

BLACK FORK  
"The Gathering Storm"  
by  
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TEASER

1                   EXT. BLACK FORK - MAIN STREET - DAY                   1

Locally-run businesses line the simple, dusty street, but at the moment, all is empty and still.

MAYOR ADRIAN DOBBS, a youthful 39, carries an undeniable presence of strength and confidence. His eyes, however, betray a great sadness within. He stands in the street, utterly lost and confused.

YOUNG JASON

Dad?

Adrian turns. Next to him stands YOUNG JASON, his 8 year-old son, wearing a bright orange shirt. Adrian's eyes open wide with astonishment. He bends down to his son's level.

ADRIAN

Jason?

A BUZZARD'S CRY. Adrian looks into the sky as an immense Turkey Vulture soars into the sky, blocking the sun, covering the scene in darkness.

JASON

Stop them.

Adrian looks back to find himself in-

2                   EXT. CAMPGROUND - NIGHT                   2

A clearing ringed by short scrub trees and rolling grasslands. On one side, a small, natural rock formation juts out of the Earth. A stream can be heard somewhere nearby. The area is bathed in the cold light of a full moon.

Adrian squats in the middle of a cluttered campsite. Jason, NOW 15, stares down at him from atop the rock formation. Before Adrian can respond, his son dissolves into a white light.

3                   INT. DOBBS HOME - ADRIAN AND LAURA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT                   3

Adrian snaps his eyes open and gasps.

ADRIAN

Jason!

He catches his breath, gets his bearings. Beside him, his wife, LAURA DOBBS, sleepily rolls away.

He raises up on his elbows, looks out the window. Moonlight filters through a tree.

He tosses his covers off and climbs out of bed.

4 INT. DOBBS HOME - HALLWAY - NIGHT 4

Dressed only in his pajama bottoms, Adrian walks quietly down the upstairs hallway. He stops at a door. Hand on the knob.

5 INT. DOBBS HOME - JASON'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS 5

The door opens on the bedroom of a young boy. The bed is made, toys neatly put away, everything is in place.

Moonlight shining into the room illuminates a BURN-LIKE SCAR on Adrian's left shoulder.

He gently sits on the edge of the empty bed, looking around. He picks up a well-worn STUFFED ARMADILLO TOY and holds it close to his chest.

ADRIAN  
(softly, confused)  
Stop who, Jason?

Clouds cross the moon, darkening the sky.

6 EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF BLACK FORK - NIGHT 6

WALTER ASHLAND, very old, wrinkled, thinning white hair slicked back, dressed in a tuxedo- walks along a gravel road, leaning heavily on an ornate cane... crosses an empty field... walks under a copse of trees.

7 EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - NIGHT 7

Ashland stops and listens. A roar grows in the distance, then lights. A truck races down the road. Ashland stands in the headlights, defiant. Brakes screech, tires squeal, and the truck swerves around Ashland, MISSING HIM BY INCHES, before speeding down the road, leaving Ashland alone.

Ashland continues walking.

8 EXT. OAKLEY FARM - NIGHT 8

Ashland enters a large, red barn through the side door.

DISSOLVE TO:

9 EXT. OAKLEY FARM - MORNING 9

BYRON OAKLEY- 43, tall, thin, unshaven- walks down a well-worn step path to his barn, whistling a happy tune without a care in the world.

10 INT. OAKLEY BARN - CONTINUOUS 10

Oakley shoves the barn doors open, looking outside. It's a beautiful morning.

He climbs into the combine harvester- hand on the keys in the ignition, lucky rabbit's foot dangling. He turns the ignition, starts the huge machine.

The blades whirls, grind, something's stuck. Suddenly the windshield of the cab is SPRAYED WITH BLOOD.

Oakley shuts down the combine, mouth open in shock.

He looks down at the blades and something makes him recoil in horror. He doubles over and vomits onto the ground.

Behind him, propped up against the wall, is Ashland's cane.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

11 INT. DOBBS HOME - KITCHEN - MORNING

11

MELISSA DOBBS- 15, bottled-chaos in a lithe, teenaged body-eats a toaster cake standing over the sink, not even moving as Laura drops dirty dishes in front of her.

Adrian sits at the table, staring into space. A hard-boiled egg, grapefruit, and toast sit untouched in front of him. Across from him, studying everyone as if she were a scientist living with gorillas, sits CAROLINE DOBBS- 17, large build, simply dressed, hair neatly up in a bun. She absently brushes her spoon in a mostly-eaten grapefruit, eyes on her family.

LAURA DOBBS  
Melissa, please eat at the table.

MELISSA DOBBS  
(stuffing her mouth)  
Done.

She dashes past Laura and grabs a coffee mug.

LAURA DOBBS  
(sighs)  
Adrian, can you talk to your  
daughter? We don't eat at the sink.

She stops in front of him, noticing his untouched food.

LAURA DOBBS  
Adrian?

Adrian blinks, coming out of his thoughts.

ADRIAN  
Sorry?

CAROLINE DOBBS  
(shaking her head)  
Way to pay attention, Dad.

He throws her a look as Laura sits next to him.

LAURA DOBBS  
Not hungry?

He looks down, as if noticing his food for the first time.

A cell phone on the table chimes. Caroline picks it up, but Melissa snatches it out of her hands.

MELISSA DOBBS  
Do you mind?

She spins around the corner, reading a text.

LAURA DOBBS  
(gently)  
You're worried about the Cassidy  
deal. Don't be. From what you've  
shown me, your presentation is-

ADRIAN  
I dreamed about Jason.

Tension fills the room. Laura chills, visibly upset.

ADRIAN  
(defensive)  
Tomorrow's the anniversary. He's  
been on my mind...

LAURA DOBBS  
We had a deal.

ADRIAN  
He's my son, Laura.

LAURA DOBBS  
He's my son, too!

Melissa comes back into the room.

MELISSA DOBBS  
Whoa. What'd I miss?

Adrian rises and grabs his coat. Melissa looks at Caroline.

CAROLINE DOBBS  
Jason.

Melissa nods, knowingly. Caroline sighs and clears her  
breakfast. Adrian heads for the door.

ADRIAN  
I'll see you tonight.

He leans in to peck Laura's cheek. She sits, still as a  
statue, until he gives up and leaves. The girls watch their  
mother, waiting for an outburst of some kind. Instead, Laura  
stands and slowly clears Adrian's breakfast.

LAURA DOBBS  
(over her shoulder)  
You're going to miss your bus.

12 EXT. BLACK FORK - MAIN STREET

12

Black Fork wakes up. The simple, dusty Main Street from Adrian's dream. Half of the storefronts are empty, "For Lease" signs in the windows. The pavement is cracked, weeds peeking up through the sidewalk.

Human activity is sparse. A store owner sweeps in front of his shop... a delivery truck unloads cases of beer in front of Bitterman's, the local tavern... a woman leaves the Black Fork Diner with a mug of coffee and climbs into her well-worn, American-made car... the Methodist and Baptist churches on either side of town welcome scattered mid-week faithful.

Adrian drives his rusty pick-up into town, shovel sticking up in the back and hunting rifle resting in a rack across the rear window.

He parks at the curb in front of a small, one-story building labeled "Town Hall" and walks across the street, head down, passing a TOWNSPERSON on the sidewalk.

TOWNSPERSON  
Morning, Mayor.

Adrian nods absently and enters a general store.

13 INT. BLACK'S BASICS

13

Shelves stocked with the staples of life. Adrian picks up the morning newspaper under the watchful eye of GUS BLACK- late 30's, pudgy, owner of the store.

GUS BLACK  
When we gettin' that stop light on  
Main, Mayor?

Adrian tosses two quarters on the counter. They've had this discussion many times before.

ADRIAN  
We can't afford a stop light, Gus.

GUS BLACK  
Nobody pays attention to the sign.  
Someone's gonna get hurt, the way  
kids zip around the corner there.

Adrian walks out of the store.

ADRIAN  
You did the same thing 20 years  
ago.

GUS BLACK  
(calling after him)  
I was a better driver!

14 EXT. BLACK FORK - MAIN STREET 14

Adrian folds the paper under his arm and trots across the street, head down. He enters the Town Hall.

15 INT. TOWN HALL LOBBY 15

Adrian enters to find DALTON BURL- 39, slightly overweight and dressed in baggy clothes to compensate- sitting at the front desk.

ADRIAN  
Morning, Dalton.

DALTON BURL  
Adrian! Hi. Cassidy Solutions  
called again. They're up early.

Adrian grabs a message off Dalton's desk.

ADRIAN  
It's not early in New York.

He enters his office.

16 INT. TOWN HALL - ADRIAN'S OFFICE 16

Adrian hangs his coat and drops into his chair behind a very cluttered desk. He looks at the phone message, it just reads "Cassidy." He crumbles it up and tosses it in the trash.

His eyes scan his desk, glazing over piles of folders and stacks of computer print-outs, to rest on a manila envelope. The return address reads "MissingKids.org".

