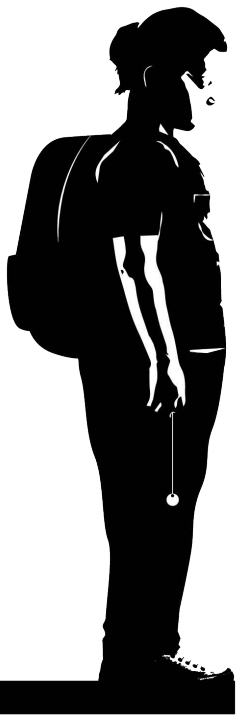


SPILT MILK

Written by

Bryan Jefferson



INT. APOSTLES OF BETHLEHEM FOR CHRIST - AFTERNOON

From the rafters, a CROWD is in riotous worship below. Half dance while the rest writhe and seize. It's a convulsing scene.

A section of the throng parts for two large MEN. They drag another even larger MAN to the back.

SUPERIMPOSE: "POCONO MOUNTAINS, 1983"

The loudspeaker booms, doubling as the voice of God.

MAN (O.S.)

Now walk with-- walk with me,  
Diane. Show the unbelievers here  
and at home. No more tendonitis, no  
more arthritis, no more dermatitis,  
spider veins, gout, restless legs,  
you name it! BLESSINGS BE ONTO YOU!  
WOOOOOOO! Let's keep Diane going,  
now, folks, give it up! GIVE. IT.  
UP. EVERYONE!

There is a small gap in the crowd.

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

Ok, ok, folks, bring it down, down  
to the ground. Uh-what?! Did you  
just feel that... right now? That  
sudden wave of warmth? We've got  
inbound from the Almighty!

(beat)

Speak up God, the folks are  
calling... Who is next to receive  
your blessed touch?

Walled in that gap is JEANIE HILL (11), she holds her own  
against the packed mass while craning to catch a sliver of  
ambient light on her CASIO calculator watch.

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

Say it with me now--LOUD! LET ME  
HEAR IT! EVERYONE, WITH ME NOW!

The faces above Jeanie, including that of her AUNT MARY (late  
40s) and indebted to Mary Kay, shout together:

CROWD

GOD... IS ON... THE LINE!

MAN (O.S.)

Is there a M--

LAUGHS overtake the hall.

Jeanie gives up on the time and gets on her tippy toes searching for any line of sight.

MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Well, hello, again, didn't see you there! Stay outta that one's way, folks. Such an inspiration. Keep it up, keep it going. Give it up one more time for Diane, folks!

Jeanie, at her wits end, hops up onto her seat.

MARY  
Aye, aye, down, get down!

JEANIE  
How much longer?

MARY  
Not much. Soon. Ok?

Jeanie sits down in a huff.

MAN (O.S.)  
(beat)  
Now, listen, listen to me well.  
(hushing the crowd)  
I'm looking for Margaret... Is there a Margaret here with us today?

A few excited calls fleck the hall.

MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Ohhh, quite a few! How the good word has spread... Beautiful.  
(beat)  
Does September twelfth, nineteen-forty-four mean anything to you, Margaret?  
(beat)  
September twelfth, nineteen forty-four... God is telling me that's a special day. Do you feel it?

Jeanie gives a raised eyebrow to Mary. Mary doesn't notice as she surveys around.

MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
(beat)  
So much has been taken from you, Margaret.

(MORE)

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

Your livelihood, your freedom, the months and years to come.

(beat)

Are you with us, Margaret? Marge? Margie? No?

(looking skyward)

Lord, hate to break it to you, I think you got your messages crossed with another one of your far-flung disciples on this here blue marble.

(miffed)

Marge? Margie? Here it is now. Four... six... five... Drury Lane. Don't tell me you're home, Margaret.

Jeanie jumps to her feet as Mary snaps her head around, mouth hanging wide.

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

Show yourself! I feel you. I feel your pain, I feel your confusion coming from... right... over...

The crowd around Jeanie gets louder as a new energy washes over the section. Mary stares blankly. Jeanie instinctively shakes her head no. Mary reboots.

MARY

(to Jeanie)

Holy hell, that's us! That's us-- US!

MAN (O.S.)

Wave your arms--let us see you. God is on the line... just for you. Question is: are you ready to answer?

The crowd gets more frenzied. Mary makes her decision.

MARY

(to Jeanie)

God's good, kiddo.

(yelling)

Here, here, OVER HERE, PASTOR! HERE! US!

JEANIE

But, she's--

MARY

Shhh, it's ok, it's ok.

Mary waves her arms frantically.

MAN (O.S.)  
 Show us that it isn't the  
 wheelchair that binds you but the  
 need for the Lord's attention to  
 free you!

The last few people are seated. Mary continues jumping up and down. PASTOR RANDY (mid-to-late 40s), a square chinned man, sweaty but a weathered showman is revealed.

Pastor Randy sees Mary, then looks up to the "heavens" confused. In his ear is a well-concealed flesh colored earpiece. An ever so brief crack in his composure shows his true self, Jeanie catches it.

PASTOR RANDY  
 Err, um...  
 (beat, to Mary)  
 Ma... Margaret... Hill? You've been  
 saved--miraculous--praise be!  
 Praise be to him! Praise him!

The crowd begins to swell but Mary shakes her head and beckons him closer. Pastor Randy takes a couple of nervous glances upward before stepping forward. Mary excitedly takes the microphone from him. Jeanie, all the while, lightly tugs at Mary's shirt begging her not to do it.

MARY  
 Pastor Randy, hey, wow, hi, what an  
 honor! I've watched your show  
 hundreds of times and never-- Just,  
 thank you! You don't know what this  
 means... to us.

PASTOR RANDY  
 Don't anoint me yet, my dear,  
 please, what can I do?

MARY  
 My name's Mary and this here is  
 Maggie's daughter, Jeanie,  
 practically her shadow.

Pastor Randy gives Jeanie a look. She shifts behind Mary to escape his gaze.

MARY (CONT'D)  
 I'm Maggie's best friend, see, so  
 I've been watching Jeanie since...  
 like you were getting at, her  
 accident.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

The one on four-oh-two a few weeks back, hers was the car that went down the embankment. Anyway, Maggie is my best friend from pretty much the day I interviewed her. Between working at Mel's, and living so close by in Liberty Square, we've been practically inseparable--just the three of us.

PASTOR RANDY

That's beautiful. That's love.

MARY

But ever since things went tits up, I mean... sideways... it's been one thing after another, and now it's some infection. I don't know. I don't get it. Don't get me wrong, she's a fighter, if you know her, you know. She'll bounce back from anything, but she could use some wins right now, ya know.

PASTOR RANDY

Well I--

MARY

Frankly, I don't know if she goes for all this like I do. She's too proud to ask for help... from anyone... ever. Even from God! But after your letter, we had to.

Pastor Randy takes the mic back, but Mary holds on. He plays it off by leading her into the aisle.

As Mary gets pulled away, Jeanie looks around the unfamiliar, leering faces and quickly moves up to the aisle seat, staying as close to Mary as she can, but careful not get caught up in whatever stunt Pastor Randy has planned.

PASTOR RANDY

You're a dear, dear friend, Mary. Unrelenting, I can tell. A true light. I would like to do something special together with you then, if you'll allow me. It'll take all of us here, but I think we can pull it off. For Maggie. I'd like to take all of God's love, all of it that's been built up here today, and send it to her...

(to the crowd)

(MORE)

PASTOR RANDY (CONT'D)  
 You think that'd help, folks?  
 (to Mary)  
 Think it's worth a shot?  
 (beat)  
 Can we use you?

MARY  
 Please, please, I can't beli-- do  
 whatever!

PASTOR RANDY  
 You have no idea how much I love  
 that to hear that.

Mary closes her eyes and flings her arms out, turning stiff  
 as a board, as Pastor Randy works about her body.

PASTOR RANDY (CONT'D)  
 God is touching her spine right  
 now. God is touching her nerve  
 endings now. God is touching her  
 cartilage and bone--all that has  
 been taken away. Give your heart to  
 the Lord, Mary, and hold onto  
 Maggie deep in it. Think of nothing  
 else but of her, and your want for  
 her best life. God will heal all  
 that is open to his eternal and  
 just blessings. Trust that he is a  
 provider in these turbulent times.  
 Be open! Open! Open up! Let him in!

Jeanie's scrunches her face unable to comprehend the sight in  
 front of her. She mouths without really realizing "no...  
 no... no... no..."

MARY  
 YES, YES, YES, thank you, thank  
 you, thank you! Please!

PASTOR RANDY  
 Maggie! Maggie, do you hear me?!  
 Let the Lord in, Maggie. She's  
 ready, Mary! Let's go. Everyone!  
 (beat)  
 Here it comes, Mary, here it comes!  
 Maggie is getting it, I feel it.  
 Ready, Mary, help me... channel...  
 it. Yes! YES, NOW! Ready? Ready?  
 Here! It! G-g-g-goes!  
 (beat)  
 BLESSINGS ONTO YOU! WOOOOOO!

At this and if on cue, Mary's knees buckle, and she drops.  
CONGREGANTS rush to restore her.

Pastor Randy, imbued with a skin-crawling cosmic energy,  
steps over them towards Jeanie, who looks on confused, but  
more disturbed.

PASTOR RANDY (CONT'D)  
Come here now, come here, Jeanie.  
The Lord has blessings for you  
too...

Pastor Randy runs his hand down Jeanie's face, down her  
chest.

PASTOR RANDY (CONT'D)  
The Lord feels your potential,  
there's only one thing you need to  
do to receive his love... Are you  
ready, little lamb? Now... LET...  
THE LORD... IN!

With that Pastor Randy palms Jeanie's forehead and throws her  
back into the people behind her. Another miracle to everyone  
in attendance but to Jeanie, an act of war.

As Jeanie gets to her feet, she sees Pastor Randy walk off.  
The shock tempers her rage. To center herself, she puts her  
nose to her left shoulder and takes in all the familiar  
scents she grew up on.

Mary stumbles back to her seat and collapses in it.

PASTOR RANDY (CONT'D)  
Wasn't that good, folks? Wasn't  
it?!  
(beat)  
Let's all now, together, cast out  
the filth and sickness within each  
of us and let the light of the Lord  
shine down!  
(beat)  
Praise be, ladies and gentlemen.  
Praise be to him!

CROWD  
PRAISE BE! PRAISE BE! PRAISE BE!

He touches hands with his followers as he makes his way back  
to the main stage.



PASTOR RANDY

This has been a testament, a downright testament to him this day. I tell ya... Now let's all take a moment to reflect, to dig deep and reflect on our own health and the gunk and filth accumulating within us, physically and spiritually. Let's be reaaaaal honest, real honest with ourselves. And let's give those bad spirits that wish to do us harm a relic of our steadfastness and resolve. Pour your hearts out, be true to yourself. Overwhelm the demons and those seeking to do you harm with your kindness, care, generosity, purity, and open hearts. We are all shedding our former unhealthy, broken, sinful selves this blessed day! And let me be the first to cast out all that is keeping me from the full attention of the Lord.

Pastor Randy, now on stage, empties his pockets of all his money and change in a big show. He motions to his minions to pass around the alms baskets.

PASTOR RANDY (CONT'D)

Wait!

(beat)

I... can do more... Sorry, my sweet!

Pastor Randy makes a show of removing an expensive looking watch. He holds it up high.

PASTOR RANDY (CONT'D)

A gift from my wife for my forty-eighth. She'll understand, I know... I pray. Between me and you, I really hope so, she has a nasty bite. Take my word for it.

Pastor Randy shakes his hand, laughs, blows a kiss above the crowd, then waves off his minions, concluding the final act.

Mary digs in her purse zealously and pulls out a wad of cash.

MARY

Think this'll be enough?

Jeanie seethes.

INT. MARY'S CAR - DUSK

Mary and Jeanie drive home.

MARY

Wow. Wow, wow, wow, wooooow, wow.  
How good was that?! Better than any  
high-- sugar high I ever had.

Jeanie reading the billboards, snaps around.

JEANIE

He didn't even know who you were.

MARY

He wasn't talking to me, he was  
working through me, to your mom. He  
got your address and her birthday,  
didn't he? And all those other  
people, too, they're all in on it,  
like some grand conspiracy? You  
think I'm in on it?!

Mary cuts around a VOLKSWAGON BEETLE with little abandon. Her  
old car rumbles with the sudden acceleration. Jeanie white-  
knuckles the sides of her seat.

MARY (CONT'D)

You have too many books.

(beat)

You won't understand till you're  
older but, kiddo, the Lord works in  
mysterious ways.

JEANIE

Mysterious? Uh-huh, suuure. I'd  
rather have unicorns.

MARY

They get out funny sometimes--ok,  
fine, granted--but you gotta at  
least give them a chance to happen.

(beat)

Anyway, we had to, she's worth  
anything... Yeah? But I get it, so  
let's keep it between me, you and  
the big guy for now--ok? See if he  
really keeps his word.

Mary eyes the time and picks up the pace, swerving in and out  
of traffic.

MARY (CONT'D)

I hope we don't miss it.

Jeanie clenches as Mary overtakes another car.

EXT. HIMMELSBACH BLUFF ELEMENTARY - DAY

A garbage truck in the schoolyard empties a dumpster.

INT. CLASSROOM

A class of SIXTH GRADERS are hard at work at their desks. Outside the floor to ceiling windows to the right of the class, birds chirp and flutter from wire to tree and back.

MRS. WHARTENBY

No, they're not related. They're not even-- Mandel, Mendel... I don't see how this pertains to the test. Anyone else, only about what's on the test, please?

Three hands shoot up. MRS. WHARTENBY acknowledges NEIL with eye contact.

NEIL

Question SEVEN... What do--

MRS. WHARTENBY

Not out loud!

As Mrs. Whartenby makes her way over, all eyes dapple Jeanie in the front desk. She gives a big stretch then goes back to daydreaming out the window.

