

"MR. MERCEDES"

-Pilot-

Written By

David E. Kelley

Based on the novel: "Mr. Mercedes" by Stephen King.

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WRITER'S DRAFT

May 5, 2015

CAST LIST

DET. BILL HODGES
BRADY HARTSFIELD
DEBORAH ANN HARTSFIELD
ANTHONY "FROBIE" FROBISHER
FREDDI LINKLATTER
JEROME ROBINSON (minor)
IDA SILVER

Det. Peter Huntley

Augie Odenkirk
Janice Cray
Baby Patti Cray
Joe Beck
Sandy
Vivica

Sheila
Marty Wall

Reporter #1

Danny (minor)
Steven (minor)
Lisa (minor)
Johnny (minor)

Frank (tortoise)

SONG LIST

PATSY CLINE SONG PLAYS OUT ON HODGES' CAR RADIO
"PUFF THE MAGIC DRAGON" (BRADY SINGS SOFTLY TO HIMSELF)
MR. TASTY ICE-CREAM JINGLE

SETS LIST

INTERIORS:

HODGES HOUSE

- KITCHEN - MORNING, EVENING, & NIGHT
- DEN - MORNING
- BEDROOM - MORNING
- BATHROOM - MORNING

BRADY'S HOUSE - DAY

- FAMILY ROOM - DAY
- BASEMENT - DAY
- BASEMENT STAIRWELL - DAY

DISCOUNT ELECTRONIX - MORNING, DAY & SUNSET

DEMASIO'S RESTAURANT - DAY

SUBARU - MORNING

ICE-CREAM TRUCK - DAY

EXTERIORS:

POLICE STATION

- TOW LOT - DAY
- PARKING LOT - MORNING

PARKING LOT - NIGHT & SUNRISE

DISCOUNT ELECTRONIX PARKING LOT - MORNING

HODGES HOUSE

- FRONT YARD - MORNING, DAY & NIGHT
- PORCH - EVENING
- BACKYARD - MORNING & DAY

BRIDGTON, OHIO - SUNSET & DAY

- GROVE STREET - DAY

COBB'S POND - DAY

"MR. MERCEDES"

- Pilot -

OVER BLACK, WE HEAR A FAMILIAR, YET UNIDENTIFIABLE SOUND. RUSTLING... SOMEBODY RIFLING THROUGH A DRAWER PERHAPS. AS THE SOUND CONTINUES, WE SLOWLY FADE IN FROM BLACK TO A WET FOG. THE OCCASIONAL SQUEAL OF TIRES ON WET PAVEMENT CAN BE HEARD. AN IMAGE THEN COMES INTO SOFT FOCUS: THROUGH THE NIGHT FOG AND DRIZZLE, A MAN, BENT OVER THE OPEN TRUNK OF A 1997 DATSUN.

AS THE CAMERA CIRCLES, WE REVEAL AUGIE ODENKIRK, THIRTYISH, BOYISH GOOD LOOKS. HE SHOVES SOME HEADPHONES INTO AN UNLOVED BACKPACK, JAMS IN A COUPLA WATER BOTTLES, A JAR OF PEANUT BUTTER, SOME BEEF JERKY. A LONG NIGHT AHEAD. HE OPENS A SHIRT BOX, REVEALING A CLEAN, PRESSED SHIRT AND TIE. NEXT, HE OPENS A MANILA FOLDER; HIS RESUME, HOT OFF THE PRESS. HE PLACES THE FOLDER ON TOP OF THE SHIRT AND TIE, CLOSES THE BOX, GRABS HIS ROLLED-UP SLEEPING BAG; HE'S GOOD TO GO.

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL WE'RE IN A FAIRLY EMPTY PARKING LOT, ADJACENT TO A LARGE WAREHOUSE-STYLE BUILDING. AUGIE WALKS, BACKPACK, SHIRT BOX, SLEEPING BAG IN HAND. THERE IS SOME SLIGHT OPTIMISM IN HIS GAIT. THE PROMISE THAT ONLY TOMORROW CAN HOLD.

TIME CUT TO:

1 EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

1

AS AUGIE ROUNDS THE CORNER OF THE BUILDING... HE STOPS...
"YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING."

HIS POV

A LONG LINE OF PEOPLE, AT LEAST THIRTY, ALREADY THERE. SOME STANDING, OTHERS SITTING, THE LINE ACTUALLY DOUBLES BACK, MAZE-LIKE. STANCHIONS HAVE BEEN SET UP TO ORGANIZE THE LINES.

RESUME AUGIE

SHIT. HE CHECKS THE TIME ON HIS SMARTPHONE: THREE A.M. SO MUCH FOR BEING AHEAD OF THE PACK.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

RESUME PARKING LOT

A BANNER IS HOISTED HIGH ABOVE THE AUDITORIUM DOORS:
"FIRST ANNUAL CITY JOBS FAIR. ONE THOUSAND JOBS
GUARANTEED." BELOW THAT: "WE STAND WITH THE PEOPLE OF
OUR CITY. MAYOR RALPH KINSLER." AUGIE STARES AT THE
CONGA-LINE OF JOB APPLICANTS, THEN GOES TO TAKE HIS
PLACE AT THE REAR; ENCOUNTERS A YOUNG WOMAN: JANICE
CRAY. THERE'S AN IMMEDIATE WARMTH ABOUT HER, A HUMBLE
CHARM. SHE HOLDS A SLEEPING BABY IN A PAPOOSE CARRIER.
AT HER FEET, A SMALL QUILTED CARRYING CASE. BABY
SUPPLIES.

JANICE

(to Augie)

Welcome to the early birds' club.

(adding)

Thought you'd be first?

AUGIE

Kind of.

JANICE

Guess we're gonna be neighbors for
awhile.

(extends her hand)

Janice Cray.

AUGIE

August Odenkirk. Augie.

JANICE

(re: the baby)

This little one here is Patti.

AUGIE

Hey, Patti.

(to Janice)

She's a beauty.

JANICE

Thanks.

AUGIE

How old?

JANICE

Almost two months. I had to bring
her. Can't afford a sitter. No
job, which is, of course, why I'm
here.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (2)

1

JOE (O.S.)
(mumbling)
Cock-fucking-sucker.

Augie turns to SEE JOE BECK, fifties, out-of-work truck-driver, standing two back from him.

JOE (CONT'D)
This many people? Yeah, the
economy's back alright.

Augie gives Joe a polite but neutral smile, turns back to Janice; as The BABY COUGHS, gravel-like--

JANICE
Croup. Sounds worse than it is.

THE SOUND OF TIRES ON PAVEMENT. THEY LOOK TO SEE A FEW MORE CARS PULLING UP.

JANICE (CONT'D)
My God. Coming in like cattle.

JOE
You can pretty much thank the Kenyan-in-chief for that.

Janice decides not to engage him.

JANICE
(to Augie)
Okay, be honest with me. I'm standing out here in the cold all night with a baby, are would-be employers gonna just take one look and think "irresponsible"?

AUGIE
They might say "dedicated." They could see the little hat, the mittens -- which seem to be hand-made -- and think "wow." "Pays attention to details."

JANICE
(a warm smile)
You're really good. Somebody's gonna hire you but fast.

The BABY THEN CRIES, WHICH GETS AN ANNOYED LOOK OR TWO FROM THE OTHERS IN LINE.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (3)

1

JANICE (CONT'D)
(to the ANNOYED
ONLOOKERS)
Sorry.
(to Augie)
I'm gonna try to settle her down
some.

She sits, as Augie regards the sky, the fog. Such an
ominous night. If only he knew.

DISSOLVE TO:

2 EXT. PARKING LOT - TWO HOURS LATER

2

THE LINE HAS GROWN TEN-FOLD. MOST PEOPLE ARE
SITTING/SLEEPING. WE FIND JANICE SEATED, ASLEEP, PAPOOSE
ON HER CHEST, HER HEAD HAS SLID ONTO AUGIE'S SHOULDER;
HE'S ALSO ASLEEP. THE BABY STARTS TO STIR, THEN CRY;
AS JANICE AND AUGIE BOTH WAKE.