Slowly, almost reverently, he removes a large, computer-generated image labeled "Jason Dobbs - Age Enhancement." It's a good likeness of the 15-year old Jason from Adrian's dream.

Dalton enters waving a small booklet.



DALTON BURL

Ta Da! The toxicity report for the Cassidy presentation. All we need now is your summary and we're set.

He sets it atop an overflowing in-box on Adrian's desk. Adrian slips the photo back into the envelope and picks up the newspaper.

DALTON BURL

OK. Rev. Lincoln wants to use Raven Park for the church BBQ next month. They're grilling burgers, so they need a permit. I'll type one up.

Adrian pulls out the sports section and hands it to Dalton, who takes it without comment.

DALTON BURL

That's it for Black Fork. Moving onto business, if we want to plug the Culver wells, we need to get our bid in to the OCC.

Adrian moves the mess on his desk around aimlessly. Print-outs from missing children websites, newspaper clippings, hand-written notes.

DALTON BURL

Adrian? You in there?

ADRIAN

Sorry Dalton, I can't concentrate.

DALTON BURL

Why? What is-

He stops, eyeing the mess on the desk. His eyes widen in understanding and his face drains of color.

DALTON BURL

Oh. Oh, Adrian, I'm so sorry. I wasn't... Is it today?

Adrian weakly waves him away.

ADRIAN

Tomorrow.

DALTON BURL

Tomorrow. Right. You going up there? If you want company-

The phone rings. Dalton reaches across the desk to answer.

DALTON BURL  
(on phone)  
Mayor's Office.

Adrian takes the photo out again, staring at the face of his lost son. Lost in the image.

DALTON BURL  
Sheriff? What's...

His jaw drops and he wordlessly hands Adrian the phone.

ADRIAN  
What?

17 EXT. OAKLEY FARM - MORNING

17

Two "Cavelton County Sheriff" squad cars sit on the grass in front of the barn, which has been roped off with crime scene tape. Byron Oakley sits, in the back of an ambulance, legs dangling over the side. SHERIFF ROGER BASON, 44, rail-thin, almost fragile-looking, comforts him as Adrian looks on.

BYRON OAKLEY  
-not too late. I need to start working.

SHERIFF BASON  
Relax, Byron. Ed Kimmins is bringin' his combine 'round. Your fields are covered.

Oakley looks up at Sheriff Bason, pleading, his eyes filled with tears.

BYRON OAKLEY  
It has to be me.

Sheriff Bason gently pats Oakley on the shoulder and waves a PARAMEDIC over, then motions to Adrian with his head to follow him.

ADRIAN  
Byron didn't kill anybody.

SHERIFF BASON  
You think I don't know that?

They approach the barn, Adrian knowing Sheriff Bason has more to say.

SHERIFF BASON

(stops)

Look, I called you as a courtesy.  
So you wouldn't get blind-sided by  
this later today. But you've got  
to remember... You may be Mayor of  
Black Fork, but Walter Ashland IS  
Black Fork. Or was. This is big. I  
already got a call from State.  
They're sending a man out tomorrow.

ADRIAN

(surprised)

State's coming here?

SHERIFF BASON

(amused)

What, you thought you and Dalton  
were gonna handle this?

ADRIAN

Course not. But State... it's not  
the best time.

SHERIFF BASON

Never is.

He continues toward the barn. Adrian follows.

SHERIFF BASON

Let the Suits handle it. I don't  
need to waste half my guys on a  
publicity shit storm.

ADRIAN

What are you telling the press?

SHERIFF BASON

You kidding? Millionaire recluse  
chopped up in a combine.

Sheriff Bason pulls the barn door open and enters. Adrian  
hurries after him.

18

INT. OAKLEY BARN - CONTINUOUS

18

Adrian takes two steps inside the door and stops. We don't  
see what he's looking at, but his jaw drops in shock.

SHERIFF BASON

Pretty much writes itself.

19

EXT. BLACK FORK - MONTAGE

19

A sequence of shots showing the passing of the day.

MAIN STREET - MID-MORNING

MR. THORNBERRY- age unknown, an odd, tall, thin, well-dressed man in a bowler hat- walks down the street carrying a small, cardboard box. The few people he passes step back, as if not to attract attention to themselves.

POST OFFICE - MID-MORNING

Mr. Thornberry enters the empty post office and calmly sets the box on the counter.

MADGE HENDRICKS, 60's, life-long postal worker, looks up, first surprised, then apprehensive, as Mr. Thornberry opens the box to reveal a large collection of bright red envelopes.

MR. THORNBERRY  
Today, if you please.

DINER - LATE MORNING

Madge dumps mail on the counter and waves to ROGER ATHERTON, 50, the large, burly owner of the diner. Roger scoops up the mail, flipping through as he walks back to the kitchen. He stops upon finding a red envelope.

RURAL HOUSE - DAY

SALLY BINGHAM, 24, frazzled blond in disheveled clothes, balances her INFANT CHILD in her arms, while she peers into her mailbox. The only thing inside is a red envelope.

FARM - DAY

EDDIE LOTTS, 40, soft and round, climbs down from his tractor as his wife, ERIN, approaches. He notices an odd look on her face as she hands him a red envelope.

He flips it over and we see a W/A insignia on the back.

20 EXT. DOBBS HOME - AFTERNOON 20

Laura Dobbs opens her mailbox- stereotypical box on a single post in front of the house- and pulls out her mail.

Walking back to the house, she flips wearily from overdue bill to overdue bill until she reaches a bright red envelope addressed to "Mr. and Mrs. Adrian Dobbs."

Curious, she opens it on her front steps and pulls out a single, red sheet of paper- a fancy invitation which begins "You Are Cordially Invited..."

21 EXT. BLACK FORK - MAIN STREET - EVENING 21

Sunset over the town. The lone street light flickers on.

22 EXT. THE EDGEMONT - EVENING 22

A once-proud four-story motel, it has been empty and ignored for years. Windows are boarded up, weeds grow in the cracks of the pavement, the building screams for a coat of paint.

In spite of this, a steady stream of Black Fork citizens file through the large double doors, clutching bright red envelopes.

23 INT. THE EDGEMONT BALLROOM - EVENING 23

The people of Black Fork stand in small groupings of two or three, looking for some sign of organization. There's a buzz of suspicion, and all talk is of the death of Walter Ashland.

Roger Atherton stands in the center of the largest group, telling loud, off-color jokes and receiving less-than-enthusiastic laughs from some, and embarrassed glances from other. Sally Bingham sways and bounces back and forth, alone in the crowd, trying to quiet her crying infant. Adrian and Laura stand against one wall with Dalton, Adrian watching everything like a hawk.

DALTON BURL

Sheriff Bason called. Said to tell  
you to expect company first thing  
in the morning.

ADRIAN

(sighs)

We're gonna get a visit from the  
State boys.

DALTON BURL

Yeah. I figured. You're gonana want  
to pick up some coffee. We're out.

AARON WHITE

Mayor Dobbs!

Working through the crowd is AARON WHITE, 22, member of the Cherokee Nation. Ancestry aside, he's dressed like an average twenty-something, with jeans, T-shirt, and a baseball cap. A few people in the crowd eye him suspiciously.

LAURA DOBBS

You, too, Aaron?

Aaron holds up his bright red envelope.

AARON WHITE

(distracted)

May I speak with you a moment?

Adrian gestures to the crowd.

ADRIAN

Til things get interesting.

Aaron looks down at his feet, gathering his thoughts. Nervous. Finally, he raises his head.

AARON WHITE

The Cherokee Nation wishes for the  
Cassidy deal to die.

ADRIAN

Get in line. Half the town's  
grabbing pitchforks over it.

AARON WHITE

We've procured an injunction.

DALTON BURL

(surprised)

You what?

Aaron silently hands a letter to Adrian, who reads it over.

ADRIAN

Ancestral graveyard?

DALTON BURL  
You guys are buried on the other  
side of the Mesa!

AARON WHITE  
Prove it.

DALTON BURL  
Gimmie a shovel!

Adrian raises his hand, cutting Dalton off.

ADRIAN  
The Cassidy deal is our future.  
Without it, Black Fork is dead.

Aaron drops his head, sadly.

AARON WHITE  
I'm afraid your town died a long  
time ago, Mayor.

Nodding to Dalton and Laura, he shuffles back into the crowd.

LAURA DOBBS  
They wouldn't really take you to  
court, would they?

Adrian looks up at the ceiling, trying to decide, when the room quiets unnaturally. The crowd splits apart as someone strides purposefully through the middle. Adrian spots an UNKNOWN WOMAN wearing a serious suit and a dour expression watching in the back.

Something about her sparks Adrian's curiosity, but his attention is pulled away by Dalton.

DALTON BURL  
It's The Ghost!

All eyes are on a small platform in the center of the room and Mr. Thornberry as he sets down a large suitcase and folds his arms in front of him, patiently. Finally, all is silent. He speaks without smiling.

MR. THORNBERRY  
According to his Last Will and  
Testament, Walter Ashland's assets  
are to be awarded to citizens of  
Black Fork.

A murmur of nervous excitement flows through the crowd. Mr. Thornberry again waits for silence before continuing.

