

FLORIDA MAN

"Episode 101"

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FADE IN:

EXT. THE EARTH - DAY

Turning below us silently, as if seen from the Space Station. Then the lower tip of FLORIDA appears, and as it unveils its distinctive shape, we begin to HEAR faint, staticky TRANSMISSIONS, barely coherent and overlapping fragments of VOICES. Astronauts? Angels? Aliens?

VARIOUS VOICES

...a porta-potty exploded when a woman lit... hit man to kill his mother... sex in Toys-R-Us with an Olaf doll... Confederate sword to rob a Chik-fil-A...

Suddenly we DROP! PLUNGE FROM SPACE, dizzyingly, and into --

TV NEWS STORIES - QUICK CUTS

NEWS ANCHORS reading true stories ON-AIR:

NEWS ANCHOR #1

A Florida man siphoning gas from a school bus set himself on fire --

NEWS ANCHOR #2

A Florida man arrested for mowing his lawn in the nude wants his teaching job back --

NEWS ANCHOR #3

A Florida woman attacked her grandfather with a fork after he wouldn't serve her more tomatoes --

The final anchor is KAITLYNN FOX, a cheerful local anchor.

KAITLYNN FOX

A Florida woman claims she was sexually assaulted by a local man while trying to commit suicide!

CELL PHONE VIDEO: a topless drunk LOCAL WOMAN with her naked breasts pixilated for TV is yelling on a BEACH:

DRUNK LOCAL WOMAN

I was just tryin'a drown myself in the ocean to die after the [bleep] judge wouldn't give me my kids back and this [bleep] comes up an' pulls my [bleep] top off!

MIKE (O.S.)

I did not!

The CELL PHONE CAMERA SWINGS OVER and finds MIKE VALENTINE, 38-45, wading in from deeper water, holding a bikini top.

FREEZE ON MIKE. TITLE CARD:

FLORIDA MAN

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

CLOSE ON HAMMERS. On a rack. Hammers of all kinds. So many hammers.

CHYRON: **PHILADELPHIA**

REVERSE on the person looking at all these hammers: the same Mike Valentine.

CHYRON: **TWO WEEKS AGO**

Mike is good-looking, quiet; a working man. After a beat, he looks down to the end of the aisle and sees a middle-aged man, GIL FRANCO, buying duct tape.

MIKE

Excuse me.

A beat, then Gil realizes he's being spoken to.

GIL

Yes?

MIKE

Sorry. I need to buy a hammer. Do you know anything about hammers?

Gil shrugs, comes down to see if he can help.

GIL

Depends on what you need it for.

(pointing)

This is a framing hammer, mostly for carpentry, a ball-peen for metal work, and here you have your all-purpose claw, a mallet...

MIKE

Uh-huh. Cool. And which one would be good for breaking a guy's leg?

Pause. Gil's not sure he heard correctly. He looks at Mike... then goes cold, as he gets what's happening here.

GIL

I know you. From the gamblers meeting.

MIKE

It's supposed to be an ex-gamblers meeting, Gil. Someone's not doing the steps.

Beat. Then Gil tries to run -- but Mike has, unnoticed, taken firm hold of Gil's shirt at the waist.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Don't.

They stand there, looking at hammers. Gil starts to sweat.

GIL

Just tell Moss he'll get his money. Got a bunch coming, two weeks tops.

MIKE

We're standing in front of a rack of hammers, Gil. Does that suggest I'm here to negotiate?

GIL

You're a piece of work. How can you do this, to other gamblers?

MIKE

I'm not the carpenter, Gil. I'm just the tool. I took a searching inventory of my shortcomings and I'm making amends to persons I have wronged. In this case Moss Yankov.

From the rack, he takes a handheld SLEDGEHAMMER.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Maybe this one?

A beat. Then suddenly Gil makes a break and runs. Dammit, now Mike has to chase Gil through the store, a messy chase full of tipped-over racks and Gil throwing a handful of nails at Mike and one attempt to use pruning shears as a weapon... until Gil finally darts out the back door.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Mike dashes out -- and Gil's gone. Mike hears a MOAN, and peers over a railing on the loading dock. Gil lies on the pavement eight feet below. His leg is broken. Bone exposed. Gil writhes in pain. Mike feels bad.

MIKE

I mean... I guess that counts?

INT. NICKY'S BAR - NIGHT

A cop bar. A rowdy celebration for IRIS POLHAUS, 34, a newly-minted detective. She wears her new badge on a chain around her neck and argues with a veteran detective, DUNNEY, while other cops laugh and give her shit for her passion.

IRIS

...Because! Statistics show --
shut up -- fuck you all --
statistics show you are eight times
more likely to get shot by another
officer if you have your badge on
your belt, not around your neck.

ANOTHER COP

Yeah, now double the odds for
having Dunney as your partner.

The cops laugh. Then someone looks o.s. at the door -- where Mike has entered. Trying to keep a low profile, but things get a quieter as cops notice him. Dunney scowls.

DUNNEY

The balls on this guy.

IRIS

I got it.

Iris goes and meets Mike half-way. She's surprised to see him. We can tell there's history. Friendly but awkward.

IRIS (CONT'D)

Mike. How's it going?

MIKE

Hey. Not staying, just heard you
made Detective and came by.

IRIS

Thanks. Took me long enough, right?

MIKE

You worked hard. You start yet?

IRIS

Yeah. Even got me on a task force.

MIKE

No shit.

IRIS
Organized crime.

Pause. That lays there between them for a moment.

MIKE
Cool.

Then Detective Dunney comes over, lip curled.

DUNNEY
You lost or something, Mike? You forget this is a cop bar?

MIKE
No, Dunney, I just heard celebrating and hoped it was your wake.

DUNNEY
Funny, we were just discussing the best place for a Detective's badge. I guess you went with "on the Captain's desk with your gun."

MIKE
Not sure you need to wear one at all, since the last thing you busted was your nut in a ten-dollar hooker.

Dunney lunges at Mike, swinging, and everyone moves to separate them, Iris getting in between the guys.

IRIS
Hey!

