcakes are ruined. You can't
do one simple thing?

Baz lets go of Deran, who shoves him, gasping for breath.

BAZ
You told us to come over, not to do
the cooking.

SMURF
(waving note)
That's what this note was for,
Darling. Can't any of you read?

Craig comes over dripping, and they all now notice J, start to size him up. Having had no real men in his life -- and now confronted with this much testosterone -- J immediately feels self-conscious. Smurf re-finds her sunniness.

SMURF (CONT'D)
You remember your uncles, J.

J
Hey. How you doing.

BAZ
Really sorry about your mom.

J
Thanks. You too.

The boys exchange looks. Not exactly crushed over their estranged half-sister's passing.

CRAIG
Been forever, man. I barely recognize you.

DERAN
He was five last time you saw him.
(to Smurf)
You and Julia were high and like, really going at it.

CRAIG
Right, oh right... She threw something at you --

DERAN
Coleslaw.

CRAIG
She threw coleslaw in your face.

BAZ
Guys.

DERAN
What?

A weird, awkward beat. Baz turns to J invitingly, to counter Deran's assholicism. Gestures to the gleaming fridge --

BAZ
You want a beer or something?

J
No thanks, I'm good.

SMURF
Dinner'll be in a twitch -- thank God the roast wasn't left in your hands. And I'll whip up more cupcakes. Chocolate or vanilla, J?

J
I'm really not that hungry.

DERAN
(fuck J)
Chocolate.

BAZ
Real drink then? Tequila? Gin?

J
I'm just y'know, kinda tired.

SMURF
'Course. Rough day. Go have a nap,
we'll save you a plate. Show him to
Pope's room, will you, Deran?
(then, with edge)
Honey.

Smurf smiles at Deran in a way the boys know means, *Just do what I fucking tell you.* Deran breaks from her stare. With a slight nod to J, Deran moves off for J to follow.

INT. CODY HOUSE HALLWAYS/POPE'S ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Deran leads J past the BOYS' ROOMS, still reflecting who they were as teenagers. Baz's has the usual Hendrix and NFL posters, Craig's an "X Games" motif. As they pass a third room tricked out with computer gaming consoles, Deran stops.

DERAN
I'm getting Halo 5 Guardians two
weeks before it comes out. Guy at
the Game Stop owes me big-time.

J nods blankly. Not the reaction Deran expected.

DERAN (CONT'D)
What, you're more an Assassin's
Creed guy? Battlefield? GTA?

J
I've never... really played 'em.
Few times at friends and stuff.

Deran looks at him like he's got three heads. His face darkening as he gestures inside --

DERAN
Well they're complicated, and mine.
Don't go trying without asking.
And always knock first.

J nods. Sure. They continue down the hall.

J
So you all... still live here?

DERAN
We got our own places, only crash
here when we feel like it. Keeps
Smurf happy, y'know...

J
Smurf?

Deran looks at him like he's a moron.

DERAN
Your grandmother.

They get to POPE'S ROOM, which by contrast feels monastic -- just bare walls and a bed. J tentatively puts his stuff down.

DERAN (CONT'D)
There's pillows in the closet.

J
Thanks... Uncle Deran.

DERAN
You're not seriously gonna call me that, are you?

J is silent. *Guess not.* As Baz and Craig sweep in carrying a FLAT SCREEN TV, a few Styrofoams's still clinging to it --

CRAIG
What if he does, bro? You've been called a lot worse.

BAZ
Got this out of the shed. Can't have you living in squalor, man.

J
Thanks.

BAZ
Just gotta find the right bracket, then we'll put it up.

In the warmth of Baz's smile, Deran's jaw tightens. He seems about to say something but then jealously walks out. Baz has noticed the beat-to-shit sneakers J's wearing. He motions to Craig, as they both take in J's puny suitcase.

BAZ (CONT'D)
Those your only shoes?

J
Yeah.

Baz and Craig share a bewildered look.

CRAIG
Dude, you can't be wearing those around us.

BAZ
Get some decent kicks, man.

Baz whips out a wad of cash and peels off THREE CRISP HUNDREDS. Tosses them on the bed.

CRAIG
Nike Zooms, or Dunks. But not those orange ones, okay? Those are just gay.

(J is speechless)
Okay?

J

Yeah.

BAZ

Cool. Get some rest.

Baz and Craig walk out. Off J, staring at the money --

EXT. CODY HOUSE BACKYARD - DUSK

Near a speedboat up on a trailer, Smurf stands with Baz and Craig. The tone has changed dramatically. Craig holds a catcher's mitt being torn at by TWO PIT BULLS.

CRAIG

We're taking in Julia's kid? Have you lost your mind?

SMURF

Cool down, Sweetie, you'll pop a blood vessel.

CRAIG

You think we can trust him? Who knows what she put in his head?

SMURF

She was too busy shooting up to put much of anything in his head. And he's no choir boy from what I can tell. He'll be "all in" once he sees the big picture.

CRAIG

And if you're wrong? Oh well. Decade or two at Folsom never hurt anybody, right?

(to Baz)

You just gonna stand there?

Smurf looks to Baz, who can't deny Craig has a point.

BAZ

Kid seems okay, Smurf, but it's not great timing to have him around.

Smurf takes a beat. We hear just crickets, the dog whining softly, and the hum of the pool lights. She turns to Craig.

SMURF

You and Deran stay on him tomorrow, suss him out.

CRAIG

What, just take him to iHop? Ask if he's gonna screw us?

SMURF

He's blood. He's in till he proves he isn't.

INT. CODY HOUSE POPE'S ROOM - NIGHT

J sits in the dim light overwhelmed by all that's happened. He still holds the money Baz gave him, not yet daring to let it go, stares at the flat screen TV leaning up against the wall. Pulls textbooks from his backpack, his notebook. Begins searching for the right page when his mom's pink iPhone DINGS. He pulls it out of his pocket. It says "Tommy", and a message "I want my money". He stares at it for a beat, then deletes the message.

*
*
*

Goes back to his reading, another DING. Assumes it's Tommy, but instead it reads "Nicky". Opens the message -- a selfie of a beautiful teenage girl, pouting seductively into her iPhone, bare legs, sexy thong panties, bra-less under a midriff bearing tank top. The message reads "Miss you..." followed by a long line of Angel Baby emoticons.

*
*
*
*
*
*

J smiles, but doesn't respond. Picks up his book again, but suddenly realizes just how bone-tired he is. Can barely keep his head up. He carefully folds up the three hundreds and puts them in his pocket. Switches off the lamp, sinks down exhausted in his clothes on the bed.

*
*

But his eyes stay open... blinking... as...

INT. CODY HOUSE POPE'S ROOM - DAY

J wakes up with a start, to the MUFFLED SHRIEK of a kitchen appliance. Sunlight pours in through the windows. VOICES, more SHRIEK, the sound of CHOPPING.

INT. CODY HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

J comes in to find Smurf at the counter juicing. It's LOUD. An iPad's propped up with a recipe she's following. Baz and Deran are at the table, looking at what appear to be a MAP and a set of BLUEPRINTS. They calmly roll them up as Smurf sees J in his rumpled clothes.

SMURF

(sunny)

Well, now... I'd sure step over you if I saw you in the gutter. Hope that means you slept?

(J nods)

How 'bout those sheets?

J isn't sure what to say. Baz and Craig come to his rescue.

BAZ

Five hundred thread count.

CRAIG

Just tell her that you noticed.

J

Um, they were great.

Smurf smiles at his lie, genuinely pleased despite it.

SMURF

Only the best for my boys, J.

She fixes her gaze on him, suggesting "her boys" include him now. She makes the juicer SHRIEK again.

INT. CODY HOUSE CRAIG'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Craig's eyes pop open violently, like he could slit someone's throat. Tangled up on top of him are TWO PASSED-OUT NAKED GIRLS. Like stringless marionettes. Like he's fucked the life out of them. They're still sleeping off last night's sins despite the juicer's devil-scream from the kitchen.

The room's a hot mess. Clothes, pills, empty bottles of booze. Craig tosses the girls off him, not gently, and staggers out of bed. Naked himself. And pissed.

INT. CODY HOUSE KITCHEN - RESUME

Smurf stops juicing for a moment and motions to J with the juicer "pusher."

SMURF

Sit, you must be starving. How 'bout eggs and bacon? Or if you just hold on... kale-pear juice with ginger. I try a new recipe every day. Boys can't get enough.

Baz catches J's eye -- *false, don't go near it.*

J

Could I just... start with coffee?

SMURF

Right there in the pot.

J pours a cup. Smurf resumes juicing, when suddenly -- Craig storms in in his boxers. He grabs the juicer violently and yanks it from the wall, Baz and Deran barely reacting --

CRAIG

What'd I say?! If it woke me up again!?

DERAN

Do it already, man.

CRAIG

(you doubt me?)
Yeah? Where's the hammer?

SMURF

This is the kitchen, Hon, best I can do is the tenderizer.

BAZ

(goadng)
Can't you smash it on the floor?

SMURF

He's right, go ahead. You did buy it, after all.

CRAIG

I did not!

SMURF

Sure you did, Baby. You always forget my birthday, so I got it for you, remember, and then I wrapped it for you to give me. I loved it. Still do. Now put it down, c'mon, and come here and give me a kiss...

Craig slowly puts down the juicer and shuffles over to Smurf, who reaches up and kisses him tenderly ON THE LIPS. Long beat, Craig subdued, then --

SMURF (CONT'D)

Will those girls be having breakfast with us, Sweetie?

CRAIG

I sure as hell hope not.

Smurf practically pats his head, gives a "thatta boy" smile.

SMURF

When you go I'll drive them home.
'Course I'll get 'em dressed first.

Smurf finds this rather humorous. J glances at the clock.

J

I should... get to school.

SMURF

What, with an empty belly?