MR. THORNBERRY  
Is Mrs. Cecilia Jones present?

Everyone looks until CECILIA JONES- a frail, 80-year old woman wearing a shawl- hobbles forward, utterly confused.

DALTON BURL  
(to Adrian)  
Cat Lady?

She is helped up onto the platform, where she stands as far from Mr. Thornberry as possible.

MR. THORNBERRY  
Mr. Ashland has left you this suitcase.

She stares at the suitcase, then looks around the room at her fellow citizens, who all stare back as if at a guinea pig in an experiment.

Finally, she wraps her hand around the handle and tugs, only to slump down, unable to move the heavy suitcase.

Mr. Thornberry just watches, impassively. Adrian nudges Dalton, who looks back, then steps forward.

DALTON BURL  
Here. Let me.

He grabs hold of the handle and tugs. A rip is heard. Dalton stumbles backward as the suitcase splits on the zipper and BUNDLES OF CASH SPILL TO THE FLOOR.

Everyone stares in astonishment except Mr. Thornberry, who is not phased. Dalton, embarrassed, shovels it back in. Cecilia Jones just stares in wonderment.

CECILIA JONES  
Oh my.

While some friends help Cecilia off to the side, Dalton drags the damaged suitcase along, throwing Adrian a befuddled look as he passes.

Mr. Thornberry stands patiently, hands crossed, until the crowd quiets and reverts their attention to him once again.

MR. THORNBERRY  
Is Mr. David Brumfield present?

DAVID BRUMFIELD  
Hell, yes!



DAVID BRUMFIELD, 27, lanky, goofy-looking, dressed in overalls, jumps forward, excited.

DAVID BRUMFIELD  
Where's my suitcase?

Brumfield hops up onto the platform, expectantly.

MR. THORNBERRY  
Mr. Ashland has left you The Edgemont and funds to finance a renovation.

Confusion in the crowd. Brumfield's eyes widen and he looks around the room.

MR. THORNBERRY  
Further heirs will be notified by Ashland's Executor at a later point in time.

Roger Atherton calls out.

ROGER ATHERTON  
You're just gonna come to our door?

MR. THORNBERRY  
Not I. The Executor. Mrs. Laura Dobbs.

All heads turn to Laura, who stares at Thornberry, stunned.

MR. THORNBERRY  
Good evening.

The crowd parts as he exits the room, amid growing murmurs. Adrian looks at Laura, who just shakes her head, bewildered.

24

EXT. THE EDGEMONT - NIGHT

24

Adrian pulls Laura to the side just outside the hotel.

ADRIAN  
When did you agree to be Ashland's executor?

LAURA DOBBS  
I worked for him for three months twenty years ago right out of high school! We haven't spoken in years!

SCOTT RANDOLPH, a short, wiry man in his 30s, hurries up to them, twitching nervously and speaking very fast.

SCOTT RANDOLPH  
Mayor! Mr. Mayor! Mrs. Dobbs!

Adrian and Laura shift gears, trying to calm down.

ADRIAN  
Evening, Scott.

SCOTT RANDOLPH  
Am I on the list? See, me and  
Ashland, we had an understanding-

DARRELL RIGGS  
(in an overpowering voice)  
Dobbs!

DARRELL RIGGS, 45, ex-jock whose body has filled out with the years, struts over.

DARRELL RIGGS  
How much do I get?

Adrian grabs Laura by the arm.

ADRIAN  
We need to get out of here.

He leads her away. A crowd forms around them, calling out.

DARRELL RIGGS  
Oh, Hell no! Get back here! Dobbs!

ROGER ATHERTON  
Are you gonna call another meeting,  
Laura? To pass out the money?

DARRELL RIGGS  
How much you pulling down for this,  
Dobbs? Executors get paid, right?

A cry erupts from the crowd and people clear the sidewalk as a grey, beat-up pick-up truck roars off the curb STRAIGHT AT ADRIAN, lights blazing.

ADRIAN  
Down!

He dives on top of Laura, dropping them both to the ground, narrowly avoiding the onrushing truck, which swerves and takes off down the street. Adrian gets up quickly.

LAURA DOBBS  
What was-?

ADRIAN  
Stay here!

He runs to a simple, blue Chevy pick-up parked nearby, leaps in, and takes off in pursuit.

LAURA DOBBS  
Adrian!

He zooms away. At the edge of the crowd, standing under the awning of the hotel, the Unknown Woman watches intently.

25 EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF BLACK FORK - NIGHT 25

Adrian's truck speeds out of town. He looks left and right for any sign of the truck in the empty fields. Spotting something, he slams the brakes and turns off the road.

26 EXT. EMPTY FIELD 26

Adrian's truck skids to a stop in the middle of the field, a few yards from the grey truck. Adrian jumps out and ducks behind his door. He detects no movement, no signs of life.

He pulls a crowbar from the back of his truck and carefully walks towards the other truck.

ADRIAN  
I know you're in there! Come on out, let's talk. You hear me?

He stops, waiting, tense. Then takes another step forward.

THE TRUCK EXPLODES.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

27 INT. DOBBS HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

27

Laura fusses over a bruised Adrian while Melissa and Caroline skulk on the stairs, watching.

ADRIAN

I'm fine.

LAURA DOBBS

You should call Sheriff Bason.

ADRIAN

Why? Because some drunk swerved  
into me, then abandoned his  
overheating heap in a field?

Laura, frustrated, moves to the sink to wash her hands.

ADRIAN

Laura, please. Nobody got hurt. Let  
it go. I'm fine.

MELISSA DOBBS

(sarcastic)

Yeah. You look great.

ADRIAN

(sharply)

Don't you have homework to do?

MELISSA DOBBS

Just trying to help.

CAROLINE DOBBS

At least she's home, that's  
something.

MELISSA DOBBS

Shut up!

LAURA DOBBS

Upstairs, both of you. I need to  
talk to your father.

Melissa and Caroline reluctantly head upstairs.

ADRIAN

She's not home a lot? You hadn't  
mentioned-

LAURA DOBBS  
You're not home a lot, either.

She watches him calmly, but accusingly. He looks down at the floor, guiltily.

ADRIAN  
There's a lot of competition to  
land these bids and plug the wells.  
Add to that all the Mayoral junk  
that piles up...

She shakes her head, choosing to ignore the obvious evasion.

LAURA DOBBS  
Maybe if this executor thing pays-

ADRIAN  
Did you see the look on people's  
faces when that cash spilled onto  
the floor? This is going to get  
ugly. We can't get caught in the  
middle.

She walks some dirty mugs to the sink and runs the water,  
washing the cups. Adrian watches, frustrated. His eyes wander  
and settle on two business cards pinned to a cork board-  
Realtors.

Laura drops one of the cups into the sink. She quickly picks  
it up, dries it off. The silence stretches.

ADRIAN  
It's been a long day. I'm going to  
bed.

He rises. Laura just stares at him. Finally, he turns back.

ADRIAN  
What?

LAURA DOBBS  
(carefully)  
It's time, Adrian. Please sign the  
papers.

Adrian steps back, as if struck.

ADRIAN  
You're bringing this up now?

LAURA DOBBS  
I need to move on.

ADRIAN

So move on.

LAURA DOBBS

We had a deal! You spent our savings looking for Jason, I supported you. You came and went in the middle of the night for weeks at a time, I didn't stop you.

ADRIAN

I'm looking for our son!

LAURA DOBBS

He's dead!

ADRIAN

A bloody shirt does not make him dead!

LAURA DOBBS

It's all we have!

She stares at him, desperate, emotion all over her face.

LAURA DOBBS

I want him back as much as you. But it's been seven years, Adrian. After all this time, all the money spent searching, if he were alive we would have found something. Please. Sign the papers. Let him go. The girls need you.

He stares back, unable to connect. Finally, he turns and heads upstairs. Laura watches him, tears trickling down her cheek. He stops on the steps, doesn't turn around.

ADRIAN

Tomorrow. Seven years tomorrow.

He continues upstairs. She throws the cup into the sink, shattering it.

28

INT. CECILIA JONES' HOME - NIGHT

28

A small, cluttered, old lady house covered in cats.

Dalton drags the suitcase next to a faded-green couch. Numerous cats scatter at his approach.

DALTON BURL  
 You gonna be OK? I can... Is there  
 someone you want me to call?

CECILIA JONES  
 (eyes on the suitcase)  
 Thank you, Dalton. Very kind.

DALTON BURL  
 Right. OK. If you need anything...  
 I can drop by in the morning...

She kneels down and opens the corner of the suitcase, peering inside. Dalton is very uncomfortable.

DALTON BURL  
 So I'll go now. Ma'am. Mrs. Jones.

She pulls out a small handful of bills and holds them out.

CECILIA JONES  
 Can I offer... for all your help?

Dalton backs away apprehensively, shaking his head.

DALTON BURL  
 You don't need to... thanks but...

He stumbles backwards into the door, nearly stepping on a cat, then turns and leaves.