DUNNEY
...Fucking disgrace!

IRIS
I said CUT IT OUT!
(shoving the guys apart)
Dunney, go get a drink. Go.
(as Dunney goes)
Mike -- thank you for coming.

She means he should go now. Mike nods -- sorry -- and exits. Iris crosses to the bar, where Dunney's cooling off.

DUNNEY
Can't believe you two couldn't make it work.

IRIS
He's gone. Forget it.

DUNNEY

(beat; pondering)

But you know... if I was put on an organized crime task force... and my ex-husband worked for Moss Yankov?

IRIS

What? No. Don't even.

DUNNEY

Might be an opportunity, is all. In the lemons-out-of-lemonade sense.

IRIS

The other way around. And no.

Dunney shrugs -- just saying -- and walks away. But now it's on Iris' mind.

INT. GAMBLER'S ANONYMOUS MEETING - DAY

Gambling addicts of all ages, genders, and income status in metal chairs in a circle. Mike is one of them. Listening to a middle-aged former banker, ROY.

ROY

Can people change?

A WOMAN raises her hand.

ROY (CONT'D)

No, Cathy, it was rhetorical. Me, I think yes. I think most people in this room think so. Or we wouldn't be here. But not everyone in our lives agrees. Can we blame 'em? -- Again, Cathy, not really asking. It's why gambling is the worst addiction. It's invisible. Wife can't smell it on you like bourbon. Boss can't drug test you for it. So they never really know if we stopped. So part of them will always be just... waiting.

This lands on Mike. The woman has her hand up.

ROY (CONT'D)

Cathy, you want to share something?

CATHY

Yes, I want to share why is there no coffee?

ROY

That's something you'd have to ask
Gil. Gil had coffee duty. And Gil
didn't come.

Mike looks to an EMPTY CHAIR where Gil would be sitting.

ANOTHER MAN

I heard he got hurt or something.

Mike feels bad.

INT. MOSS YANKOV'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A big old house in an old Main Line Philly neighborhood. We're on DELLY WEST, early 30s, sexy and smart, putting on makeup in a vanity mirror. We HEAR muffled ARGUING from downstairs. Delly puts on a final bit of makeup, studying the results... then checks a MAGAZINE, open to a picture of KATE MIDDLETON. She compares herself to the Duchess. Looks in the mirror -- too much. Tones down the eyeliner, wipes the blush off some. Yeah. Classier. The VOICES downstairs get louder -- there's a THUMP, maybe a PUNCH, someone CRIES OUT in pain. Delly rolls her eyes, goes out to --

INT. MOSS YANKOV'S HOUSE - HALLWAY/DOWNSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

She leans over the stair landing --

DELLY

Moss!

DOWNSTAIRS, a big guy (JIMMY) guards an office door. The door opens, and we glimpse inside -- a chair with some guy in it and CRUTCHES on the floor by the chair -- as MOSS YANKOV comes out and looks up. 30s, rough-edged, a punk trying hard to fill his mobster dad's oversized shoes.

MOSS

What?!

DELLY

You said you wouldn't work late on
my birthday.

MOSS

Yeah. Almost done. You look nice.

He goes into his office, Delly goes back into --

INT. MOSS YANKOV'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Delly starts to finish getting ready... then HEARS more ARGUING through the floor. We can't make out what's being

said. But Delly gets down close to the hardwood, over Moss's office... and puts her ear to the floor. Listening.

EXT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Mike waits outside, working security while Moss and Delly eat inside. Mike's co-worker is Jimmy, a cheerful idiot.

JIMMY

Hey, Mike. Know what I heard?

Mike sighs a bit; knows whatever's coming will be moronic.

MIKE

No, Jimmy. What did you hear?

JIMMY

Twenty-three people die every year from pennies dropped off the Empire State Building. Goes right into their skull.

MIKE

Twenty-three people. And we never hear about this.

JIMMY

The city pays off the family to keep quiet. Because of tourism. One family got ten million dollars.

MIKE

And one cent.

Jimmy thinks about this -- then the restaurant door flies open and Delly storms out, pissed, Moss following her.

MOSS

Delly, come on! It's your birthday!

Delly wheels around and whips a DIAMOND NECKLACE at him.

DELLY

Yeah, tell your fence thank you! Next time check to see if there's some girl's HAIR in the clasp!

MOSS

It's pre-owned, so what? Ever hear of "estate jewelry?"

DELLY

One time, just one time, I'd love to get a present that wasn't stolen --

MOSS

Hey! Shh!

DELLY

-- that you got just for me,
special, that no one else has had!

She whirls around and stalks away down the sidewalk.

MOSS

Delly...!

She flips him the bird without looking back. Moss sighs.

MOSS (CONT'D)

Mike. Make sure she gets home okay.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

We're with Delly as she stalks along the sidewalk. Mike pulls up alongside her in his SUV, rolls his window down.

MIKE

You know you never see this the other way. A man storming down the street, a woman in the car begging him to get in. Don't know why.

DELLY

The way it is. Men build a fence, women dig under it to escape.

MIKE

Can you get in, please?

DELLY

Can you fuck off?

MIKE

This next block up here isn't great. Lot of prostitutes.

DELLY

What's one more, then?

MIKE

Just do me a favor.

DELLY

I don't recall owing you a favor.

MIKE

Then how about I'll owe you one?

Delly slows down, looks at Mike. Stops.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHARLIE'S BLACK DOG TAVERN - DAY

A sports bar and pub. TVs everywhere. Mike eats a burger and watches a basketball game alone on a TV over the bar.

MIKE

(tense, re game)

Pass it... corner, pass it pass it
pass it, shoot...! DAMMIT!!!

Buzzer, game over. Mike's pissed lie he lost big. Then he sighs and slides a few MATCHSTICKS from a pile in front of him to another pile -- "paying off" his bet with himself.

IRIS (O.S.)

No one ever said don't play with
matches?

Detective Iris slides onto a stool. Mike's surprised.

MIKE

I think it's allowed. Maybe.

IRIS

Thanks for coming the other night.