J

I can grab something on the way.

BAZ

Your mom just died, man. That's a free pass.

SMURF

There's a six foot left at San Onofre. Isn't that right, boys?

She looks at Craig and Deran.

CRAIG

Yeah. Should be killer. You should come, take your mind off.

DERAN

You surf?

J

I get by.
(to Baz)
You going too?

BAZ
Nah, I stayed the night. Better go
back and check on my kid.

SMURF
Give Cath and her my love.

But other than her smile, Smurf might have just said: *Why don't you force them both to drink a pint of battery acid?*

BAZ
Will do.

Baz throws her a flat, toxic smile. Smurf smiles to J.

SMURF
So, what'll it be? Pancakes?

EXT. CODY HOUSE DRIVEWAY/FRONT YARD - DAY

Deran and J are at the back of the Jeep, cinching in three surfboards. Craig throws in a cooler. Then moves off to a nearby shed with a fold-up metal door. Deran rolls his eyes.

DERAN
Yo, not today. Let's just go
together.

CRAIG
Need some speed, bro.

Craig yanks up the shed door TO REVEAL -- a black and silver DUCATI 848 EVO. J's eyes go wide. A truly bad-ass machine.

CRAIG (CONT'D)
(backing it out)
What do you say, J? Wanna get a
little closer to God?

Deran cracks a smile, half-daring J to hop on. With no great desire to go with Deran, J's tempted, but thinks better of it. Craig did almost kill the juicer.

J
That's okay, I'm good.

CRAIG
On the ride back then.

He kick-starts the bike. Its flawless engine REVS TO LIFE.

INT. JEEP (MOVING)/EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - DAY

ROCK MUSIC DISTORTED BY WIND blares from the Jeep's speakers, as Deran drives J along the curvy coast. Craig on the Ducati, no helmet, appears behind them in the REARVIEW. *He's flying.* Knees inches from the asphalt as he leans into the turns.

J
He gonna do this the whole way?

DERAN
Yeah. Unless he bites ~~it~~ ^{is calling} - For educational purposes only

As Craig speeds up behind them, Deran smiles and suddenly jerks the Jeep to the left, making it harder for Craig to pass. But Craig threads past an ONCOMING TRUCK -- buying a long, furious HONK -- and blows by them in a BLUR.

DERAN (CONT'D) *
 You still in school, huh? *
 (J nods) *
 Hated school, waste of time. *
 Dropped out day I turned sixteen. *

J *
 School's okay. *

DERAN *
 Geometry? Poetry? When the hell *
 you gonna use -- *
 (grins) *
 Oh, here we go... *

Up ahead, Craig has slowed to let them catch up, folds in next to Deran, parallel to his window. Oncoming cars whiz by laying on their HORNS. With a grin, Craig gets so close he's able to kick the Jeep and fuck with Deran's mirror. *

Deran grabs some crumpled beer cans and orange peels off the dash, and with a laugh *flings them at him*. The stuff dings off Craig's handlebars and whooshes off behind them.

Craig doesn't miss a beat. Reaches into the backpack strapped to his gas tank and opens a half-carton of EGGS. Side-arms them, splattering Deran, J, the windshield. They swerve, recover, almost go off the road --

DERAN (CONT'D)
 Asshole!

Craig laughs his ass off, POPS A WHEELIE, takes off.

Deran drives, using fast food wrappers to clean the egg off of himself. They round a curve into a long straightaway. UP AHEAD -- Craig is hurtling straight at them -- in their lane. An insane game of chicken, Deran's not blinking. J freaking.

DERAN (CONT'D)
 (laughing)
 C'mon, you pussy, yeah. C'mon.

The speck that was Craig is looming larger by the second. Deran grits his teeth, J watching, bracing. *Holy shit, man.*

But at the last moment Deran pulls slightly right. Craig rockets past, seeming not to have budged an inch, till he zips back into his right lane. Deran flips Craig off, but J's sure Craig doesn't see it.

Off J, able to breathe again, as the wind whips his face --

EXT. SAN ONOFRE BEACH - DAY

J bobs in the surf with Craig and Deran, facing them on PCH, the NUCLEAR POWER PLANT looms, and beyond that, the scraggly vastness of Camp Pendleton.

TV Calling - For educational purposes only

J sees a set approaching, paddles effortlessly and drops in. Bottom turns down the line, hits the lip and cuts back.

J paddles back to where Craig and Deran straddle their well-worn surfboards waiting for the next set to arrive.

DERAN
You just "get by," huh? You carved that up pretty good.

J
I get lucky sometimes.

DERAN
Yeah, or you're a liar.

CRAIG
Leave him alone, let's just surf.

DERAN
D'you feel the gamma rays while you were shreddin' it? Best part, right? They kill you, sure, but in the meantime they make your dick bigger. Take Craig. His balls used to be like raisins, but now they're almost cherry tomatoes.

Craig smirks. But his eyes are on a bunch of YUPPIES surfing near them with shiny new boards, wet-suits.

CRAIG
Look at these idiots...

The set rolls in. A nice WAVE forms near the yuppies. One of them clumsily catches it, but as it rolls toward Craig.

CRAIG (CONT'D)
No. He's just gonna waste it.

Craig paddles hard till he snakes the wave, forcing the YUPPIE to panic and bail. The wave closes out, and Craig makes his way back. The yuppie waits, pissed.

YUPPIE
What the hell was that? Ever hear of surf etiquette?

Craig just stares at him.

DERAN
Yeah, it means rookies like you should go find a beginner's break.

YUPPIE
What, like -- you own it? The oceans belong to all of us.

Our boys trade eyes. That was pretty dorky. The yuppie spits out some sea water, even more pissed.

YUPPIE (CONT'D)
 (under his breath)
 Trailer trash losers...

He paddles off. Craig, Deran, and J bob up and down for a long moment. Craig's face blank, almost pleasant.

CRAIG
 I'm beat.

Craig starts to paddle in. The other two follow.

INT. BAZ'S HOUSE - DAY

Baz stands in a pink room watching his three year old daughter, LENA, napping in her crib. CATHERINE, lean and pretty and his de facto wife, walks into the room and jumps --

CATHERINE
 Baz!... How many times have I told you not to sneak into the house?

BAZ
 You alright? You look tired.

CATHERINE
 Do you want me to punch you?
 (then, re: Lena)
 She was croopy again. Had to stay up with her half the night.

BAZ
 Give her that stuff the doc said?

CATHERINE
 If you'd called, you'd know.

BAZ
 It got complicated. Julia dying...
 Smurf taking in the kid.

CATHERINE
 (shrugs)
 Maybe you can make it up to me.

BAZ
 Will this'll do it.

He reaches into his backpack and pulls out one of the bundles of cash we saw earlier -- his cut of the last job. Tosses it to her. She weighs it in her hand and frowns.

CATHERINE
 What's that, under ten?

BAZ
 Nine-four.
 (off her look)
 C'mon, not so bad. For twenty minutes work? No shots fired?

CATHERINE
 Yeah, and three weeks prep.

BAZ

I saw a sign over at the Wyndham --
big lawyers' convention in town.
Maybe you should troll a cocktail
party, see if you can do better.

CATHERINE

I might just do that.

She looks at him as he comes closer, her eyes saying *she really might*. But as he gets within a foot of her, their chemistry kicks in. Baz pulls her close. She shoves him -- and then kisses him. Hard. He picks her up and they move to the wall, kissing harder, peeling off shirts.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

(Lena)

She's sick, we shouldn't wake her.

BAZ

Then shut up. Or try to.

He slides her shorts down to the floor. They start to make love on top of their daughter's alphabet throw rug.

EXT. SAN ONOFRE BEACH PARKING LOT - DAY

J comes up from the beach dripping wet and carrying his board. He goes to Craig, who's leaning on the Jeep stuffing potato chips in his mouth. The Ducati is parked nearby. Craig's eyes are fixed across the asphalt.

CRAIG

Where's Deran?

J

Taking a piss.

CRAIG

Hell's the ocean for?

(then, smiling)

Okay, here we go...

J looks across the parking lot. The yuppie and four of his gym-buff BUDDIES have been trying to secure their boards to the roofs of two BMW's. They're just now figuring out that their Yakima straps have been cut, making that impossible. They react... *what the fuck?*... as almost in unison, they look over incredulously at Craig and J. Craig just grins and cracks open a beer. Subtly raises it to them as J looks on.

INT. SAN ONOFRE BEACH BATHROOM - DAY

Deran pisses at a dank urinal, the place deserted. Slowly, he senses movement behind him. He turns to find a man, tan, 30s, expensive haircut, nice watch, buff. Standing in an open stall watching him. Deran pulls up his swim trunks and faces the man. The man smiles, nods. Deran doesn't respond, but also doesn't move. His face cryptic.

EXT. SAN ONOFRE BEACH PARKING LOT - DAY

The yuppie and his buddies break from a kind of huddle, their outrage building like a storm. They start toward Craig and J.

YUPPIE
Asshole! Hey -- asshole!

The pack starts coming faster. Craig casually reaches for more chips, but instead, pulls a GLOCK .45 from under the seat. He hands it to J like he's handing him the mail. The yuppies can't see it because it's blocked by Craig and J's surfboards leaning up against the Jeep. J looks to Craig.

CRAIG
Show 'em who's king, man.

The crunch of gravel is getting louder, the pack of guys almost on them, as -- J still hasn't raised the gun, so Craig reaches across and helps J raise the gun and POINT IT AT THEM. This changes everything. The yuppies cry out and crab-scramble backwards. Several start to beg --

YUPPIE
Shit, no -- please, man --

They turn tail and flee back to their cars, jump in and PEEL OUT, leaving behind their fancy surfboards. J lowers the gun, hand shaking, feeling his heart pounding in his neck.

CRAIG
How'd that feel?