JANICE
(to Augie)
Sorry. She's hungry.
(then)
Oh, my God, she's soaked right
through, I can feel it. I can't
change her out here in this cold.

JOE
Yeah, real forward-thinking on your
part.

AUGIE
(to Joe)
Back off.

JOE WOULD LIKE TO DO ANYTHING BUT. BUT, BEING FAT AND
FIFTY AND NOT ENTIRELY STUPID... HE'LL SETTLE FOR A
DEATH-GLARE BEFORE RE-DIRECTING HIS LOOK. THE BABY
THEN SHRIEKS WITH HUNGER, TO THE FURTHER ANNOYANCE OF
THE SLEEP-DEPRIVED CROWD.

JANICE
(to Augie)
She wants the breast. What am I
going to do?

WE HEAR A FEW UNSOLICITED SUGGESTIONS, UNDER--

AUGIE
Know what?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

AUGIE (CONT'D)
I actually brought a sleeping bag.

AS HE UNROLLS IT--

AUGIE (CONT'D)
(to Janice)
Why don't you slide in there, get warm, get her warm. Here, give her to me, slide in.

JANICE
(as she passes the child)
Okay. You married?

AUGIE
Divorced.

AS SHE SQUIRMS INTO THE BAG--

JANICE
Kids?

AUGIE
No.

JOE
Get a room, would ya? What is it you kids call it? Hooking up?

AUGIE
(to Joe)
Sir. You're being rude.

JANICE
(to Augie; re: Patti)
Okay, pass her to me.

AUGIE
(doing so)
Here you go.

JANICE
Mind grabbing me a diaper? They're in the bag. I should change her before I feed her.

AUGIE UNZIPS THE QUILTED BAG.

JANICE (CONT'D)
You'll see a bottle. Baby Magic, I'll take that as well.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: (2)

2

AUGIE PASSES THE DIAPER AND THE LOTION, FEELING THE STARES OF MANY.

AUGIE
(to the lookie-loos)
All good here, folks, thanks for
your concern.

THE BABY SQUEALS LOUDER AS JANICE CHANGES THE DIAPER. WE HEAR A CHORUS OF COMPLAINTS: "SHUT THAT KID UP." "SOMEBODY SHOULD CALL SOCIAL SERVICES." "JESUS CHRIST!!" JANICE'S HAND SHOOTS OUT FROM WITHIN THE BAG; SHE HOLDS A HEAVY, WET DIAPER.

JANICE
(re: the quilted case)
There's a plastic Costco bag, just
drop it in there.

AUGIE PINCHES IT WITH A THUMB AND FOREFINGER.

AUGIE
Nice. Thanks.

THE BABY'S CRYING CONTINUES, THEN STOPS. A MUTED, SUCKING SOUND. AUGIE THEN NOTICES A CAR, BRIGHT HEADLIGHTS, YELLOW FOG LIGHTS. THE LIGHTS ILLUMINATE THE PEOPLE IN THE LINES, AT LEAST THOSE NEAR THE FRONT. IN FACT, SOME ARE NEARLY BLINDED BY THE GLARE.

AUGIE (CONT'D)
H.D. headers.

JANICE
What's that?

AUGIE
This car coming in. Some guy showing
up at a job fair in a Mercedes Benz.
Sign of the times, I guess.

JANICE
Maybe it's the Mayor, coming to
check out his big to-do. He drives
one of them sports coupes.

THE CAR COMES TO A STOP; THE HIGH BEAMS LIGHT UP THE JOB-SEEKERS.

AUGIE
Be kinda bad taste to pull up in a
Benz. Plus, this ain't a coupe,
it's a bigger model.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: (3)

2

VIVICA

(standing behind Augie)

Bet he thinks he can go right to the front of the line, showing up in that.

AUGIE

Why's he just stopping there?

JOE

One thing for sure, we know he's an asshole.

THEN, SUDDENLY... THE DRIVER OF THE MERCEDES LEANS ON HIS HORN... A LONG... IMPATIENT BLAST. WE HEAR A CHORUS OF REACTIONS, COMPLAINTS AS THE HORN CONTINUES TO BLARE. JANICE POPS HER HEAD OUT OF THE SLEEPING BAG.

JANICE

What the hell?

AND THEN, SUDDENLY, THE CAR LURCHES INTO DRIVE, ACCELERATES. AND IT'S COMING DIRECTLY AT THEM. NO INTENTION OF SLOWING DOWN. SCREAMS, PEOPLE JUMPING TO THEIR FEET, SCRAMBLING TO FLEE. BUT IT'S TOO SUDDEN. THE CAR ACCELERATES DIRECTLY TOWARD THE MOST TIGHTLY-PACKED SECTION OF JOB-SEEKERS. THE TRUE EARLY-BIRDS HAVE NO CHANCE, THE CAR IS MOWING THEM DOWN, BODIES ARE SUDDENLY FLYING, SOME SQUISHED.

AUGIE

Jesus Christ!!
(to Janice)
Move!!

THE FLEEING CROWD IS SURGING THEIR WAY; AUGIE IS KNOCKED OVER, TRAMPLED. HE TRIES TO ASSIST JANICE OUT OF THE BAG; ALL THE WHILE WE HEAR THE SCREAMS, THE ENGINE, THE BLARING HORN. AUGIE LOOKS UP, SEES THE BIG GRAY SEDAN -- THE KIND WITH TWENTY CYLINDERS, FEROCIOUS POWER. PANICKED SCREAMS AS THE VEHICLE PLOWS THROUGH THE SEA OF HUMANITY. IT'S BEDLAM NOW, DIFFICULT TO DISCERN BETWEEN SIGHTS AND SOUNDS. AUGIE FRANTICALLY TRIES TO FREE JANICE FROM THE BAG, HE'S PULLING HER OUT AS SHE CLINGS TO BABY PATTI. THE SOUNDS OF TERROR ARE ALMOST SWALLOWED UP BY THE APPROACHING ROAR OF THE CAR. AUGIE LOOKS UP... A HUGE BLACK TIRE EATS UP HIS, AND OUR, VIEW.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: (4)

2

SILENCE OVER BLACK. THEN WE FEATHER IN THE SOUNDS OF SIRENS AND POLICE CARS, TRUCKS, AMBULANCES; LOUDER, LOUDER STILL... THEN DEAFENING. THEY THEN FADE OUT AND WE'RE BACK TO SILENCE. UNTIL--

FADE IN:

3 EXT. PARKING LOT - SUNRISE

3

WE GET OUR FIRST CLEAR LOOK AT THE SCENE. HUMAN CARNAGE ALL OVER. SOME BODIES INTACT. SOME SEVERED LIMBS. VARIOUS POLICE TEAMS AT WORK, MULTIPLE FORCES WERE CALLED TO RESPOND. THERE ARE BODIES EVERYWHERE.

ANGLE AN UNMARKED CROWN VIC PULLING UP. DETECTIVE BILL HODGES, LATE FIFTIES, A LITTLE OVERWEIGHT, DEBOARDS. HE'S SEEN A LOT OF CRIME SCENES. NEVER ONE LIKE THIS. HE SURVEYS THE SCENE.

HODGES
(under his breath)
Holy fuck.

HE'S APPROACHED BY HIS PARTNER, DETECTIVE FIRST GRADE PETER HUNTLEY, FIFTIES. OFF HODGES' STARE--

PETE
Worse than it looks. We got at least a dozen dead, triple that in injuries.

Hodges surveys the scene.

HODGES
A car? You sure it wasn't a truck?

PETE
Car. Somebody lost control.

Hodges looks around.

HODGES
He didn't lose control.

Hodges then sees it:

ANGLE THE SLEEPING BAG

Bloodied, soiled. We recognize THE DEAD BODY NEXT TO IT AS AUGIE. A HEAD, SLIGHTLY PROTRUDING FROM THE BAG ITSELF; SOME MATTED, BLOODIED HAIR.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

RESUME

HODGES BENDS DOWN, PEEKS INTO THE BAG... RECOILS. LOOKS AS IF HE MIGHT WRETCH. PETE THEN LOOKS IN THE BAG.