Mrs. Whartenby walks to Neil's desk never losing track of Jeanie.

MRS. WHARTENBY (CONT'D)

What was your question?

NEIL

Seven... For  
(louder than necessary)  
SEVEN...

Neil whispers the rest in Mrs. Whartenby's ear. Jeanie looks back at her sheet and scratches the back of her head.

MRS. WHARTENBY

Yes. I don't really see how you could read it any other way.

MRS. WHARTENBY focuses on Jeanie who goes back to watching the birds out the window.

MRS. WHARTENBY (CONT'D)  
Eyes down, everyone.

(beat)  
Fifteen minutes left. I hope you  
all are taking this very seriously.  
Remember, this and your project  
count for twenty percent of your  
final grade.

(beat)  
Anyone else? Raise your h--

ABIGAIL  
Three, Mrs. Whartenby. Three  
please!

BECCA  
Six, too!

OLIVER  
Eleven. Eleven! Don't forget  
eleven!

ABIGAIL  
Wait your turn, bozos! I asked  
first!

PAT  
What question are we on right now?

ABIGAIL  
For THREE, question THREE, is the  
first part of the qu--

MRS. WHARTENBY  
Quiet! Everyone be quiet!  
(collecting herself)  
No more talking. Raise your hand  
and I will come over. No more  
talking. Understand?  
(beat)  
Jeanie, take your test to my desk  
and wait there.

JEANIE  
Huh, wha?! I didn't even do  
nothing.

MRS. WHARTENBY  
It's "anything", you didn't do  
anything.

JEANIE  
I know, that's what I'm saying!

The class laughs.

MRS. WHARTENBY  
My desk, now. You're done.

BECCA, Jeanie's closest friend, makes funny faces at her as she makes the short walk to the front.

Jeanie blinks back at Becca T-W-A-T in Morse code. Becca snickers.

MRS. WHARTENBY (CONT'D)  
Any other questions?  
(beat)  
I didn't think so.

MRS. WHARTENBY moves to the front and takes Jeanie's test.

As she grades it, her red marker hovers just above the paper dipping a few times but never touching.

MRS. WHARTENBY (CONT'D)  
Go back to your seat, please.

Jeanie shrugs and goes back to staring out the window again, this time toward the Wipock County Bank beyond. She watches a familiar white van pull around back. She checks her watch.

EXT. MEL'S DINER - AFTERNOON

Jeanie's school bus passes a phone booth and pulls along the curb.

A WOMAN (late 30s) stands strong and commanding, wearing an apron, beaming as it approaches. She is a vision. Jeanie looks wistfully at her.

The stop sign on the side of the bus pops out as it slows along the curb.

MOMENTS LATER

As the last of the yellow motors away, Jeanie is left facing Mel's Diner and Truck Stop alone. The woman was just an apparition.

Jeanie walks toward the diner as Mary comes out to greet her dusting herself off.

INT. MEL'S DINER

Mary takes the check with the money from table seven, sliding the coins over the edge and into her hand.

MARY  
Right back with your change.

SIMS  
All good, darlin'.

MARY  
Thanks, fellas, be good now, catch  
ya in a few.

Mary walks to the register and drops the change into a donation jar. The picture of the woman from outside is affixed to it. She puts the correct amount in the register then adds the tip to a nice wad. Jeanie is still working away at her usual spot.

MARY (CONT'D)  
Bunch o' campers. Sorry.  
(beat)  
What's taking you so long?

JEANIE  
Extra credit.

MARY  
Extra credit, huh? That's new...  
Ok, pack it up.  
(to the kitchen)  
We're out, Earl!

EARL (mid 50s), crusty, comes out and puts an empty plate on the window. Mary gives him a crinkled face and a sharp point that playfully implies "don't".

EARL  
Aaarrright. Aye, Jeanie, quarter  
per, I'm serious. That's a deal...  
Trust me.

Mary takes off her apron and hangs it up.

MARY  
(to Earl)  
Let the negotiations begin.  
(whispering to Jeanie)  
We'll make him pay through the  
nose.  
(snaps her fingers)  
Time to boogie!

A sharp pain pierces Jeanie's inside. Mary misses the slight pained expression.

MARY (CONT'D)  
Few quick stops then we're home  
free.

Mary and Jeanie head out of Mel's for the night, the bell above the door dings.

EXT. WIPOCK COUNTY BANK - EVENING

Mary turns into the parking lot, tires screeching a little. Jeanie looks at her darkened school across the street.

INT. WIPOCK COUNTY BANK

A lollipop jar sits at the teller window. Mary and Jeanie hurry in just before close.

MRS. FITZSIMMONS (late 30s) sits fixing her lipstick in a pocket mirror. She snaps it shut.

MRS. FITZSIMMONS  
Hey, Mar. Hey, Jeanie. Got you's  
over here.

MARY  
Thanks, Min, you're a lifesaver!

Mary pulls out a wad of cash and puts it down. Jeanie sneaks a lollipop while Mary furiously fills out a deposit form.

MARY (CONT'D)  
Only one.

MR. FLOYD (late 50s), well appointed, prattles on in the background.

MR. FLOYD  
You said today?! And, where are  
you? Can you assure me someone will  
come tomorrow? I thought when I  
called, I would be helped, not get  
the run around! This is the fourth  
time in as many months. These  
surges are intolerable!  
(beat)  
What? Fine.  
(beat)  
Yes. Do I just leave it--  
(beat)  
(MORE)

MR. FLOYD (CONT'D)

Switch it off, yes.

(beat)

So, you're telling me it'll be longer. Grand, just grand! When then?

(beat)

Yes. Yes. Yes. I know. I have one.

(beat)

Yes. I understand that's what they're for. I don't have any more time for this. I'll call tomorrow and I'll take it up with your manager. Goodbye!

MRS. FITZSIMMONS

This is all I listen to now. Damn thing.

(beat)

Been good for you, though, huh?

MARY

People are being extra generous these days. I'll be happy when it gets boring again.

Mrs. Fitzsimmons side-eyes Jeanie who is looking around pretending not to listen, but really looking for chances to steal more lollipops.

MRS. FITZSIMMONS

Oh. Right, course. One minute.

Mrs. Fitzsimmons starts to count. Mr. Floyd hangs up the phone in a huff.

MR. FLOYD

Mrs. Fitzsimmons. I'm going to need you to stay a little longer tonight--surprise, surprise--they're not coming.

MRS. FITZSIMMONS

It's June's birthday. Jerry's not gonna be-- Really hate to leave him like that with her... Second thought...

(snickering deviously,  
then thinking)

Lost count. Sorry, sorry. One more time.



JEANIE

(to Mary)

Hey Aunt Mary, where does that money go?

MARY

Into my savings, you know that.

JEANIE

I mean where does the paper stuff go. I still don't get it. Like how do they keep track of what's yours? Do they rip it up after you give it to them... do they burn it up in a pile like leaves? After they take it, can you never use it again?

MR. FLOYD

(overhearing)

Great, great questions... um... ummm...

MRS. FITZSIMMONS

Jeanie.

MR. FLOYD

Jeanie! Lovely name, I had an aunt named Jeanie. She was a real terror--nothing like you, I'm sure. Anyway, you see, Jeanie, they actually "rip up" the bills with a shredder after it's out of what we call "circulation." Think like a blood transfusion, switching out the old for the new. And the way they know which bills to take out or which are new or old are by these ten-digit individual identifying codes called a serial number.

Mr. Floyd takes a bill from Mary's deposit.

MR. FLOYD (CONT'D)

See, this right here. Look at your finger. It's just like that, a fingerprint for money!

JEANIE

So, you scan them in with one of those lasers from the grocery stores?

MR. FLOYD

Not exactly. Those are bar codes; these are part of a sequence so all the bills after they're printed can be tracked.

(beat)

Now when they take them out of circulation, that's when it gets fun. That's when they shred them. If a bill is too old, too worn, or any number of other reasons. We don't do any of that type of stuff here, what we do is, as a bank, we have individual lockboxes, plus we keep a fixed amount of cash in our vault down there...

(pointing off)

And to top it all off, that new machine you saw out front, that's an A.T.M.--and it's the future! It's how everyone will be banking in--what would you say Mrs. Fitzsimmons--let's say, and I'm being conservative now--ten years. Withdrawals, deposits, loans, all at your fingertips, twenty-four hours a day. Glorious, wouldn't you say?

MRS. FITZSIMMONS

(finished counting)

I keep telling him, it'll never catch. You can't replace people.

MR. FLOYD

(to Mrs. Fitzsimmons)

My dear, think of all the free time we'll have.

MRS. FITZSIMMONS

(finished counting,  
tapping into place)

You'll always need people, just ask that repair man of yours... You never give anyone enough credit.

MR. FLOYD

(to Jeanie)

Hardly! I give them all their filings allow. Jeanie... Now that the dust has settled from the renovations, next time you're in, I'll give you the million-dollar tour. Book it!

Mrs. Fitzsimmons brings a large stamp down onto the deposit form.

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Maggie's duplex comes into view.

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - FOYER

Mary swings the front door open as the phone rings. They both have lollipops in their mouths. Mary pushes Jeanie along as Mary scoops the mail from the floor. Jeanie runs the pizza into the kitchen.

MARY

Ten minutes, butt or no butt.

Mary taps on a tape of "AIRPLANE!".

JEANIE

But... they're--

MARY

Tough luck, kiddo. Scram! I gotta get this, I'm expecting good news.

JEANIE

Yeah, yeah, you always say that.

MARY (O.S.)

Gooooo!

KITCHEN

Mary grabs the ringing phone and waves Jeanie away.

Jeanie flings open the basement steps, takes a deep breath, then bounds down the stairs.

MARY (O.S.)

Hello, sorry, Hill residence. Oh...  
Ohhh, hey, yes, of course, how are  
you?

BASEMENT

Jeanie beelines to a chest of drawers, holding her breath. The basement is musty and dark at the corners.

She pulls the handle of a middle drawer. It doesn't budge. It's warped, again. She scrunches her face.

Trying to balance strength with stealth so as not to disturb any sleeping ghouls, Jeanie gives a quick, more forceful tug. Nothing, again.

Jeanie now running low on air, grabs the handle with two hands and heaves. The face of the cabinet comes off and Jeanie goes flying back into an armoire.

It teeters precariously as the weak magnet latch fails and the mop, broom, and assorted cleaners fall out, leaving only a dated flight attendant's uniform wrapped in plastic hanging.

CRASH!

Her breath escapes in a GASP.

MARY (O.S.)  
What was that?! Jeanie, you ok?  
Jean--

JEANIE  
It's ok, I'm ok, all good, stupid  
drawer was stuck!

MARY (O.S.)  
Ok, well, hurry up!  
(trailing off, to O.S.)  
No, no, yes, I'm happy to pass  
it...

Behind Jeanie a black curtain of ghoulish hands take shape from the darkness. It closes in slowly.

Jeanie throws the mop and broom back into the armoire. However, standing on her tippy toes, every cleaner she puts on the top shelf falls, blocked by something.

Jeanie hurriedly brings over a step ladder and notices a number of rags balled up in the back. Under them is a box with a lock on it.

Her fear and the hands that were almost on her are dispelled by her curiosity. Jeanie brings it to the floor and before any real thought enters her head, she picks it with ease.

She replaces her bobby pin and opens it.

On top is a news clipping that reads "FEMALE GUARD SAVES FELLOW GUARD, INMATE".

Underneath is an issue of LIFE from 1972 with "SKYJACKER" in big, bold letters folded in half, a manila medical folder, and an envelope from Ichor Diagnostics with the name "DR. WILT" on it, along with some other things.

She looks over the contents quickly but never lets go of the clipping.

MARY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 (Hanging up the phone)  
 Quit playing down there--Pizza's  
 getting cold!

The curtain of disembodied hands returns.

Jeanie stuffs the news clipping into the front pouch of her overalls, puts everything else away, hastily, then grabs the napkins and thunders up the stairs racing toward the light.

INT. JEANIE'S ROOM - LATER

Through the walls, Mary's laughing/coughing fits are dull but discernible.

A REALISTIC T.R.C.-214 C.B. radio sits on Jeanie's nightstand, and just beyond a Blues Brothers poster. Jeanie stares at the poster as she lays in bed.

Jeanie takes her hand out from under her pillow, in it is the clipping.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE WITH PHOTO

Reads, "FEMALE GUARD SAVES FELLOW GUARD, INMATE"

Pictured, female guard and male guard, bruised and beaten, shake hands. A third battered man, an inmate, stands in the back with a cast on his right wrist.

Jeanie rereads her favorite line in a sliver of light:

*... "I wouldn't be good at my job if I let any man in here get hurt. Would I?" ...*

Jeanie looks up to the picture and zeroes in on C.O. REESE MITCHELL.

EXT. MARY ROSE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - DAY

A car circles the driveway.

## INT. MAGGIE'S ROOM

Jeanie works by the window, examining nine plastic sandwich bags. She documents her findings in a notebook.

MAGGIE

Told you they'd do good, didn't I?  
It's east facing.

MAGGIE (late 30s) lays in her hospital bed tired but with a deep, unshakeable beauty. She thumbs through the mail, while JESS, a young nurse, works around.

Chips and dip sit on the table over her bed.

JEANIE

This one's sprouting already! Eight too, I think, but I don't want to chance it.

(beat, poking another)

This looks a little slimy though...

(to herself)

That's not good...

JESS

Can I get you anything?

MAGGIE

(beat)

I'm good, Jess, thanks. Anything I need, this one'll get.

(beat, to Jeanie)

Give it another day or two. If anything's wrong, I'm pretty sure I read we can cut off the moldy spots when we plant them.

(beat)

So, what're you going to make with them when they're done?

Jeanie charts the results in her book. Jess finishes checking everything and leaves. Maggie tosses an insurance letter aside. It lands on a pile of similar letters.

Maggie grabs a chip.

JEANIE

Money! Earl said he'd give me a quarter per. I can probably get him up to fifty. He's lowballing me, but I don't care... it's something, at least...