Craig laughs, slaps J on the back.

CRAIG (CONT'D)
Get a little stiffy?

J stands there. Dazed, but also jacked. Feeling the power. Tries to hand the gun back to Craig. Craig grins.

CRAIG (CONT'D)
Keep it. You never know, right?

Craig goes to scavenge the Yuppie boards. J feels the weight of the pistol in his hand, likes it. Smiles as we hear --

EXT. CODY HOUSE BACKYARD - DAY

HARD ROCK BLASTING from outdoor speakers, as Baz leaps off the roof and lands a "cannonball" in the center of the pool. A big BBQ feast's spread out -- steaks, ribs, chicken, fish, numerous side dishes -- and tons of alcohol to go with it.

It's a party -- and not one of those crappy "Entourage" parties you see on HBO. Sure, the sunshine is as bright as the bikini tops are small, but the girls around the pool -- some with boyfriends, little kids -- aren't plasticine models with the same fucking nose. They're local girls, friends of the family -- they tend bar, work in surf shops -- they have real faces, are athletic, have freckles, tattoos, piercings, and because of it they are all much hotter.

Some have slept with the boys, some haven't; some might and might regret it; but right now no one gives a shit, because a party is a party.

We also get the sense that Smurf's the "Auntie" to a lot of these people. Maybe helped when they were short on rent, gave them hand-me-down clothes for their kids, or once bailed them out of jail. They love Smurf but also fear her. Like all worlds, this one ain't perfect. But this is their community.

The BIG SPRAY from Baz's cannonball hits Smurf, Catherine, and some other folks lounging pool-side. They barely keep hold of their drinks, Smurf loving it, whooping it up:

SMURF

Yeah-hoo! Way to nail it!
 (then, to Catherine)
 Top me off here, Sweetie, will you?

Smurf nods to a pitcher nearby with some icy cocktail in it. Catherine grudgingly pours her more, as Smurf turns to little Lena, who sits on a blanket munching a brownie.

SMURF (CONT'D)

Who has the best Daddy? *Lena does.*
 (to Catherine)
 She got a suit? I'll take her in.
 Or she can go in in the buff.

CATHERINE

She was up all night. Fever.

SMURF

Cold water'll do her good.

Catherine smiles flatly as we find Craig hauling two of the scavenged yuppie surfboards from the back of the Jeep into the party. He yells across to a couple of scruffy teenagers smoking weed by the jacuzzi.

CRAIG

Lucas! ...You replace that Channel Island board you busted out at the Jetty last week?

A pimply fifteen-year-old shakes his head sadly... "no". Craig examines the yuppie surfboard in his hand, recites.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

...How about a five-ten Arakawa Bandit, that work for you?

Gives the yuppie board to the amazed kid. Checks out the other board. Craig grins at the second teenager.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

...Trade you this Tokoro with Futures for that blunt?

The kid can't hand over the joint fast enough. Deran calls down from the roof.

DERAN
Yo, Santa Claus! ...You coming up
or not?

Craig heads for the ladder, takes us UP ONTO THE ROOF --
Deran moves a wooden lawn chair back another foot from the
edge, to mark the increasingly crazy "leap-off" point, it's
his turn to jump. J's up there with them.

SMURF
(yells up)
Show us what you got, Baby!

Catherine gives her a look as other party-goers HOOT.

CATHERINE
He really could miss.

Smurf barely looks at her, just hands Lena another brownie.

SMURF
My boys know their limits.

CATHERINE
(re: brownie)
That's her third, Janine.

SMURF
Yep, look at that. Now that you
stopped all that breast-feeding,
girl's eating like a trucker.
Aren't you, Lena-roo?

Lena two-fists the brownies, Catherine's jaw tightening.

CATHERINE
Baz told you I stopped?

SMURF
No, Hon, it's obvious.
(re: Catherine's breasts)
They've shrunk back down, y'know,
and that's mostly a good thing.

But Smurf isn't paying attention to Catherine anymore, she's
watching a woman in a bikini with a baby in her arms, KIMMIE,
trying to escape the hectoring she's getting from a muscular
man with a high and tight GI haircut, Corp tats, Oakleys and
a beer, her husband, DANNY. Catherine follows Smurf's gaze.

CATHERINE
Still?

Smurf nods. Baz comes over soaking wet and pulls Catherine
into a kiss, half watching the hijinks on the roof.

BAZ
(scoffs at the leap-off point)
I can beat that.

CATHERINE
Yeah, well don't try. Lena doesn't
need a quadriplegic for a dad.

BAZ
(winks)
I'll use my turbo thrusters.

He gooses her ass and starts off, but she grabs him. Firm.

CATHERINE
Baz. No.

Smurf looks to Baz -- *You gonna take that shit from her?* Baz ignores Smurf as, with a Tarzan yell, Deran sprints and leaps off the roof, arms and legs flailing... and makes the pool by a couple of feet. Everyone but Catherine HOOTS and HOLLERS.

But Smurf's attention is back on Kimmie with her baby and her Marine hubby, Danny. Their exchange is growing more heated. Kimmie tries to walk away, but he pulls her back.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Thought he was overseas somewhere.

SMURF
Got back a couple weeks ago.

Smurf stands, heads for them while we stay with Catherine, watching. The argument is getting physical but as Smurf approaches the man immediately backs away. Smurf takes the baby as the wife pleads her case to Smurf. We can't hear what's being said, but it's clear Smurf carries real weight with both of them.

ON THE ROOF -- J's turn now. We see Deran climb giddily out of the pool and go to the BBQ. He sprays lighter fluid on the coals, sending up a geyser of FLAMES in J's flight path.

CRAIG
Whoohoo! Higher, man, yeah!

Craig moves the lawn chair back another foot from the edge. J LOOKS DOWN. Feels the knot twisting in his stomach.

CRAIG/DERAN
(chanting)
J, J, J, J!

Down below, Catherine looks at Baz: *Jesus, Baz.* Baz shrugs, but then... *yeah, okay.* He yells up to J in support:

BAZ
You don't have to, man, forget it!

CRAIG/DERAN
Bullshit! The hell he doesn't!

J takes a beat. Craig and Deran resume their chant. It's a long leap to the water, if he doesn't fry on the way.

J waves down to Baz: *Yeah, think I'll pass.* But Craig lets out a war whoop. J turns but too late. Craig comes barreling from behind him and tackles J off the roof. Entangled, they soar through the leaping flames and make the pool by inches.

Everyone goes nuts, impossible not to, as Craig and J burst out of the water. Craig yanks up J's hand like he's a boxing champ. J's freaked -- *what the fuck?!* -- but perversely he's also psyched. High on adrenaline. And approval.

One especially SEXY GIRL with a drink in her hand catches J's eye. She makes clear, that was pretty bitchin'. J smiles.

INT. CODY HOUSE POPE'S ROOM - DAY

J comes in toweling off and stops. The flat screen TV hangs nicely on the wall. To boot, there's an iPod set up with a docking station and speakers. Someone's also made his bed -- and washed the clothes he slept in. All neatly folded.

He goes to the open closet and we see his sparse array of other clothes still in his beat-up suitcase. He grabs some and tosses them on the bed, pulls off his swimsuit. Feels a breeze coming in the window, the curtains blowing.

J looks at it for a beat. Had he left the window open? He shuts the closet and -- JUMPS BACK sending a lamp CRASHING to the floor. There, behind the door, is ANDREW "POPE" CODY, 30s, staring at him with a gaze like a white-hot metal poker.

POPE
Who are you?

Smurf, having heard the crash, calls out from the kitchen.

SMURF (OS)
J, Honey, you okay?

POPE
Who's J?

J
I -- I'm Josh, Julia's kid.

POPE
She's here?

J
No.

SMURF (OS)
(getting closer)
Josh, can you hear me?

Pope's stare dials down a notch, but it's still the most disturbing stare J has ever seen. Smurf walks in --

SMURF (CONT'D)
Josh, Love --

-- but seeing Pope, her voice catches. She just stands there in shock, as Pope's eyes bore into J.

POPE
You just ruined my surprise.

INT. CODY HOUSE LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - DAY

Pope sits on Smurf's lap surrounded by Baz, Craig, and Deran. Everyone's smiles, but there's apprehension in the air too, it just goes with Pope's presence. J mills about listening. Catherine is behind the counter, Lena on her hip, wanting no part of being any closer to Pope. Outside, the party is still going strong. Smurf gently scolds Pope.

SMURF

If you'd just let us know, we would've picked you up.

POPE

With balloons, and a homemade sign?

DERAN

Limo, with two hookers in the back.

CRAIG

(laughs)

Yeah, and an eight-ball of speed.

BAZ

Why didn't you say you were up again when I visited last week?

POPE

Figured I'd get rejected, like the last two times.

Smurf gives Pope a squeeze.

SMURF

Finally that Parole Board came to its senses. Six years for a bank robbery where no one got hurt? The three you've done are crime enough.

POPE

Three years and nineteen days.

SMURF

Whatever it's been Baby, we're so happy to have you back. I'm just sorry you had to come home to the news about Julia.

Smurf's voice has turned sad, but there's a hollowness to it, like it's mostly for J's benefit.

J

I'm going... out for a while.

BAZ

Yeah, where to?

J

My girlfriend's place.

Smurf and the boys trade looks.

SMURF

You didn't say you had a girlfriend.

J

More just, yeah, this girl I know.

SMURF

You'll have to bring her by.

J

Yeah. Absolutely.

J turns to go, but Pope stops him with his voice:

POPE

So, living here, huh, J? You're part of it all now?

J's not sure what to say. Smurf and Baz throw Pope a look.

SMURF

He's been here a day, Sweetie, don't make his head hurt.

POPE

Let me drive you over. You and me can catch up.

J

Thanks, I... got my bike.