Cecilia looks after him, then returns her gaze to the money in her hand. She stuffs it back into the suitcase, then stands to lock the door behind him.

She stands at the door a moment. Something bothers her. Her eyes scan the room, her face hardening into a frown.

29 INT. CECILIA JONES' HOME 29

Quick series of shots of Cecilia locking and bolting every door and window in her home.

30 INT. CECILIA JONES' HOME - NIGHT 30

Cecilia sits on her couch, slowly sipping a cup of tea, eyes on the suitcase, surrounded by cats. She's brought a pillow and blanket down to the living room, in preparation of spending the night on the couch.

31 INT. THE EDGEMONT - NIGHT

31

David Brumfield walks through the dark, broken-down, beaten-up halls of his new property, wild-eyed.

Every door he opens reveals a room in need of a fresh coat of paint. Wallpaper is peeling, floors squeak, what furniture exists is covered in moldy sheets.

He finds more of the same on the other three floors. Empty rooms, rotting furniture, dust and mold.

At the end of the hallway on the top floor, he comes to yet another decrepit door, with the number 48 hanging loosely at an angle. He moves to open it, only to find the door locked. Curious, he takes out a ring of old, black keys, trying one after another until finally he finds the right key. The door opens only an inch before catching on a safety chain on the inside of the door.

He stares, shocked, through the crack at a modern, well-furnished, spotless room.

FADE TO:

32 INT. BLACK'S BASICS - MORNING

32

A general store. Shelves stocked with the latest. Focus on a can of Folgers pre-ground coffee. It's plucked off the shelf by Adrian, who walks down the aisle.

Reaching the front, he grabs the morning paper and stands behind Cecilia Jones, who waits at the counter in front of a small pile of groceries.

Gus Black holds a bill in his hand, frowning.

GUS BLACK

Sorry, Mrs. Jones. I don't have change.

He tries to hand the bill back. Adrian sees that it's a \$100.

CECILIA JONES

I don't need change.

Cecilia picks up her groceries and walks out of the store.



33 INT. CAVELTON COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY 33

Bell rings. The hallway is flushed with students. Melissa Dobbs walks, head down, lost in thought.

Out of nowhere, arms grab her around the waist and yank her into an open classroom.

34 INT. CAVELTON COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL - EMPTY CLASSROOM 34

The door is slammed shut and Melissa is pressed up against the wall. Before she can scream, a hand covers her mouth. Her eyes widen, then relax.

DAVID DANIELS- 16, greasy hair, torn jeans- holds a finger to his lips. Once he's sure she's calm, he takes his hand away.

MELISSA DOBBS

Looking to score detention? There's a corner of the library I'm pretty sure'll be empty for another hour if you're up to it.

David sags, a worried look on his face. She playfully lunges her mouth forward, and he leans back, out of her reach.

MELISSA DOBBS

Oh, come on.

He steps away, nervous. She folds her arms, waiting.

DAVID DANIELS

I think we should tell someone.

MELISSA DOBBS

Are you crazy?

DAVID DANIELS

We almost hit him!

MELISSA DOBBS

But we didn't. And now he's dead so who's gonna know?

DAVID DANIELS

We can't just-

MELISSA DOBBS

We can and we will.

He frowns, not convinced. She changes tactics, steps forward.

MELISSA DOBBS  
Come on, David.  
(she boldly cups his  
groin)  
Grow a pair.

He quickly pushes her hand away. She chuckles, then scurries back out into the hall.

35 INT. TOWN HALL LOBBY

35

Dalton stands as Adrian marches into the lobby.

DALTON BURL  
Adrian! Hi. She was standing  
outside when I got here. I offered  
her coffee, but, of course, we're  
out. She's in your office.

ADRIAN  
Who?

DALTON BURL  
The suit.

ADRIAN  
(frowning)  
Bring us a couple cups.

Adrian tosses Dalton the coffee and marches into his office.

36 INT. TOWN HALL - ADRIAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

36

Adrian enters to find SARAH FISHER- the Unknown Woman from the night before. 31, medium height, blond hair tied up professionally in a bun, she sits at his desk, rifling through his papers.

ADRIAN  
Can I help you?

She looks up and leans back.

FISHER  
Did you catch whomever tried to run  
you down last night?

He stops, caught off guard.

ADRIAN  
You were at the Edgemont.  
(shrugs)  
A local drunk. No harm done.

She nods, then moves out from behind the desk.

FISHER  
It's a very small town, isn't it?

Their eyes meet and something makes Adrian smile.

ADRIAN  
Back in my grandfather's day Black  
Fork was an actual destination. Of  
course, that was when we had oil  
bubbling up all over the place.

FISHER  
And now? Why stick around?

ADRIAN  
Oh, it has its charms.

FISHER  
How long a stay is required to  
discover them?

He laughs as she offers her hand.

FISHER  
Agent Sarah Fisher of the Oklahoma  
State Bureau of Investigation.

They shake.

ADRIAN  
Adrian Dobbs. Welcome to Black  
Fork. You're here for Ashland's  
suicide, right?

FISHER  
Correct. Sheriff Bason recommended  
I use you to facilitate my  
investigation.

Dalton enters.

DALTON BURL  
Coffee's brewing. Do you need milk  
in yours? We're out, but I can hop  
over to the Diner-

FISHER  
Black is fine. Thank you.

He nods and leans against the door. She eyes him.

FISHER  
Was there something else?

DALTON BURL  
No, I'm good.

ADRIAN  
Agent Fisher, how, exactly, can I  
help... facilitate?

FISHER  
Directions. Introductions.

DALTON BURL  
Why do you need to talk to anyone?  
He laid down in a combine.

FISHER  
I need to be thorough. View the  
body, talk to Mr. Oakley.  
(to Adrian)  
I'd like to start right away.

ADRIAN  
What? Now?

FISHER  
The sooner I begin...  
(smiles)  
Maybe afterwards, you can show me  
some of Black Fork's charms.

Adrian looks over at Dalton who shrugs- no help. Adrian nods.

ADRIAN  
Sure. Give us a second?

She smiles, and exits the office. Dalton looks questioningly  
at Adrian. Who makes sure Fisher's out of earshot.

ADRIAN  
There's a burnt-out truck half mile  
down Route 82. Get me a name.

Dalton nods slowly, as Adrian exits.

37

EXT. TOWN HALL - MORNING

37

Adrian leads Fisher to his truck just as REV. LINCOLN bursts out of the Methodist church across the street. 45, tall, almost sinewy in appearance, she bustles down the steps ungainly, yet unquestioningly charismatic.

REV. LINCOLN  
Mayor Dobbs!

Adrian's face darkens and he tenses up.

REV. LINCOLN  
You are putting a stop to this,  
yes?

ADRIAN  
Stop to what, Reverend?

REV. LINCOLN  
Walter Ashland is taunting us from  
the grave, waving his money around  
one last time. What are you going  
to do about it?

FISHER  
Mayor Dobbs has no power to  
override a legal document, Ma'am.

Rev. Lincoln whips around and is in Fisher's face.

REV. LINCOLN  
Ma'am? Who are you?

FISHER  
Agent Sarah-

Rev. Lincoln turns back to Adrian, interrupting (and ignoring) Fisher.

REV. LINCOLN  
I will not stand idly by and let  
that man poison my flock with his  
ill-gotten wealth.

ADRIAN  
Ashland's dead, Rev. You won. Let  
it-

REV. LINCOLN  
Stop this, Dobbs. Or I will.

She turns and heads back to her church. Fisher stares, dumbfounded. Adrian sighs.

FISHER  
She's quite...

ADRIAN  
Yeah.

He climbs into the truck. With another look back at the church, Fisher climbs in as well.

38 INT. CECILIA JONES' HOME - MORNING 38

Cecilia nervously folds up her blanket and places it on the edge of the couch, her eyes darting back to the suitcase.

Finally, she shoos a cat off the top and lifts the ripped lid, peering in at all the cash. She gets an idea.

39 INT. CECILIA JONES' HOME - CLOSET 39

Cecilia shoves aside old jackets, digging something out of the back of the closet.

40 INT. CECILIA JONES' HOME 40

She wheels a large, hard-top, roller suitcase into the living room and sets it down next to the money.

Opening the new suitcase, she begins transferring the money from the damaged suitcase into the new one.

41 EXT. BLACK FORK STREET - MORNING 41

Cecilia stands at the end of a dusty street, her roller suitcase next to her. A BUS pulls up.

42 INT. BUS 42

Cecilia climbs up and motions to the suitcase behind her.

CECILIA JONES  
Be a dear.

She takes a seat directly behind the driver, who awkwardly gets up to grab her suitcase under her watchful eye.

43 EXT. OAKLEY FARM

43

Adrian's truck sits on the dry grass in front of the barn.  
Crime Scene tape around the barn flaps in a light wind.

44 INT. OAKLEY BARN

44

Agent Fisher stands, awestruck, amidst the carnage. Dried blood is everywhere, and on everything. In the center of the barn, the Harvester stands ominously.

ADRIAN

We've sort of kept the scope of the  
mess under wraps.