MIKE

Should've just sent a text.

IRIS

No, it was nice. Not easy, I know.

Beat. Mike knows why's she's here, so he helps her along.

MIKE

"So. How's that task force going?"

IRIS

Okay, listen, it wouldn't be my
first choice to exploit our
relationship. Prior relationship.
Whatever. But Moss Yankov --

MIKE

Is not worth a task force. He's a
half-wit goon who'll jack himself
up soon enough if you let him.

IRIS

Nevertheless. You're on the inside.

MIKE

I just do some security work --

IRIS

Right. Mike, it's me -- I know you didn't stop being a cop just because they took your badge --

MIKE

No, that's definitely what happened. There's even a letter somewhere.

IRIS

-- and you're sure as hell better than being some leg-breaker for a punk like Moss Yankov.

MIKE

First of all, I've never broken any legs. Well. Not technically. I don't have to. I'm persuasive.

IRIS

(wry smile)

That's true. You persuaded me to abandon all reason.

MIKE

And two, I'm just working for Moss long enough to clear my debt and start clean.

IRIS

Then start now, Mike. Don't get dragged under with this ship.

No reply. Beat. Iris stands. Nods to Mike's matchsticks.

IRIS (CONT'D)

You up or down?

MIKE

(half-smile)

What do you think?

Iris smiles, and leaves.

INT. MOSS YANKOV'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

ON THE WINDOW. A pebble flies up from outside and TAPS against the glass. Then another. We FIND DELLY in bed, asleep. Woken by the tapping, she rolls over a little... and feels something under her head. Groggy, she finds a

car's KEY FOB, tied into her hair by a knot. What the hell? The key dangling from her hair, she crosses to the window.

DOWN BELOW, IN THE DRIVEWAY, she sees Moss standing there, tossing gravel -- next to a brand-new white BMW 5-SERIES car. He waves, smiling. Delly gives a little happy squeal.

EXT. MOSS'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Delly circles the car, hardly able to believe it.

DELLY

And it's mine? I can have it?

MOSS

It has zero miles -- I told 'em if it had even one mile on it I won't take it because I want you to have something no one else has ever had.

DELLY

(hugging him)

Aw, Moss...

MOSS

Even though you do have something no one else has. My heart.

DELLY

(looks at him, surprised)

Oh my god. I want to laugh, but I can't. Look at your face.

MOSS

You better not laugh.

He holds her. Off Delly's face...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SMALL OFFICE BUILDING - DAY - ESTABLISHING

One of the companies here is "Tri-State Security."

INT. TRI-STATE SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

Mike is in the lobby, filling out an employment app. We see in CLOSE-UP the lines he fills out. PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT: he writes "Philadelphia Police Department." CURRENT EMPLOYMENT: Mike just stares at the line. Skips it for now.

He gets a TEXT from Moss. Ignores it. Goes back to the application. Then a SECURITY GUY walks through the lobby, wearing a Tri-State Security Uniform. Old guy. Overweight.

Dull eyes. Probably used to be a cop, too. Mike stares at his future.

A beat, then we see the RECEPTIONIST behind a counter.

RECEPTIONIST
Mike Valentine...?

She looks up -- and the lobby is empty. Mike's application left behind on a chair.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

Near Independence Park. The historic buildings of America's founding are nearby. Their lofty ideals on plaques. The Liberty Bell, somewhere out there.

Mike arrives at a spot, looks around. Then:

MOSS (O.S.)
Hey! Mike!

Mike looks, sees a FOOD TRUCK ("Brotherly Loaf" sandwiches), and inside it at the window, grinning, is Moss.

MOSS (CONT'D)
What can I get you, sir? Kidding,
fuck off, we're not open.

We see Jimmy inside, scraping hard to clean off the grill.

MIKE
What's this?

MOSS
Guy owed me money. Now he doesn't.

MIKE
He gave you his truck?

MOSS
(vague shrug)
Not at first.

Mike watches Jimmy scraping god-knows-what off the grill. Chooses not to ask. Moss leaves the truck to join Mike, taking a little jar of VICKS VAP-O-RUB from his pocket. Occasionally he'll dab a bit below his throat. A habit.

MOSS (CONT'D)
Thanks for coming. Let's sit.

There's only one bench. A BUSINESSMAN is on it, eating his lunch. He looks up to see Moss standing over him, waiting.

BUSINESSMAN

Who the hell are you?

MOSS

Me? I'm from 30 seconds in the future, where I just saw you with that sandwich up your ass.

The Businessman decides to gather his stuff quickly and leave. Moss and Mike sit. A beat. A dab of Vicks.

MOSS (CONT'D)

Delly's gone.

MIKE

(beat)

Gone, how?

MOSS

Gone. Got in her new car and drove.

MIKE

Drove...?

MOSS

Her car.

MIKE

Yeah I know that, where did she go?

MOSS

Florida.

MIKE

(thrown)

Florida. What do you mean, Florida?

MOSS

What do you mean what do I mean, I mean the State of Florida, where she went, someplace named Coronado Beach. I google-maps'd it, it's near Daytona.

MIKE

And how do you know this?

He hands Mike a folded piece of PAPER. WE SEE a b/w PICTURE of DELLY behind the wheel of her BMW, driving.

MOSS

Speed trap camera. Emailed to me because the car's in my name.

Mike's looking at the printout when Moss hands him a SECOND PRINTOUT of a ticket. Delly again. Top of a GROCERY BAG visible on the seat.

MOSS (CONT'D)

Got this one an hour later. Going back. With groceries. She stayed.

MIKE

Any idea why?

MOSS

(shakes his head)

Didn't tell me if she was mad. You were in the car with her, her birthday night. She say anything?

INT. MIKE'S SUV - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The SUV is pulled over on a side street -- and Mike and Delly are having sex inside. Delly's on top.

DELLY

Oh god oh god oh god...!

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - RESUME

MIKE

No.

MOSS

Well, I need you to go get her.

MIKE

What? No.

MOSS

Yes.

MIKE

I'm not going to Florida.

MOSS

You'll go where I fucking tell you go.