PETE

(softly)

My god.

THE CAMERA CLOSES ON HODGES, AS HIS FACE CONTORTS SLIGHTLY WITH A COMBINATION OF RAGE AND HORROR. THE CAMERA CLOSES ON HIM, AS WE HEAR A NEWS REPORTER.

CLOSE ON A SCREEN

REPORTER #1 (O.S.)

(a real word-puncher)

Witnesses say it appeared to be deliberate. The car -- described as a dark Mercedes sedan, apparently stolen, sped directly at the crowd and continued to accelerate after making contact, mowing down perhaps a hundred people, many of them killed.

FADE TO BLACK AS WE BEGIN TO HEAR THE OVERLAPPING DRONE OF VARIOUS NEWS PROGRAMS. A MASH-UP OF DIFFERENT ANCHORS, REPORTING ON DIFFERENT EVENTS, WHICH CUMULATIVELY SUGGEST THE PASSAGE OF TIME. A POLAR VORTEX; VIOLENCE IN UKRAINE; FACEBOOK ACQUIRES "WHAT'S APP;" EBOLA; A MISSING MALAYSIAN PLANE; FERGUSON, MISSOURI; THE GIANTS WIN THE WORLD SERIES AGAIN; THE IPHONE SIX; SONY HACKED BY NORTH KOREA; THE PATRIOTS WIN THE SUPER-BOWL AGAIN; HILLARY DELETES EMAILS; THE IWATCH; THE CALIFORNIA DROUGHT; AN EARTHQUAKE IN NEPAL; THE WHITE NOISE OF NEWS-BLATHER CONTINUES, AS WE:

FADE INTO:

4 INT. HODGES HOUSE, DEN - MORNING

4

CURRENT NEWS ON THE TELEVISION. A SLEEPING SLOB IN THE LA-Z-BOY, clearly he lives alone and is either too cheap or cash-strapped to have a cleaner. A few beer cans next to the man, unwashed dishes on the kitchen counter in the b.g. Clutter. Neglect. ALONG WITH THE DRONE OF THE MORNING TELEVISION NEWS, A RINGING AND VIBRATING CELL PHONE on the table next to the chair. Finally, the sleeping man begins to stir... his eyes crack open... he looks familiar. It's Detective Hodges, fatter, sadder, puffier... the same guy, except he's not.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

HE TURNS OFF THE TELEVISION AS he reaches for the phone.

HODGES

(into phone)

Yeah?

PETE (O.S.)

What time we on for?

HODGES

(groggy)

Who is this?

PETE (O.S.)

It's Pete. What, I wake you up? I keep forgetting you retired farts sleep in all day.

HODGES

(annoyed)

What do you want?

PETE (O.S.)

Coffee. We on, or not?

HODGES

Yeah.

PETE (O.S.)

See you there. And wear something nice for me, would you, big guy? Maybe one of your bright spring ensembles.

Hodges simply CLICKS OFF THE PHONE, still trying to orientate himself. Takes a quick inventory of the beer cans; as he extracts himself from the La-z-boy, he bumps the card table, shaking a couple of half-finished jigsaw puzzles.

HODGES

Fuck.

5 INT. HODGES BATHROOM - SECONDS LATER

5

Hodges enters, drops his pants a bit, prepares to pee. This could take awhile. A beat. Another beat. Yet another.

HODGES

(muttering)

Fuck.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: 5

Finally... a SPRITZ... A STOP-AND-GO. WE THEN HEAR THE ANEMIC TINKLE. This could also take awhile.

6 INT. HODGES HOUSE, KITCHEN - MORNING 6

Hodges waddles in, still shaking some cobwebs out of his head. There's another jigsaw puzzle in progress on the kitchen table. He opens the fridge door, grabs a head of cabbage.

7 EXT. HODGES HOUSE, BACKYARD - SECONDS LATER 7

Hodges emerges with the cabbage.

HODGES

Frank.

(nothing)

Frank.

(nothing)

I know you hear me. Fucker.

And then... FRANK, twenty-five-year-old TORTOISE, crawls out from a small wooden hutch. Hodges unceremoniously throws the cabbage head at him. Goes back inside.

8 INT. HODGES BEDROOM - LATER 8

Hodges stands in front of a mirror, buttons his shirt as HE STARES AT HIS REFLECTION IN THE MIRROR. The unmistakable "how-did-it-come-to-this" expression on his face. The abdominal bloat. The pallid skin. His once almond-shaped eyes now look like two slits, his puffy lids look like spider-egg sacs. He buttons his left collar button, then discovers the right one is missing.

HODGES

Fuck.

CUT TO:

9 INT. DEMASIO'S RESTAURANT - DAY 9

Hodges, wearing the same shirt, is having coffee with Pete, his old partner.

PETE

I gotta be honest. You don't look so hot.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

HODGES

You ain't so sweet on the eye
yourself.

PETE

You getting any exercise?

HODGES

What, are we married now?

Pete smiles softly; measures his friend. Sips his
coffee. Then--

PETE

You hate it, don't you? Retirement.

HODGES

I don't hate it.

Upon which, THE WAITRESS, SHEILA, late thirties, sexy,
trashy, flirty, ample cleavage -- which she quantifies
with bigger tips -- arrives.

SHEILA

(to Hodges)

Hey, handsome. Long time.

Hodges actually sits up a little straighter.

HODGES

Hey, Sheila.

SHEILA

Been missing you around here. You
still got that killer smile?

HODGES

No, I...

SHEILA

Oh, come on.

He smiles a little.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

There it is.

(to Pete)

More coffee, hon?

PETE

Why not?

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: (2)

9

She pours, as both Hodges and Pete take a beat to admire those breasts.

SHEILA
Anything else I can get you boys?
(adding)
That's on the menu?

She buttons that with a wink.

PETE
I think we're good.

And Sheila heads off.

PETE (CONT'D)
Okay. We know we're not handsome.
We know she knows we're not handsome.
The question becomes, do you think
she knows that we know that she
knows we're not handsome?

HODGES
That's too much thinking for me.

Hodges' eyes drift around the joint. He's so loved this place. The familiarity of it, the smell, the fatty food. But mainly, it's been the joy of the respite -- the opportunity to take a breath -- the chance for a glimmer of reflection with a colleague. But the foundation of it all is work. The job. There's an emptiness to the place without the job or perhaps just an emptiness to Hodges himself. Pete reads his face, knows him well. Finally.

PETE
Phoebe good? Grandson?

HODGES
Both good. Isabelle?

PETE
The same.

HODGES
Sorry to hear that.

Pete smiles. A beat.

PETE
You doing okay? Really?

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: (3)

9

HODGES

It's an adjustment.

As Sheila returns with some rum cake, puts it in front of Hodges--

SHEILA

I remember you like the rum cake.

PETE

I think he's been enjoying too much of the rum cake, Sheila, wouldn't you agree?

Sheila smiles, leaves the rum cake on the table; departs.

HODGES

Why would you say something like that?

PETE

I'm just messing with you a little.

HODGES

Even so...

PETE

Come on. Don't tell me your sense of humor retired, too.

HODGES

Let's just suppose for a second she maybe does find me handsome. Maybe I am, maybe I'm not, she's torn. Your little comment there possibly tips the scale against me, you think about that?

PETE

I guess I didn't.

Upon which, PETE'S CELL RINGS; HE ANSWERS.

PETE (CONT'D)

This is Pete.

(then; eyes lighting up)

What?

(then)

I'll be right there.

HE CLICKS OFF.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: (4)

9

PETE (CONT'D)

(suddenly adrenalized)

Unbelievable. Remember Donald Davis?
That sanctimonious cocksucker who
killed his wife and then set up the
reward fund for info leading to her
whereabouts?

HODGES

Yeah.