Pope stares at him, just that stare. Smurf and Deran watch Pope, Katherine shares a looks with Baz, not happy Pope is back. Unnerved, J grabs his school backpack, goes. *

EXT. CODY HOUSE - DAY *

J pulls his bike from the garage, heads out the hedge and onto the street, pulling his backpack on as he climbs on his bike. As he does, he looks up to see a sleek, muscular black and white Oceanside Police Nissan GT-R cruiser, gliding slowly up the street toward him. *

It slows as it approaches J, the two young officers inside eyeball fuck J from behind their Ray-Bans. Taking in the house, taking in J. They don't nod or acknowledge J, just cruise slowly past the house, making their presence known. *

And then they're gone. Off J, watching them disappear down the street -- *

EXT. OCEANSIDE STREETS (VARIOUS SHOTS) - DAY

J pedals his rickety bike through the different parts of Oceanside, the sun starting to set. The neighborhoods get nicer as he climbs into the hills. J coasts up to a McMansion in a bigger development and drops his bike by the garage.

INT. CODY HOUSE KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Pope sits at the bar. Baz puts a beer in front of him as Smurf sunnily makes dinner with Catherine helping.

SMURF
Meatloaf with eggs and onions.
Spicy -- just how you like it.

BAZ
Welcome home, man.

Baz warmly slaps Pope's back. Pope stares through the beer.

POPE
You're letting him go to his
girlfriend's and blab about
whatever?

BAZ
He's got nothing to blab about.
Besides, he seems okay.

SMURF
Even Craig thinks so.

POPE
(sarcastic)
Well, if Craig thinks so, what's
there to worry about?
(then)
What are we planning next?

A beat. They just look at him.

POPE (CONT'D)
You're not gonna tell me? I'm not
part of this anymore?

SMURF
(calm)
Of course you are, Baby, but maybe
it slipped your mind: it's your
first day out of prison. You
should sit this one out.

Pope looks to Baz, who shrugs his agreement.

POPE
Where should I "sit" exactly, since
J is in my room?

SMURF
Take the couch for a night or two.

Pope stares at her, incredulous.

POPE
Night or two. Wow.

SMURF
You can't stay here, Hon. We can't
have some parole officer popping by
to give you piss tests any time of
day or night, now can we?

POPE
Screw it -- I'll crash at my place.

Smurf and Baz share a look.

BAZ
You can't. We sold it.

CATHERINE
Renting it was a nightmare, Baz had
to be over there all the time and
it didn't even cover the mortgage.

Pope stares at Catherine, who the fuck asked her opinion?
Baz sees it, steps back in, upbeat.

BAZ
We'll get you a new place. Don't
make a big deal out of it.

Smurf's eyes say the same. Pope nods. Sure. He takes a
swig of beer. Letting the bitterness fill his throat.

INT. NICOLE HENRY'S HOUSE BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

MUSIC PLAYS as we find J making out with NICKY HENRY, 17,
earthy-sexy, bright, troubled, and in full-scale rebellion
against her bourgeois upbringing. Straddling J on the floor,
she peels off her shirt, somehow managing to keep the lit
joint in her mouth. Then she hikes up her Roxy skirt and
starts sliding off her thong, hot, tantalizing, blowing smoke
down into his mouth; but he coughs, doesn't want it. She
takes one more drag and puts the joint aside.

NICKY
Y'know, for a bad influence, you're
not really pulling your weight.

J smiles. She presses into him. Whispers into his ear --

NICKY (CONT'D)
I missed you in Chem today. Hepner
almost caught me thinking about you
with my hand down my panties. *

J doesn't say anything. She licks his ear seductively -- *

NICKY (CONT'D) *
Help me with my homework? Mole *
mass and mass mass...? *

J *
...stoichiometry... *

NICKY *
I don't get any of it, do you? *
(he nods/she smiles) *
...'course you do... *

Nicky kisses him some more, getting serious, then stops. *
Something's weird. J seems even more distant than usual.

NICKY (CONT'D) *
J...?

INT. MINIVAN (MOVING/STOPPED) - LATE AFTERNOON

Nicky's mother, ALICIA HENRY, her step-dad GUS EMERY, and her step-brother JACK, 8, pull into the driveway to find J's bike by the garage. Alicia shoots Gus a look -- *He's here again.*

ALICIA
Are you going to say something?

GUS
What's there to say that you haven't already covered?

ALICIA
She might listen if it comes from you. You're the father figure, much as you'd like to not be.

GUS
Hey, not fair. I just don't agree that J's the source of all of her problems. Your daughter's a pretty hot mess herself --

ALICIA
My daughter, see --

GUS
Will you stop with that shit?

JACK
You said don't say "shit."

ALICIA
Failing classes, college out the window -- she's off the rails, Gus, you could maybe do something.

GUS
Like what? Throw him out? "Forbid" her from seeing him? Least when he's over, we know where she is.

Gus throws the car into park, kills the ignition.

JACK
I like J. He's smart. He helps me with my math. *
*

GUS
We all like J. Now get inside and do your homework. *
*

Gus glares at Alicia -- *Can we please not talk about this around him?*

INT. NICKY'S BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Nicky reels. J's just told her about his mom OD'ing.

NICKY
Jesus... J. She died?

J nods. Nicky bites back how it hurts that he waited this long to tell her, but enjoying the drama of it all.

NICKY (CONT'D)
Well are you... okay?
(J nods)
Where will you live?

J
With my grandmother, in the flats.
She's got a house on Ditmar.

NICKY
Good, okay. That's good at least.

J
I don't really know her. My mom
and her weren't close.

Julia's pink Hello Kitty iPhone DINGS in Jay's pocket.

NICKY
She seem nice?

J
(a beat)
Yeah.

The phone DINGS again. He pulls it out, reads. "Tommy", and a message "Where's my money!" J deletes it.

NICKY
Who was that?

J
Nobody...

Suddenly -- the doorknob TWISTS. Someone trying to come in but it's locked. Then voices, an ANGRY POUNDING:

ALICIA (O.S.)
Nicole! Open the door!

GUS (O.S.)
Nicky, c'mon -- you know the rule.

ALICIA (O.S.)
Open this damn door!

J
(to Nicky, zipping pants)
I can... go out the window.

NICKY
No, stay right there.

Nicky throws on a shirt but barely does up her skirt, wanting to rub her mother's nose in it. Nicky flings open the door.

ALICIA
That's it. I have had it. J, get
out! And you --

NICKY
 (screams)
 His mom just died! Okay? She's
dead!

Alicia and Gus are stunned.

ALICIA/GUS
 What... Oh God...

NICKY
 (milking it)
 Yeah, and he came here for a little
 support, which I'd kinda like to
 give him, if you'll back off!

Nicky SLAMS the door in their cowed faces. She looks at J
 and they start laughing.

INT/EXT. CHEVY SUBURBAN (MOVING) SAN PEDRO WHARF - NIGHT

Baz drives Craig and Deran through this desolate part of San
 Pedro notorious for tweakers. The Suburban they're driving
 is a car we haven't seen. The car looks new, sports tinted
 windows. They wear gloves, scan the docks.

CRAIG
 Pope looked good, don't you think?
 I mean, considering?

BAZ
 Yeah, he looked fine.

DERAN
 How much you think he got raped?

CRAIG
 (what the fuck?)
 Deran.

DERAN
 Well that's the elephant in the
 room, right? How many times he had
 to take it in the shower?

CRAIG
 Why don't you ask him, so he can
 stab you in the face.

DERAN
 See Smurf's eyes, when she saw him?

BAZ
 Watch the docks, okay?

DERAN
 It was like... part of her wishing
 they hadn't let him out. Been a
 whole lot easier --

Baz skids to a stop, locking up their seat belts.

BAZ
 He just did hard time, he could've
 rolled on us, but did he? No. We
 owe him, so keep your mouth shut.

DERAN
 (mutters)
 You sure do.

BAZ
 Say that again.

CRAIG
 Guys.

BAZ
 Say it to my face.

CRAIG
Baz.

Craig gestures off, where now they see a group of TWEAKERS hanging out. Baz gives Deran a reprieve, they've got work to do. Craig smiles.

CRAIG (CONT'D)
 Fishing anyone?

Baz cruises toward the tweakers. Craig rolls down the window and holds out a baggie of "ice." Jiggles it like a demon.

CRAIG (CONT'D)
 Yo, check it out. Two grams, eighty
 bucks. What's that? Half price?

It's unworldly, like waking the dead. Four or five come closer to the car. But then -- Craig and Deran jump out. With stunning, brutal efficiency, they zip-tie four tweakers' wrists and throw them like sardines into the back of the Suburban. And they speed off.

INT. CODY HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

J comes in late to find Pope on the sofa watching TV with the sound off. Pope's sitting as still as a corpse. J starts quietly down the hall. Pope barely looks up.

POPE
 Who cuts your hair?

J stops, reluctantly turns.

J
 Um. My girlfriend.

POPE
 Think she'd do mine if I asked her?
 Shitty prison haircuts.

J
 Maybe, yeah.

POPE

Know where the boys are?

*

J

No I... was at my girlfriend's.

Pope nods, but it's clear he's suspicious. He turns full round and fixes J with his penetrating gaze.

POPE

You know you can tell me things, right? I mean, your mom and I were twins, so we had a lot in common. Slept in the same room for years, same bed when it rained hard. She was scared of thunder.

(and then)

So if you ever wanna talk, or feel scared... I'm here for you, okay?

Pope gives a thin smile. J nods and moves down the hall.