MIKE

Why?

MOSS

Because that's where she is!

MIKE

I mean why me?

MOSS

Why do you think you?

MIKE

(carefully)

I don't know... why do you think me?

MOSS

Because Delly's smart. And you're smart. My other guys... you know. So go, and get her home. Just do what you did the other night.

INT. MIKE'S SUV - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Mike and Delly having sex in the SUV.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - RESUME

On Mike. He looks at the photo of Delly.

MOSS

She can't leave me, Mike. How would it look? My father wouldn't've let something like that go, right?

Finally:

MIKE

I'll go. I'll get her back for you, Moss, if it's the last thing I do.

MOSS

(touched)

Mike. Thank you...

MIKE

No -- I mean if it's the last thing I do for you. I do this, we're square. I walk away clean.

Moss eyes Mike, pondering this. Beat.

MOSS

Nah.

MIKE

No?

MOSS

I know you guys. You need some action to keep it interesting. So:

(MORE)

MOSS (CONT'D)
bring her back, your book is clean.
You don't... you owe double.

Mike eyes Moss. Double. Hm. Then:

MIKE
Sure. Okay.

MOSS
Good. Start driving.

MIKE
I'm not driving, I'll get a flight.

MOSS
At the last minute? You know what
that'd cost me?

MIKE
Are you kidding right now?

MOSS
Fine. But an economy rental car.
And she might need "persuading."
Know what I mean? Persuading?

MIKE
Yeah, we just established how smart
I am.

MOSS
So you can't take a weapon on a
plane without paperwork. How're
you gonna get a gun?

MIKE
Moss? It's Florida.

SLAM TO:

INT. ORLANDO AIRPORT - BAGGAGE CLAIM - DAY

Among the bags sliding onto the baggage carousel are GUNS:
hunting rifles in soft cases, handguns in small hardside GUN
CASES. Mike has his bags, and watches a HANDGUN CASE be
collected by a muscled and buzz-cut DAD, who with his wife
corrals two YOUNG KIDS and snatches their bags onto a cart.

DAD
Jackson, I said don't sit on the
carousel. Go stand over there.

The Dad puts his gun case on his stack, turns away to grab a Dora the Explorer bag, and when he turns back -- the gun case is gone. He doesn't notice. And he doesn't see MIKE, slipping the gun case into the open top of his suitcase as he heads out of the airport -- stealing a STRAW HAT from someone and tilting the brim down to avoid security cameras.

INT./EXT. RENTAL CAR - DRIVING - DAY

Mike, squeezed into a compact economy car, drives out of Orlando. OUT THE WINDOW, we see store after store pass by. Gun store. Gun store. Gun store. Dollar Store. Gun store. ON the RADIO is an aggressive COMMERCIAL:

RADIO ANNOUNCER

*Do you like ACTION?! Do you like
to GAMBLE?! Get on a winning streak
with Jai-Alai, the world's fastest
game, with daily doubles, exactas,
trifectas --!*

Mike changes the channel. And as he drives, we CRANE UP to see where he's going -- the suburban snarl of Orlando giving way soon to miles of sunny grassland and trees and lakes, and far beyond, the Atlantic Coast.

EXT. PALM'S MOTEL - DAY

Coronado Beach is a cool little beach town, not upscale. Normal people live here, and on weekends and in the summer it's busy. Mike drives into the PARKING LOT of his motel, at the end of the main strip of town by the beach. An old place, single-story, worn by the sea and time. Faded aqua paint, shutters. Mike gets out of his car and looks at the SIGN for a beat: "Palm's Motel." He frowns at it.

INT. PALM'S MOTEL - OFFICE - DAY

Mike finishes checking in. The owner is an eager young Cuban immigrant and entrepreneur, BENNY (Benito), with a heavy accent. There's an American flag on the wall, and Benny's SON, 9, plays back in the office.

BENNY

Thank you my friend, here is your key, I am Benny, I am the owner, anything you need, just say it my friend, I make it happen.

MIKE

You could lose the apostrophe.

BENNY

The what?

MIKE

Palm's. It's possessive.

BENNY

(very proud)

Yes. It is my possession.

MIKE

Right. Then just a map.

BENNY

(brings out a map)

Yes, here you go, there are coupons on it for tours, you can go to NASA Space Pad, Shamu, you can go to Shelly's Oyster House and say Benny sent you, you get a side item, free. Potato. Cole slaw. Hush puppies. Chowder. Any side. Beans...

INT. MIKE'S MOTEL ROOM - DAY

The telephone is a dial phone. In aqua. Mike opens the GUN CASE that he stole. Inside, he finds a GLOCK 9MM PISTOL. And the BUSINESS CARD of the owner: a Durham, NC Deputy Sheriff named Ketcher. A cop's gun. Well, shit.

INT. ORLANDO AIRPORT - SECURITY - DAY

While his wife and kids wait, the angry Dad, Deputy Sheriff KETCHER, files a missing gun report with Security and watches SECURITY VIDEO of baggage claim. ON THE VIDEO we can spot Mike leaving the airport, but he has that straw hat on and his head angled away, so they don't notice him.

KETCHER

No other angles? So a law enforcement officer's sidearm just walks out? Jesus Christ I might as well be at Disney World already because this whole place is Mickey Mouse.

EXT. HIGHWAY - VARIOUS - DAY

On the PHOTO OF DELLY in her car, the one with a grocery bag on the seat beside her. The LOGO on the bag shows the top of an "A." TILT UP off the photo to see the same logo in real life -- ALBERTSON'S GROCERY. REVEAL Mike, outside his car beside a SPEED TRAP CAMERA, confirming this is where she was. Cars zoom by him as he takes out a Sharpie, and marks the MAP --

MATCH TO:

EXT. PALM'S MOTEL - BEACHSIDE DECK - DAY

-- ON THE MAP, Mike draws a rough possible BOUNDARY in which to start his search: between the grocery store, a bridge over the Indian River, and the Atlantic Ocean. REVEAL Mike is now sitting on a little deck behind the motel. Looking out at the ocean. The breeze is light. Mike looks out over dunes and seagrass to the beach, where a few cars drive slowly along, past lifeguard stands. The waves are rhythmic and hypnotic. He closes his eyes, breathes. After a bit --

OLD MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

See this?