PETE

A game warden spotted some old bones
and a tattered dress in a gravel
pit, less than two miles from Davis's
house. We're gonna finally get
that bastard.

He holds his right hand up for a high-five; Hodges
obliges.

PETE (CONT'D)

(reaching into his
pocket)

Sorry, I gotta run. Can we
reschedule?

HODGES

Sure.

(re: the tab)

I got this. Go. Go.

PETE

How 'bout tomorrow for lunch?

HODGES

Sounds good.

And Pete bolts... leaving Hodges with... well... nothing,
save a piece of rum cake. Nothing to do. No place to
go. He just stares straight ahead, a bit lost in
thought, or simply lost. Fucking boredom is everything
it's cracked up to be. He just stares, looks almost
dazed. He picks up a spoon. Stares at his reflection
in it. Finally--

SHEILA (O.S.)

Something wrong, hon?

Hodges glances up to see Sheila has returned, a look of
concern on her face.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: (5)

9

HODGES

What?

SHEILA

With the spoon? Something wrong with it?

HODGES

No. I... my reflection's upside down.

(looking at it)

You ever notice that everything's upside down on a spoon?

A beat.

SHEILA

That's maybe how life is, hon. The spoon's just got it figured out.

Maybe the spoon and Sheila both. She tops off his coffee, then heads off. Hodges regards the rum cake. What the hell; he's got nothing else to do. He begins to pick away at it with his fork. OFF this, we:

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE ON HODGES, AS HE DRIVES HIS SUBARU.

His face looks a bit deadened. A PATSY CLINE SONG PLAYS OUT ON THE CAR RADIO.

10 EXT. GROVE STREET - DAY

10

THE SUBARU TRAVELS DOWN A CHARMING RESIDENTIAL STREET, MIDDLE INCOME AMERICANA; QUICK CUTS OF HODGES' POV:

A YOUNG COUPLE PUSHING A BABY CARRIAGE.

A NEIGHBORHOOD STREET-HOCKEY GAME.

AN ICE-CREAM TRUCK; KIDS LINING UP TO BUY THEIR TREATS.

CLOSE ON HODGES

As he takes this all in. He's surrounded by happiness, it seems. Why the fuck can't he reach out and touch it?

THE SUBARU NAVIGATES THROUGH THE STREET-HOCKEY PLAYERS; FINALLY PULLS INTO THE DRIVEWAY OF A MODEST, SINGLE-STORY HOME.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

IDA SILVER, SEVENTIES, HANDS ON HIPS, IS STARING AT HODGES' OVERGROWN LAWN. AS HODGES DEBOARDS, HE REGARDS IDA. SEVENTY-TWO-YEARS OLD, BUT STILL PRETTY WELL PUT TOGETHER. IN FACT, SHE PRIDES HERSELF ON IT. IDA'S A REAL PIECE OF WORK, MOST OF IT GOD-GIVEN, SOME OF IT COSMETIC. AT THE MOMENT, IDA IS FROWNING AT HIS FRONT YARD.

HODGES

(to Ida)

What's your problem?

IDA

My problem is it costs money to maintain my lawn, all for naught when the yard next door looks like you're raising ticks.

HODGES

The kid had his SAT tests or something Saturday.

IDA

Well, that was Saturday, today's Wednesday.

HODGES

That's true, Ida. And here's another little nugget that can't be denied. You should mind your own business.

IDA

I never mind my business. Did you call him, tell him to get his lazy ass over here? This is the problem with standardized testing, lawns don't get mowed.

Hodges heads off, under--

HODGES

Have a nice day, Ida.

IDA

(yelling after him)

I'm going to call him. And tonight, I may bring over some sea bass, I bought more than I can eat. So you don't need to defrost the Pepperidge Farm Coconut Cake, or whatever other delicacy you had planned.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: (2)

10

Hodges just keeps going; doesn't bother to even dignify that.

CUT TO:

AERIAL VIEW

11 EXT. BRIDGTON, OHIO - SUNSET

11

Blue-collar town, just outside of Akron, population 100,000, give or take. Used to be 200,000 or so in 2009. Shitty times. THE CAMERA PANS THE URBAN BLEMISH AND FINALLY SETTLES ON "DISCOUNT ELECTRONIX," an aging retailer -- probably on borrowed time. Not many cars in the parking lot, despite all the "50% OFF" signs on the windows. BRADY HARTSFIELD, late twenties, slight build, heads toward the front entrance; he wears a Discount Electronix jacket. He's singing softly to himself.

BRADY

(singing)

Little Jackie Paper/ Loved that
rascal Puff/... Noble kings and
princes/ Would bow whene'er they
came...

He enters into:

12 INT. DISCOUNT ELECTRONIX - CONTINUOUS

12

FREDDI LINKLATTER, clerk, thirtyish, over six-feet, easy, is at the counter. A sight to behold: Toggled out in straight-leg 501's, motorcycle skids, a plain white tee that hangs dead straight, not even a hint of breasts. Black hair, butched to a quarter-inch, no makeup, no earrings.

FREDDI

Hey, Brady. How'd it go?

BRADY

Fine. Some old lady with a screen-freeze. How's things here?

FREDDI

Been better. Evidently, I'm going to hell.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

FREDDI (CONT'D)

(off Brady)

Some Jesus jumper just gave me chapter and verse, turns out the Supreme Court lacks jurisdiction over God.

As ANTHONY "FROBIE" FROBISHER, thirties, floor manager, approaches; still in search of his first congeniality award. Steven Buscemi looks, though less-attractive.

FROBISHER

(to Freddi)

The hell was that back there? You were rude to a customer.

FREDDI

I wasn't rude. He was nice enough to give me grooming tips, I returned the favor.

FROBISHER

I got it on video, Freddi.

Frobisher holds up his jumbo iphone-6 Plus. WE SEE FREDDI AND THE JESUS JUMPER as Frobisher hits PLAY.

ANGLE SCREEN

FREDDI

(on screen)

Hey, throw on a little lipum-stickum and a dog collar, you might luck into a date at the Corral, get your first squirt on the Tower of Power.

RESUME

FROBISHER KILLS HIS PHONE.

FREDDI (CONT'D)

My problem with smart-phones, they don't capture context.

FROBISHER

Your behavior was unacceptable, it reflects on this store, this company, and my leadership skills. The three "C's," Freddi. Courtesy. Commitment. Consideration. Does "Rude" begin with a "C"? Does "Abrasive" begin with a "C"?

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (2)

12

FREDDI

I'm really bad at phonics.

Frobisher makes a sucking sound through his teeth, a sign that he's irritated.

FROBISHER

Need I remind you both, -- it's our relational attributes that keep us from going the route of the Radio Shacks and the Best Buys. Our ability to be personable with our clientele.

(to Freddi)

Are you listening to me?

FREDDI

"Personable," yes, "P" word.

FROBISHER

That was flippant.

(then)

Y'know, I hired both of you recalcitrants not just 'cause you're good with computers, but because you're waywards, and one of the ways I like to give back is by being a beacon with waywards. Shed a little light for the less-fortunate. But I got limits, you get my message?

FREDDI

I do. No light for the flippant.

Another sucking sound. OFF Brady and Freddi, we:

CUT TO:

13 EXT. GROVE STREET - DAY

13

HODGES IS JOGGING, perhaps taking Pete's words to his endangered heart. HUFFING AND PUFFING; he hasn't exercised in over a year. He finally gives up. SLOWS TO A WALK, STILL HUFFING. And then, A TENNIS BALL SMACKS HIM ON THE CHEEK.

HODGES

(muttering)

Jesus fucking balls.

DANNY and STEVEN, A COUPLE OF STREET-HOCKEY PLAYERS COME IN PURSUIT OF THE BALL, which Hodges picks up.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

They're a little afraid of him, they call him "Billygoat Gruff" behind his back.

HODGES (CONT'D)

This is a street, not a goddamn hockey rink.

DANNY

We apologize.