Jeanie takes a chip from a bag and loads it with French onion dip. Maggie does the same.

MAGGIE

What did I tell you? Stop that, they're sending the documents. It's getting sorted. Things just work slow with us grown-ups. Think, a smudged name or mis-numbered I.D. can cost a company thousands; a few of them, then poof, they're kaput, then no one is around to help. Let them cross their T's and dot their I's--ok? Besides, it gives me something to do all day, or this is all I'd be doing.

Another chip with dip.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

A few more calls, that's it. Easy. So, you know what I want? I want you to take your money to the mall or arcade or that new skate palace you were telling me about. Ask Becca, Lisa, Julie, and all them. Have some fun. I'll be outta here before you know it.

(beat)

You know I'm no lightweight.

Maggie winks then dips a chip. The radio picks up the news.

REPORTER (V.O.)

This is not the only time the suspect attempted something like this. It was the same route, in fact, three years ago, same flight, Northwest Flight six-oh-eight. Before, if our listeners recall it was settled for three cheeseburgers and a headstart--

JEANIE

I know that... but you said--

REPORTER (V.O.)

This time, sadly, we must report that his most recent attempt did not end so peacefully. We can now confirm he was shot and killed by an onboard F.B.I. agent shortly after landing in Portland.

(MORE)

REPORTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
It is unclear at this time if he  
knew he was not in Afghanistan--

Maggie flicks off the radio.

MAGGIE  
I'm not trying to be a heavyweight,  
either.

She crumples the bag closed and puts a lid on the dip  
container, pushes them aside, then sweeps the crumbs away.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
Let's get out of here, go for a  
stroll. I'm tired of laying around.  
(surveying)  
You can tell me what else's been  
going on, like, if Aunt Mary's been  
behaving herself.

Maggie throws off the sheets to show her mangled legs. Jeanie  
brings over her wheelchair.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
Let's boogie!

The warmth and familiarity of those words makes Jeanie smile.

LATER

Maggie sits alone in her hospital bed, the day well passed.  
She looks out over great big trees and mountains, a vein of  
traffic flows through it. A brightly lit billboard of a plane  
taking off with the headline "ADVENTURE AWAITS!" juts out.

Fog rolls over.

She looks down to the sprouting cabbages, the new life, then  
to her legs.

She takes a chip and dips it. It breaks in half. Maggie  
fixates on it.

After a few moments, she puts her head back and closes her  
eyes still holding the chip, tears form at the corners.

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Jeanie works at her desk.

Her book, "FLIM-FLAM! THE TRUTH ABOUT UNICORNS,  
PARAPSYCHOLOGY AND OTHER DELUSIONS", sits in the corner.



Underneath are old issues of "S9 C.B. RADIO" and "C.B. RADIO MAGAZINE".

Jeanie empties her piggy bank onto her cluttered desk. Exactly eight quarters drop out--same as always. She pockets them.

Done there, Jeanie drops to the floor and pulls out a blue duffle bag from deep under her bed. She unzips it to reveal her own lockbox inside. She picks it finding it quicker.

It's filled with a number of interesting knick-knacks she has collected through the years: sunglasses, light up keychain, clumps of gutted electronics, flares, a large bolt, foreign change, etc. Jeanie slides the familiar news clipping out, looking at it once again, eyes going from Maggie to Reese back to Maggie a few times.

She puts it down to fish one more thing out. It's hard to tell what.

MARY (O.S.)

Order up!

Mary's impression of Earl never fails to make her smile.

JEANIE

Coming!

SLAM.

ZIP.

SWOOSH.

EXT. ZAP'S ARCADE - AFTERNOON

A cold, blue sky with floating, puffy clouds is in full view. The top of a brightly lit arcade appears. Below is a phone booth. Lower still, Jeanie stands inside on the phone.

A woman, CARLY, answers.

CARLY (V.O.)

Hello?

Jeanie puts a torn yellow piece of construction paper with a scratched phone number down.

JEANIE

(uncharacteristically  
bubbly)

(MORE)

JEANIE (CONT'D)

Hello! Is Mr. Mitchell available,  
please?

CARLY (V.O.)

Can I ask who's calling?

JEANIE

Lacey Duncan, I'm calling for a  
school project.

CARLY (V.O.)

Uhhhhh, okaaaaay...

(beat, loud)

Reese! Reeese! Some little girl's  
on the phone for you! Something  
about a project...

Two MEN dressed in black suits leaving the arcade catch  
Jeanie's eye.

REESE (V.O.)

Who is it? What's up?

CARLY (V.O.)

(hushed and fading)

Lacey Duncan? Who--

INT. REESE MITCHELL'S LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Reese wears brown pants with a darker brown streak down them  
and a crisp white shirt. He shushes Carly as he puts the  
phone to his ear.

REESE

Uh, hello?

JEANIE (V.O.)

Hello, Mr. Mitchell, my name's  
Lacey Duncan and I'm writing a  
paper for this year's Ronald  
Reagan's Shooting Stars Scholastic  
Achievers Symposium. I got your  
number from Mr. Craig at the  
prison, mind if I ask you a few  
questions?

REESE

Well, I...

JEANIE (V.O.)

Only to fill in the gaps, I forgot  
a question or two. Just a couple  
minutes. Promise.

REESE  
 Uh, alright then, what do ya got?  
 Shoot.

Reese covers the phone.

REESE (CONT'D)  
 (to Carly, shrugging)  
 For Reagan's school symposium  
 something or other. I dunno.

JEANIE (V.O.)  
 (to herself)  
 We covered that... that too... Got  
 that.

Uncovering the phone, he nods at something past Carly.

JEANIE (V.O.)  
 Ah, here we go... has any woman  
 ever been a guard before?

He switches to snapping. Carly looks around confused.

REESE  
 Plenty, actually. Little  
 interesting fact I learned back in  
 the day, the first female warden  
 happened in something like  
 seventeen-ninety-something in  
 Pennsylvania, no, maybe Ohio, no,  
 wait, Pennsylvania? Somewhere there  
 abouts, I think. Whatever, doesn't  
 matter. That's something isn't--

He points harder.

JEANIE (V.O.)  
 Never at D.C.F.?

Carly almost getting there.

REESE  
 (beat)  
 No. Not there.

Carly shoots a look back. Reese snaps and points and mouths  
 "YES".

JEANIE (V.O.)  
 Really? Not as a guard?

REESE

Yes. Yes.

(beat)

I mean, no. That wasn't-- I'm sure.  
Listen, I been there for more than  
fourteen years. I know everyone  
that's been in and out, and in  
again, and the one thing they all  
had in common, they all were guys.

Carly brings him his almost full glass. He nips at it, the  
bourbon underlying the cola makes him show his teeth. Carly  
picks up a magazine on the couch and plops down.

JEANIE (V.O.)

Well, does the name Margaret Hill  
mean anything then?

REESE

(beat)

Margaret-- Marg-- you mean Maggie?!  
How do you--

(beat)

Hey, is this about that article?!

Reese gulps down the glass to collect himself.

REESE (CONT'D)

Fine, well, the answer you're  
looking for then is yes... I guess.

He shakes the empty glass at Carly. She gets up and takes it  
into the other room gruffly. He switches the phone to the  
other ear.

REESE (CONT'D)

You have to understand, Maggie  
wasn't there very long. She was  
kept off peak hours and generally  
away from the men. It was an  
experiment--lots going on in there  
back then...

(beat)

It's all different now.

JEANIE (V.O.)

But did she really save you, your  
life... like it said?

REESE

I... she... The story was  
sensationalized to sell papers, you  
see, you gotta understand, but...  
she was able to help.

(MORE)

REESE (CONT'D)

I'll give her that much. My only thought was getting home and hugging my wife and new baby girl. That's it. It was doing my job and surviving. Luckily, Maggie had the same idea. To be honest, it was hard to tell what was going on at all. My brain was all scrambled when the reporter came asking. Thirty-two stitches in the head'll do that. You read that part? That animal snuck me and fractured my skull. Not a pretty scene. You get my drift?

(beat)

La-- Lacey... little girl? You there?

Hello, little girl?

HELLO?!

Carly brings back another drink. Reese looks confused.

EXT. ZAP'S ARCADE - MOMENTS LATER

The phone sits on the ledge of the phone booth.

A small, dark blur fades toward the bright colors and lights of the arcade.

INT. ZAP'S ARCADE - LATER

Jeanie plays her favorite game: SPY HUNTER. Stacks of quarters sit on the console.

Jeanie crashes.

GAME OVER flashes.

BECCA

So... How'd it go?

JEANIE

Fourth.

Jeanie enters her initials then hits enter. "JMH" smatter the leaderboard, but "DAN" still sits atop just itching to be caught.

JEANIE (CONT'D)

Almost got him...

BECCA  
(motioning with her head)  
I meant... out there. Is he?

JEANIE  
A spud... thankfully I'm still  
fatherless.  
(beat)  
Can I get my quarter?

BECCA  
Yeah, yeah, let me just... pop...  
this... one... last... stupid...  
stinking... banana.  
(beat)  
There!

Becca takes a moment from BUBBLE BOBBLE. She digs her fingers deep in her pocket. They rise out seemingly not grasping anything... until... a circular shiny object with a hole drilled in it comes out. After a quick look around, she tosses it to Jeanie.

BECCA (CONT'D)  
So, really, he's not, like... for  
sure? How do you know?

The start scree of SPY HUNTER flashes up, a debonair man shadowed by his fem-fatale cohort appear on the screen asking for money to fund their escapades.

Jeanie gives them a half, wishful smile.

JEANIE  
The new one finally opened up, I'm  
gonna check it out.

Jeanie collects her stack and heads over.

INT. ARCADE CABINET

Jeanie moves to the new game, a lone cabinet in the back.

She gives a look around, then loops the end of the line around her index finger and pops it in. The game registers the token with an excited BEEP. She brings it up and drops it in again. She slaps the start button.

LATER

BECCA  
(low, muted)  
Jeanie... Hey, Jeanie... you almost  
done? I gotta get going. Jeanie?!

Jeanie, pupils dilated, is entranced by a screen of swirling colors and shapes and lines.

BECCA (CONT'D)  
Jeanie! Earth to Jeanie! Where are  
you?! Aye, Jeanie!

Becca snaps in front of Jeanie's face. Jeanie reorients herself with a shake of her head.

BECCA (CONT'D)  
I gotta get going... Wanna come  
over? My mom said you can sleep  
over.

JEANIE  
Sorry, sorry, I can't. Aunt Mary  
has me helping with the books  
tonight.

Jeanie shakes her head a few more times to get all the way back then checks her watch.

JEANIE (CONT'D)  
Oh crap, when the-- I'm late, I'll  
catch you later!

Jeanie bolts. Becca watches her off.

BECCA  
Aye, Jeanie, your quarters!

Becca, shrugs, takes a quarter from the stack and drops it into the new game: POLYBIUS.

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mary makes her way out the front door, yelling behind her.

MARY (O.S)  
In for thirty at three-fifty.  
Number is on the fridge. No TV or  
radio after nine, got it? Back in a  
little--BE GOOD!

The front door closes with a thud.

## LIVING ROOM

Jeanie switches off the TV and moves to the kitchen with single-minded purpose.

## KITCHEN

Jeanie stands at the top of the dark, disinviting steps, terror reducing her skin to goose flesh. The basement floor stretches thousands of feet below as dust swirls in the air like a storm.

She takes a deep breath, then takes the plunge.

## JEANIE'S ROOM

Jeanie wipes her pajama sleeve across her mouth then brushes the few errant splashes off her shirt.

Jeanie inspects an envelope.

## INSERT: ENVELOPE

From Dr. Wilt at Ichor Diagnostics in Oklahoma.

In her other hand, a scratched letter.

She sets the envelope down among the organized chaos of her desk, a glass of milk is close at hand.

She takes the letter in both hands, intent on drinking in its every word.

## INT. SQUAT APARTMENT - 1971 - DAWN

A MAN sits at a desk holding a freshly inked letter, same as Jeanie. To a keen observer, the letters differ ever so slightly.

Also, mirroring Jeanie's desk's clutter, a half-finished crossword, a book, a pack of Raleighs, balled up papers, and other assorted items. In place of the glass of milk is a coffee mug.

PETER (mid-to-late 30s) brings the letter to the window. He stands shirtless and in white long john bottoms, hair seemingly windswept, smoking a cigarette. Not a cloud in the sky.

He proofreads out loud, rolling and flexing his right hand.



PETER

Dear Magpie, your favorite clouds  
are coming in. They're making my  
hand ache. Thanks for the memories.  
They were good, weren't they?

As the sun rises on him, six equidistant  
scars/burns/disfigurements, aligned in two columns, three  
rows in each, are momentarily highlighted on his back.

PETER (CONT'D)

I guess you heard the news... I  
made it back--and like I said, I  
was always coming back... For you,  
for us, for everything we talked  
about--especially that Thanksgiving  
on the beach. But you're not home.

(beat)

I wasn't expecting a warm hello. I  
figured you'd hate me a little--ok,  
ok, probably a lot. You can be a  
real hard-ass about things, and I  
downright love it, it's just one of  
a million things that make you my  
one and only. And me being the  
idiot you fell in love with, would  
never stop chasing, not until at  
least I made my case and explain  
why I had to do what I did. But you  
knew too quick...

(beat)

I guess you also knew, if you  
stayed and I came back and all else  
failed, I'd do something stupid  
like camp out on your lawn, make a  
big scene, lay it all at your feet,  
and if the police came around, make  
you pick between my life or ours.

Peter furrows his brow at something on the page and moves  
back to the desk.

He reaches across it, bypassing the coffee, to the whiteout.  
He dabs an errant comma.

He notices a word repeated in a string a few sentences below.

PETER (CONT'D)

...selfish, stupid, foolish,  
shortsighted... shortsighted...  
What else? And... And...

He blots it in the interim.