Mike opens his eyes to see a tanned and possibly crazy OLD MAN with a metal detector, stopped in front of him. He's showing Mike a small GOLD COIN on a cord around his neck.

OLD METAL DETECTOR MAN

Found it right out there, not fifty yards away from where you sit. Washed up by hurricane Dorian. Probably churned up a whole ship. Pirate gold. Just sitting out there for the finding.

(leans in, serious)

And fuck Florida if it thinks it's getting a penny of it when I do.

Beat.

MIKE

Fuck Florida.

The old man nods, continues on his way. A beat... then Mike spots someone in the ocean. Way out. Swimming? No -- drowning! It's a WOMAN, flailing and struggling. Mike looks around -- and yells at a young woman Lifeguard down the beach.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Hey!

But right then, a big SUV rolls by the Lifeguard with MUSIC blaring from it, so she doesn't hear. The old metal detector man isn't far away, but he has headphones on, so he can't hear Mike, either. The woman is still drowning. So Mike has no choice -- he leaps off his deck, sprints across the dunes to the beach, takes off his pants, and swims out.

OUT IN THE WAVES, deep enough to drown in, Mike reaches the woman, and tries to grab her -- but she struggles. She's about 30, and drunk. She pounds at him as he manages to grab her and pull her toward shore.

DRUNK WOMAN

Lemme go! They took my babies...!

And now we realize that this is the same woman from the news video at the beginning. And we've caught up to that scene. As the drunk woman struggles against Mike trying to drag her in through the waves, her BATHING SUIT TOP gets pulled off --

DRUNK WOMAN (CONT'D)

Quit it, asshole...! Help!

But Mike presses on. Exhausted, he drops the topless woman on the sand. PEOPLE GATHER, and the young woman LIFEGUARD.

DRUNK WOMAN (CONT'D)

He tried to violate me!

LIFEGUARD

EMTs are coming, ma'am, lay still.

DRUNK WOMAN

He took liberties!

Mike spots the bikini top on the waves, and goes back out.

MAN IN CROWD

I'll get her a towel!

The man runs off, and his LITTLE GIRL, about 5, stays.

LITTLE GIRL

Baby shark.

LIFEGUARD

No, honey, she wasn't bitten by a shark, she just went out too far.

Now a few people are CAPTURING IT ALL on video.

DRUNK WOMAN

I was jus' tryin'a drown myself in the ocean to die after the fucking judge wouldn't give me my kids back and this asshole comes up an' pulls my fucking top off!

MIKE (O.S.)

I did not!

As Mike wades back with the woman's top, in thigh-deep water -- he's suddenly bitten by a SHARK! Not a big one, but still.

MIKE (CONT'D)

AH! God-DAMMIT!

LITTLE GIRL
(quietly)
Baby shark.

People react, as Mike limps onto the beach, bleeding from his leg. The Man comes back with a towel for the lady and Mike fights her for it, so he can staunch his blood.

LIFEGUARD
Be still! Put pressure on it!

As she tries to stop the blood, she sees it's flowing fast.

LIFEGUARD (CONT'D)
Yeah, I think it got an artery...

We hear SIRENS approaching down the beach, but Mike is losing blood, and as he starts to pass out the last thing he sees is the Old Metal Detector Man right over him, nodding.

OLD METAL DETECTOR MAN
Fuck Florida.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE UP ON:

INT. MIKE'S SUV - DRIVING - NIGHT

Mike's POV: Delly, riding in the passenger seat.

DELLY
Well, Mike, now you've done it.
(turns right to him)
Mike.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

Mike's eyes open. That was a dream; he's in the hospital, and grinning down at him is PATSY, 6 years younger than him.

PATSY
There he is. Hey, sleepyhead!

So cheery. Mike looks at her for beat, focusing. Then:

MIKE
Hey, sis.

PATSY
You never said you were coming home!

MIKE

Um. I'm not. A work thing. Here at the beach. I was gonna call you.

PATSY

Well, the doctor said if you can walk, you can go. Can you walk?

MIKE

I don't know. How did you know I was here?

As a young ORDERLY approaches, staring at Mike...

PATSY

From the news, silly.
(to Orderly)
Can I help you?

ORDERLY

I just wanted to see if it's true.

PATSY

No, it is not true, now go on.

The Orderly exits.

MIKE

Is what true?

PATSY

Oh, the internet was saying the shark bit your thing off. But it didn't, I checked. I didn't look or anything, I mean I asked the nurses.

MIKE

What do you mean, the internet?

PATSY

You don't know what the internet is? How much blood did you lose?

SLAM TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Mike, his thigh wrapped up, stands with his sister at her car in the parking lot, watching a VIDEO on her CELL PHONE. It's the same NEWS VIDEO we saw at the top, but now it goes all the way to Mike getting bit by the shark. Then BACK TO THE ANCHORS -- Kaitlynn Fox and a male co-anchor laughing.

KAITLYNN FOX (ON VIDEO)
Ouch! Guess that'll teach him!
(suddenly serious)
The hospital says the woman's
attacker is a local man, who police
are still hoping to interview.

Mike sighs. Police. Great.

EXT. PALM'S MOTEL - DAY

Patsy drives up, drops Mike off. He carefully gets out.

PATSY
So you're coming to dinner, right?
Can you drive over there okay?

MIKE
By tomorrow.

PATSY
And then how long are you here for?

MIKE
Not long, I hope. Gotta find a
lady, give her an insurance check.

She hides her disappointment. They hear THUNDER.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Guess rain's coming.

PATSY
Well, you know what they say, if you
don't like the weather in Florida...

MIKE
(smiles)
...Wait 15 minutes, and something
so terrible will happen you'll wish
it was 15 minutes ago when weather
was your biggest problem. See you
tomorrow.

He walks away, limping a little.

INT. MIKE'S MOTEL ROOM - DAY

As Mike enters his CELL PHONE RINGS. He checks it, answers.