HODGES

And I'm tired of finding these things in my shrubs. I stepped on one last week, nearly turned my ankle.

DANNY

Yes, sir.

Hodges scowls at them, unsure of their contrition.

STEVEN

Would you like to play, sir? We're short a goalie.

HODGES

I look like a goalie to you?

STEVEN

Well, sometimes we see you watching us from the window. It's kind of creepy. Goalies are weird, according to ESPN. Would you like to be a goalie?

DANNY

You could wear the Jason mask.

OFF Hodges, we:

CUT TO:

14 EXT. HODGES PORCH - EVENING

14

Hodges and Ida have dinner. A lot of chewing, no talking. Until, finally--

HODGES

(re: the food;
grudgingly admitting)

It's very good.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

IDA

Of course it's good, if I make something, trust it to be goddamn good.

They eat.

IDA (CONT'D)

How long have you had trouble peeing?

Hodges stops chewing; shoots her a look.

IDA (CONT'D)

Don't give me the look, I see the Flo-Max boxes in your garbage. If you can't be bothered to recycle, I will. I pay for half my groceries with your empty beer bottles.

More chewing.

HODGES

The street-hockey kids asked me to play goalie. They think I'm weird.

IDA

You scare them. I've heard them talking.

Silence. Then--

IDA (CONT'D)

When's the last time you had sex?

Hodges stops chewing now; looks at her.

IDA (CONT'D)

Seriously.

HODGES

You propositioning me, Ida?

IDA

What if I am? You could do a lot worse. Not to mention I live next door, there's something to be said for convenience.

(then)

As well as hygiene, I'd need you to bathe. Do you?

HODGES

Are you being serious here?

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (2)

14

IDA

Face it, Bill, I'm your only option
if you don't intend to pay for it,
you're not an attractive man.

HODGES

You're out of your mind.

IDA

(sliding her phone
over)

Take a look at that.

As he picks up the phone.

IDA (CONT'D)

That was taken just two days ago.

HODGES

(sliding the phone
back)

Jesus fucking Christ. You're buck
naked.

IDA

You're damn right I am. And I look
incredible.

(then)

Let me tell you something. If you
drop dead in this house, the resale
price gets cut in half, and not
just here, my property values might
take a whack as well.

HODGES

So you want to have sex to protect
your resale value, you're a fucking
lunatic.

She holds a long look. Then--

IDA

(softening)

This physical and emotional inertia --
It's what killed Larry, y'know.

One day he's a college professor.
Then he retires. Little-by-little,
minute-by-minute, he just retreated
from the living. The depression
slithered up like a constrictor.
It was a slow, choking death.

(suddenly raw)

It was awful.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (3)

14

HODGES

(genuine)
I'm sorry.

A beat.

IDA

(a beat; quietly)
You need to find some sort of
purpose. I'll leave it at that.

DISSOLVE TO:

15 INT. HODGES KITCHEN - LATER

15

Hodges is rinsing dishes, loading the dishwasher; SPORTSCENTER IS PLAYING ON THE SMALL TELEVISION ON THE COUNTER. He grabs a beer, settles at the kitchen table. His lap-top has duct tape on it from the time he dropped it. And then kicked it in disgust at himself for dropping it. HE FLIPS UP THE SCREEN, BEGINS TO PERUSE SOME EMAILS; TINKERS WITH HIS JIGSAW PUZZLE AT THE SAME TIME. He finds a piece, inserts it in its proper place. Then, something on the computer gets his attention.

ANGLE THE COMPUTER

"FROM MR. M. SUBJECT: 'LONG TIME.'"

RESUME HODGES

"Long time"? A little odd. HE CLICKS IT, THE SCREEN THEN GOES BLACK. Okay. Even more odd. Perhaps the computer is finally feeling the effects of the drop-kick. He checks to see if it's getting power; it is. Why the fuck did his screen go black? And then... it pops up. A LARGE SMILEY FACE. THE EMOTICON OF SMILEY WEARING DARK GLASSES AND SHOWING HIS TEETH.

CLOSE ON HODGES

The image stirs a memory, and not a good one.

RESUME

Hodges moves the control, CLICKS ON SMILEY. AND SMILEY COMES TO LIFE, SPEAKING IN A SOMEWHAT ALTERED ROBOTIC VOICE.

SMILEY

Greetings, detective.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

SMILEY (CONT'D)

I hope you do not mind me using
your title, even though you're now
retired.

Hodges, spooked, double-clicks the control again, and Smiley freezes. The hair stands up on Hodges' back and neck. This is immediately unsettling. A beat. He kills the television. Smiley will get his full attention. ANOTHER DOUBLE CLICK, AND THE EMOTICON RETURNS TO LIFE.

SMILEY (CONT'D)

(on screen)

I'd like to commend you for thirty-one years of splendid service, twenty-seven of them as a decorated detective. I saw one of the retirement ceremonies on Channel Two - Public Access. You looked so proud. Thinner, too, you've put on a few. You must still be proud, I bet, you broke hundreds of cases, didn't you? Many of them high-profile.

And SMILEY CHUCKLES, A BELLY LAUGH. Hodges almost stops breathing. He already knows we're headed to the dark side.

SMILEY (CONT'D)

(on screen)

Tell me, detective. Did you get all the bad guys?

SUDDENLY, A STILL BLACK-AND-WHITE PICTURE OF AUGIE ODENKIRK POPS UP. ONLY THE LIPS MOVE, JOHNNY QUEST STYLE, AS IT SPEAKS IN A CRUDELY DUBBED, AUTOMATED VOICE.

AUGIE

(on screen)

We know the answer to that, don't we? Some of us still lie in our graves, our murders unavenged.

AND THEN ASSHOLE-JOE'S BLACK AND WHITE POPS UP. SOME CRUDE JOHNNY QUEST LIP MOVEMENT; ALSO AN AUTOMATED VOICE.

JOE

(on screen)

You made a promise, you said you'd get him.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (2)

15

THE CRUDE ANIMATION ONLY COMPOUNDS THE CREEPINESS. AND THEN, FACE AFTER FACE, DIFFERENT BLACK-AND-WHITE IMAGES OF VICTIMS; MANY OF WHOM WE RECOGNIZE; AUTOMATED VOICES; THEY MORPH FROM ONE TO THE OTHER.

AUGIE

(on screen)

But you didn't get him. He's still out there.

JOE

You failed.

THE SMILEY FACE REAPPEARS.

SMILEY

Everyone's got an opinion. And I find the murdered to be especially unforgiving.

JOE

(on screen)

Were any of us on your mind when they gave you that plaque at the retirement party?

SANDY

(on screen)

Did you think of us while your fellow Knights of the Badge and Gun were telling their heartwarming stories about you?

AND THEN, JANICE'S FACE POPS UP.

JANICE

(on screen)

Did any of them mention me? Or my little baby?

And it gets worse. PATTI, the BABY -- her image pops up.

BABY PATTI

(on screen; grotesque voice)

I barely got to live at all. Two months. You got a cocksucking plaque. I got squished!

SMILEY POPS BACK UP, ANOTHER GUT-BUSTING BELLY LAUGH. Hodges' entire body is rigid, clenched.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (3)

15

SMILEY

(on screen)

A baby, I must say, that was a bonus.
And the mom. Strawberry jam in a
sleeping bag. Did you know I was
actually wearing a condom that night?
So much excitement.

MR. SMILEY SUDDENLY SPROUTS A STICK-FIGURE BODY, COMPLETE
WITH A HUGE, PULSATING PENIS.

SMILEY (CONT'D)

(on screen)

I was afraid I might spontaneously
ejaculate! And I'd have to worry
about DNA.

THE SMILEY FIGURE THEN MORPHS INTO A CLOWN, WHICH ALSO
LAUGHS.

CLOWN FACE

(on screen)

No DNA for you, Kermit!!

ANGLE HODGES

BABY PATTI

(on screen; grotesque
voice)

I didn't make it to my first goddamn
birthday, you washed-out fucking
hack.

SMILEY

(on screen)

So easy to second-guess.