PETER (CONT'D)  
 Shortsighted and... Death-  
 defying...? Ballsy...?  
 Historical...? Iconic...?  
 Mythical...? INCONSIDERATE! There  
 it is.

He scratches in the replacement, nodding in sleep-deprived approval.

He sheds a massive weight as he lets the pen drop from his left hand. He takes in the gravity.

Peter reaches for his coffee.

TINK.

His eyes go wide...

INT. JEANIE'S ROOM

Jeanie puts her glass down.

PETER (V.O.)  
 Dr. Wilt won't tell me where you  
 went, he refuses, no matter how  
 many times I ask, says you haven't  
 even answered him.  
 (beat)  
 If that's what you want, so be it.  
 I don't like it but I'll respect  
 it, respect you... But, if these  
 are really it, you just have to  
 laugh that we're back to this.

Jeanie rolls her eyes as she takes a sip.

She reads the rest of the letter silently.

LETTER

*I'll be around a few weeks sorting things out with Dr. Wilt. Please, call, write, if not to me, at least to Dr. Wilt. It's been hard on him. So please.*

*With all my heart,*

*PETER S.*

*P.S. You'll always be my high-water mark. I love you. You're it.*

There's a number at the bottom.

JEANIE  
Peter... S...?

Jeanie's eyes light up. She puts the letter and Maggie's article side by side.

She reaches for a notepad and pen, but, in her haste, upends her glass.

JEANIE (CONT'D)  
SHOOT! Idiot!

The milk pools on her desk. She tosses the letter onto the bed and darts out.

JEANIE (CONT'D)  
(Trailing off)  
Fu, fu, fu, fuuuuuuuu...

The milk spreads across the desk. First wetting FLIM-FLAM! and the magazines, her notebook, Dr. Wilt's envelope, then the news clipping before making its way to the edge.

It drips onto the LIFE MAGAZINE sitting on top of her box and duffle.

Jeanie comes rushing back and throws a dish towel over her desk, patting it down. She's careful not to smudge anything. She picks up the magazine.

After wiping it off, she opens it.

Inside are more articles, "MAN LEAPS FROM PLANE WITH OVER \$200,000", "HIJACKER REMAINS AT LARGE", "RECENT SKYJACKING CONTINUES TO BAFFLE F.B.I.", and "WHO IS D.B. COOPER?".

She shuffles through the clippings. Key words jump out at her from the articles: "NOTE"... "BOMB"... "HOSTAGES"... "WIRES"... "WANTED".

Jeanie hears a car not so smoothly pull in out front.

Jeanie tosses the dish towel, envelope, magazine, news clippings, and everything else into her box. She closes, locks, and zips it up, then pushes it back under her bed.

She turns on the C.B. low before slipping under the sheets. TRUCKERS talk.

TRUCKER 2 (V.O.)  
Nah, I don't need an antenna, it's not the antenna's fault, it's the damn radio--

TRUCKER 5 (V.O.)  
I got an extra antenna if you want  
to buy it.

Mary makes her way down the hall. The sounds of her footsteps are irregular. Mary opens Jeanie's door a crack. Jeanie fakes being asleep.

TRUCKER 4 (V.O.)  
That ain't his agenda driver, it's  
his AM/FM modulator that broadcasts  
into radio that's giving him the  
problems. How far away from the  
radio is that modulator, driver?

TRUCKER 2 (V.O.)  
Sitting on my dash and the radio  
is, uh, sitting on the lower part  
of my dash.

TRUCKER 4 (V.O.)  
So, within two feet?

TRUCKER 2 (V.O.)  
Ohhh yeah, yeah, pretty close.

TRUCKER 4 (V.O.)  
I always try to keep that modulator  
as close to my radio as I can or up  
there up high near close to the  
antenna so I get as little distance  
between and where it will pick up  
as possible.

TRUCKER 6/EARL (V.O.)  
Hey, that guy talking about the  
antenna, go to twenty-five.

TRUCKER 2 (V.O.)  
You know this thing is pissing me  
off, getting on my nerves. Every  
time I get--

Mary sneaks in as best she can to turn off the radio.

MARY  
(whispering, raspy)  
Sweet dreams, kiddo. Good things  
are coming.

She strokes Jeanie's hair.

Before leaving, she gives a few sniffs around, there's something... Dispelling the thought, she slowly closes the door behind her, extinguishing the light.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MIDNIGHT

Mary walks into the living room with a plate of leftovers. Even in her stupor, something doesn't feel right, she puts her hand to the back of the tv.

It's cold...

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Jeanie eats cereal at the table, she fixates on the ad for the missing child on the carton.

Mary, showing some signs from the night before, pours herself OJ with a splash of vodka.

She moves onto a large bowl and whips the contents vigorously.

MARY

Finish what you were reading last night?

JEANIE

Wha--? Reading what?

MARY

That magician's book. That's what you were rea--

JEANIE

Oh, oh, no, not yet. Why? Wanna borrow it? Makes ya really think. It's really good.

MARY

Pffft. Hey, you know what'd be really good, how bout you wear that nice dress your mom likes today, ok? The green number...

JEANIE

Ugh, why? I hate dresses. Please don't make me.

MARY

It'll make her happy--that should be reason enough. Give her a win.

JEANIE  
Fiiiiine... but you owe me.

MARY  
It's a deal if you give me a  
hand... and clean out your room,  
too. It's ripe in there.

They pinkie swear. Jeanie drinks the rest of her cereal.

The oven timer dings.

INT. MARY ROSE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

Jeanie and Mary walk down the hall. Jeanie holds the container of brownies with a tin foil cover. There's a commotion coming from up ahead, NURSES and PLAINCLOTHES run in and out. Something is up.

JEANIE  
Not again?!

She panics and races down the hall.

MARY  
Jeanie! Jeanie--HOLD UP! Wait!

INT. MAGGIE'S ROOM

As Jeanie gets to the door, a TV CREW inside is frantically rearranging things to fit their equipment.

Maggie, sitting in her chair next to the huge window, turns to Jeanie with a guilty, sheepish smile. It catches Jeanie off guard.

Off to the side, the toilet flushes and the door opens. It takes a moment to process... then it hits Jeanie, Pastor Randy brought his show on the road.

Pastor Randy touches the tip of her nose with a hand he certainly didn't wash. She notices there's a new watch on his wrist.

PASTOR RANDY  
Hello, little lamb.

Pastor Randy slowly looks down Jeanie to the container. He peels back the foil lid revealing the fresh brownies.

PASTOR RANDY (CONT'D)  
 Oh, how I wish... Mmmm, mmmmmmm.  
 (snapping out of it)  
 Alright, folks, we ready? Let's  
 roll! Maggie, I have to say after  
 hearing your story, and meeting  
 Mary and Jeanie, my wife and I had  
 to come do what we could.

MAGGIE  
 If ya got seventy-five thousand  
 laying around, that'll save us all  
 some time.

The room chuckles but Pastor Randy is not amused.

PASTOR RANDY  
 Funny you should say that, we can  
 always use help around the church.  
 Honest pay for an honest day's  
 work, if Jeanie is ever interested,  
 that is. Would be wonderful  
 experience...  
 (beat, to Jeanie)  
 Think about it... We like to have  
 fun down there, as you saw... And  
 for your first job, save me a  
 brownie, how about it?

Pastor Randy gives a toothy smile to Jeanie as he takes his  
 spot by the window. He does a quick survey around.

PASTOR RANDY (CONT'D)  
 (snapping)  
 Ethan, let's get these out of here.  
 I want the mountains and all that  
 good Godliness unobstructed.

ETHAN grabs the nine Ziplock bags thoughtlessly and tosses  
 them on the radiator in the corner. Jeanie goes to talk with  
 her mom.

ETHAN  
 Aye, aye, back, back, we're about  
 to start. Stay here.

JEANIE  
 But my cabb--

ETHAN  
 It's fine, everything's fine.  
 Faster we get started, faster we're  
 outta here.

PASTOR RANDY  
How're we on lighting? How do I  
look? We ready?  
(Turning to look out the  
window)  
Let's just pray some of this fog  
lifts.

SALLY  
Do this.... Here...

SALLY (early 40s), a bright, professional woman and Pastor Randy's wife, rubs the inside of her eye, signaling for him to do the same. He gets the hint and complies.

Sally thumbs the displaced wisp off his cheek then takes his head in her hands for final inspection. With that, she gives him a peck.

SALLY (CONT'D)  
Perfect.

PASTOR RANDY  
Roll tape!

ETHAN  
Rolling!

PASTOR RANDY  
Ahem.  
(beat)  
Good day, folks! Pastor Randy here,  
coming to you once again from Mary  
Rose Memorial Hospital with another  
very special guest, this time the  
lovely, radiant, indomitable Maggie  
Hill. It is wonderful to finally  
meet you in person, Maggie. We've  
all heard so many wonderful things.  
We're blessed to be here.

Pastor Randy reaches his hand out.

MAGGIE  
This is really... something... too  
much... it's really something  
special. Thank you for coming.

As they shake, Pastor Randy turns to the camera and holds the pose for a beat.



PASTOR RANDY

As you all know, we like to do what we can at Apostles of Bethlehem for Christ. Many of you already know Maggie's story: single mother, survivor, fighter, and a stalwart in our community, but none more so than to her best friend and coworker Mary and her remarkable daughter Jeanie--right over there. Say hi you two.

Sally stands beside Mary and Jeanie strategically.

PASTOR RANDY (CONT'D)

You folks may recall Mary and Jeanie came to one of our recent services in Maggie's name. Desperate and calling out to God for an answer--the righteous, true answer only he can provide--and would you know it--God delivered! He DELIVERED, folks! So we came to bring his message and his touch to her bedside. But we must hold in our heart that the onus isn't just on the Almighty to mend Maggie's body and soul, but on all of us good people. Because we're good Christians.

(beat)

So I am here with Maggie asking you to send your blessings--send them here or just think A-B-C--Apostles of Bethlehem for Christ and we'll make sure she gets them--whether it be prayers, warm words, letters, cards, donations, anything you can offer to aid in her struggle. Cause, boy, and many of you already know this about me and my days in Philly, I know all too well how easily life can go wayward--back when I was living faster than my brain could keep up. You all know how rambunctious little boys can be--not like all those precious little princesses.

Pastor Randy gives Jeanie a look. Jeanie clenches her fists.

PASTOR RANDY (CONT'D)  
But on that day, the sunniest,  
calmest day you could ask for,  
that's when my breaking point hit  
me... And notice I didn't say--

Mary sees that Jeanie is tense.

MARY  
C'mon.

Sally eyes them as they leave.

INT. SITTING AREA

Mary and Jeanie sit in seats down the hall, the light is  
strong behind them creating silhouettes.

MARY  
The other night is when--

JEANIE  
Why though? She's already here, why  
does she need them?! They're not  
helping, they're not doing  
anything. She's a prop, why can't  
you see, why doesn't anyone else  
see?!

MARY  
They're doing no such thing!  
They've come to help. The power of  
prayer is as old and as proven as  
time! Besides, they're doing this  
out of the kindness of their  
hearts. Your mom didn't raise you  
to be so close-minded.

JEANIE  
Proven?! That's so not true! It's  
all a show! I can't believe she  
said yes, that's not--

MARY  
I convinced her. It was my idea.  
But why not try anything?  
Seriously, Jeanie. You know what's  
going on, you're a smart girl.  
Sometimes too smart for your own  
good.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

You gotta know by now the world isn't perfect, or even good, is a stretch, but it's making the best of it with the people you love that makes it special. So, if you have to be angry or take it out on anyone, it's me, no one else, certainly not that woman in there, who has been nothing but a light to both of us. Got it?

JEANIE

They're not going to do jack. If it's the power of prayer, ask them why they need to film it and sell tapes and put it on TV. Go ahead.

(beat)

They're in it for money--that's the only thing that makes miracles. I really wish you could see. That's what makes me so ang--

MARY

Money is the only thing that makes miracles?! Really?! You gotta stop listening to Earl--he's a WACKADOO!

JEANIE

Stop always blaming Earl. It's my eyes and ears, too, it's--

Echoing heels in the hall grow louder.

SALLY

We're ready, Jeanie.

JEANIE

Me?! Why do you need me?!

SALLY

So, we can pray together.

JEANIE

Can I make wishes instead?

SALLY

If that's how you get God to hear you, yes, of course, by all means. The most important thing is getting our hearts and thoughts aligned with the same purpose: getting your mom better. You want your mom to get better, right? To get back on her own two feet? Then let's go.

(MORE)

SALLY (CONT'D)

It's going to take all of us--and  
everyone watching at home.

Jeanie looks to Mary. She grits her teeth and gets up.

INT. MAGGIE'S ROOM - LATER

Jeanie looks down at the parking lot. The crew finishes loading their white van. It pulls out and drives off tailing a powder blue CADILLAC. Jeanie holds a cabbage bag in her hand, it's still hot.

She digs her fingers into the soft mush.

INT. MEL'S DINER - DUSK

Jeanie sits in her normal spot doing her homework. Her pencil breaks. She heads to the register to get a sharpener. She overhears Mary and Earl through the chatter of Earl's C.B.

Jeanie hunches along the wall below the kitchen window.

MARY

--put it by the register.

EARL

I'm not doing it, Mar. I'm gonna  
use it. I'd put a help wanted sign  
up before--

Above the wall and through the window, Earl and Mary blow smoke out the back door, the entrance to the lot in the distance. There is a worn hand-painted "No Campers" sign hanging on its gate. They fight against the cold.

MARY

Not now, Earl, c'mon. She's right  
out there. She--

EARL

It's shit, shit luck, to a  
wonderful woman, I'm not denying  
that. But you see what she's  
looking at. Uncle Sam don't care  
about one person, hell one million  
people, depending on which flag  
they salute. Ya got the scratch? I  
sure as hell don't, no matter if I  
sell. You gotta ask yourself, what  
kind of damn country calls a  
surgery that helps someone  
"elective", anyway?