EXT. CHEVY SUBURBAN/WAREHOUSE GARAGE - NIGHT

Baz pulls the Suburban into an abandoned warehouse, skids to a stop. Deran and Craig climb out, Baz cracks a window and kills the motor, joins them. One of the doors pops open -- a tweaker trying to get out. Craig kicks it shut. Baz locks the car with a chirp. Our boys exit the garage and pull down a big steel door. It clangs shut as we CUT TO --

*

*

INT. CODY HOUSE LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - MORNING

Smurf pulls a sheet of note paper from a kitchen drawer, looks at it for a brief moment, then folds it up, blank. Places it into an envelope, licks it closed. Sees J in a bad suit is trying to tie his tie in the living room mirror. Smurf comes over to help and Deran grabs a snack from the fridge. Smurf notices that Deran has some scratches on his neck.

SMURF

What happened there, Hon?

DERAN

Scraped the reef when we were surfing.

SMURF

Oh? Thought the bottom was sand.

DERAN

(defensive)

We surfed different spots.

With a hard, inscrutable look to J, Deran moves off. Smurf gives J a sympathetic pat and continues tying his tie.

SMURF

When you were little, he used to ride you up to the highway on his cute red BMX and teach you to throw rocks at cars. He'll come round.

J nods. Sure. She finishes his tie, as J stops, taking in what Smurf's wearing -- the GREEN SILK BLOUSE.

SMURF (CONT'D)

What?

J

My mom had a shirt like that.

Smurf seems touched.

SMURF

Really? She used to borrow this from me. I guess she got one for herself. I'm wearing it to feel closer to her.

J

Why'd you stop talking to each other?

SMURF

Oh, Sweetie, who can remember? It got so tangled up.

But J's still looking at her. Smurf eyes him for a beat. Knowing he craves an answer.

SMURF (CONT'D)

Well... guess it began over a game of Hearts, the card game. Your mom said you could play a penalty card on the first trick. She was drunk -- so was I, but even so... that isn't the game. If you did that, there'd be no game. I should've taken the high ground, it was stupid. But what can I say, J? Stubbornness runs in the family.

J studies her, fairly sure there's more to the story, if that even is the story. Smurf changes the subject.

SMURF (CONT'D)

So, how do I look?

J

Good.

She beams at him.

SMURF

Correct.

(then)

Beautiful boy.

Smurf takes J's head in her hands and kisses him tenderly, if briefly, on the lips.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Smurf, Baz, Catherine (carrying Lena), Craig, Deran, Pope, J and Nicky, Nicky's parents and Jack, all stand at Julia's grave site. Off to one side, we see a few down-and-out looking MOURNERS, presumably friends of Julia's. Off to other are Smurf's neighborhood people there to show their respect -- the arguing couple from beside the pool, Kimmie and Danny among them.

Pope is stealing looks at Catherine, but Catherine is watching Kimmie and Danny, Kimmie sporting an overly large pair of sunglasses, a kid in her arms, another clinging to her leg. Craig is checking out Nicky's ass, nice and taut in a black skirt. Baz hits him to get with the program.

SMURF

If anyone would like to say a few words... J?

J shakes his head. Smurf nods. She understands. But then one of the mourners, a tired looking woman, comes forward.

MOURNER

None of you belong here. It's just wrong.

The Codys are taken aback.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

Julia hated you, you scared her --

CRAIG

Hey, get outta here --

She turns to J, sputtering --

MOURNER

Maybe she wasn't the best mother but she loved you. She tried hard to keep you away from these peop --

Craig and Baz get a hold of her, but Smurf waves them off.

SMURF

No, leave her be. Boys... Stop.

They let go. J's takes Nicky arm, digging all the drama. Smurf gives the woman a look full of quiet, reptilian danger.

SMURF (CONT'D)

You've lost a pal, that's sad, and you're having trouble coping. But what you're doing here? It won't bring back Julia, and it won't help you, either, that much I can promise. But if you really have to keep talking, go on, Dear, we won't stop you.

Seeing Smurf's eyes, the woman loses her nerve. She turns and moves off, Smurf watching after her. Long beat, then:

SMURF (CONT'D)
 (buoyant)
 Well... anyone else?
 (nobody dares speak)
 I know, it's so hard.

Smurf turns and looks into the grave.

SMURF (CONT'D)
 So I wrote it down, Julia. Just
 some things I wanted to say to you,
 but never got the chance.

She takes the envelope with the blank note folded inside we saw her put together earlier in the kitchen from her pocket and lets it luff down onto the coffin. It taps the lid and rests there. J stares at it.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY (LATER)

Baz walks with Pope back to the parked cars.

BAZ
 First six months, Lena cried all night. Screamed, like she hated us. I wanted to smother her with a pillow, but figured if I did, Cath might stop having sex with me.
 (a beat)
 Joke. Feel free to laugh...

Pope isn't listening. He's watching Smurf ahead of him, arm and arm with J, Nicky trails behind with her family.

POPE
 I want in on the Job.

BAZ
 Don't worry, you'll get your cut.

POPE
 No, not a handout. I need to do something.

BAZ
 Pope. You've been out for a day. *

POPE
 Fine, then push it a week.

BAZ
 It's already in play. Plus the place just got a new shipment.

POPE
 (frowns)
 Shipment? It's not a bank?

BAZ
 After you got caught, I started thinking outside the box. Last two Jobs we did, the cops didn't even look at us.

POPE
Yeah, what is it then?

Baz stays silent. Pope stares at him, incredulous.

BAZ
It's Smurf's call, man, and she
doesn't want you in.

POPE
You taking Julia's kid? He your
new project? Craig first, then
Deran, now this J kid?

BAZ
What? No. J's like sixteen.

POPE
Deran was fifteen. You took him
under your wing, taught him up, got
him on your side.

BAZ
There aren't *sides*. Nobody's
against you, Pope. Jesus...

POPE
Sixteen seconds.

BAZ
What?

POPE
How far I was behind you, at the
bank that day.

BAZ
Pope...

POPE
It's funny, that's all. You trip
on a waste basket, that guard goes
for his gun... If I'd tripped,
y'know, and you'd drawn down to let
me run out the back, you'd have
done the time. I'd have stayed out
here, free to "think outside the
box."

Baz says nothing, feeling guilty. Pope lets him suffer.

POPE (CONT'D)
Just throw me a bone, man. Smurf
doesn't have to know.

They arrive at the cars. After a tortured beat --

BAZ
We need another car.

POPE
Big or fast?

BAZ
Fast.

POPE
By when?

BAZ
Three a.m.
(off Pope's tiny smile)
The car -- nothing else -- and just
leave it in the usual spot. Okay?

BEHIND THEM -- Catherine catches up to Kimmie. Kimmie's husband, Danny, is ahead, talking to another man.

CATHERINE
Hey...

They walk in silence for a moment.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
How is it with Dan back?

Kimmie shrugs, then flatly --

KIMMIE
Great. It's good for the kids to
have their Daddy home.

Up ahead, Danny looks back, watching, concerned. Then returns to talking to his friend.

CATHERINE
What happened to your face? *

Catherine stops her gently. Takes off Kimmie's sunglasses to REVEAL a bloodshot eye and bruising she's tried to disguise with make-up. Kimmie glances quickly in her husband's direction. Puts her sun glasses back on. Won't meet Catherine's gaze.

DANNY
...Kim?

Danny, watching them warily from ahead.

KIMMIE
I gotta go.

Kimmie hurries to join Danny. He stands there, staring Catherine down. She meets his gaze. Kimmie catches up to him. They go. Catherine turns to find Smurf has been watching. A beat. Smurf starts for Catherine.

EXT. OCEANSIDE PIER - AFTERNOON

J and Nicky sit looking out at the ocean. The usual mix of girls in bikinis, surfers, fishermen, tourists, tatted-up meatheads, and fresh-faced Marine recruits pass by. J has on his cool new pair of NIKES. Nicky notices.

NICKY
Where'd you get those? TV Calling - For educational purposes only

J
 (with a smile)
 Mall.

NICKY
You went to the mall?

J
 You like 'em?

NICKY
 Yeah. Where'd you get the money?

J
 Turns out mom left me a trust fund.
 (laughs/then)
 I found three hundred bucks in her
 underwear drawer.

Nicky smiles, *very cool*, but then she gets quiet.

NICKY
 You didn't cry.
 (...what?)
 At the funeral. Did you want to?

J
 No.

Nicky takes that in as -- HONK-HONK -- Craig and Deran skid up
 in the pick-up. Craig leans grinning out the driver's side.

CRAIG
 J, man, where'd you go? We been
 looking all over for you. Jump in!

J hesitates, looks to Nicky, unsure. Craig REVS the engine.

CRAIG (CONT'D)
 She can come too. Come on! We'll
 bum around a while and then go eat
 with Smurf!

NICKY
 Smurf?

J
 My grandmother's nickname.

A MOTORIST behind Craig gives a HONK, and Craig casually
 gives him the finger. Nicky climbs in the back, definitely
 liking this vibe --

J (CONT'D)
 Wait, my bike.

J gestures to it leaning against the fence.

CRAIG
 Leave it, we got you a new one!

Craig nods to the back. J sees a shiny bike with a CUT BIKE
 LOCK hanging off it, obviously stolen. Craig smacks Deran.

CRAIG (CONT'D)
 You couldn't have taken the lock
 all the way off?

DERAN
 (sullen)
 Should I have gift-wrapped it for
 him too? *

J climbs in the back with Nicky. Craig leans over from the
 front seat, admiring Nicky.

CRAIG
 Damn, J... When you said you had a
 girlfriend you didn't tell us she
 was hot. *

NICKY
 You called me your "girlfriend?" *

Nicky's delighted, folds herself into his arm as Craig guns
 it and they roar off. *

INT. VIETNAMESE RESTAURANT - DUSK

Pope, Craig, Deran, J, Baz, and Nicky eat dinner. The table's
 crammed with plates and nearly as many big bottles of beer. *
 Nicky entertains Craig and Deran with a game of "Fuck-Marry-
 Kill," as Smurf talks quietly with Catherine. J sees Pope
 staring over at Catherine, who's doing her best not to
 acknowledge him. Some charged, unspoken thing between them. *

NICKY
 (laughing)
 Okay, next: Hillary Clinton, Lady
 Gaga, and Oprah.