(then)

For my two cents, I'm just missing
the ending. You promised one,
'member?

AND THE FOOTAGE OF HODGES' PRESS CONFERENCES POPS UP.

HODGES

(on screen)

Take a good look at me, buddy. I'm
coming for you. I'm coming.

AND THE DANCING SMILEY STICK-FIGURE REAPPEARS; THE PENIS
STILL PULSATING.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (4)

15

SMILEY

(on screen; mock fear)

I'm coming, I'm coming. Auntie Em,
Auntie Em!!!

(then)

Hey, guess what? I'm coming, too.

AND THE BIG PENIS EJACULATES; A SPLATTER ON THE SCREEN.

SMILEY (CONT'D)

Talk later, buddy. My love to Frank.

AND THEN THE SCREEN GOES BLACK. Hodges sits there, frozen, unaware it's been almost thirty seconds since he's taken a breath. SUDDENLY, HE TAKES A HUGE GULP OF AIR; goes to a kitchen cabinet. He pulls out a .38 Smith & Wesson M&P revolver. An old gun, but a goodie. He then pulls out a Glock. Seriously spooked, convinced this psycho must be watching him, he goes to the window. Draws the shades. He can feel his chest thumping. He sucks in a coupla deep breaths. Belly breaths, it's calming. He then sits back at the table; he needs to watch it again. He double-clicks... but NOTHING. THE SCREEN STAYS BLACK. Then again. NOTHING. What the fuck? He then goes to his email inbox to retrieve it... his face freezes.

ANGLE THE COMPUTER SCREEN

The email is gone. There's no trace of it. Hodges goes to "junk," then "trash." NOTHING. He tries "archives," then "drafts," "sent"... NOTHING. The email has disappeared. He pushes away from the table, revolver in hand. If Smiley's goal was a good mind-fucking... mission accomplished.

THE CAMERA CLOSES ON HODGES... there's fear in his eyes. AS WE GO TIGHTER STILL, AN AWFUL NOISE, A GRINDING SPEWING MOTOR SOUND OF SORTS... THE CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL:

16 INT. HODGES BEDROOM - MORNING

16

Hodges... laying in bed. Eyes open; did he even fall asleep? Perhaps he did so with his eyes open, looks that way. The revolver is on his nightstand. AS THE GRINDING PIERCING MOTOR SOUND GROWS LOUDER -- TO EXCRUCIATING DECIBELS -- THE SOUND OF AN ONCOMING CAR? Hodges abruptly lurches up. Whether he slept in fight or flight mode, the sleep was not restorative.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

The SOUND OF THE MACHINE BECOMES MORE RECOGNIZABLE: the fucking muffler-less lawn mower, almost fifty years old.

CUT TO:

17 EXT. HODGES HOUSE, FRONT YARD - MORNING

17

JEROME ROBINSON, seventeen, African-American, PUSHES THE LAWN MOVER. Surfer shorts, tee, headphones... a "life is good" step to his gait. He mows away, SINGING TO WHATEVER IT IS HE'S LISTENING TO ON HIS HEADPHONES; nothing with an actual melody. The front door opens. Hodges appears.

HODGES

Jerome.

The kid hears nothing; between the mower and the headphones--

HODGES (CONT'D)

Jerome!!!

Still nothing. Hodges picks up the newspaper, FLINGS IT; IT BOUNCES RIGHT OFF THE SIDE OF JEROME'S FACE.

JEROME

Shit!!

He turns, sees Hodges. KILLS THE MOWER AND THE MUSIC.

HODGES

(not in the mood)

It's six-thirty in the morning.

JEROME

Yeah, that crazy-ass lady next door called me and said if I didn't mow your lawn today... it's either now or never, boss, I got school.

Hodges considers.

HODGES

You any good with computers?

JEROME

You know I am.

OFF Hodges, we:

TIME CUT TO:

18 INT. HODGES KITCHEN - MORNING

18

Hodges and Jerome; the computer in front of him.

JEROME

It just disappeared?

HODGES

I played it once. Went to play it again. Gone. The whole thing vanished.

JEROME

And you didn't accidentally trash it?

HODGES

I did nothing.

JEROME

(re: the computer)

Looks like somebody sure went to town on this.

HODGES

Is it possible for a file to just disappear on its own?

JEROME

Yes, but you'd be talking some very high-end software and shit. What was in the file?

HODGES

That ain't important.

JEROME

If it's not important, why you so out of joint? Aside from that being your normal personality?

HODGES

You want me to smack you?

JEROME

If you got homeowner's, yeah, I could use the money.

HODGES

Just tell me... can the video be retrieved, or not?

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

JEROME

(working his magic on
the computer)

I dunno, maybe. You can never really delete anything completely. Nothing here on the surface, though. I'd need more time. Whoever did this probably knows his shit.

OFF Hodges, we:

CUT TO:

19 EXT. BRIDGTON - DAY

19

Tract homes, somewhere on the north side of town. Most look like shit, a lot of plastic toys on crab-grass lawns. Brady drives up in his rust-bucket Toyota Camry, pulls in behind an old rust-bucket Honda. He deboards in front of his house: 49 Elm Street; where there are no elms, and probably never were. All the streets on the north side were named after trees. Brady totes a large pizza box; he heads for the house.

20 INT. BRADY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

20

As Brady enters, HE FIRST HEARS THE CACKLE OF THE TELEVISION. Deborah is in the family room, watching last night's recorded "Survivor."

BRADY

I'm home, Ma.

21 INT. FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

21

DEBORAH

(with a slight slur)

Hi, honey. Watching "Survivor," come join, it's a goodie.

She's sitting on the couch, white silk robe... and we can see more white where it splits apart, high up on her thighs, her panties. She's pushing fifty, starting to flab out around the middle. The half-empty vodka bottle on the coffee table doesn't improve the visual.

BRADY

I got work downstairs.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

DEBORAH

What is this big project you got going?

BRADY

Just a new kind of router.

DEBORAH

Come sit with me for just a second, could you, baby?

He approaches, sits next to her.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

I'm concerned about those circles under your eyes. I think you're working too hard with all these different jobs of yours.

BRADY

If I wanna go to college, I gotta earn money to pay for it, don't I?

DEBORAH

My baby, the college boy.

She holds a look. Brady fights against letting his eyes drift down to her spreading thighs.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

It can't be all work and no play, though. A young person should have some kind of social life, honey.

BRADY

I have friends.

DEBORAH

Who? The lesbian? Or your boss who's nothing but mean to you?

BRADY

They're okay.

DEBORAH

You need a little fun in your life, that's all I'm saying.

(then)

Why is it you've never had a girlfriend? I just don't understand this.

As Brady looks away--

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (2)

21

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

I'm not trying to find fault with you. In fact, just the opposite. You're smart. Resourceful. And good-looking. Do you know how good-looking you are? I would think the girls would drip off you.

BRADY

I really need to get to work.

DEBORAH

(with a sigh)

Okay.

(then)

Give mommy a kiss first, can you do that?

As he leans in, she turns her face to one side, offering the cheek... but as his lips arrive, she turns back and pushes her open mouth into his lips. She places a palm on the nape of his neck, flicks her tongue along his lips. She then pulls back, gives him a smile. Then her hand goes to his groin.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

My honey-boy.

He rises, pulls away.

BRADY

I got work to do.

Brady heads for the door to the basement as Deborah returns her attention to "Survivor."

22 INT. BASEMENT STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

22

Brady descends.

23 INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

23

A computer-command center of sorts, a techie's playground. Brady enters; tries not to think about his mother. But when it cannot be avoided, it must be dealt with. He unbuttons his pants, takes hold of himself, begins to take care of business. OFF him, his short, rhythmic breaths, we:

CUT TO:

24 EXT. COBB'S POND - DAY

24

A SMALL POND IN GARLAND PARK, CENTER OF TOWN. SOME FOOD VENDORS ... THE PLACE COULD BENEFIT FROM SOME LANDSCAPING, BUT ALL TOLD, PRETTY PICTURESQUE, ESPECIALLY FOR BRIDGTON. WE FIND HODGES AND PETE, EATING HOT DOGS.