Fisher slowly steps through the barn, then squats down,  
inspecting the straw-covered floor.

FISHER

He was alone?

ADRIAN

Near as we can figure.

FISHER

Did they find anything else? Did  
they even do a proper search?

ADRIAN

Don't get all high and mighty on  
me, Sheriff Bason's crew's as  
professional as anything you'll  
find in Tulsa, or wherever. The  
only thing they found that didn't  
belong in here was Ashland's cane.  
Well, aside from...

(he searches for the right  
word, gives up)

Ashland.

Fisher examines the room while Adrian stands, arms folded.

FISHER

I'll need to view the remains at  
some point.

ADRIAN

Sure. They're up at the plant.

FISHER

Plant?

ADRIAN  
Ashland Animal Processing. It's got  
a cold storage locker.

She looks at him incredulously. He smiles.

45 INT. PARSONS' GARAGE - LATE MORNING

45

Laura walks into the main work room of Parsons' Garage, weaving her way through a maze of farm machinery in various conditions of repair: tractors, plows, etc. CHIP PARSONS- 60, hairy, slow- is bent over a combine, working on the gears, covered in oil and grease.

LAURA DOBBS  
Morning, Chip.

He lifts his head.

CHIP PARSONS  
Laura.

She walks through to a small office in the back.

46 INT. PARSONS' GARAGE - OFFICE

46

She drops her bag on a small table and turns on an old computer. While it warms up, she hangs her coat and sees, through the large window into the garage, Chip watching her.

She smiles at him and sits down at the computer, sifting through a pile of paperwork. A glance up, and Chip is still watching her.

Her mood sours. After a moment, she shakes her head.

LAURA DOBBS  
(to herself)  
Damn.

47 INT. PARSONS' GARAGE

47

She struts out of the office over to Chip, who remains in front of the combine, watching.

LAURA DOBBS  
I haven't seen a list. I don't know  
if the Old Man left you anything.



CHIP PARSONS

OK.

LAURA DOBBS

I don't even know if I'm going to do it.

CHIP PARSONS

OK.

LAURA DOBBS

I'm going to go back into the office now.

He nods, she turns and walks back into the office. After a moment, Chip turns his attention back to his work.

48

EXT. OAKLEY BARN

48

Agent Fisher strides purposefully towards Oakley's house, Adrian behind her.

FISHER

Just introduce me. I'll ask the questions.

ADRIAN

(distracted)

Uh-huh.

FISHER

Even if he directs a question to you, let me answer.

She stops, turns. Adrian is staring out into the open field of prairie grass.

FISHER

Mayor Dobbs?

He heads off into the field at a jog.

FISHER

Mayor Dobbs!

49

EXT. OAKLEY FIELD

49

Fisher pushes tall prairie grass aside, following the sound of Adrian pushing his own way through ahead.

FISHER

Dobbs! What is this? What are you-

She steps out into a small BEATEN-DOWN CLEARING. The grass has been knocked down, trampled, and dug up.

Off to one side, Byron Oakley stands knee deep in a trench, digging. He's covered in dirt, streaks of blood on his hands as he works furiously. The trench, and other areas of beaten-down grass, extend like a maze into the field. Adrian walks up to Oakley, who doesn't notice the intrusion.

ADRIAN

Byron?

Oakley turns around, tense. Seeing Adrian, he relaxes.

BYRON OAKLEY

Christ, Adrian. You scared me something fierce.

ADRIAN

Sorry, didn't mean to-

BYRON OAKLEY

I'm busy.

He turns and continues digging. Fisher joins them.

FISHER

Is there a problem?

ADRIAN

Byron, why are you-

BYRON OAKLEY

Get out of here and let me dig! I have to finish.

FISHER

What happens if you don't finish?

Oakley stops and eyes Fisher a moment. He doesn't like her. She shivers from the cold stare and he returns to digging without answering her. She looks to Adrian for help and he steps forward.

ADRIAN

What happens if you don't finish, Byron?

Oakley continues digging, ignoring them. Adrian gently backs away, pulling Fisher with him.

Behind them, Oakley digs furiously.

50

EXT. OAKLEY FARM

50

Adrian and Agent Fisher emerge from the field. Adrian walks to his truck, Fisher stops.

FISHER

You want to tell me what that was  
all about back there?

ADRIAN

Byron lost his wife a few months  
ago. He's sort of gone off the deep  
end. Yesterday can't have helped.

He hops into the truck. She shakes her head and climbs in.

FISHER

He's just out in his fields digging  
randomly?

ADRIAN

Cheaper than therapy.

Camera pulls away as the truck drives off and we get an  
aerial view of the field. Oakley isn't digging randomly. He's  
creating a very large, very specific pattern in the Earth.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

51 INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - DAY 51

Cecilia Jones wheels her roller suitcase through the showroom, the sound echoing loudly among the cars. A CAR SALESMAN hurries to her side.

CAR SALESMAN  
Howdy, Ma'am! Welcome to Eaton  
Cadillac.  
(nodding to the suitcase,  
amused)  
Planning to stay awhile?

Cecilia sets the suitcase down, bends over, unlocks it, and throws it open, revealing stacks of cash.

Car Salesman's jaw drops and he staggers back a step.

CECILIA JONES  
I'd like to buy a car.

52 EXT. OPEN ROAD - DAY 52

Adrian's truck speeds down the empty road.

53 INT. ADRIAN'S TRUCK 53

Adrian drives while Agent Fisher writes in a small notebook.

FISHER  
Is Ashland really in a meat locker?

ADRIAN  
I don't think he minds.

His phone rings. He pulls it out and glances at the caller ID, keeping one eye on the road. It rings again, and Agent Fisher looks up.

FISHER  
Do you need to answer that?

Adrian awkwardly holds it to his ear, eyes on the road.

ADRIAN  
Dalton?

54 INT. TOWN HALL LOBBY

54

Dalton at his desk, on the phone.

INTERCUT BETWEEN THE TWO SCENES AS NECESSARY.

DALTON BURL

Adrian. Hi. You got a call from  
Cassidy Solutions. Sounded urgent.

Adrian grunts as he rounds a curve, dropping the phone.

ADRIAN

Ah, Hell!

He leans down to pick it up, brushing against Fisher's leg.

FISHER

Don't mind me.

ADRIAN

Sorry.

He flashes a quick glance at her thighs before straightening up and shoving the phone against his ear with his shoulder.

ADRIAN

Did you chase down that truck?

Adrian shifts, almost loses the phone again.

ADRIAN

Damn it. Hold on.

55 EXT. OPEN ROAD

55

Adrian's truck pulls over to the side of the road. Long-abandoned oil pumps litter an empty field that butts up against rocky hills.

56 INT. ADRIAN'S TRUCK

56

ADRIAN

(to Fisher)

This'll just take a second.

He hops out of the truck before she can respond. She watches him a moment, then pulls out her own cell phone.

57 EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD NEXT TO ABANDONED OIL PUMPS

57

Adrian paces into the field, away from the truck.

ADRIAN

Tell me about the truck.

DALTON BURL

Did you not hear me? Cassidy-

ADRIAN

I heard you, but I can't talk to them. They want the presentation, I don't have it yet. The truck?

DALTON BURL

OK. Yeah. Alright. It's registered to Randall Knoll.

ADRIAN

Knoll? He's in construction, right?

DALTON BURL

Right. He married Lucy Beckett. Remember? She was a cheerleader. Hurt her leg Junior year.

ADRIAN

I remember.

Adrian passes a rusty, derelict oil pump- the closest to the road. He pays no attention to his whereabouts.

DALTON BURL

Thing is, didn't he-?

ADRIAN

Yes. I need an address.

THROUGH TELEPHOTO LENS

We watch Adrian pace his way into the field of abandoned oil pumps through a telephoto lens. He is being watched.

58 INT. ADRIAN'S TRUCK

58

Agent Fisher holds her cellphone up to her ear.

FISHER

If he had them with him when he killed himself, Sir, they've disappeared.

59

INT. OKLAHOMA STATE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

59

RICHARD CUMMINGS- 50, bald, fit, and trim- sits behind his desk, leaning forward on his elbows and talking into a speakerphone. His office is sparse, with wood-panelled walls and a window overlooking an industrial park.

CUMMINGS

That's incredibly unfortunate.

INTERCUT BETWEEN THE TWO SCENES AS NECESSARY.

FISHER

I'm sure they're at his estate. But I'll need a warrant to get in.

CUMMINGS

You're positive it's Ashland?

FISHER

I'm examining the remains later and will make a positive ID at that time. But Sir, a warrant? This could be our chance. Ashland kept us out of his little compound while alive, but now-

Cummings looks up at an UNSEEN INDIVIDUAL in the room.

CUMMINGS

What do you know of the Mayor?

FISHER

(surprised)

Adrian Dobbs? He's been helpful. Why? Is he somehow involved with-

CUMMINGS

Find out what you can about him. And get me a positive ID on the body by tomorrow morning.

He hangs up. Fisher stares at her phone a moment, confused.