J has Baz and Catherine's daughter, Lena, beside him. He's
 entertaining the little girl by drawing small doodle animals *
 on the paper place mat and trading making silly faces with *
 her. She smiles. Baz watches them together. Impressed with *
 how comfortable Lena is with J. *

CRAIG
 That's easy: Kill, kill slowly,
 and marry then kill, so I wind up
 with her money.

Nicky, Deran and even Smurf, laugh -- *

DERAN
 It's called "Screw-Marry-Kill,"
 genius, you gotta do one to each.

CRAIG
 Yeah, well, I'm changing the rules,
 'cause if I screwed any of 'em, I'd
 want to kill myself.
 (more laughter, to Nicky)
 This game's stupid, time to get
 serious: Open your mouth, Darlin'.

He grabs a shrimp and holds it up to throw.

CRAIG (CONT'D)
 Hundred bucks if you can catch it.

Nicky and J's laughter turns a bit darker --

SMURF
 Leave her alone, Hon, she doesn't
 need dinner on her.

DERAN
 (to Nicky)
 What, you allergic to seafood?

Smurf looks at them reproachfully, but we get the sense she wouldn't mind seeing it. Craig gives Nicky a charming grin.

CRAIG
 Two hundred. C'mon.

Seeing Smurf, Nicky seems to relax, like it's all in good fun. She opens her mouth wide -- buying the stares of other diners -- and Craig fires. The shrimp bounces off her face.

J
 (to Nicky)
 You really don't have to --

CRAIG
 Shut up, that's loser talk.

Craig grabs another shrimp, aiming, and Nicky opens her mouth wider. He throws it -- and it goes in. Nicky starts laugh-chewing, blushing as they cheer. Craig digs out a wad of cash and slaps down TWO HUNDRED BUCKS. Nicky balks at taking it.

SMURF
 Go ahead, Dear, fair and square.

Incredulous, Nicky takes it. Someone across the room catches Deran's eye. A familiar handsome man eating dinner with his wife and yuppie kids. The man from the dank beach bathroom. The man has seen Deran but barely acknowledges him. Deran looks away quickly to find Smurf watching him carefully. Did she see? But then Craig lights a cigarette, drawing Smurf's attention away from Deran.

SMURF (CONT'D)
 Can't smoke in here, Sweetie.

CRAIG
 Let 'em ask me to stop.

The pink iPhone DINGS in Jay's pocket. He checks it under the table, then:

J
 I'm gonna... hit the bathroom.

SMURF
 (Nicky)
 We'll take good care of her.

With a glance at Nicky, who seems fine, J goes by carrying J-101 educational purposes only

INT. VIETNAMESE RESTAURANT - BATHROOM - DUSK

J checks the phone as he stands at the urinal. "Tommy", and a message "I want my money tonight bitch!". He deletes it. Flushes the urinal as Baz comes out of a stall and starts washing his hands. Sees the Hello Kitty phone.

BAZ
That your phone?

J
Was my Mom's.

BAZ
Gotta do something about that.
Damn thing's an antique.
(and)
Nicky's cool, man. Good-looking,
smart... Where were girls like her
when I was flunking high school?

Baz seems sincere, not creepy. It makes J feel good.

J
Thanks, you've been nice to her.

Baz shrugs, no problem.

BAZ
You're still in school?
(J nods)
You getting decent grades?

J
B's, A's mostly.

Baz nods, impressed.

BAZ
You're smart, huh?
(J shrugs)
Keep it up. Have too many dropouts
in this family already.

J doesn't answer. Baz watches him.

BAZ (CONT'D)
Rough day. You okay?

J
Yeah, I'm good.

BAZ
How 'bout Pope? He giving you any
trouble?

J isn't sure what to say. Baz sees the answer is yes.

BAZ (CONT'D)
Just tread lightly till he gets to
know you. Should be alright.

J nods, that's comforting. Sort of. Starts our with Baz

TV calling for educational purposes only

BAZ (CONT'D)
 Wait a sec, you wash your hands?
 (what?)
 Seriously. Your hands go anywhere
 near your ass, or your dick, you
 wash 'em, right? C'mon.

Baz stands over J as J gets some soap, starts the tap.

BAZ (CONT'D)
 That's it, get a good foam going...
 rinse, there you go.

J puts his hands under the electric dryer, it won't turn on.

J
 These things never see me.

BAZ
 Sure they do. You just gotta get
 up in there.

J sticks his hands in closer. The dryer turns on noisily.
 Baz gives J a look -- *What'd I tell you?* -- and walks out.

Off J, feeling maybe for the first time ever that there's a
 man in his life who gives a shit.

INT. CODY HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A credit card cuts a line of COKE. WIDE -- Craig kneels
 shirtless at the coffee table, preparing to suck it in.
 Deran lazes on the floor with his bong. Smurf's on the couch
 with a cocktail, next to J and Nicky, who's thinking J's new
 family is the coolest ever. Baz comes in, frowns at Craig.

BAZ
 Really? We're all just hanging
 out, you gotta go chopping in?

CRAIG
 Avert your eyes, Father.

BAZ
 Why don't you try sleep for once in
 your life?

CRAIG
 (barely looks up)
 Someone get Baz a drink, and make
 it a big one.

BAZ
 (Deran's bong)
 You want to get mellow? Maybe
now's not the time?

Baz looks to Smurf, speaking in code because of Nicky. Smurf
 shrugs, buzzed herself, not really worried. Craig notices
 Nicky watching.

CRAIG
 Want a taste?

TV Calling - For educational purposes only

Nicky sits up a bit, interested --

J
No, she's good.

CRAIG
Hey, don't trample on her freedom.
(to Nicky, deliberate)
Sweetheart, you want some, or not?

NICKY
(off J's look)
Thanks, I'll... stick with weed.

CRAIG
Deran, give the lady another toke.

Deran doesn't respond. Craig wings a magazine at him.

CRAIG (CONT'D)
Hey.

BAZ
I'm going home.

Baz catches Craig and Deran's eyes: *See you later? Right?*
Craig and Deran shrug, *don't worry.* Baz walks out.

EXT/INT. MOBILE STATION MINI-MART - NIGHT

Baz pulls past the pumps and up to the front of the store,
hops out. Heads inside the brightly lit mini-mart, passes
racks of chips, the Icee machine, candy, trail mix, and
Tampons. Makes his way to the glass beverage coolers at the
back. Searches for a moment, finds what he wants. Slides
open the door to remove a carton of milk.

NICHOLS
Pope's out, huh?

Baz turns to find a man standing there, late-thirties, ex-
military, short sleeve button down shirt, imposing.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
Popped up on our system this
afternoon. Figured somebody in
Sacramento must have screwed up.
But I called Corrections and they
said nope, they had to release him.

Baz takes his milk, walks to the cashier. Nichols follows.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
Federal court order crap reducing
prison overcrowding.
(to cashier)
Pack of Marlboros.

Baz counts out some cash, doesn't look at Nichols.

BAZ
How've you been Detective?

NICHOLS

Fair to middlin'. Had a stabbing out on 76 last night, added a little color to an otherwise routine day. Guy was upset his wife was banging some Marine.

*
*
*
*
*
*

BAZ

He stab the Marine?

*
*

Nichols takes the pack of Marlboros from the cashier, unwraps it, taps out a cigarette, puts it in his mouth but doesn't light it. Digs in his pocket for the cash.

*
*
*

NICHOLS

No, the wife. Marine shipped out a couple of weeks ago.

*
*
*

Baz turns, finally looks at Nichols. Gestures to the milk.

*

BAZ

Gotta get home.

*
*

Baz starts out, Nichols calls after him.

*

NICHOLS

Tell Pope I'm looking forward to getting re-aquainted. I'm sure it won't be long.

*
*
*
*

Baz ignores him, climbs into his Challenger and backs out. Nichols follows Baz out into the parking lot. Nichol's partner climbs from their unmarked detective car and joins Nichols watching Baz drive away. Nichols pops out a Bic and lights his cigarette.

*
*
*
*
*

INSIDE the Challenger, we watch Baz watching the mini-mart disappear in his rear view mirror. Are they following him? No. Do they know anything? Shit...

*
*
*

INT. CODY HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A MUSIC VIDEO, with the sound off, plays on TV. J and Nicky are asleep on the couch, her head on his legs. Across from them sits Pope, just staring at them. We feel his focus shift to her, his eyes boring into her, for what seems like an eternity. Finally, Pope gets up and moves over to her. He gets on his knees and slides his arms underneath her, trying not to wake J up.

INT. POPE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Pope comes in carrying a sleeping Nicky in his arms. He lays her down on the bed as she makes a little sound. Strokes her hair out of her face. She's wearing just shorts and a tank, her belly exposed. Pope stares at her... so tormented we almost feel sorry for him. J comes in, confused and rubbing his eyes. Stops dead when he sees them. Pope stands up.

POPE

(a beat)
She's beautiful, man.

Pope walks out. J's heart is pounding. Nicky's CELL RINGS, wakes her up. She comes to finds her phone in her shorts.

NICKY
My parents...
(declines call)
I bet they're going crazy.

She realizes she's been moved, different room, bed.

NICKY (CONT'D)
(smiles)
You carried me? Get over here.

J
It's late. You should probably go.

J glances out at Pope watching TV again in the living room. The mere back of his head disturbing, like he can see them.

NICKY
(sexy)
Yeah? I was thinking I'd stay
over. Or, under... upside down...

J
I'm not sure Smurf's cool with
that. I should ask, y'know, but
she's sleeping.

Nicky looks at him like he's crazy.