HODGES

I think the food is what I miss most. I try to replicate it at home. But it's not the same.

PETE

When you think about all the moments we had on park benches like this. Or in coffee shops? They now say social camaraderie is key to good health.

They eat.

HODGES

So. Was it her?

PETE

Sorry?

HODGES

The bag of bones in the gravel pit. Davis's wife?

PETE

Still waiting for forensics, but I'm ninety-percent sure, yeah. Check one off the list.

Silence.

PETE (CONT'D)

You okay talking about it, or...

HODGES

What? Why wouldn't I be?

PETE

Well. To be honest, you kinda got that look in your eye.

HODGES

What look?

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

PETE

The "I'm not in the game anymore" look.

(off Hodges' silence)

It's killing you, isn't it?

HODGES

I'm fine. Truth be told, I don't even miss it too much.

PETE

Right.

HODGES

I'm serious.

(then)

Except maybe the cases still hanging fire, I dwell on them, some. Starting with right here, The City Park Rapist. I still can't believe we didn't get him.

PETE

We will. The thing about rapists, they always strike again.

A beat.

HODGES

Then, there's the Mercedes killer.

(fishing)

Anything new on that?

PETE

No. And I ain't too sure there ever will be. It's been what, two years? Likely a one-off. For my money, he was probably coming to the job fair, saw the long line ahead of him, and flipped out.

HODGES

He stole a Mercedes to go to a job fair? That don't make sense.

(then)

Is the case still active? I mean, for real, anybody doing actual work on it?

PETE

(don't even go there)

It's active, Bill.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: (2)

24

PETE (CONT'D)

(then)

You're never gonna let it go, are you?

HODGES

I'm just making conversation. Camaraderie for my health.

PETE

Okay.

A beat.

PETE (CONT'D)

The old lady killed herself, y'know. That's new.

HODGES

What?

PETE

Olivia Trelawney. The woman whose Mercedes was stolen. Evidently blamed herself for leaving the keys in the car. She never got over it. Swallowed some pills.

HODGES

Fuck.

They eat in silence.

HODGES (CONT'D)

Was it ever disclosed that the Smiley-Face sticker was found on the steering wheel?

PETE

I don't think so.

HODGES

What about the Clown-Face? Ever reported that the witnesses saw the driver wearing the mask?

PETE

Why do you ask?

HODGES

Just wondering.

OFF Pete, wondering, we:

CUT TO:

25 INT. DISCOUNT ELECTRONIX - DAY

25

Freddi and Brady as Frobisher approaches; hands Brady some pink slips.

FROBISHER

Here you go, Mr. tech-wiz, six out calls.

BRADY

I was actually planning to leave by three.

FROBISHER

You were planning to leave by three.

BRADY

You know I have another job.

FROBISHER

You have another job. What is this other vocation, Brady? You inventing space ships with Elon Muskrat, whatever the fuck his name is?

FREDDI

Back off, Frobie.

FROBISHER

No, I will not back off.

(to Brady)

Whether you choose to see me as such or not, I'm kind of your mentor in life.

Brady looks to Freddi.

FREDDI

He's going into beacon mode.

(to Frobisher)

Go ahead. Beam us.

Frobisher makes the sucking sound with his teeth. Then--

FROBISHER

(to Brady)

You don't got a father. And your mother, well... no offense, I like the vodka myself, but not on my Rice Krispies, if you get my drift. You need to take good mentor advice where you can get it. This is your job right here, Brady.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

FROBISHER (CONT'D)

This is your career. You sticker DVDs, you help old fackakas with dementia get the Polident out of their laptops, and there's nothing wrong with that. It's a role in society. A lot of people don't got roles. You do. But you will never be happy if you can't both appreciate what you have and accept what you are.

A beat.

FREDDI

His light shineth.

OFF Frobisher, making a sucking sound, we:

CUT TO:

26 INT. HODGES KITCHEN - NIGHT

26

Jerome is on Hodges' computer; they've been at it awhile.

JEROME

And you're positive you didn't download any application or something?

HODGES

I don't even know how to download.

JEROME

There's all kinds of software to make files disappear and shit, but both parties gotta have it installed.

(adding)

I can't find anything.

HODGES

Could he have hacked my computer and downloaded it?

JEROME

I dunno. Possible, I guess some kind of Malware, maybe.

(then)

A talking, laughing, jism-spewing emoticon. And you weren't mixing medications or nothing?

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

And then... A KNOCK ON THE DOOR. Hodges is immediately spooked.

JEROME (CONT'D)

You expecting somebody?

HODGES

No.

He opens a drawer, grabs his Smith & Wesson.

JEROME

Serious?

FOLLOW HODGES AS HE APPROACHES THE FRONT DOOR. He opens it to REVEAL IDA. She sees the gun.

IDA

Oh, for god's sake.

(re: Jerome)

And what's he doing here?

JEROME

We're having a party.

HODGES

What do you want, Ida?

IDA

I'd like a minute. Alone, if possible.

TIME CUT TO:

27 INT. HODGES KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

27

Jerome has left, Ida and Hodges sit alone.

IDA

You hurt my feelings.

(then)

I wasn't going to say anything, but keeping pain to myself is not a strength.

A beat. He waits for it.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

IDA (CONT'D)

Should you desire or not desire to have sexual relations with me -- certainly your choice -- I take well-earned pride in my physical appearance.

HODGES

That's what this is about?

IDA

Yes. For you to be so repulsed by my body...

HODGES

I wasn't repulsed.

IDA

You nearly gagged on your own vomit.

HODGES

I was repulsed by the fact that you were showing me naked pictures of yourself, not... I wasn't reacting to how you looked.

Silence.

IDA

I'm a handsome woman.

HODGES

I never said that you weren't.

IDA

But you couldn't bring yourself to so much as look at the pictures. You recoiled.

HODGES

I did not recoil.

IDA

Yes you did. You recoiled. I saw it.

A beat.

HODGES

What do you want from me, Ida?

IDA

I'd like you to look at the picture.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (2)

27

A beat.

HODGES

You want me to look at the picture?

IDA

Yes.

HODGES

For what purpose?

IDA

Because you're my neighbor and I want to be friends with you. And I don't think I can be friends with somebody who recoils at the sight of my body. I realize that's a deficit of mine but I am what I am.

A beat.

HODGES

Fine.

Ida slides the phone over. He regards the picture. Then--

HODGES (CONT'D)

Very nice. It's lovely.

Ida's hardly satisfied. She takes her phone. Exits.

HODGES (CONT'D)

(muttering to himself)

Jesus fucking Christ.

Hodges then sits at his kitchen table. He gets back on the computer, pulls up some OLD ARTICLES OF THE INCIDENT.

ANGLE THE SCREEN

THE ONLINE VERSION OF THE PLAIN DEALER.

ANGLE THE COMPUTER SCREEN

On the right side of the screen, among the various advertisements, there's one that says: "Out of work? Depressed?" Under the caption... A SMILEY FACE.

ANGLE HODGES

He stares. Spooked all over again. He moves the cursor to the emoticon. He's almost afraid to click. A beat.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (3)

27

Then... convincing himself he's being paranoid, HE CLICKS ON IT. THE SMILEY EMOTICON BREAKS INTO THE SAME BELLY LAUGH... THEN SUDDENLY... FOUR SECONDS OF DARK BUT UNMISTAKABLE FOOTAGE. PEOPLE BEING RUN OVER; THE DRIVER'S POINT OF VIEW. FOUR SECONDS OF GRISLY HORRIBLE TERROR. AND THEN BLACK. Hodges pushes back away from the table in horror.

28 EXT. HODGES HOUSE, FRONT YARD - SECONDS LATER

28

Hodges emerges, Glock in one hand, Smith & Wesson in the other. Looks left. Looks right; cannot escape the sense... somebody's watching. He begins sucking in deep breaths. OFF him, his chest pounding, we:

DISSOLVE TO:

29 EXT. POLICE STATION, PARKING LOT - MORNING

29

Hodges stands in the parking lot with Pete, who leans against the hood of his car.