60 EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD NEXT TO ABANDONED OIL PUMPS 60

Adrian hangs up his phone and looks around at all the pumps.

THROUGH TELEPHOTO LENS

Adrian half-jogs back to his truck.

61 INT. ADRIAN'S TRUCK 61

Adrian climbs into the cab as Fisher pockets her phone.

FISHER  
Everything alright?

ADRIAN  
That was Dalton. Our concrete  
shipment is delayed. Nothing to do  
with Ashland.

FISHER  
Concrete?

ADRIAN  
We plug abandoned oil wells. Park  
our rig over the hole and fill it  
with concrete.  
(smiling)  
What? You thought being Mayor of  
Black Fork paid the bills?

He starts the truck.

ADRIAN  
You ready to see the body? I'll  
drop you off at your car and warn  
the Plant you're coming.

Without awaiting a reply, he pulls onto the road. She studies  
him a moment, noticing his nervousness.

FISHER  
That'll be fine.

62 EXT. BLACK FORK - MAIN STREET 62

A beaten-down SCHOOL BUS rolls to a stop in the center of  
town. Doors open and HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS pile out.



Melissa is among a small group of kids making their way towards the Black Fork Diner. Caroline is one of the last ones off the bus, totally alone.

As the bus pulls away, Melissa turns back to her sister.

MELISSA DOBBS

Hey, tell Mom I'm at the Diner, OK?

CAROLINE DOBBS

You're supposed to go right home.

MELISSA DOBBS

And?

Caroline frowns, Melissa chuckles, turns, and bounces over to her friends. The group descends on the Diner.

Caroline watches them go, then looks around the street. Her gaze locks on the Black Fork Methodist Church. Rev. Lincoln stands atop a ladder leaning against the church's sign, placing a final letter on the new message. She hands the rest of the letters down to her ASSISTANT, a homely 40-something man with short, black hair. She carefully closes the glass cover, then climbs down.

The sign reads "Whoever loves wealth is never satisfied. Ecclesiastes 5:10."

She walks towards the church as, across the street, Adrian and Fisher pull up to the curb in front of Town Hall and get out of his truck.

FISHER

How helpful are they going to be when I examine Ashland's body?

ADRIAN

Pretty helpful. They don't get many visitors to the plant.

FISHER

I'll be a break from the boredom?

ADRIAN

Something like that.

CECILIA JONES (O.S.)

Mayor Dobbs!

Cecilia Jones steps out of a brand-new Cadillac.

ADRIAN  
(eyeing the car)  
Nice car, Mrs. Jones.

CECILIA JONES  
(beaming)  
Do you like it? It's been a while  
since I've owned one. I'd forgotten  
how much fun they are.

Amused, Fisher hides her reaction.

ADRIAN  
What can I do for you?

She motions him to follow her to her trunk. Once there, she quickly looks around before popping it open.

Inside is the roller suitcase. She opens it up, revealing piles of cash.

CECILIA JONES  
I was hoping you could lock this  
away for me. Somewhere safe.

Adrian stares at it, scratching his shoulder absently.

FISHER  
You don't have banks here?

ADRIAN  
There's a couple over in Eaton...

CECILIA JONES  
I'd rather the money stay in Black  
Fork. It's what Walter would have  
wanted.

Adrian closes the trunk.

ADRIAN  
(to Cecilia)  
Take it 'round back, I'll put it in  
the safe.

She scuttles back to the driver's side.

ADRIAN  
We don't have much crime in Black  
Fork, but that's an awfully big  
temptation.

Jones pulls away, clumsily driving around the corner. Adrian walks Fisher to her car.

ADRIAN

You have directions. They'll be expecting you. Call if there's anything else.

He shuts her door for her and jogs into Town Hall. Fisher watches him, frowning.

63

INT. BLACK FORK DINER - AFTERNOON

63

Sally Bingham sits alone in a booth, her newborn in a bucket seat next to her, eating a late lunch. Darrell Riggs watches her from the counter, then walks over.

DARRELL RIGGS

Got a minute Sally?

She looks up, immediately suspicious as he slides into the booth across from her.

DARRELL RIGGS

You was at that meeting last night.  
You got one of them envelopes.

SALLY BINGHAM

Yes I did. So did you.

DARRELL RIGGS

Right. Here's what we're gonna do.

64

EXT. DOBBS HOME - DAY

64

Laura walks up her driveway, eyes on the ground, a small folder of papers in her hands.

She climbs the steps to the porch and freezes. The folder of papers drops, individual papers, including a few Realtor flyers, float to the ground.

Mr. Thornberry, still dressed in his dark suit and bowler hat, stands patiently at the door.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

65 EXT. TOWN HALL

65

From her car, Fisher watches Adrian and Dalton climb into Adrian's truck.

A moment after it pulls away, she pulls out from behind the corner and follows.

66 INT. BEE'S SALON - AFTERNOON

66

A number of OLD LADIES of the town sit in chairs, reading and chatting while BEE KINGFISHER- 48, Cherokee descent- works her magic on their hair.

The small bell above the door announces Cecilia Jones' entrance. Conversation stops and all eyes are on the frail woman. She waits patiently, cradling a small, grey cat in her arms, until Bee finally steps forward.

BEE KINGFISHER

Hello, Mrs. Jones! This is an unexpected pleasure. Welcome!

MADDIE SMITH- 60's, short grey hair and weathered skin, scoffs from one of the waiting chairs.

MADDIE SMITH

Christ almighty Bee, slow down on the fawnin'. She's been rich for, what? One day?

Bee bristles but ignores Maddie.

BEE KINGFISHER

I've been wanting to do you up for years. I know just the look.

CECILIA JONES

(aghast)

Not me! I was hoping you could do something for Veronica.

She nods down at the cat in her arms. Bee stands, stunned. Maddie Smith breaks out laughing.

CECILIA JONES

She hasn't been herself lately, and I thought, well, a girl always likes to look her best.

BEE KINGFISHER  
I'm not a pet groomer, Mrs. Jones.

CECILIA JONES  
Hair is hair.

MADDIE SMITH  
Dump a heap of money into her lap,  
she's still the Crazy Cat Lady!

The other ladies laugh along with Maddie. Bee is not amused.

BEE KINGFISHER  
That is not funny! Pay no attention  
to them, Mrs. Jones.

MADDIE SMITH  
Hey Bee, my grandson's got a  
hamster could use a make-over.

Howls of laughter. The place is rocking. Bee takes Cecilia by the elbow and walks her to the front.

BEE KINGFISHER  
I'm sorry, Mrs. Jones, I can't.  
I'll lose my licence. Tell you  
what, I can swing by after I close-

CECILIA JONES  
(eyeing the mocking  
patrons with animosity)  
Never mind. I see what sort of  
clientele you cater to.

She shakes herself free from Bee's grasp.

BEE KINGFISHER  
Mrs. Jones, please-

CECILIA JONES  
I will take my business elsewhere.

She struts out, ignoring the derisive laughter behind her.

67

EXT. OUTSIDE LINTON AUTO YARD - AFTERNOON

67

Adrian and Dalton stand in front of the closed and locked gates of the Linton Auto Yard. Weeds have grown up around the cars, the place looks deserted.

Dalton kneels in front of the gate with a pair of bolt cutters as Fisher drives up, kicking up a cloud of dust.

He pauses, surprised, and looks to Adrian for direction as Fisher hops out of her car and marches up to the gate.

ADRIAN  
You've got to be kidding me.

FISHER  
You're here because of the truck  
that nearly ran you over following  
the reading of Ashland's will. Am I  
right?

ADRIAN  
It was just a local drunk.

FISHER  
You don't believe that.

ADRIAN  
This has nothing to do with your  
investigation!

FISHER  
That's not your decision to make!

Stand-off. Dalton fidgets, uncomfortable.

DALTON BURL  
Should I keep going?

FISHER  
I'm here. You may as well fill me  
in. I'm not going away.

Adrian looks back at Dalton, who shrugs. Finally, Adrian relents.

ADRIAN  
Fine. The owner of that truck died  
four years ago when he wrapped it  
around a tree. The truck was  
totaled and left for scrap.

FISHER  
It didn't look scrapped last night.

ADRIAN  
Four years ago, a wrecked truck  
would have ended up here.

Fisher nods, digesting the line of thought.

FISHER  
This place has been deserted for a while.

ADRIAN  
Yup.  
(to Dalton)  
Cut it.

68 INT. DOBBS HOME

68

Laura comes down the steps as Caroline enters.

LAURA DOBBS  
Have you seen your sister?

CAROLINE DOBBS  
No.

Laura notices an odd tone in Caroline's voice, and stops her as she tries to walk past.

LAURA DOBBS  
What is it?

Caroline looks into her mother's face with such intensity that Laura is momentarily taken aback.

The doorbell rings. Caroline looks to the door. Laura is torn between answering the door and questioning her daughter. It rings again. Laura sighs, frustrated, and heads for the door.

69 INT. DOBBS HOME - LIVING ROOM

69

Laura opens the door to find Darrell Riggs and Sally Bingham, her newborn in an old, hand-me-down Baby Bjorn.