(MORE)

## EARL (CONT'D)

This place makes its living on desperate people. Greatest country, my ass. Yeah, greatest country to be rich in! It might not be today, or tomorrow, but one day, it'll be us too, Mar, so don't worry, we'll get our turns. But we need help now.

As the camera comes down, Jeanie is gone.

Mary comes back to find Jeanie's books unattended, but no schoolbag.

## EXT. MEL'S LOT / THE STACKS - DAY

Trucks are parked in neat rows in the large undeveloped lot across the street. It's the only thing orderly about it.

Jeanie cases it from the surrounding woods from familiar sight-lines. Finding a truck she likes, Jeanie reaches her hand through the fence and picks up a handful of gravel. She pelts it with a few rocks, making it loud enough to irritate a potential occupant but not alert anyone else.

After a few beats, listening, she makes her move.

She pushes aside part of the fence and wiggles through it next to a 1980 KENWORTH W900A. She lightly taps on the passenger side door.

TAP... TAP...

After another few beats, she tries the door.

It opens.

## INT. KENWORTH W900A - FRONT

Jeanie moves swiftly into the passenger seat. She starts opening compartments, checking the cassettes, looking for anything of interest, mindful not to nab anything too quickly, as she observes her "one item per cab" limit. Her code. In the glove box, she sees a gun but pays it little mind.

She moves over to the driver seat.

As she settles in, gravel crunches outside. The door swings open, Jeanie rolls out of the driver seat and into the sleeper with astonishing reaction time.

KECKSBURG stands turned, talking to SOMEONE offscreen.

KECKSBURG

Correctamundo, compadre! It's their inquisitive nature, ya see, can't help themselves. They go up the chute and POW they just say BYE BYE. In an instant. His buddy, at the bottom, looks around like--you good, man--then goes on up to check it out for himself... It's something, you should see it. Give my love to the missus. I'm gonna live high on the hog today!

Jeanie tugs at the divider strap. After a few yanks, it falls, just as Kecksburg focuses on the interior of the cab.

Eyeing the divider conspiratorially, he digs under his driver seat for his rubber mallet.

INT. KENWORTH W900A - BACK

The sleeper is strewn with UFO monthlies and books by Asimov, Sagan, Heinlein, Friedman, and others. Kecksburg's alarm clock ticks as Jeanie probes around careful not to leave a trace.

DUM DUM... DUM DUM... DUM DUM... DUM... They become fainter as Kecksburg checks his tires.

Jeanie makes her way around the cab, exploring its mysteries.

DUM DUM...

She finally finds what she's looking for. Time to go.

DUM DUM... DUM DUM.

Kecksburg strikes the two front tires and is now done.

She freezes.

Kecksburg goes to the back to the check the refrigeration temperature.

She climbs to the front passenger seat to make her escape, but another truck pulls up next to her. She slumps down before being seen. Kecksburg slams the hatch and the gravel outside gets louder. Jeanie slips into the back once again.

Kecksburg gets in, pats himself down, fishing his cigs out of one of the pockets he stuffed them in.

Before lighting it, he looks back at the divider... He holds off on the smoke to secure it first.

With a clear view of the back, his eyes go wide.

KECKSBURG

YOU! I see you! You ain't gettin'  
away from me!

He lunges... and smacks a poster of an extraterrestrial above his bed. Everything feels the same but he knows something is different.

No more ticking.

Jeanie silently pushes the back driver-side window shut. She slings the now heavier backpack over her shoulder and runs off away from the scene, away from the diner towards the woods.

INT. MEL'S DINER - DUSK

Jeanie enters through the back door and quickly throws her backpack in a cabinet below the sink, washes her hands and starts peeling potatoes. Earl cooks on.

Mary comes to the window, blinks at Jeanie a few times. Processing...

MARY

Jeanie, where've you been?

JEANIE

Here, peeling spuds.

MARY

Your books, why they still out  
then?

JEANIE

(pointing to the peeled  
potatoes)  
I took a break.

MARY

Where's your schoolbag?

JEANIE

I have it.

MARY

Where?

(to Earl)

You gonna help here?

EARL

I'm here to cook, darling, I tried the whole dad thing and I'm zero for three with the whole endeavor.

MARY

You weren't in the stacks ag--

JEANIE

(pointing up, sheepishly)

No, I have it. I have it. I had it with me up there...

Even Earl does a half turn at this.

MARY

(startled)

Up there? The roof?! You're not supposed to-- How do you ev--

JEANIE

The ladder... over by the tanks.

MARY

You know you shouldn't be up--

Earl sets down a B.L.T. and a basket of popcorn shrimp on the window. He dings the bell, takes a deep breath then bellows.

EARL

ORDER UP!

Mary winces, hating when he does that.

MARY

Ugh! I told you not to show her--

EARL

Down, girl, easy, I didn't--

JEANIE

No, it was just me. I wanted to recharge my battery for my calculator... And being up there helps me think, too. I like being up there, it makes me feel better.



MARY

It's a regular thing?! Hanging  
around the junkers was bad enough,  
but up there--

JEANIE

I just wanna be alone sometimes,  
and get away and think. Is that so  
bad?

MARY

It's... not. I get that.  
(disarmed)  
I really do. But you know, we can't  
afford any--

Earl nudges up the food.

EARL

Mar, our livelihoods are getting  
cold, will ya?

MARY

Later.

After Mary takes the order, Earl walks to Jeanie and takes a  
few peeled potatoes off the top. Unpeeled ones are  
underneath.

Next, Earl goes to the cabinet where Jeanie stashed her  
schoolbag. He opens it.

After a brief pause, he reaches in and pulls out a mashed up,  
brown banana.

EARL

(loudly)  
Mar, we're taking ten.

Earl throws the banana in the trashcan and grabs his coat  
beside the back door. As he leads Jeanie out...

INSERT - PHOTO

Of Earl, Mary, one of Maggie's exes, with Maggie holding  
Jeanie the day she was born July 24, 1972. The caption Earl  
wrote at the bottom reads, "The heir apparent".

EXT. ROOF - GOLDEN HOUR

Jeanie and Earl stand on the roof. They stare over the  
stacks.

There are a few dilapidated vehicles at the far end, overgrown and barely visible through the overhanging trees. The whole scene looks like a pagan playground.

They glow an idyllic gold in the light. Earl sets up a chair he has stashed around and lights a rollie.

EARL

Didn't know anyone else came up here. You're good at not leaving a trace, huh?

Both of them soak up the wind and its sweet air like gunslingers facing one another down.

EARL (CONT'D)

Pop quiz: How much is a three-decker and a jamoke and coke?

With little hesitation:

JEANIE

Depends... Could be one-thirty-five for a burger and bacon, or it could be one-forty-five for Chicken and bacon or ham and cheese.

EARL

How about a jumbo chicken sammie, a short stack, two OJs and the best Boom Boom Shrimp in the tri-state sure to make your toes curl.

JEANIE

Eight-fifty... Why?

EARL

Good. You can add. I was worried, cause nothing you were saying in there was adding up.

Earl kicks his feet up on the A/C unit.

EARL (CONT'D)

We've needed to talk for a while now, I suppose. Yeah?

Earl takes a big puff of smoke filling his mouth and lungs.

EARL (CONT'D)

You're becoming a liar, Jeanie. It's bad for you, it's bad for Maggie, it's bad for Mary, and worst of all, it's bad for business. You understand? When your mom first started; the night Mary offered her a spot, a home essentially, she said two rules: Show up and don't bring drama around. For the last, hell, I don't even know, how old are you again?

JEANIE

Almost twelve.

EARL

Jeez, it's all over for me, isn't it? But for those almost twelve years your mom has been a rock. She can be colder than an icicle in Dick Nixon's heart, but she is love incarnate to a special few.

(beat)

Look, I know you're angry. No one to look up to. Sure as hell ain't me or anyone that's ever been in this joint. But you gotta stop taking it out on people that love you, ya dig? Find a way to use all that energy to give back. Cause whatever you're up to now isn't working for anyone.

Jeanie nods, understanding.

EARL (CONT'D)

One more for you. A fresh slice if you get it. Deal?

JEANIE

Shoot.

EARL

(beat)

Alright, gimme six rodeo burgers, four black and whites, a B.L.T., two things of tendies, an eggplant parm, and some crab cakes. Plus, throw in four jamokes and sixteen sodas to wash it down. Oh, oh, aaaaand five slices with extra whip. What it be, honey bee?

JEANIE

Wait, some of that's not even on the menu!

EARL

Not anymore...

JEANIE

I don't know... Not fair!

Jeanie taps her feet and looks up to the sky, brow furrowed.

EARL

C'mon, time's a ticking...

JEANIE

Uhh, uhhh, twenty-two dollars?

Earl makes a loud buzzer sound.

JEANIE (CONT'D)

Impossible. How was I even--

EARL

That's one of the first orders we ever got--and I'm still waiting for it to get settled. Bunch of bikers, before they had a name yet. One of the hardest lessons I had to swallow when we started this spot, things don't always go how you think.

(beat)

Doubt you'd have gotten it even with your calculator anyway. Let's go, honeybee, you have work to do.

INT. MARY ROSE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

Maggie lays in bed, she thumbs through the mail. She throws a few letters into a growing pile, begrudgingly. The colorful ones are getting taller than the white, insurance ones.

MARY

That's eight more! Can you believe it?!

MAGGIE

I really don't like charity.

MARY

Fine. Consider it a gift from God then, but you're keeping it no matter what! You can't help but make headlines, can you?

Jeanie tears open an envelope. On the front is a message about Salvation.

MARY (CONT'D)

What do we got, Jeanie?

Jeanie cracks it and reads.

JEANIE

"Dear Maggie, we hope this gift will help you in your time of need. You and your daughter will be in our thoughts and prayers now and forever."

Two crisp bills are inside.

MARY

Yes, yes, aaaaand...

JEANIE

Fifteen.

MARY

BA-BOOM! Where we at now?

MAGGIE

(stunned)

Makes it... three-thousand-four-hundred-and-eighty, give or take. I really hate math.

JEANIE

Yup, great--only seventy-one thousand two hundred and fifty left to go...

Mary comes down and takes in the reality.

MARY

I'm gonna get a coffee, either of you want anything?

Maggie and Jeanie both shake their heads with a tight smile. They watch Mary leave.

Jeanie goes over to the black moldy bags of congealed goo.

MAGGIE

Jeanie, I know why you been so angry lately and, truth be told, you have every right to be.

JEANIE

You do? I do?

MAGGIE

Aunt Mary told me, but I knew. Mother's intuition... and, also, because.... it's all my fault... So it's about time I tell you... I'm sorry.

JEANIE

You're sorry... for what?

MAGGIE

You know... You really gonna make me?

JEANIE

I need you to, mom. Please.

MAGGIE

I'm sorry we're even here right now, in this room, in this hospital. I did something truly stupid and selfish. I screwed up big time and I hope one day you can forgive me.

JEANIE

Mom, what is it? Just tell me.

MAGGIE

My accident. The other driver... I had been drinking that night too. I never thought-- I just hope you learn from my mistakes.

JEANIE

I already know that. But it wasn't your biggest, was it?

MAGGIE

(taken aback)

What the hell is that supposed to mean?!

JEANIE

You're not some cabbage--are you?!

MAGGIE

What does that even mean?!

JEANIE

I wasn't made out of nowhere, was I?

Jeanie throws down the congealed goo bag.

MAGGIE

Wha-- wha-- why now?

(beat)

I told you, he made his choice. He left first. That's why he's not here.

JEANIE

But that's not an answer, it's a cop out.

MAGGIE

I told you everything there is to tell. He's a bad guy, and an idiot to boot with some sorta death wish. No way I'm apologizing for keeping you from that.

(beat)

Besides, he never wanted any of this: a house, a family, a routine, he wasn't that type. He would've gotten bored and left anyway. His head was too far up his own butt. So, I made the choice for us. We can't keep looking in the rear view if we want to make our way ahead. Got it? He's gone, still running from one thing or another, probably. I don't know and I don't care.

JEANIE

But I do! WHO was he? Tell me.

MAGGIE

You really want to know? Just look at yourself in the mirror. You remind me of him more and more and it scares me to death. I don't want you being anything like him, never have. Hell, that's why--

(beat)

Never mind. Let's not ruin today, please?

JEANIE  
(struggling)  
Does he know... about me? I need to  
know.

MAGGIE  
No... and we're better off for it.

Mary comes back.

MARY  
So, where we at now?

MAGGIE  
(to Jeanie, hushed)  
Please. Not today.

Jeanie tears open another envelope. In her frustration she partly tears the card with a heart on the front.

Outside the room, through the doorway, Jess the nurse goes through a stack of medical charts.

INT. APOSTLES OF BETHLEHEM FOR CHRIST - NIGHT

A darkened room, rich with exotic woods and a roaring fire. A pile of colorful envelopes lay on a large desk with two money counters waiting hungrily.

Sally hangs up the phone.

Pastor Randy puffs his cigar as Sally gets back to guzzling her wine.

PASTOR RANDY  
What is it?

Pastor Randy cuts the side of an orange envelope with a pearl-handled letter opener.

SALLY  
Stage 4... In her colon...

PASTOR RANDY  
Oh no... that's terrible... so  
little time...  
(beat)  
I'll do it tonight then.



SALLY

Good, your little pet project  
hasn't been bad, but we need  
someone more, you know... on the  
line...

Sally picks a random envelope from the pile.

SALLY (CONT'D)

Oh, the Taylors... Lucky if it's a  
couple nickels.

Sally tosses the envelope aside into a half full alms basket.

PASTOR RANDY

Yahtzee!

Pastor Randy throws the money in a separate basket and tosses  
the envelope and card into the fire.

SALLY

And can you punch it up this time?  
They're all so bleh anymore. "Our  
Lord--words, words, words--  
blessings to you and those affected--  
-blah, blah, blah-- the Lord is a  
powerful tool to aid in your times  
of struggle--yadda, yadda, yadda,  
etcetera." You're not maximizing  
your God-given talent as a writer  
enough and it's a terrible sin.