HODGES

It just got me thinking. All the pranks and taunts and shit that we got with this case. Has that continued? Has anything recently happened that--

PETE

No.

(then)

Why are you asking?

HODGES

I just told you, I'm curious.

PETE

(suspicious)

You're curious.

HODGES

I worked on that case for two years. And after our conversation yesterday, it just got me thinking.

PETE

The conversation we had about the Park Rapist that you segued into a conversation about the Mercedes killer. That conversation?

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

HODGES

Why you talking to me like that?

PETE

Because of all the cases for you to
obsess over...

HODGES

--I am not
obsessing, I'm
just asking if
there's been any
suspicious recent--

PETE

...this is the one
more than any other
that led to your
demise.

HODGES (CONT'D)

Y'know what, nevermind.

PETE

Bill. You need to nevermind.

HODGES

Sixteen people died, we're meant to
just forget that?

PETE

I'm not, I'm still on the case.
You're meant to forget it, you're
retired.

CUT TO:

30 EXT. DISCOUNT ELECTRONIX PARKING LOT - MORNING

30

THE SUBARU PULLS IN. HODGES DEBOARDS; HEADS FOR THE
STORE.

31 INT. DISCOUNT ELECTRONIX - CONTINUOUS

31

Hodges briskly enters the store; he's quickly met by
Frobisher.

FROBISHER

(to Hodges; brightly)
Good morning, sir.

HODGES

You carry surveillance cams?

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

FROBISHER

(polite to the point
of being unctuous)

Why yes we do, sir, security cams,
nanny cams, drop cams, and we not
only can provide the equipment, we
can service all your installation
needs as well.

HODGES

I can install it myself, I just
want the merchandise.

FROBISHER

Let me show you where it's located.

As they go--

FROBISHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

One can never take security too
seriously, that's what I believe.
We live in an increasingly dangerous
world. Vigilance is an American
value. "One if by land. Two if by
sea." Our wonderful country began
with that.

CUT TO:

32 INT. SUBARU - LATER

32

Hodges drives, he's ON HIS CELL.

SPLIT-SCREEN WITH JEROME, ON HIS CELL, OUTDOOR BLACKTOP.

HODGES

How's three o'clock work?

JEROME

Works fine, but you should know I
charge a higher premium for tech
than I do landscaping.

HODGES

Three o'clock. Don't be late.

HODGES CLICKS OFF; he continues to drive.

CUT TO:

33 EXT. TOW LOT - DAY

33

The place is fenced, barbed wire... secure... through the fencing, rows and rows of cars. This is a police tow yard. WE FIND HODGES as he approaches the entrance gate. The Guard, MARTY WALL, forties, is there. Sees Hodges.

MARTY

Not a chance.

HODGES

This will be the last time I ever--

MARTY

You said last time would be the last time. And the time before that.

HODGES

I promise this--

MARTY

You're a civilian. I give civilians access to evidence, I lose my job.

Hodges decides to take another tack.

HODGES

(humbly)

Marty. My therapist is telling me I gotta get closure and shit. Personally, I think closure is over-fucking-rated. But the nightmares, the panic attacks, I could do without. He says I gotta take certain steps. This is one of 'em.

(off Marty)

Five minutes. I'll let you hold the gold watch as collateral, the one I got for thirty years of distinguished service. Please.

TIME CUT TO:

34 EXT. TOW LOT - MINUTES LATER

34

Hodges walks through the rows and rows of cars. He can feel his chest tightening with each step. He knows exactly where he's going, been here many times. Belly breaths... Belly breaths. And then... he stops.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

34

HIS POV

THERE IT IS: THE GRAY MERCEDES SEDAN. The killing machine. Still stained with blood on the front.

RESUME HODGES

It's shuddering, every time he sees it. He can almost feel and smell the death. He can also feel the driver. Him. It's why he's come. No new evidence to be collected. He's got a zillion pictures of it. He's come to feel "him." Mr. Mercedes. Hodges just continues to stare at the vehicle. The death sedan.

FLASHBACK

QUICK CUTS OF THE SCENE, THE CARNAGE, THE STREWN DEAD BODIES.

BACK TO PRESENT

Hodges continues to stare at the car.

FLASHBACK

HODGES EXTRACTS A SEVERED FINGER FROM THE GRILL OF THE MERCEDES.

BACK TO PRESENT

The horror of it all re-surges within Hodges. And then... a look of resignation creeps across his face. Calm, even. What to do in retirement? He now knows what to do: He will track down this motherfucker. And kill him. There will be no painting classes. No trips to Florida. No golf dates. Just one thing on his "to-do" list. OFF his resolve, we:

CUT TO:

35 EXT. HODGES HOUSE, BACKYARD - DAY

35

Hodges and Jerome at work. JEROME has stripped down to his shorts, sweating; he STANDS ON A LADDER, installing a video-cam. Frank, the tortoise is out of his hutch, a bit curious.

JEROME

You want maybe I angle it so you can see into Ida's backyard? You could watch her sunbathe in the nude, she'd like that.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

HODGES

I want a full panoramic if you can get it.

JEROME

You thought about a guard-dog? Not that your turtle ain't scary.

HODGES

Skip the fucking commentary, would you?

CUT TO:

36 EXT. HODGES HOUSE, FRONT YARD - MINUTES LATER

36

JEROME IS UP ON THE LADDER, installing another camera.

JEROME

Y'know, we could program this shit right into your iphone so you can watch it from anywhere. Sitting in some movie theater, bored to shit over whether Iron Man is getting it on with Wonder Woman, you can just whip out your phone, see who's breaking into your house.

HODGES

Yeah, I'll keep that in mind.

UPON WHICH, WE HEAR THE MR. TASTY JINGLE, THE ICE-CREAM MAN COMETH DOWN THE STREET.

JEROME

Okay, this one's done.

(climbs down)

How 'bout we take a break, you treat me to a Whistle-Pop.

(off Hodges)

That's an ice-cream, boss.

Hodges reaches for some cash.

HODGES

I'll take a brownie delight, no whip cream.

JEROME

Watching your figure, are you?

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

HODGES

So help me, I'll smack you.

Jerome heads off, as Hodges considers the placement of the next camera. He then spies THE TENNIS BALL UNDER ONE OF HIS SHRUBS. Those fucking kids. He approaches, reaches down, grabs it. Freezes.

ANGLE THE BALL

A SMILEY FACE HAS BEEN DRAWN ON THE YELLOW BALL WITH A MAGIC MARKER.

RESUME

Hodges' body clenches yet again; he nearly pisses himself, continues to stare at the ball, as we:

CUT TO:

37 INT. ICE-CREAM TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

37

SOMEBODY'S POV

LISA, six years old, adorable, is at the window, A BUNCH OF KIDS LINED UP BEHIND HER. Jerome is approaching the end of the line.

LISA

Can I have a Berry-good please?

ANGLE BRADY

The ice-cream man.

BRADY

Well, that depends. Have you been a berry good girl?

LISA

(beaming)

Yes.

BRADY

Then I guess you can have one. But only if you give me a berry good smile.

She obliges. The kids love the ice-cream man.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

37

BRADY (CONT'D)

(to Lisa)

Here you go, sweetheart.

(to the NEXT CUSTOMER)

What can I get for you?

JOHNNY

I'll have a chocolate eclair, please.

BRADY

Oh, I love the eclairs. They're
gooey gooey good, aren't they?

JOHNNY

Yeah.

BRADY

I just love gooey gooey good.

The KIDS CACKLE WITH DELIGHT, as Brady looks out beyond
them.

HIS POV

Hodges is still staring at the tennis ball.

RESUME BRADY... EYEING HODGES.

The sickly little smile creeping across his face. OFF
this, we:

SMASH TO BLACK.

TO BE CONTINUED

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