DARRELL RIGGS  
We need to talk, Laura.

Laura is surprised to see them. She looks behind her at Caroline.

SALLY BINGHAM  
If this isn't a good time-

DARRELL RIGGS  
It's a fine time. Let us in.

LAURA DOBBS  
What do you want? Why are you here?

SALLY BINGHAM

The money, Laura. Ashland's money.

Laura pales.

70 INT. SCOTT HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

70

MIKE SCOTT- 48, short, wiry frame- and BONNIE SCOTT- 46, long red hair, average build- peer out their kitchen window at the Dobbs' house.

BONNIE SCOTT

What's going on over there? Is that Riggs' truck? Is he cutting a deal with Laura?

Mike Scott rises and grabs his coat.

MIKE SCOTT

Not without us, he's not.

Bonnie follows, taking out her cell phone as she leaves.

71 EXT. LINTON AUTO YARD

71

Adrian, Fisher, and Dalton walk slowly and quietly through the desolate, yard. Various husks of cars and trucks dot the landscape like the skeletons of dinosaurs, covered with weeds, dust and animal tracks.

DALTON BURL

What are we looking for, exactly?

FISHER

Anything recent. If someone here fixed up your truck, there should be tracks, tools, evidence.

Adrian and Fisher share a look. She's on board.

72 EXT. LINTON AUTO YARD

72

Quick shots of them exploring the yard...walking past a burned-out husk of a jeep...inspecting a pile of old tires...past a boarded-up office...between two smashed pickups.

Agent Fisher sees movement coming from the shell of an Ford LTD and moves to investigate, drawing her gun.



ADRIAN  
See something?

Agent Fisher sticks her head into the cab.

73 INT. LTD SHELL 73

A massive pile of rats pick at the bones of a dead coyote.

74 EXT. LINTON AUTO YARD 74

Agent Fisher stumbles back a step with a quick cry.

Adrian hurries over.

ADRIAN  
You alright?

FISHER  
(catching her breath)  
I wasn't expecting that.

Adrian peeks in and hides a smile.

FISHER  
(looking around)  
Where's your man?

They scan the area, finding no sign of him.

75 EXT. LINTON AUTO YARD 75

Adrian and Fisher search the yard, their inability to find Dalton growing urgent.

ADRIAN  
Dalton!

He climbs atop one of the cars to get a better view.

ADRIAN  
Dalton!

DALTON BURL (O.S.)  
Adrian!

The call comes from within a small, decrepit structure in the center of the property.

DALTON BURL (O.S.)  
You need to see this!

76 INT. LINTON AUTO YARD - STRUCTURE 76

Adrian and Fisher enter the structure to find Dalton staring, dumbfounded, at the far wall.

IT'S COVERED WITH A BIZARRE DIAGRAM OF LETTERS, NUMBERS, AND STRANGE SYMBOLS.

77 INT. DOBBS HOME - LIVING ROOM 77

Laura is trying to calm Darrel Riggs and Sally Bingham while Caroline watches.

LAURA DOBBS  
You want me to ignore Ashland's wishes?

DARRELL RIGGS  
Who cares what he wanted? He was an ass!

SALLY BINGHAM  
We just want what's fair.

DARRELL RIGGS  
Screw fair, I want what's mine!

The Scotts enter, Mike already on edge.

MIKE SCOTT  
I knew it! You're making deals!

LAURA DOBBS  
I'm doing no such thing!

BONNIE SCOTT  
Then why are they here?

DARRELL RIGGS  
I'm gettin' my money!

MIKE SCOTT  
Who says it's your money?

As the argument grows, Laura steps back protectively in front of Caroline, horrified at what's unfolding.

78

INT. LINTON AUTO YARD - STRUCTURE

78

Fisher touches a finger to the diagram.

FISHER  
(quietly)  
Blood?

ADRIAN  
What is this?

DALTON BURL  
Creepy as Hell is what it is.

FISHER  
Do you have a problem with the  
occult out here?

Adrian scratches his shoulder absently, taking it all in.

ADRIAN  
Not that I was aware of.

DALTON BURL  
Somebody's been here.

He crosses to a table and chair set-up in the corner. A half-opened bag of chips rests atop a number of papers fanned out on the table. Adrian studies the wall.

ADRIAN  
This is not random. It means  
something.

Dalton leans over the papers, all hand-written scribbles of numbers, charts, dates.

FISHER  
I have a camera in my trunk. I'll  
document the-

DALTON BURL  
Adrian!

He holds up a series of photographs- CANDID SNAPSHOTS OF  
LAURA DOBBS.

ADRIAN  
Laura?

He yanks the pictures out of Dalton's hand and flips through them faster and faster. Every one is of Laura, either alone or with Adrian.

FISHER  
Someone's stalking your wife?

Adrian drops the photos and frantically pulls out his cell phone.

ADRIAN  
That truck wasn't trying to hit me,  
it was trying to hit her!

79 INT. DOBBS HOME - KITCHEN 79

The argument is in full swing as the phone rings. Laura sees the Called ID and eagerly grabs it off the wall.

LAURA DOBBS  
Adrian!

The phone emits nothing but a high-pitched squeal of static.

80 INT. LINTON AUTO YARD - STRUCTURE 80

Adrian's phone shrieks, causing him to drop it and clutch his head in pain.

FISHER  
Dobbs!

81 INT. DOBBS HOME - KITCHEN 81

Laura staggers back and cries out in pain.

CAROLINE DOBBS  
Mom!

82 INT. LINTON AUTO YARD - STRUCTURE 82

Dalton closes the cell phone.

FISHER  
Are you alright?

Adrian shakes his head clear.

ADRIAN  
I have to get to Laura!

He yanks the door open.

83

EXT. LINTON AUTO YARD

83

Adrian leaps down the steps as Dalton runs out after him.

DALTON BURL  
Adrian, wait!

ADRIAN  
They're trying to kill her! This is  
what Jason meant! I've got to stop  
them!

He hurries through the auto yard.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

84 INT. ADRIAN'S TRUCK 84

Adrian speeds down the road, a worried look on his face.

85 EXT. DOBBS HOME 85

Walking down the driveway, Melissa hears yelling coming from inside. A faded sedan skids to a stop and Roger Atherton leaps out.

ROGER ATHERTON  
Is your mother really cutting deals  
with Ashland's money?

MELISSA DOBBS  
What?

ROGER ATHERTON  
(clutching his cell phone)  
Bonnie Scott called me. I got an  
invite! I want my share!

He hurries towards the house. Melissa follows.

More headlights appear on the road, approaching the house.

86 INT. DOBBS HOME - LIVING ROOM 86

Roger and Melissa barge into the house as the confrontation escalates.

MIKE SCOTT  
You have no right!

DARRELL RIGGS  
I have every right!

ROGER ATHERTON  
What's going on?

DARRELL RIGGS  
Where the Hell you come from?

BONNIE SCOTT  
I made a number of calls, Darrell.  
You are not stealing this money  
away from the rest of us.

Melissa finds Laura, who stands, stunned and slightly afraid.

MELISSA DOBBS

Mom?

LAURA DOBBS

(snapping out of it)

Upstairs. Both of you. Now!

She shoves Melissa up the stairs as more people enter the house.

87 INT. ADRIAN'S TRUCK

87

Adrian pulls his cell phone out as he drives and tries to dial home. The phone slips from his hand and falls to the floor on the other side of the truck.

ADRIAN

Damn it!

A new thought. He reaches behind him to the rifle hanging on the window rack.

88 INT. DOBBS HOME - LIVING ROOM

88

More people have arrived, and it is turning ugly. Folks arguing with each other, angry, pushing further and further into the house. Laura stands in front of Melissa and Caroline, protecting them with her body if need be.

MIKE SCOTT

We should start a trust! All the money goes in, and everyone gets a share.

SCOTT RANDOLPH

Only if they got an invite! We were picked! He choose us!

LAURA DOBBS

Please! Everyone needs to calm-

SALLY BINGHAM

We should give it to people who need it most.

BONNIE SCOOT

We all need it!

Tempers rise, people shout over one another. Laura raises her hands, trying to get everyone's attention.

LAURA DOBBS  
Stop it! Just stop it!

She is ignored. Someone in the crowd starts shoving, it spreads. Desperate, Laura grabs Roger Atherton.

LAURA DOBBS  
Roger, please! This is-

Darrell Riggs spins Roger back around, furious.

DARRELL RIGGS  
Get your hands off my money!

ROGER ATHERTON  
It's not your money!

He shoves Riggs, who stumbles back a step and takes a swing at Atherton, punching him in the face. It is turning into a free-for-all.

A RIFLE SHOT RINGS OUT. Everyone screams.

Adrian stands in the doorway, pointing the rifle from his truck out the door and up into the sky. He stares into the crowd as it slowly quiets, expectantly.

ADRIAN  
What the hell is going on?

He walks into the crowd.

ADRIAN  
Haggling over the instructions of a will? Walter Ashland hated each and every one of us. Right now, he's probably lying in his grave laughing his ass off while you tear at each other's throats for a piece of his fortune.