PASTOR RANDY

That's not me. Blame him. You know  
what the one thing God made me  
realize, during those dark years,  
the most paramount thing? You know  
it, I know you know it.

Pastor Randy takes a break and walks over to his prayer plant  
drawing energy from its nightly worship. He fingers the new  
leaves.

SALLY

I do, but I like it when you tell  
me.

PASTOR RANDY

Stay. On. Message. just like  
Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter  
and all of my predecessors.

(MORE)

PASTOR RANDY (CONT'D)

They're not my words, my sweet, I'm only a humble disciple, it's the Lord Almighty's message--and we both know you can't mess with perfection.

They laugh with a love that's deep and understanding as the cash flows into one basket, the envelopes and cards into the fire. From years of this scheme, they take their cut and send the lowest donators/most letters to Maggie.

INT. MARY ROSE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

Maggie talks with Ethan, Hill Street Blues plays in the background. Jeanie holds her book, "FLIM-FLAM! THE TRUTH ABOUT UNICORNS, PARAPSYCHOLOGY AND OTHER DELUSIONS", in front of her face, making sure the title is in full view.

Ethan, holding a box, sees the title and wrinkles his nose as if getting a whiff of sulfur.

MAGGIE

Thank you again, please tell the pastor how appreciative we are, this is more than I could've ever of imagined. Isn't that right, Jeanie?

JEANIE

(through her book)

Yes, thank you... for everything.

ETHAN

What can I say, it's their mission. Here good?

MAGGIE

Great.

ETHAN

Alright, I gotta jet, God bless.

Jeanie puts her book down, leans back in her chair and tracks him out the door. Maggie's words are muted.

Ethan stops at the nurse's station.

After a few seconds of smiles and flirting, which Jeanie can't overhear, Jess hands him a clipboard. After a quick look, he takes an envelope from his pocket and switches it out with the paper. He folds it up and pockets it. After some more words and big smiles, he walks off down the hall.

Jess' eyes snap to Maggie's room. Jeanie snaps forward. Her chair comes down with a thud.

JEANIE

Can I go to Zap's now?

EXT. ZAP'S ARCADE - DAY

Jeanie stands in the phone booth.

Traffic hums. The line clicks over. Jeanie's breaths are irregular, doing it manually to try and steady herself.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

We're sorry, you have dialed a  
number that has been disconne--

Jeanie slams the phone in frustration.

The unused change tumbles out: one quarter. It's a little win she needed. Her spirits rise just enough to try again.

She feeds her quarter on a string into the machine and redials, this time slower.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

We're sorry, you have dialed a  
number that has been disconnected  
or is no longer in service. If you  
feel you've reached this recording  
in error, check the number and  
please try your call again.

She hangs up the phone, calmer this time, another quarter rolls out. She scribbles the top number out, leaving a business name and address underneath.

One more chance...

She picks up the phone then hits "0".

OPERATOR

Operator, how can I help you?

JEANIE

Ichor Diagnostics, eight-seven-six  
Red Lion Road, Dibble, Oklahoma,  
please.

OPERATOR

(beat)

Please hold.

The line goes dead. Jeanie taps her foot impatiently.

OPERATOR (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry but there is no business  
by that name at that location...

JEANIE  
Oh.

OPERATOR  
However, there are a number of  
other locations in the same area.

JEANIE  
(beat)  
There's more?

OPERATOR  
Several, in fact. Looks like  
they've expanded a bit recently.

JEANIE  
Uh, can you please connect me with  
the main one? Thank you.

OPERATOR  
Ok, please deposit fifty cents to  
continue the call.

Jeanie drops the quarter on a string down twice more. This time she keeps it there just above the threshold, so every tug registers another quarter.

OPERATOR (CONT'D)  
Thank you. One moment please.

CRACKLE...

Silence.

Beat.

The line connects.

RING, RING...

RING, RING...

Someone answers:

MIMI  
Ichor Diagnostics, this is Mimi  
speaking, how may I direct your  
call?

JEANIE

Hey, hi, can I please speak with  
Dr. Wilt please?

MIMI

Uh, is this a crank, or something?  
Who is this?

JEANIE

No, no, this is Jeanie Hill... I  
think the doctor knew my father...  
It's very important.

MIMI

My apologies, anything pertaining  
to the case should go through your  
family's attorney. We can't speak  
to you about any ongoing matter due  
to legal--

JEANIE

No, no, huh?! This isn't-- Dr. Wilt  
knew my mother, too, they worked at  
the Dibble Correctional Facility  
together.

MIMI

Again, I can't speak about any  
research conducted at D.C.F. This  
company is independent of anything  
that--

JEANIE

I'm sorry I don't know anything  
about what you're saying--my mom  
was a guard.

MIMI

At the prison? A guard...  
(beat)  
What was your name again?

JEANIE

Hill, Jeanie Hill!

MIMI

Wait. Maggie...? Maggie Hill, is  
that your mom's name?

JEANIE

Yes! You knew her?

MIMI

No. Only know of her. There's an article in Dr. Wilt's office... hanging up. That your mom?

JEANIE

Yes, yes! I just have one question for him, please!

MIMI

All he'd say was that she was an old family friend... I really wish I could help but... Dr. Wilt... he passed a few weeks ago... I'm sorry... I'm his assistant, helping settle the estate. They just let us in his office this week. It's been a bit hectic with everything going on, you can imagine...

Jeanie is gutted.

JEANIE

(weakly)

Yeah... course... sorry to hear.

MIMI

I wish I could've been more help. If there's--

Almost defeated, she takes her last shot, weakly.

JEANIE

Have you heard the name Peter Scholz before? He was in the article, too. That's who I'm looking for. I need to find him. It's important.

GASP. Silence.

JEANIE (CONT'D)

Hello, do ya? I don't have much ti--

MIMI

I do... or at least I met him... at the funeral... They did some work back in the day, apparently. The doc worked with everyone.

JEANIE

Can you tell me how to contact him? Like I said, it's really urgent.

Silence.

JEANIE (CONT'D)

(acting emotional)

Please! Please! You don't understand--this is my last chance, don't take it away from me! Please! I need to talk to him. He... He... could save my mom! He at least needs to know!

MIMI

Um, no, I won't... I won't let that happen, of course. Let me see. Give me a minute. If I recall, he lives somewhere in Washington, or thereabouts. Give me a minute.

Jeanie's heart drops. He's so far...

RECORDING

Excuse me, please deposit twenty-five cents for the next three minutes. If twenty-five cents is not deposited within twenty-five seconds the call will be automatically terminated.

Jeanie excitedly pulls on the string a little too hard.

The line snaps and the quarter drops. She grits her teeth.

She pats herself down only to realize she left all her quarters the other day.

JEANIE

Idiot!

All she has are two quarters to learn the truth.

Jeanie nervously taps one of them as she waits for Mimi to get back.

MIMI

I'm sorry, didn't mean to make you wait. Wasn't where I thought. I was right, though, D.C.! No address... but there's a number. Are you ready? You there?

JEANIE

D.C.?!

MIMI

Just outside. Ready? Got a pen and paper?

Jeanie is jolted hearing it's Washington D.C. and not Washington state as she first feared. Her mood switches on a quarter...

MOMENTS LATER

JEANIE

Three-nine... zero-four! Great, thanks!

Jeanie finishes writing the number on her hand.

MIMI

You're going to want the area code now

JEANIE

Yup, yup, got it, thanks so much!  
I'm about to get cut off, I appreciate all the help!

Jeanie hangs up. She fixates on the number on the back of her hand, still holding the phone.

After a beat, Jeanie rolls her neck and dials again.

Click.

RING...

A voice crackles over.

PETER

Yello!

JEANIE

Uh, hello, is this Peter, Peter Scholz?

PETER

You got me. And this is?

Jeanie's breaths shorten.

Jeanie puts the last quarter in the slot then counts the minutes she has left on her CASIO calculator watch.



EXT. WIPOCK COUNTY BANK - DAY

Jeanie watches the bank entrance from a shaded bench. She's bundled in a large coat, bracing herself against the wind. A familiar white van pulls out from around back. Ethan rides shotgun spitting sunflower seeds as they turn away.

Jeanie waits. An ELDERLY WOMAN enters, followed by a MAN. She checks her watch, presses a button, then crosses the street and heads in.

INT. MAIN FLOOR

Jeanie gets in line, hands buried deep in her bulky coat. An elderly Slavic LADY finishes up in front.

MRS. FITZSIMMONS

Next!

Jeanie walks to the booth. Mrs. Fitzsimmons leans over to see her.

MRS. FITZSIMMONS (CONT'D)

Hey Jeanie...

(looking around)

...where's Mar?

JEANIE

(stilted)

Said to come in myself... Can Mr. Floyd show me the vault now, please?

Mrs. Fitzsimmons sees she is distraught and chalks it up to her being sad about her mom.

MRS. FITZSIMMONS

Lemme check, 'kay, hon?

Jeanie watches as Mrs. Fitzsimmons floats off and gives a soft tap on the office door in the back. Peeking her head in, she whispers.

The lollipops taunt Jeanie.

MR. FLOYD (O.S.)

(excitedly)

More than happy to!

Mrs. Fitzsimmons comes back to the booth.

MRS. FITZSIMMONS

I think you just made his day.

Mr. Floyd excitedly pops out of his office adjusting his tie.

MR. FLOYD

I promised you the million-dollar tour, didn't I, and so you shall have it! Plus, lucky for you, there's something really worth seeing today! Between that vault and the A.T.M., I'm going to drag this infernal town into the future. Mark my words.

Mrs. Fitzsimmons shakes her head playfully.

MR. FLOYD (CONT'D)

Why don't you come along, too, Mrs. Fitzsimmons? Bernice can hold down the fort. Just a quickie.

(wink)

Scout's honor.

Mrs. Fitzsimmons blushes. Jeanie knows exactly what's happening. BERNICE, the other attendant, continues about her work unfazed, helping a gentleman.

INT. VAULT ENTRANCE

MR. FLOYD

--nearly impenetrable, unless you have some seriously powerful stuff: TNT, plastique, heck, fat man and little boy might as well bring a crowbar. It's all in the brochure they gave me. Come on now, come on! Mrs. Fitzsimmons, keep up.

Mr. Floyd slaps the open steel door.

MR. FLOYD (CONT'D)

Steel-reinforced concrete, walls one foot thick, at the narrowest. Come here, come look at this: three and half feet thick! Guess how much it weighs... Go ahead, I bet you won't get it... I'll tell ya, seven hundred pounds!

(to Mrs. Fitzsimmons)

How many Junes is that again, Mrs. Fitzsimmons?

MRS. FITZSIMMONS

Oh, that's bad, you shouldn't!

MR. FLOYD

It's safe to say no one is getting in or anything is getting out. Pun very much intended. Now get a load of this!

Mr. Floyd pulls open the vault door.

INT. VAULT INTERIOR

On the table in the middle of the room are stacks of cash bound in rubber bands. The bills are old and puffy at the sides, making them look like flattened bowties.

MR. FLOYD

Come on now, come now. Isn't that a sight?! That, my dear, is pure, unfiltered capitalism. Drink it in.

Mr. Floyd emphatically throws his hand out over the stacks.

MR. FLOYD (CONT'D)

You have impeccable timing, too. The largest deposit we've ever had in this branch's history happened today... from a little business who shall remain nameless, of course. But I have to say, they're making a killing--dang near paid for the entire renovation.

Mr. Floyd takes a deep breath.

MR. FLOYD (CONT'D)

And smell that? There are those smells in life that you just can't get enough of... new shoes... ocean spray and sunscreen... fresh baked sourdough. Nothing beats this for me, though. Don't you just love it, Mrs. Fitzsimmons? The Japanese have a thing called "forest bathing" going out in nature and soaking in all the green, shinrin... shinron-roku, maybe? Anyway, I like to think this is the American--

Jeanie hands him a note. A frayed end of a wire pokes out from her sleeve. He doesn't notice.

MR. FLOYD (CONT'D)

What's this?

The note is written in purple colored pencil on yellow paper. He reads the first few sentences.

MR. FLOYD (CONT'D)  
This... This is not funny, young lady! Do you know how serio--

MRS. FITZSIMMONS  
Wha-- What is it?!

Mr. Floyd looks at Jeanie more closely. Her jacket bulges and two frayed wires poke out from each sleeve. She unzips slowly to reveal the tops of dynamite (road flares from one of many truck raids), wires protruding, along with the clock she took from Kecksburg. To round it all out, a red blinking keychain is also affixed to it.

Her eyes once downcast now beam at him wildly. He looks back down to the note.

MR. FLOYD  
"She has a bomb... I have the detonator... This is not a joke. Put \$200,000 in USED bills in the backpack. After she leaves do not follow. Do not open the door. Do not call the police for one hour. Do not trip any alarm. Break one of these and I will detonate BOTH bombs: the girl and another hidden in the bank. I AM WATCHING. I AM LISTENING. I WILL KNOW."

Mr. Floyd turns pale. He puts the note on the table next to the money. His breaths are short and panicky.

JEANIE  
See these?!

Holding the underside up her wrists up emphasizing the protruding wires.

JEANIE (CONT'D)  
Said if they touch, I'll... I'll d-d-DIE! I'll EXPLODE and kill everyone around! I don't want to! Please help me! Help me PLEASE! I don't want to die!

Jeanie opens her schoolbag whimpering. She extends an antenna and takes it out.

MR. FLOYD  
Detonator! Ahhh! DON'T PUSH THAT  
BUTT--

Jeanie turns it on then presses talk on her Realistic T.R.C.-  
214.

JEANIE  
(resigned)  
I'm here... They're doing it...  
Please don't. I'll be out SOON!

There is a heavy pause of static.

No answer.

The static is overwhelming, Jeanie fiddles with it.

JEANIE (CONT'D)  
(into the walkie)  
Hello! You there? HELLO?! PLEASE,  
I'm doing it!  
(listening to static)  
Can you hear me?! Over.