NICKY
I think she'll be okay with it.

J
(lies, sharp)
I just -- want to be alone, okay?

Nicky absorbs that. Wishing it weren't true.

NICKY
Yeah. Okay.

She finds her phone, gets up. J keeping an eye out the door on the back of Pope's head.

INT. BAZ'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Catherine tucks Lena into her bed, the little girl already fast asleep. Kisses her on the forehead, it's sweet. Turns off the light, heads for their master bedroom, finds Baz doing chin-ups, warming up for the night ahead.

BAZ
Milk's in the refrigerator.

CATHERINE
Kimmie's face was a mess.

BAZ
You told Smurf, right?

CATHERINE *
Yeah. She wants me to go over *
there with her. *

BAZ *
Go. *

She doesn't answer, watching him for another moment. He *
finishes, drops off the bar, short of breath. Finally: *

CATHERINE *
Maybe it's time to cut the cord. *

BAZ *
Hnh... what're you talking about? *

CATHERINE *
Between us and them. *

Baz stops working out, thrown. *

BAZ *
Them? You talking about my family? *

CATHERINE *
They're not. Me and Lena are your *
family. *

BAZ *
Where's this coming from? *
(then, "gets it") *
Christ, what'd she say? Smurf goes *
off, you know that. You just gotta *
learn to ignore -- *

CATHERINE *
Do you care about them, really? *

BAZ *
Kind of question is that? *

CATHERINE *
Or is it all just -- guilt? Some *
feeling that you owe them? *

He towels off, annoyed, starts gathering his stuff -- *

BAZ *
I gotta get ready. *

CATHERINE *
You were twelve, she took you in, *
I'm not saying don't be grateful. *
But if it's just about loyalty, *
you've more than repaid her looking *
out for them all these years. *

BAZ *
(searching) *
'Hell are my black boots? *

CATHERINE *
Pope's back. Let him take over. For educational purposes only *

Baz turns to her, almost laughs. *

BAZ *
Pope? You serious? *

CATHERINE *
All the more reason to get away *
from them. He seems worse than *
ever, and with Lena around now, it *
just isn't... feeling safe. *

Baz's anger fades, seeing she really is scared. And being a *
mother. He takes her into his arms. *

BAZ *
Don't worry about Pope. He got off *
his meds in jail, once he's back *
on, he'll be fine. *
(off her, hardly *
convinced) *
Cath, I gotta get ready. *

Catherine nods, but looks away, some dark secret she's not *
telling him. She edges out of his arms. Long beat. *

CATHERINE *
Remember to kiss us before you go. *

He gives a smile. 'Course. She walks out. Baz stares at *
the empty doorway. He's got a few dark secrets of his own. *

INT. CODY HOUSE BATHROOM - NIGHT

J takes a shower, steaming water rushing over him. Suddenly *
the curtain's yanked back, and there's Pope, fully dressed. *
J jumps back, trying not feel so incredibly vulnerable.

POPE *
You any good with cars? *

J *
...Good how? *

POPE *
You know what I mean. Are you? *

J *
I'm okay. *

POPE *
They need a car, for the thing. *
Get dressed and we'll go get it. *

J *
(a beat, hazards) *
Baz... said I should? *

POPE *
What? *

J *
Baz said I should go with you? *

Pope's jaw tenses like it could crack.

POPE
Yeah. He said get a car. C'mon,
hurry up.

Pope walks out. Off J, naked, unsure what to do --

EXT. SMALL CALIFORNIA BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Smurf and Catherine head up the walk. An orange tree in the yard, American flag flying from the porch, Dodge Ram in the driveway. Smurf knocks on the screen.

A woman appears from the brightly lit kitchen, silhouetted through the gloom of the darkened living room, steps into the light seeping in from the porch -- Kimmie. She hesitates when she recognizes them, so Smurf pushes opens the screen, let's them in. Gently touches Kimmie's bruised face.

SMURF
Oh sweetie... Where is he?

INT/EXT. BUNGALOW KITCHEN AND BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Smurf steps out into the backyard. Danny's sitting in a chez, Corp T-shirt and shorts, drinking Coronas in the semi-darkness. He's been at it for a while.

SMURF
How you doing, Danny?

He turns, surprised to see her there, but doesn't move to get up. Just sits there, wary, a little buzzed.

SMURF (CONT'D)
You settling back in okay?

DANNY
...What do you want?

SMURF
Me? I'm here for you. To help you apologize. After you thought about what you did, I'm sure you wanted to, but just didn't know how.

DANNY
Apologize for what?

Smurf smiles gently at him -- as you would to a three-year-old who asked you "why?", when the only answer is "because I said so". Then Smurf glances back to the house. Danny follows her gaze to find Kimmie hovering behind Catherine in the open kitchen doorway.

SMURF
Go on now, you don't want to keep a lady waiting.

Does Smurf mean herself, or Kimmie? Hard to say. He considers her carefully, then grudgingly --

DANNY

Sorry.

SMURF

Oh, come on, Dan. You can do better than that. Put some heart into it. Own that sorry.

He stares at her. This *bitch* is in his yard. Invading his life. His hardness takes over, sips his beer, looks away.

DANNY

...Fuck you. Fuck you and your whole fucking family.

Smurf smiles sweetly. It's unnerving.

SMURF

Oh, poor baby...
(and/then)
Come on. It's time to go.

DANNY

...What?

SMURF

You're moving, Daniel. Tonight. Go pack your things. Be sure to take everything you think you might need. You won't be coming back.

He stares at her, incredulous.

DANNY

Who the hell do you think you are?

SMURF

(a beat)
You know exactly who I am.

EXT. SMALL CALIFORNIA BUNGALOW -- NIGHT

Danny swings his duffle bag into the bed of the Dodge truck, climbs in behind the wheel and backs out of the driveway.

Smurf, Catherine and Kimmie stand on the porch, watching. Kimmie holds Catherine's hand, frightened. Danny takes one last hard look at them from behind the wheel, then ROARS off. Smurf turns back to Kimmie, finds she's crying. Smurf brushes away Kimmie's tears kindly.

SMURF

No... none of that. We're brave, we're strong. It's for the best...

Kimmie looks to Catherine for assurance. Catherine isn't so sure but knows Smurf's watching. Nods.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

J sits nervously in a NISSAN GT-R, its hood open, wires showing.

The streetlights are few in this industrial-feeling part of Long Beach. DANCE MUSIC thumps from a distant club. J tries the ignition. Nothing. He looks DOWN THE STREET at --

Pope, watching dubiously from his car: *Can this kid just not do it, or is he chickening out?* J fiddles, tries again. The car starts, but then -- a MAN rounds the corner and sees J stealing his car.

MAN
Hey! ...You!

J tries to run, but the man grabs him, starts to pummel him.

POPE
Shit.

Pope reaches in his glove box as J gets his ass kicked. The man's pissed, and strong. He slams J against a wall, ready to land a massive punch, when --

Pope comes out of nowhere and whacks him in the jaw with a MAG LIGHT. The guy drops hard. Pope gets on top of him and puts his keys to the guy's eyes.

POPE (CONT'D)
You don't remember our faces.
(a beat)
Say it.

MAN
(sputters)
I don't.

Pope finds the guy's wallet and shoves it in his own pocket.

POPE
I know where you live. Understand?

The man sickly nods. Pope gets off him and turns to J, who's staggering near the wall, blood streaming from his lip.

POPE (CONT'D)
(the Nissan)
Take it.

J jumps in and PEELS OUT, as Pope heads back for his car.

INT/EXT. SMURF'S PICK-UP TRUCK (MOVING) - NIGHT

Smurf behind the wheel, Catherine beside her. They ride in silence for a long moment before --

CATHERINE
What if he comes back?

SMURF
He won't.

CATHERINE
Two little girls, no job. How's she going to survive?

SMURF
We'll take care of her.

Catherine stares at Smurf, equally frightened and admiring.

SMURF (CONT'D)
That's what we do, sweetie.

EXT. WAREHOUSE GARAGE - NIGHT

Deran is now driving J's stolen Nissan GT-R, skids up outside the warehouse garage. Baz and Craig, dressed in full ARMY FATIGUES, with their pants and sleeve openings taped shut and wearing gloves, climb out carrying two GAS MASKS, they unlock the lock and lift the big steel door, as Deran speeds off. *

INT. WAREHOUSE GARAGE - NIGHT

Baz and Craig unlock the Suburban, find the tweakers in bad shape. Craig peels one off the driver's seat and throws him like a rag doll into the back. They react to the smell.

CRAIG
There goes that "new car" smell.

BAZ
Next time steal a used one, it won't feel so bad.

CRAIG
DNA jackpot, bro. Should keep the Crime Lab plenty busy.

They pull on their gas masks and get in, the tweakers tangled in back. Craig backs the car out fast.

INT. CODY HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Smurf is brewing a cup of tea as Pope and J come in. Smurf sees J's face, turns to Pope unhappily.

SMURF
What happened?

POPE
Nothing.

SMURF
Pope, what'd you do?

POPE
Just took J for a little "test drive" and we hit a few bumps.
(to J)
No big deal, right?

Smurf's face darkens with anger. Pope sees her rein it in.

POPE (CONT'D)
What, you want him to learn the ropes, don't you? So I started teaching 'em to him.

Smurf's voice is dead-calm.

SMURF
You will not do that again. Not
without asking.

POPE
What am I, six?

SMURF
You will not do that again.

POPE
Who's gonna stop me, you?

Pope hulks up to Smurf and shockingly grabs her wrists -- both in his one hand -- and holds them tightly together.

SMURF
Let go of me, Andrew.

POPE
"Andrew," oh, you must be mad. Go
on, then, stop me.

Smurf doesn't struggle, just keeps staring at him. Pope lifts up his index finger, ostensibly loosening his grip.