MIKE
Hey, Moss.

INTERCUT:

EXT. MOSS'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

Moss is on the phone, cheerily talking while he walks around filling up hummingbird feeders with red sugar water.

MOSS

Mike! How's it going down there?

MIKE

Going okay.

MOSS

Yeah? Hey, I forgot to tell you -- bring me back a shot glass.

MIKE

A shot glass?

MOSS

I like to collect 'em. I get one from everywhere I go.

MIKE

But you didn't come here. I did.

MOSS

Forget it, then. Don't get me a shot glass. Fuck you.

MIKE

I'll get you a shot glass.

MOSS

Thank you. And hey, quick question --
(total shift to fury)
Why the FUCK did I not know you're
FROM FLORIDA?!

MIKE

(shit)
Someone's been on the internet.

MOSS

Yeah -- YOU, "local man!"

MIKE

I'm not, I'm from over an hour away.

MOSS

Oh well never mind then, Captain
Geography!

MIKE

Lot of people are from Florida,
Moss! Probably more from it than
in it, because it sucks.

MOSS

Yeah but I tell you Delly ran off
there, and you don't take the
chance to say oh that's very
interesting, I'm very familiar with
that location, the reason being
it's only a short one-hour drive
from where I got my first handjob!

Silence. Only sound is Moss breathing. Then, quietly:

MOSS (CONT'D)

You know why I think you didn't
tell me, Mike?

Uh-oh. Does he know? More silence. Then:

MIKE

No, Moss. Why?

Long pause. Mike's holding his breath.

MOSS

Because you didn't want me knowing
where your family is.

On the one hand, Mike is relieved it's not about Delly. On
the other hand -- he's pissed. Keeping calm:

MIKE

Why're you bringing up my family,
Moss?

MOSS

To emphasize that I would never do
anything to hurt them. That's all.
(pause)
So go do what we said. Bring Delly
back. And we're good.

Moss hangs up. He takes a jar of Vicks from his pocket,
inhales the fumes deeply, straight from the jar.

Mike hangs up. Feeling the danger and the pressure now.

INT. KINKO'S - NEXT MORNING

Mike uses a computer station to design a BUSINESS CARD. The
SIGN posted nearby says there's a 500-card minimum order.

EXT. KINKO'S - DAY

Mike comes out with a BOX OF BUSINESS CARDS. He tosses all but two of the cards in the recycling bin.

INT. CORONADO BEACH POLICE STATION - DAY

Mike enters. A quiet squad room. A few uniformed cops at desks. One -- ANDY BOONE, Mike's age -- calls over to him.

ANDY

Help you?

Mike crosses to Andy's desk. Andy doesn't look up.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Sorry about the smell.

(voice raised for another
cop to hear)

Officer Thompson saw fit to heat up
his catfish in the microwave.

The other cop pointedly ignores him.

MIKE

I'm the guy from the video?

(beat)

Getting bit by a shark?

Now Andy looks at Mike, glances down at Mike's penis area, then back up, his eyebrows raised in curiosity.

MIKE (CONT'D)

No, just the leg.

ANDY

Well, that's good.

Andy nods for Mike to sit. Mike does. He hands Andy his new Kinko's business card. Andy reads it.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Mike Valentine. As in Sonny
Valentine?

MIKE

My father.

ANDY

(friendlier)

No way! Sonny's the one that hired
me. Back when he was Chief.

MIKE

No kidding.

ANDY

How's retirement treating him?

MIKE

Um, I don't know, really.

ANDY

You don't know?

MIKE

Haven't seen him yet. Been busy.
You know. Getting bit.

ANDY

Well, when you do, tell him hi.
He's a good man.

MIKE

(beat; forced smile)
Yes.

ANDY

A real good man.

MIKE

You bet.

ANDY

So how'd his kid turn out to be
some kind of surf pervert?

MIKE

What? No -- I didn't --

ANDY

(calls to other cop)
Hey Tommy, we caught the beach
rapist!

MIKE

I didn't touch her! I mean I
touched her, but I was saving her
from drowning, and her top --

ANDY

I'm kidding. We talked to
witnesses, we know what happened.

MIKE

Oh. Good one.

ANDY

(studies Mike's card)
Up in Philly now, huh? What's an
"Independent Insurance Consultant?"

MIKE

It changes. Right now I'm tracking
down a beneficiary to give her a
settlement check.

ANDY

Name?

MIKE

Delly -- Delilah -- West.

ANDY

Don't know her. Sorry.
(hands Mike's card back)
But good news about your dick.

MIKE

Yes. It is.

Mike stands, exits. As he goes, a cop tacks up an ALERT
BULLETIN: a North Carolina deputy sheriff's gun was stolen.

EXT./INT. SHUTTLE BUS - ORLANDO - DAY

The rolling MARQUEE on the front of the bus says, "THEME
PARKS... WATER PARKS." Inside the bus we find Deputy
Sheriff Ketcher and his family. Ketcher fidgets, stressed.

KETCHER'S WIFE

Relax, please. You don't need your
gun, it's Disney World.

KETCHER

As an officer of the law, it's my
duty to carry my sidearm.

KETCHER'S WIFE

Can you just be normal today?

The bus comes to a stop at the Magic Kingdom. People start
to get out, including the Ketcher family. Ketcher's wife
turns back, sees the deputy isn't getting up.

KETCHER'S WIFE (CONT'D)

Oh my god you're gonna find a gun.

KETCHER

I'll meet you at the castle.

INT. PATSY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A normal and nice middle-class Central Florida home. A couple of U. of Florida Gators accessories here and there, but all otherwise tasteful. The TV NEWS IS ON.

Patsy is bringing dinner to the table, where Mike is seated, with Patsy's husband DEACON PITTS (earnest and friendly) and their daughter TYLER (14, smart, sarcastic), on her phone.

PATSY

Cube steak, I made it from Mama's old recipe, you used to like it. Don't eat it if you don't want to.

MIKE

Looks great, Patsy.

DEACON

Tyler, put your phone down.