MR. FLOYD  
The walls, they must be too thick,  
it can't get through! There's no  
signal! We can--

MRS. FITZSIMMONS  
Jeanie, now! Take it off, now's  
your chance.

MR. FLOYD  
(screeching)  
No, don't! It could be rigged, I'm  
sorry, we can't. I'm sorry.

MRS. FITZSIMMONS  
Jeanie, what's going--

JEANIE  
(into walkie)  
Please, can you hear me?! I'm  
coming!

MRS. FITZSIMMONS  
Jeanie, tell us, what's going on?

JEANIE  
I'm scared! Please, please, please,  
help me! Do what he says! Before  
NOW! Please! DON'T LET ME DIE!

Jeanie shakes with adrenaline and fear. Suddenly, her CASIO calculator watch's alarm starts beeping frantically. Jeanie, Mr. Floyd and Mrs. Fitzsimmons jump.

Jeanie wipes tears and snot away. Mr. Floyd shovels heaps of cash into the schoolbag.

JEANIE (CONT'D)

(to Mr. Floyd)

I'm almost out of time! I only have five minutes, that's what that means! I need to hurry. They'll do the job. They said it. Hurry!

MR. FLOYD

Of course, I know! But who?! Who's doing this, Jeanie?!

JEANIE

I don't know! I don't know! I don't know why! They just took me.

MRS. FITZSIMMONS

Where are they taking you after? Where are you going? Tell us everything so we can get help.

JEANIE

NO! Do what they said, please! I have to go!

As soon as the bag is full, Jeanie grabs the note off the table and stuffs it in her pocket then runs off with the schoolbag slung over her shoulder and walkie in hand.

Mr. Floyd AND Mrs. Fitzsimmons are left with mouths agape. Paralyzed. Jeanie disappears out the door.

MR. FLOYD

(overwhelmed, to Mrs. Fitzsimmons)

You've always been it for me.

As Mr. Floyd and Mrs. Fitzsimmons begin to decompress, the vault door shuts. A scream leaps to Mrs. Fitzsimmons mouth but she swallows it. Mr. Floyd rushes over only to put a helpless hand to it as it seals. He rushes to the emergency lever.

MRS. FITZSIMMONS

You can't! The alarm! The BOMBS!

Once it closes, Jeanie gives a spin of the lock.

INT. MAIN FLOOR

As Jeanie passes Mrs. Fitzsimmons station, she wills herself to leave behind the sweetest taste, the lollipops.

Bernice goes about her work unfazed.

EXT. STREETS - AFTERNOON

Jeanie works her way into the crowd of KIDS letting out for the day from her school, doing her best not to be spotted. Kids meander in all directions.

After turning a few corners and almost at her destination, she hears footsteps behind her.

BECCA

Jeanie! Hey, Jeanie, what gives?  
Thought you called out today?

JEANIE

I had to get something... Uh...  
(her walkie)  
This! It was in my locker!

BECCA

You left that at school, really?  
You ne-- I could've brought it, I  
don't care what my mom says about  
Mel's.

With a flash of realization, planting a seed. Jeanie side-eyes something behind Becca.

JEANIE

I know... always.  
(beat)  
Listen, I may be out tomorrow, too.  
If anyone asks, you didn't see me,  
got it? It's important. You owe me  
for the test and your tire and that  
two bucks. Goes for everyone, too.  
Ok? Not a word. This is important  
or I'll never be able to help with  
another test. Ok?

BECCA

Ok, ok, for sure. Everything good?

JEANIE

Yeah, I just... I got in trouble.

BECCA  
(sarcastically)  
What else is new! What's the angle?

JEANIE  
Can I tell you a secret?

BECCA  
Always, you know that.

JEANIE  
He's here... He's doing a job  
though, so I don't have a lot of  
time.

BECCA  
Really? How?! When?! I'm so happy  
for you!

JEANIE  
I'll tell you later, but for now,  
please, no one, seriously, no  
matter who, you never saw me. Got  
it?

Becca locks her lips then gives the invisible key to Jeanie.  
Jeanie takes the wind out of Becca with a good hug and runs  
off around a corner.

MOMENTS LATER

Peeking around the corner, making sure the coast is clear,  
Jeanie goes to the passenger side door of a brown 1979 FORD  
BRONCO.

INT. PETER'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Jeanie hops up into the car and slouches deep in her seat,  
holding her bulky backpack tight.

PETER  
Wow, there you are... Hi. Let's  
make it official. Hello Jeanie, I'm  
Peter. Nice to meet you.

PETER (mid-to-late 40s) with dark salt streaked hair, smiles.  
He reaches out his hand. Jeanie, bear-hugging her backpack,  
does the same.

JEANIE  
Hi... nice to meet you, too...  
Peter.



PETER

Good to go? Sitting around makes me  
antsy.

Peter claps his hands and rubs them together. In unison, but  
with different tones, they say...

PETER (CONT'D)

Let's boogie!

JEANIE

Let's boogie...

In that moment everything evaporates, they smile amused at  
one another knowing that blood bonds them.

PETER

So, how's your school? You have  
some real taskmasters from the  
looks. I never liked school myself,  
too much like jail. Is that a  
walkie? Neat!

Jeanie turns on the walkie to channel 19. Normal chatter  
overtakes it. She turns it down to an indiscernible volume  
absorbing the tones not so much the words.

PETER (CONT'D)

This is so surreal... It's so great  
to meet you. There's so, so much to  
get to. Where to even start, ya  
know?

Jeanie and Peter drive in silence a few moments as the car,  
like their courage, gathers momentum. Peter looks at Jeanie,  
she gives him a tight smile. He shakes his head, still not  
believing.

PETER (CONT'D)

So, where to?

Jeanie peeks over the dash.

JEANIE

Straight four more lights, take the  
left on Sawhill then a right on  
Centralia. There's a lot on the  
left, go in there.

Another few pregnant beats pass.

PETER

I guess-- I'm not really good-- You really look like her, you know, a spitting image, like, wow! You're my-- Magpie's...

(beat)

Thanks for letting me know by the way. I don't know how right it is to say but I wished on darn near every star to see Maggie again.

(beat)

How is she?

JEANIE

Not good...

PETER

What's wrong, exactly? You were so short on the phone.

JEANIE

I didn't think you'd come.

PETER

Jeanie, I had to. I'm here, yeah? And I'll always be here--for both of you now that-- There's a lot to get straight, I get that.

Peter eyes Jeanie suspiciously as she slouches in her seat, bear hugging her backpack.

PETER (CONT'D)

So, yeah. I picked you up! That's a good start, huh?

A cop car lazes by. Peter tracks it out of habit.

Jeanie blinks at Peter, something he thinks he picks up on.

Jeanie goes back to fiddling with her handheld.

Peter short stops at a stop sign in his distraction between the cop and the radio and the thought of "was it really?" Instinctively, he shoots a hand out and catches Jeanie and her backpack. It feels oddly packed.

Jeanie closes her eyes and tenses up.

PETER (CONT'D)

Whoops, sorry, that dang thing sprouted outta nowhere. I got you. Not a fan of driving either.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

I prefer to fly myself. You ever fly before?

Jeanie shakes her head still trying to get her bearings.

PETER (CONT'D)

So, what is it... with your mom, I mean? What happened?

JEANIE

You really want to know? A lot. Everything. And it's like she can never catch a break. The accident, her surgeries, then an infection. And now she can't go back to Mel's, she can't go home--she's stuck--and the insurance people aren't doing their job and helping like they're supposed to. Aunt Mary got so desperate, she got Pastor Randy involved. He's... You two would probably get along. There's been some donations from it, but not enough, not by a long-shot. And the hospital, they can do more, everyone knows it, but they're not allowed to. She lays there all day fighting for a break just for it to keep getting worse. It's not fair! That's why I had to find you.

PETER

You're very brave, Jeanie, but no surprise there. But I'm sure they're doing everything in their power, I know it. That's what doctors--that's what they're supposed to do.

JEANIE

If it were the President, he'd have robot legs. They'll keep her around, but you have to afford to get better in this country. That's what Earl says.

Peter looks over a bit shocked to meet such a young girl with early-onset ennui. He inspects her a little more closely.

PETER

I... I don't have that kind of money, Jeanie, you know that, right?

JEANIE

It's not about your money, don't worry.

She continues to fiddle with the handheld.

PETER

So, what's up with that? That how you and your friends talk? Pretty neat!

JEANIE

They'll be the first to know... especially Earl.

PETER

Know what? Who's Earl, exactly? I'm liking that guy less and less.

Jeanie checks her watch then hands Peter the note. She turns up the handheld.

Peter's eyes dart from road to note as he drives, then to Jeanie. Her coat is now unzipped part way as well as her schoolbag. He is struck by a traumatic chill. THE FEDS. UNK. It flashes again and again in his mind's eye getting faster and faster, his firing synapses crackle like thunder.

TRUCKER 3

Yardstick thirty-five on ninety-five South headed north.

TRUCKER 1

Storm coming in Yardstick thirty-five. Hunker down. Ninety-five South headed north.

TRUCKER 2

Any good Choke and Puke for a place to ride it out?

TRUCKER 4

Mel's up there is a place to pay the water bill if nothing else.

TRUCKER 3

Ohhh, he's not going to like that if he's reading the mail.

TRUCKER 4 (EARL)

Not more than two rights off that exit, driver, and you'll be a pig in shit and dry one, too.

TRUCKER 3

Ratchet jaw underselling the shits,  
per usual.

TRUCKER 1

We got a northbound bear bait going  
past the fifty-two...

TRUCKER 3

Coming west on four-oh-two, headed  
to the center of town from the  
looks of it. Anyone know what the  
word is?

After his fifth read, Peter pops the paper in his mouth and  
swallows it. Jeanie is surprised.

Peter's mind is quiet now, his energy changed. Jeanie feels  
it.

PETER

I'm going to assume it's not real.

JEANIE

Was yours?

PETER

(calmly but sternly)  
What's going on here, Jeanie? Spill  
it. This isn't cute. Is your mom  
even hu--

JEANIE

It's what you do, right? At least  
you did... before. I dunno,  
definitely once, maybe twice?

PETER

What I do?! Jeanie--look--LOOK AT  
ME--I'm a REGULAR FREAKING GUY! You  
have no idea who I am! Where did  
you even get the idea? I know she  
wouldn't--

Jeanie fiddles with the volume.

PETER (CONT'D)

Dang it, quit playing with that  
thing! I need answers before  
anything else.

Peter slows the BRONCO to a crawl, the car behind swerves  
around honking angrily.

JEANIE  
I read your letter!

PETER  
My letter?!  
(beat)  
Which... letter?

JEANIE  
When you got back to Dibble  
after...

PETER  
If that's it, you're way, way off!  
You didn't read anything about the  
suicide watches or the trials? One  
screwup like you're doing right  
now, it destroys people, Jeanie.  
I'll never forget this one guy,  
throwing his head against the wall.  
Not once, not twice, twelve  
times... Full force. That sound  
like gravel rubbing together... His  
eyes before they put the bag over  
him still stick with me. He knew he  
wasted his life. It was all over  
one way or another for him. Do you  
think you're immune to bad things?  
You're mortal, Jeanie, we all are!  
If only you understood, what it's  
going to do to you... To me...  
You're toying with the US  
government, Jeanie! The goddamn  
FEDS, the F.B.I., the freaking  
FEDS! They have loooooong memories  
and deep pockets! They just killed  
a guy up in Portland, my gosh,  
like, did you even think?!

JEANIE  
(slow and emphasized)  
And who you can't go to.  
(beat)  
They want you. I need you. If you  
wanted different? All you had to do  
was stay.

Peter looks over stunned. Jeanie blinks "F-U" furiously at  
him in Morse Code again.

PETER  
I just-- I needed to-- I didn't  
know.  
(beat)  
(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

Hey, I thought that's what you were saying! I see, Jeanie! You're saying "Fuck You". "F" you... "F" me?!

JEANIE

Uh, what, what're you talking about?! Nuh-uh!

PETER

You're saying it with your eyes, Jeanie! It's not a new trick, for crying out loud!

Up ahead a school bus pulls away. Peter finding what he's looking for, slows up.

JEANIE

No, not here, up there, left, LEFT!  
Go around! you can't--

Jeanie quickly slumps down. Peter pulls alongside the curb.

PETER

Wait here! We have one shot...  
(patting himself down)  
Please tell me you have change.

EXT. MEL'S DINER - AFTERNOON

As Peter walks up, Mary walks out. Mary gives him her approximation of a seductive smile.

PETER

Hello! You wouldn't happen to work here would you?

MARY

(decked out in apron and hat)  
Why yes I do. What gave it away, my smile?

PETER

You do?! You're a vision. Do you have change for two bucks? It'd really make my day.

MARY

Sure would.

They exchange money.

PETER

Ah, great, my hero.

MARY

After you're done out here, can I put you down for something sweet inside... maybe later?

PETER

I'd kill for a coffee and cigarette but, unfortunately business calls, you understand.

MARY

Of course. I'll keep it fresh just in case.

Mary begins to walk away then turns, looking around once more.

MARY (CONT'D)

By any chance, you seen a little girl around, about yay high, brown hair, probably with her nose in a book?

PETER

No, ma'am.

MARY

(to herself)

Eh, probably the hospital then...

(to Peter)

Ok, thanks anyway. Be good.

Peter spots Jeanie peeking over the dash. He opens the door to the phone booth.

INT. PETER'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Peter jumps back in. Jeanie lowers the volume on the radio.

They pull away.

PETER

(exasperated sigh)

Did you even stop for a minute to think how much this going to hurt your mom and your aunt? Did you even have a plan?



JEANIE

Actually, you're plan B... Up there. Go in there. There's more.

EXT. MEL'S LOT / THE STACKS - AFTERNOON

As they turn, Jeanie notices under the old, worn "NO CAMPERS" sign is now a "FOR SALE" sign. Jeanie does a double take but says nothing of it. Jeanie and Peter drive the row of semis. A few DRIVERS watch as they pass by.