SCOTT RANDOLPH  
As Executor, Laura can-

ADRIAN  
She's not the Executor!

LAURA DOBBS  
(quietly)  
Yes I am.



Adrian freezes, eyes wide in shock.

LAURA DOBBS  
Mr. Thornberry... The Ghost.. Came  
by today. I accepted the position.

Adrian is stunned. Laura faces the crowd.

LAURA DOBBS  
I don't know who's getting his  
money. But I'm not changing the  
Will. If Ashland picked you, he  
picked you. That's it.

Laura surveys the crowd, before looking back at Adrian, who  
just stares at her in disbelief. She turns back to the crowd.

LAURA DOBBS  
Please leave my home.

She turns and walks up the stairs. Melissa and Caroline  
silently move aside to let her pass.

Adrian watches her go as everyone begins to shuffle out the  
door, grumbling.

89 EXT. DOBBS HOME - SUNSET 89

Fisher's rental car sits next to Adrian's truck. All other  
cars are gone.

90 INT. DOBBS HOME - KITCHEN 90

Adrian sits at the table, rifle in his lap, while Laura  
stands against the far wall. Dalton and Agent Fisher enter.

FISHER  
No sign of anyone out there.

DALTON BURL  
Doesn't mean they're not coming.

Adrian clutches his rifle a little tighter.

FISHER  
Do you want me to-

ADRIAN  
No. I'll handle it from here.

An uncomfortable silence stretches. Fisher looks to Laura, who avoids her gaze.

FISHER  
I still need to view Ashland's  
body.

DALTON BURL  
Tonight?

FISHER  
I have a deadline. Will anybody be  
there this late?

DALTON BURL  
The night crew. I'll call Donovan.  
Set it up.  
(to Adrian)  
You want me to swing by after she  
drops me off at my car?

Adrian shakes his head.

DALTON BURL  
OK. Alright. G'night.

They quietly walk out. Once they're gone, Laura walks past Adrian and up the stairs. Adrian sits in silence.

91 EXT. CECILIA JONES' HOME 91

A white-picket fence surrounds a picture-perfect little home. Cecilia Jones' Cadillac comes around the curve.

92 INT. CECILIA JONES' CADILLAC 92

Jones drives with both hands on the wheel, Veronica lounging next to her.

CECILIA JONES  
Almost home, dear.

She pulls down on her turn signal.

93 EXT. CECILIA JONES' HOME 93

The car, turn signal blinking, pulls into her driveway.

94 INT. CECILIA JONES' CADILLAC 94

She pushes up on the other lever, turning on the windshield wipers.

CECILIA JONES

Oh!

Alarmed, she shoves the wipers back, spraying soap and water all over the windows.

She panics. Feet stomping for the brake.

SHE SLAMS ON THE GAS INSTEAD.

95 EXT. CECILIA JONES' HOME 95

The car lurches forward, crashes over the white-picket fence and into the house, SHATTERING A HUGE BAY WINDOW.

As neighbors come out, drawn by the sound of the crash, Cecilia pushes her door open and staggers forward, blood trickling down her forehead.

CECILIA JONES

Help! Help me!

She staggers forward, eyeing the huge hole in her house, as a number of cats leap up onto the hood of the car.

CECILIA JONES

My babies!

One of the cats, covered in blood, sits on the hood licking itself. Cecilia peers over the edge of the windowsill.

96 INT. CECILIA JONES' HOME 96

The car has smashed through the wall, splinters of wood and glass cover the floor. A cat lies dead in a pool of blood.

CECILIA JONES

No!

97 INT. ASHLAND ANIMAL PROCESSING - HALLWAY 97

Agent Fisher walks down a bland, industrial hallway with DONOVAN CLARK- 50, a big, beefy, teddy bear of a man.

DONOVAN CLARK

This is the third body we've had since I've been here. The other two were car accidents. Generally they truck 'em over to Eaton, they've got a morgue. But in a pinch...

They reach a door. He puts his hand on the handle and stops, turning to Fisher.

DONOVAN CLARK

Ever been inside a slaughter house?

She shakes her head. He shrugs and opens the door.

98 INT. ASHLAND ANIMAL PROCESSING - SLAUGHTERHOUSE

98

A large room, filled with hanging carcasses of cattle in rows of processing lines. Some rows have only been exsanguinated, and the carcass appears relatively intact. Other rows are further on in the process, skin removed.

Fisher stops just inside the doorway, overcome. Her hand immediately goes to cover her nose and mouth. Clark motions to a freezer door off to the left.

DONOVAN CLARK

He's in there. You'll want to grab a coat and apron.

He walks past her, grabs a large coat for warmth and pulls the freezer door open.

99 INT. ASHLAND ANIMAL PROCESSING - FREEZER

99

Fisher, bundled tightly against the cold, stands amidst rows of frozen carcasses, lit by occasionally flickering fluorescent lights. Before her is a stainless steel table.

DONOVAN CLARK

Take all the time you want, but no smoke breaks, you need a key to get in once the door closes.

FISHER

I'll be fine. Thank you.

Clark wrestles three large Hefty bags down from a shelf.

DONOVAN CLARK

You want him all at once?

FISHER  
What do you mean?

He dumps the contents of one of the bags onto the table.  
Frozen guts, bone and other body parts spill out in a pile.

100 INT. DOBBS HOME - ADRIAN AND LAURA'S BEDROOM 100

Laura sits on the bed, head in her hands.

Adrian enters the room, crosses around the bed and, after a moment of hesitation, sits next to her.

ADRIAN  
You alright?

She struggles to answer, then leans against him. He puts his arm around her and she sags into him, emotionally drained.

ADRIAN  
You don't have to do this. Call The  
Ghost.. Thornberry... back, tell  
him to find someone else.

She breaks the hug and leans away.

LAURA DOBBS  
I'm sorry, Adrian. It's settled.  
Someone has to take care of this  
family.

ADRIAN  
You're doing it for the money?

A long silence. Laura is too emotional to respond. He stands and walks out of the room.

101 INT. ASHLAND ANIMAL PROCESSING - FREEZER 101

Fisher works over the stainless steel table. She wears a heavy apron, long rubber gloves, and safety goggles as she inspects the gruesome remains.

Frozen bone, bits of flesh, internal organs- all the pieces of Walter Ashland are strewn out in front of her like a jigsaw puzzle. She examines a bone, then carefully sets it in place. She's recreating the body.

The lights flicker and she looks up at them, annoyed.

102 INT. DOBBS HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

102

Adrian sits next to the window, staring out into the night. His glass, now all ice, sits on the side table next to him. His rifle leans against his chair.

Laura quietly walks in, stands behind him. Her gaze drops to the glass of ice on the table.

ADRIAN  
(not turning)  
Relax, it's Diet Coke.

She sighs, the tension between them is obvious.

LAURA DOBBS  
Come to bed.

He closes his eyes, as if to block out the events of the day.

ADRIAN  
I didn't make it out to Jason's  
campground tonight.

He opens his eyes and cranes his neck to meet her gaze.

ADRIAN  
It's the first year I've missed it.

She puts her hand on his shoulder, unsure what to say.

ADRIAN  
If I sign the papers, have him  
officially declared dead, will you  
turn down Ashland's... offer?

LAURA DOBBS  
Don't do it for me.

She heads back up the stairs. Adrian stares out the window at the night sky, ominous dark clouds blotting out the stars.

103 INT. ASHLAND ANIMAL PROCESSING - FREEZER

103

Agent Fisher lays a chunk of skull atop her Ashland puzzle.

104 INT. DOBBS HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 104

Adrian sags in the same chair, asleep. Rain pelts the window. On the coffee table in front of him are the papers, laid out and signed. A ball-point pen lies on top of them.

105 EXT. DOBBS HOME - NIGHT 105

The rain falls steadily.

A second story window opens and a small figure drops down. Melissa. She hurries off across the field.

A FIGURE watches her from the mailbox. After a moment, it walks up the path towards the house, carrying a black umbrella and a small package.

IT'S MR. THORNBERRY, dressed in his typical suit and bowler hat. He quietly walks up the steps and sets something down in front of the door. Then he turns and walks away.

Left on the porch is a SMALL, OLD-FASHIONED, METAL TOOLBOX.

106 INT. ASHLAND ANIMAL PROCESSING - FREEZER 106

The empty bags litter the floor. Agent Fisher sets a small hunk of toe down at the base of her puzzle and steps back.

On the table, Ashland has been more or less put back together, with the occasional hole.

However, THE ENTIRE LEFT ARM IS GONE. There's not a single scrap of bone or flesh to signify it was ever there.

Agent Fisher eyes this, curious, when a GLINT catches her eye. She moves a rib away and picks up the liver, flicking ice flecks away. SOMETHING GOLDEN is embedded within.

She takes a circular saw and carefully cuts into the liver, her eyes widening. Finally, she stops, sets the saw down and pries an object out of the organ in wonder. She holds it up.

IT'S A SOLID GOLD KEY.

END OF SHOW