POPE (CONT'D)
How 'bout now, Mommy? Make it any
easier?

J looks on. It has the feel of some weird game they might have played when Pope was small. Pope lifts his *middle* finger too, "loosening" more, but still holds tight.

POPE (CONT'D)
Now? What if I tickle you?

He gives her a sharp tickle. Smurf doesn't flinch.

J
Leave her alone.

SMURF
(softly)
It's okay, J.

Pope lets go and corners J near the drying rack. His eyes predatory. Feral. J braces for the worst -- *Does he run? Hit first?* But then... Pope swings a quick arm around him and gives J a hard, headlock-like hug. J grits his teeth.

POPE
That's it, J, good boy. You pass.

Pope lets go with a snap and moves off. Smurf turns to J like not much happened... gives a maternal smile.

SMURF
(J's lip)
Let's get some ice on that, Honey.

J shakes his head. Moves down the hallway and pushes into --

INT. J'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SLAMS the door behind him. Sits on the bed, trying to process it all. The new TV, clean clothes hanging in the closet, a few brand new boxes of Nikes stacked on the floor. His textbooks neatly arranged now on the bedside table.

*
*

A DING, his mother's Hello Kitty iPhone in his pocket. He pulls it out, reads: "Tommy" "I'M COMING FOR YOU BITCH!"

Off J, staring at the phone --

EXT. BACK ROAD - NIGHT

Craig and Baz skid up in a cloud of dust. A remote gulley somewhere, pitch black except for their headlights. They open the hatch of the Suburban and haul the tweakers out, yanking off their gags and swiftly cutting off their cuffs, shove them out into the dirt. Craig BANGS on the car --

CRAIG

Hey, yo, look at me!

Craig takes out a couple of big bottles of cheap soda and a jug of water, throws down some granola bars and candy.

BAZ

Water, sodas and food.

(points)

The road's that way. Got it? Half a mile. You can walk when it gets light. Don't be idiots and die.

Baz and Craig climb back into the Suburban and drive off.

EXT. OCEANSIDE STREETS - NIGHT

J on his "new" bike, street lights glinting off the stripes of his Nikes, rides as fast as he can through Oceanside. Frantic sweat pours down his face, veins bulging, legs pumping.

INT. CHEVY SUBURBAN (MOVING) - NIGHT

Craig and Baz cruise down a Long Beach avenue, BREATHING inside their gas masks. They're quiet, focused, a "game day" vibe between them. Out the windows, it's nearly sunrise.

UP AHEAD -- a deserted SHOPPING MALL. Rows of high-end stores, a "walk street" with concrete barriers, traffic lights. By instinct, we'd slow down. But off a look from Baz, Craig GUNS IT... 60, 70, 80 mph... and then, bracing for impact -- Craig jumps a curb and CRASHES the Suburban through the huge plate-glass window of a TAG HEUER WATCH STORE.

INT. TAG HEUER WATCH STORE / STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Glass still crackling, an ALARM going off, they jump out past the airbags and SMASH the display cases. In no time, their bags are full of hundreds of watches. They bang through a door, run up a stairwell, and come out onto the ROOF.

EXT. ROOFTOPS - CONTINUOUS

They sprint over the roofs of all the stores, past chimneys, air vents, leaping the GAPS between buildings. They haul ass for a good quarter mile, until -- they come to a FIRE ESCAPE. They practically slide down it and drop into an ALLEY.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Deran skids up in the Nissan GT-R. Baz and Craig throw themselves inside with their bags.

INT. NISSAN GT-R (MOVING) / EXT. ALLEYS - CONTINUOUS

Deran GUNS IT, as Baz and Craig get their bearings. Deran makes a sharp turn into another tight alley, when -- he SLAMS THE BRAKES. Blocking them, not ten yards away, TWO middle-aged RENT-A-COPS lean on their car with coffees. Shocked, they look at the Nissan. Hear the alarm in the distance.

It doesn't take a genius. Craig turns to Deran.

CRAIG

Shit! You said no security on the south end till six!

Deran throws it into reverse as one of the rent-a-cops, wanting to be a hero, gets Deran's door open. Deran yanks it shut, hits the gas -- the guy running next to them.

The second rent-a-cop OPENS FIRE, SHATTERING WINDOWS, as the first one falls, we see him in the REARVIEW tumbling off. Craig punches the dash, as Deran speeds off, yelling, juiced -

DERAN

Whooooooooo....

Baz looks at Craig, all of them amped, sucking air. Pulsing out from around Craig's arm is a steady stream of BLOOD. He's been shot. Baz takes that in.

CRAIG

What? ...What?

EXT. LEMON STREET, OCEANSIDE - NIGHT

J flies around a corner on his bike, churning full speed into a seedy part of Oceanside east of the 5 Freeway. Low rent addict hookers mill about near the Arco Mini Mart waiting for truckers from the highway and Marines from the base.

J searches, determined. Spots him, down the block, talking to several other low-life surfer/skaters -- Tommy. J dumps his bike, heads for him. Tommy sees him.

TOMMY

Where is she? You got my money?

J doesn't answer, just keeps coming.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
 No? Well why don't we start with
 me taking that bike of yours and
 those fancy ass sneakers --

J pulls out the big, shiny Glock .45 Craig gave him. Tommy
 backs up fast, the other surfer-losers take off fast. J jams
 the big gun into Tommy's face.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
 Whoa... whoa... chill...

But J's anything but chill, screams.

J
 She's dead asshole!

Shoves the gun barrel harder into the Tommy's face.

J (CONT'D)
 Dead from that shit you sold her!

*

J cocks the hammer on the gun.

TOMMY
 No... wait... don't...

Tommy's terrified, and he should be. J's amped. He could do
 it, wants to do it.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
 We're cool... okay?... I didn't
 know... you don't owe me anything
 alright...?

J considers him, makes a decision. Reaches down, rifles
 Tommy's pockets, just like Tommy did to him. Finds vials,
 tosses them away. Some money, pockets it. Tommy's car keys.

J backs away, gun still pointed at Tommy. Drops the car keys
 down a storm drain grate.

J
 You want to find me, I'm living
 with my Grandma Cody on Ditmar.
 Ask around, everyone knows who the
 Cody's are.

J slips the pistol into his hoodie and climbs back on his
 bike, rides away --

EXT. VACANT LOT - DAWN

The Nissan screeches to a stop. No one else around. Craig's
 Jeep, mostly hidden, is parked in a corrugated lean-to shack.

Baz and Deran jump out, Baz already out of his fatigues.
 They help Craig out, putting pressure on the wound.

CRAIG
 How bad?

BAZ

Shut up.

Strip off Craig's fatigues and throw everything (except the loot) into the Nissan. Deran gets a gas can from the shack and douses the car. Baz lights a MATCH, throws it. The Nissan goes up like a Burning Man sculpture.

EXT. OCEANSIDE PIER - DAWN

J rides out to the end of the deserted pier. Stares out at the ocean. Digs into his pocket, pulls out his mother's Hello Kitty iPhone. Considers it for a beat, then tosses it as hard and far as he can out into the water.

EXT. CODY HOUSE - DAWN

J rides his bike toward the house, comes through the bougainvillea hedge and up into the driveway, past the Jeep, Smurf's Jaguar, the pick-up. Leans his bike against a tree.

Moves to the front door... but hears LAUGHTER and GROANING from the GARAGE. It gets louder as J gets closer.

INT. CODY HOUSE GARAGE - DAWN

J comes around all the sports gear TO FIND... Craig with his shirt off sitting on a workbench. Pope and Baz have a MEDICAL KIT open, supplies laid out, including what seems to be a cauterizer. There's blood and bandages. The smell of flesh hangs in the air. Pope leans over his younger brother.

POPE

Stop being a pussy, it didn't hit any bone.

Craig is wincing, it's definitely painful. Baz is laughing at Craig's discomfort. Pope picks up the cauterizer, applies it to the wound. Craig yells, almost passes out, then recovers and punches Pope in the chest with his good arm, HARD. Which only makes Baz laugh even harder.

J catches Baz's eye. Baz nods, Pope and Craig both now see J there too. Nobody says anything for a beat, then they turn back to working on Craig's arm. J goes inside.

INT. CODY HOUSE HALLWAY/DERAN'S ROOM - DAWN

J moves down the hall, stops as he passes DERAN'S ROOM.

INSIDE -- Deran lies on the bed, his head turned away, while Smurf sits next to him stroking his hair.

SMURF

Baby, c'mon... Everyone makes mistakes... Deran.

Deran doesn't respond. Smurf inverts her fingers on his back and starts to "walk" them toward his head. Starts singing:

SMURF (CONT'D)
*Poor Little Robin... walking,
 walking, walking to Missouri... he
 wants to know-ohh...*

Her voice lilting upwards on the "know," trying to get Deran to smile. Smurf see J standing there, smiles softly at him as she continues to sing. J moves off and into --

INT. CODY HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

J drifts in and sees the TV playing with the sound off. It's the GAME SHOW he was watching when his mom died yesterday, or was it the day before? J can't quite remember. A CONTESTANT answers right and starts jumping giddily up and down.

J pulls out his gun, hefts it in his hand, smiles.

Pope appears from the garage. Goes to the sink, grabs some paper towels to wipe Craig's blood from his hands.

Considers J standing there with the gun. Then tosses J something shiny, J catches it. Looks -- A watch, a nice one, expensive, but small, feminine.

POPE
 Give it to your girl.
 (a beat)
 Girls like shiny stuff.

Pope tosses the paper towels into the trash. Starts to go, then turns back to J. *

POPE (CONT'D) *

You're with me now. Not Baz, me. *

It's a statement, not a question. Pope stares J down for a long moment and then goes. Leaving J standing there, holding the gun and the watch. *

J weighs them both in his hand, then smiles as we --

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END