JEANIE

We're good for now. They don't talk to bears. Down and to the left, the rest is in my rig.

EXT. "HONEYBEE" - MOMENTS LATER

Jeanie climbs into the rusted yellow carcass of an old rig in far back of the lot. On the side, the name "HONEYBEE" is emblazoned. Her playground, fort, and getaway since always. Peter watches as she tears a panel up, and pulls a blue duffle from it.

She throws it onto the passenger seat. Peter unzips the bag, fighting back his revulsion.

PETER

(sniffing)

Oof, what is that?

JEANIE

Just spilt milk, no worries.

As he picks through it, a fondness overtakes him. He tallies its contents and that of the rest of the car: one government secret, one felony skyjacking confession, one fake bomb, a backpack full of money belonging to a prominent televangelist stolen from a bank, and to top it all off assorted knick-knacks from a number of petty larcenies.

PETER

You two are a real pair, some real collectors. Anyone of these by itself could--

(beat)

I couldn't do better myself.

Peter picks up a manila folder and checks through it. He shakes his head, saddened.

PETER (CONT'D)

Such a waste.

(Beat)

All this all... All along... Your mom... She could've... she's the best of humanity, you know. She always made me want to be better, get better. I just could never get it together in time, or ever, really.

Peter looks once more with awe at the contents of the bag before zipping it up. She had more cards than any of them all along.

PETER (CONT'D)

Incredible.

(beat)

And you're sure that's everything?

JEANIE

Yeah.

PETER

No other letters?

JEANIE

Yeah... I mean, no.

PETER

(deflated)

Oh. You're positive now? None? One little thing, that's all--

JEANIE

Yesssuhhh. I know. I checked everywhere just in case. Her room, basement again, cabinets, crawl space, everywhere.

(beat)

I found these, though... Thought you might want them.

Digging something out of the duffle, Jeanie hands over black wayfarer glasses.

PETER

(can't contain the deep  
ironic chuckle)

Of course. And the bills? That's all of them too, right? They can be traced, you know?

JEANIE

With serial numbers, yeah, I know.  
But that's why I did it when the  
church made their deposit. That and  
cause the pastor is a total creep.  
It's all used bills too, so no one  
will even know!

PETER

I could spend the rest of my life  
behind bars for this--not to the  
mention my soul being eternally  
damned.

(beat)

But none of that scares me even a  
millionth of a percent with what'll  
happen if we don't land this right.  
Your life, for all intents and  
purposes, will be over. Kiss your  
mom, Aunt Mary, and this little  
quintessential life thing you have  
going goodbye. It'll be a living  
nightmare. Don't forget that, not  
for a second.

(centering himself,  
snapping his fingers)

The watch. That too.

Jeanie takes off the watch and tosses it in the bag.

JEANIE

Do you know how much prep I did to  
get that?

PETER

Who set it? You or them?

JEANIE

Them.

PETER

Him or them?

JEANIE

Them. Them. Them. One took me while  
another drove around.

PETER

Was the driver a man or woman?

JEANIE

A man.

PETER

And what about the note?

JEANIE

He drove and told me what to write.

PETER

How long did this all take? You must've got a good look between that and them rigging you up.

JEANIE

(acting emotional)

I don't know! I don't know! I was blindfolded and the one or two minutes I wasn't they made me face out the back of the wagon the entire time. I never turned around... I... I... was too scared!

(beat)

See, I know. I can do this. I got it. I know what I'm doing.

PETER

If you did, you'd never have done something so profoundly stupid, and we wouldn't be here right now. I wanted to get ice cream! Whole time driving up I was getting more and more excited to meet you, see your mom again, and get extra jimmies!

Jeanie's innate sweet tooth overtakes her momentarily making her wonder if she really made the right decision. She pushes it deep down.

JEANIE

How else was she going to get better?

PETER

When they ask why you went to the hospital after...

JEANIE

All I wanted was to see my mom!

PETER

And when they ask why you didn't call?

JEANIE

I wanted to be with my mom!

PETER

And why you didn't tell her? Huh?  
Huh?!

JEANIE

(fake wailing)

Because I was too scared and didn't  
want to upset her!

PETER

Defend and deflect but don't be  
evasive. Hammer the details, while  
keeping it simple, and for the love  
of God, don't tell stories.  
Speaking of which, let them find  
out about the church. They'll be  
more inclined to believe that's how  
some crazies found you.

(beat)

They're going to mistake you for  
young, let them. I sure as hell  
did. But that's the only way you're  
going to walk away from this. WE  
walk away from this. The more they  
write you off now, the more leeway  
you'll have later. But, get this,  
Jeanie, get it well, they'll  
always, always, always be sniffing  
around--whether the agent assigned  
now or some young gun trying to  
make a name later--for the rest of  
your life, and everyone you know,  
too.

(beat)

It's going to be a while before we  
see each other again...

(beat)

But, I guess you planned on that,  
too...

JEANIE

Well, at least I had a plan for  
you.

PETER

I... didn't... You need to  
understand... But, Jeanie, despite  
all this. For some sick, demented,  
loathsome reason, I'm actually so  
stupidly proud of you. Your mom is  
very lucky to have you.

(beat)

But, unfortunately, you're a lot  
like me: a total freaking idiot.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

I bet that really gets her too.  
But, thing is, you still have a  
chance. I'll make sure of it. No  
matter what. But, take it from  
someone who made a living sticking  
it to people, the things you leave  
on the table, and I'm not talking  
about the money--for you, with this  
right now, it's your future--and  
you lose that, you'll never forgive  
yourself no matter how important  
this job seems in the moment. It'll  
be with you forever. You don't want  
that, not now, and definitely not  
so young. So, if there's one thing  
I can do as your dad, it'll be to  
make sure you get a second  
chance... to be more like your  
mom...

(beat)

If everything goes right, they'll  
come in as donations, at first.  
We'll go from there. Think of it as  
an allowance.

Before Jeanie can say anything, Peter reaches across her and  
opens the passenger side door.

PETER (CONT'D)

Aye, last thing, tell her... About  
before, it wasn't about the money  
or the job, it was for all us  
after.

JEANIE

Yeah, I will...

(beat)

I guess-- Thanks... dad.

(beat)

I... I... owe you a lot.

Peter gives her the warmest smile.

PETER

Forever and ever.

Jeanie closes the door. Peter speeds off. Jeanie looks on at  
a mass of trees with a large salt box building in the  
distance lording over her: Mary Rose Memorial Hospital.

INT. MARY ROSE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - DUSK

Jeanie sits facing her mom's bed, a little disheveled from her walk, not a new sight for Maggie. Jeanie sips a milk carton. Maggie watches the breaking news on the TV in the corner of the room.

Maggie spoons an empty-ish Jell-O container.

MAGGIE

What even is this stuff, tell me that. Is it even good for you? Could I live on it? Like, if I was stranded out on a desert island and all I had was this and coconuts, could I survive? I don't think I ever had a craving for this stuff a day in my life. What's even the point?

JEANIE

Sorry I couldn't bring anything today... I got caught up.

REPORTER (O.S.)

We're getting new information now. Just to reset for those just joining, Wipock County Bank has just been robbed, police are still tightlipped about the exact details but one well-placed source was able to share a detail, the ransom note was written...

MAGGIE

You know you don't have to always bring me something. I'm just glad you can tolerate my lame butt. Ooh, ooh, ooh, turn it up, turn it up. Ohhh, this should be good...

Jeanie goes over and drags a chair into position. She gets up on it and at first turns it down, then up.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Ah, ah, ah. Ok, there, there. Perfect. Right there, thanks.

REPORTER (O.S.)

...in crayon. One color, twelve, sixty-four. We will be where the leads take us to bring you the latest. Keep the dial on WOL 9 for more on this developing story.

Commercials overtake the news coverage.

MAGGIE

Wipock County, really, a bank?!  
Idiots! How dumb can you be! Ha! I  
hope Mindy's ok.

(beat)

But, what're the chances they been  
to Mel's, you think... or Aunt Mary  
dated one of 'em? I'd put money on  
it.

Jeanie finishes dragging the chair back to the desk.

INT. PETER'S CAR - DUSK

Peter sits in bumper to bumper traffic. A large storm cloud  
moves in over him. He turns up the walkie poking out from the  
duffle.

He is tense but reserved on the outside. Slight tics surface,  
ones he was once much better at suppressing. He fixes his  
glasses, lights a cigarette and grinds his palms against the  
wheel. The radio keeps on.

TRUCKER 1

That guy going to Shrevesport...

(ha)

You gotta find yourself an aero  
plane.

TRUCKER 2

Funny you say that I was thinking  
the saaaame thing. But you beat me  
to it!

TRUCKER 1

Welp, if you can flip off a state  
police helicopter, they probably  
come pick you up. But I don't think  
they're bringing you to  
Shrevesport.

(beat)

I always ask myself why I keep  
working up here.

TRUCKER 2

Need a truck transformer.

TRUCKER 3

We got another accident going north  
or what's the deal here?



TRUCKER 4

I see the wreck behind me when I  
come outta there.

Peter becomes more hopeful.

PETER

C'mon baby, let's boogie! C'mon  
baby. Straight shot. Heeeere we go.

BACK TO:

INT. MARY ROSE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - DUSK

Jeanie feels the dread of the most important moment of her  
life coming upon her, a feeling she is now becoming well  
acquainted with. Her awareness comes back to her.

As she finishes putting the chair away, Jeanie notices the  
usual two stacks of envelopes on the table, the white  
insurance ones and brightly colored ones.

This time, there is a new third pile with a single envelope.

Jeanie focuses in on the name "Dr. Wilt". Jolted, she turns  
to look at an excitedly waiting Maggie.

MAGGIE

Bout time! Go ahead.

Jeanie opens it.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I know you know, so I won't. You  
made quite the mess... Aunt Mary  
told me. And well, you think I  
don't know you. Don't forget we're  
a lot alike, too. I guess it was  
inevitable... me being here, and  
all.

Jeanie looks up from the letter, separating a check from it.  
Tears well up in Maggie's eyes. Maggie nods yes.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Everything's... ok now. We're free.  
It's a miracle and you and Aunt  
Mary did it! You've always been my  
Jeanie. You did it again.

REPORTER (O.S.)

Sources say authorities are narrowing down in on a person of interest. As for how many were involved, is still a source of speculation. We have been speaking with witnesses on the scene--

MAGGIE

Can you turn it off? First thing we do when I'm outta here, we're taking a big vacation, you, me, and Aunt Mary. Anywhere you want--first class all the way!

Jeanie so overwhelmed throws herself into her mom's arms and whispers in her ear.

The phone at the nursing station rings and rings.

A hand reaches for the TV in the corner and turns it off. Two MEN in suits fill the entry way.

Maggie's joy turns to shock and bewilderment as she squeezes Jeanie tighter and tighter.

BACK TO:

INT. PETER'S CAR - DUSK

Peter stews in traffic.

TRUCKER 1 (V.O.)

Well, they said it was bad, backed up to exit forty-nine. You gotta little ways passed the bridge.

TRUCKER 5 (V.O.)

Heard that, appreciate it drivers.

TRUCKER 6 (V.O.)

Backed all the way up to Ericsville.

TRUCKER 5 (V.O.)

When I came off twenty-two, I hit it, backed up six or seven miles.

TRUCKER 2 (V.O.)

Just my luck.

TRUCKER 5 (V.O.)  
Appreciate the comeback there  
driver, god bless.

TRUCKER 1 (V.O.)  
It's a crapshoot around here  
anyway.

TRUCKER 7/EARL (V.O.)  
Same old shit, different day, am I  
right?

TRUCKER 2 (V.O.)  
Ain't no doubt. That shit. Same old  
shit going that other way, too.

TRUCKER 1 (V.O.)  
Wow, three bears just like  
Christmas, lit up all round! See  
that, Deadhead?

TRUCKER 8 (V.O.)  
All I see are goddamn red lights  
and I'm like Roll Tide!

TRUCKER 3 (V.O.)  
Two booking it across the bridge.

TRUCKER 7/EARL  
Roll Tide?! Don't sneeze driver,  
your brain'll come out.

Police lights come on four cars behind Peter, in front of a  
baby blue MAC. Peter eyes it in the rearview.

TRUCKER 2 (V.O.)  
Bingo--my front door!

Peter slowly turns down the C.B. and zips the duffle closed.  
He turns up the car radio.

The light gray clouds send down a misting rain.

Cars behind Peter begin making a clear path to his BRONCO.

He sheds the wayfarers, clenches his jaw, and white knuckles  
the wheel staring into the roiling storm ahead.

He turns the wheel right and moves up an inch, then another  
inch. The cop chirps, revving its engine at the cars behind  
him.

Another inch... CHIRP! Another inch... CHIRP, CHIRP! The cars  
creep a part just enough for...

The cop speeds up within inches of his bumper, stopping with a screechy halt. Peter keeps inching his way into a blown-out section of the guardrail under an airline billboard, "Adventure Awaits!"

CHIRP.

Off in the distance looms the large salt box hospital. One room shines brighter than the rest... there she is.

Another CHIRP.

Peter edges up the last inch, clearing a path for the officer. Rocks tumble down the recently depressed embankment to a dirt offshoot below, leading deep into the forest. He eyes it, calculating. He could... just... maybe...

The blue and red lights cut through the fattening rain.

Time drags.

FADE TO BLACK.

An engine roars.

INT. APOSTLES OF BETHLEHEM FOR CHRIST - NIGHT

Sally rushes into the room just in time to catch Pastor Randy lording over the TV. Back turned, his hands rest on the top.

SALLY

So... you saw...

His shoulders broaden as he listens.

PASTOR RANDY

No matter...

After getting his fill, he turns with a wicked smile, smushing out a cigarette.

PASTOR RANDY (CONT'D)

Insurance will cover everything.

He takes the flesh covered earpiece from the desk and puts it in.

PASTOR RANDY (CONT'D)

Thank, God.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END