TYLER

I need to find out the homework.

DEACON

You'll find out after dinner, put it down. We don't know if your Uncle Mike will pass through again in our lifetime, we need to experience it fully while we can.

PATSY

I know, it's like Halley's Comet or something! Deacon, will you turn that TV off? We have company.

As Deacon crosses to turn off the TV, we see the NEWS.

KAITLYNN FOX (ON TV)

...The sinkhole that swallowed up an Orlando truck rental location last month is finally stable, and the city says repairs can begin --

Deacon TURNS OFF THE TV. Comes back to the table.

DEACON

You hear about that, Mike? Trucks. This whole state's always about 30 seconds from going under -- no wonder people just take what they can from it while it's still here.

PATSY

I like that Kaitlynn Fox. She's not married, Mike, you still have a thing for news anchor ladies?

MIKE

Did I?

PATSY

Oh my lord, Becky Blankenship on Channel 2? You wrote and asked her to your junior prom. Tyler Pitts, put your phone down!

TYLER

Fine, I guess I'll just fail math!

DEACON

Are you failing math?

PATSY

You'd better not be failing math. You need math. Tell her, Mike.

MIKE

I don't know if she needs math or not.

DEACON

Of course she needs math. Look at me, what would I do without math?

MIKE

I'm not sure what you do anyway, Deacon.

DEACON

County surveyor. You need to know angles, and lines, geometry, measurements... A surveyor needs as much math as a NASA scientist.

PATSY

Well, that's just not true.

DEACON

Is so true. Without proper and precise surveying of boundaries, nobody would know where they leave off and someone else starts.

PATSY

Heck, I feel that way all the time.

Beat. They all eat for a moment.

TYLER

How come you're not a cop anymore?
You shoot an unarmed black man?

PATSY

Tyler!

DEACON

Go to your room. Right now.

PATSY

Don't send her to her room. That's
what she wants.

MIKE

No, I didn't shoot any unarmed
black men.

PATSY

(proudly)

Good for you. Tyler, your Uncle
Mike's not like that. He's one of
the good ones.

Her face tells us she loves and worships her older brother.
Mike avoids her look. He doesn't share her opinion of him.
Beat.

TYLER

So do you have to pee sitting down
now?

PATSY

It did NOT bite his thing off, I
TOLD you that! Go to your room!

Tyler grabs her plate and her phone, and happily exits.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA STREET - NIGHT

Detective Iris drives home from work, downtown. An
intersection is blocked by utility workers. The streets are
slick with sewage. A UNIFORMED OFFICER is directing traffic
through here, and comes over as Iris holds up her badge and
rolls down the window. She recoils at the smell.

UNIFORM

Yeah, sorry, Detective, sewer's
backed up, and it's even worse on
the side street. Can't go around
the shit -- gotta go through it.

Iris smiles wryly as she rolls her window up.

IRIS

Ain't that always the way.

EXT. PATSY'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Patsy is with Mike out back, sitting on a trampoline and sneaking a CIGARETTE as she chatters on.

PATSY

That Tyler. Man. I love her but it's like Good and Evil in one body. But that's everyone, I suppose. You ever think about moving home? Never mind. I wasn't gonna ask.

MIKE

(avoiding the topic)
Don't know what I'd do here, Pats.

PATSY

(laughs)
With your brains? It's Orlando -- you own a collared shirt, they'll make you the Mayor.
(beat)
That's okay, you've got your own life, but it would be nice to have someone on my side around here. Those two, Tyler and Deacon...
(re cigarette)
I know I shouldn't smoke, but this and a couple of Commandments are all that's stopping me from murdering them both.

She takes a drag. Lets it out. Beat.

PATSY (CONT'D)

Kidding.

Another long pause.

PATSY (CONT'D)

You weren't really gonna call, were you. To say you're in town.

MIKE

(beat)
Probably not.

PATSY

It's okay, I get it.

MIKE

It's not you. This insurance-check job... there's some urgency to it.

Patsy nods. A beat.

PATSY

You know, Michael, growing up with our dad, you probably formed a pretty good instinct when someone's lying through their teeth.

MIKE

Guess I did, yeah.

PATSY

Yeah. Me, too. So you might want to work on that "insurance check" story.

MIKE

Sorry.

PATSY

This woman -- she want to be found?

MIKE

Probably not.

PATSY

Criminal type?

MIKE

Criminal-adjacent.

PATSY

Well, then... maybe you should talk to a criminal.

She looks at him. Mike sighs, pained, knowing she's right.

EXT. RIVERSIDE DOCKS - DAY

The Intracoastal Waterway. A beautiful, natural stretch of river with mangroves and birds and sometimes a manatee or dolphin swimming by. A weathered fishing boat dock and a charming old bar called SONNY'S LANDING. Hosing down a fish-cleaning table is SONNY VALENTINE -- 70s, strong and manly, a pleasant and homey demeanor masking a ruthless heart.

Mike approaches, stops. Sonny sees him, stops. Beat. They haven't talked in years. No love lost either way.

SONNY

You can't be here for money. You know I never have that.

MIKE

Can't a boy just want to have a catch with his father?

Sonny grins. That's funny. Nods to his bar.

SONNY

Like it? I used to bring you here when it was RJ's. RJ passed of brain cancer, I bought it, to occupy myself in my retirement.

MIKE

"Retirement," is that what you're calling it? Cash business. Access to deep water. I guess the smuggling is just a hobby, now?

SONNY

(beat; little smile)

Despite numerous assaults on my reputation and my badge, at the end of the day the people of this community were less interested in academic notions of Right and Wrong than in feeling Protected and Served. I left the Department with honors, a full pension, and a plaque over a booth at the IHOP.

(beat)

I wonder if your "retirement" package was that generous.

Mike doesn't say anything, but we can see he's surprised his dad knew about his troubles.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I still keep my ear to the ground. Something about you falling afoul of ethical standards...?

MIKE

Stole evidence. Sold it to pay gambling debts. Got fired.

SONNY

Oh yeah. That was it.

MIKE

Must make you happy. The apple
falling right next to the tree.

SONNY

I do recall a parting soliloquy
comparing and contrasting our moral
foundations. But no, every father
wants his son to be better than him.
(beat)
Not just think he is.

Mike lets it go. Makes himself ask this favor.

MIKE

Your keen ear for the goings-on of
the community is why I'm here. I
need to find this woman out of
Philly. Delly West.

He hands Sonny copies of the traffic-cam pictures of Delly.

SONNY

Why's she down here?

MIKE

I intend to ask her that myself.

SONNY

What do you know about her?

MIKE

Not much.

SONNY

Too bad. A person's habits are
their weak spots. They can change
locations... but not who they are.

The jab is for Mike, but Mike ignores it, thinking about
Delly. He turns and walks away, with an idea.

MIKE

Let me know.

SONNY

(calling after Mike)
Hope we can still have that catch.

Sonny grins, but we're CLOSE ON MIKE, remembering --

INT. MIKE'S CAR - PHILADELPHIA - NIGHT (**FLASHBACK**)

Mike and Delly ride in silence, post-sex. Delly peers into the visor-mirror and puts her hair and makeup right again.

DELLY

How'd you guess what I wanted for my birthday?

MIKE

Thought we weren't going to do that anymore.

DELLY

Yeah well, neither of us got here on good decision-making skills.
(closes the visor mirror)
I need a coffee.

MIKE

I need to get you home. If Moss gets home first, he'll ask why.

Beat. Delly doesn't like being told no.

DELLY

He talks about you, you know. His own cop. Like a golden retriever that fetches a stick when he's told.

Mike ignores her. After a beat...

DELLY (CONT'D)

(a little bark)
Woof.
(beat)
Woof.

Finally, Mike rolls his eyes, searches the street ahead, and PULLS OVER in front of a coffee shop. He nods: there.

DELLY (CONT'D)

Not this one.

She nods ahead a half-block to a COFFEE BEAN & TEA LEAF.

MIKE

Why not support a local business?

DELLY

Because I want that one! Jesus, do we have to debate climate change too, or can I get a fucking coffee?

Mike sighs, shakes his head, and drives up the half-block to the Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf. Okay? Delly pulls out her wallet, finds a Coffee Bean debit card, and hands it to him.

DELLY (CONT'D)

*Medium extreme ultimate vanilla ice
blended with two shots of caramel.
It's off-menu.*

Delly is a woman used to men doing what she wants.

MIKE

That's not even a coffee.

She just looks at him, card out, waiting. Finally, Mike grabs it, gets out, and goes to get her stupid drink.

INT. KINKO'S - DAY (**PRESENT**)

Mike designs another business card. On the computer screen, we see him on the COFFEE BEAN & TEA LEAF page. He copies and drags their LOGO to his business card creation.

EXT. KINKO'S - DAY

Mike comes out, tosses away all 500 cards except for one.

INT. COFFEE BEAN & TEA LEAF - CORONADO BEACH - DAY

Mike enters, and is met by a young female EMPLOYEE.

EMPLOYEE

Yes, sir, what can I make you?

MIKE

*Medium extreme ultimate vanilla ice
blended with two shots of caramel.*

EMPLOYEE

Oh. Okay...

The Employee goes to make the drink.

MIKE

I don't really want it.

EMPLOYEE

Sorry?

MIKE

Anyone else order that drink lately?

EMPLOYEE

Yeah. A lady.

Nearby, the MANAGER (ANGIE) hears, and comes over.

ANGIE THE MANAGER
Sir? Why are you asking?

Mike hands her his new Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf business card.

MIKE
I'm from Corporate. The customer
who ordered that drink complained
she experienced racial profiling.

EMPLOYEE
What?! She wasn't "racially
profiled" -- that lady's white!

MIKE
(holds a hand up)
We don't know what color a person's
skin is at Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf.
Whether it's Vanilla, Mocha, or
Pumpkin Spice -- they're customers.
(to manager)
Can I see your security video?

INT. COFFEE BEAN & TEA LEAF - BACK OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

ON A MONITOR is VIDEO from a security cam that Mike fast-
forwards as the Employee and manager watch.

EMPLOYEE
There she is!

STOP. There's Delly. Handing her card to the Employee.

EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)
See? She's... vanilla. Like I
said.

Mike fast-forwards a bit more, to where Delly is picking up
her cup at the other end. FREEZE. He taps a key and ZOOMS
IN ON THE CUP. In marker is written, "JOAN."

MIKE
That's the name she gave? Joan?

EMPLOYEE
JoAnne.

MIKE
It says Joan.

EMPLOYEE
It says JoAnne.

MIKE
(beat, okay then)
JoAnne it is.

ANGIE THE MANAGER
Are we okay, now?

MIKE
If she comes in again, call me.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA STREET - NIGHT

The street is wet with sewage. Traffic cones and barriers block off an open MANHOLE where a Public Works truck is parked. We DROP below the street, to --

INT. SEWER TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Two SEWER WORKERS in breathing masks and hazmat suits make their way with FLASHLIGHTS through the waist-deep sewage. They reach a junction, a NARROW PORTAL, less than four feet wide, where they discover the reason for the blockage:

A CRUTCH is wedged diagonally across the pipe. Just past it is the matching one, wedged the other way, to form a cross blocking half of downtown's sewage.

One worker yanks the first crutch free -- then beyond it... sees something that makes his eyes go wide. Distressed, he claws his mask off, just in time to throw up in the water.

INT. BREAKERS BAR AND BURGERS - NIGHT

An old beachside burger joint. Out the dark front window, beyond the waves hissing up the sand, we can see the lonely lights of shrimp boats, like eyes watching us. Mike is at the bar, vainly trying to get the bartender's attention.

MIKE
Excuse me, can I get --

The bartender walks away, ignoring Mike. What the hell?

BENNY (O.S.)
They're mad at you.

Benny, the Palm's Motel owner, takes the stool beside Mike.

MIKE
Who is?

Benny jerks his head -- look around. Mike sees various locals giving him steely and disapproving glances.

BENNY
For the shark.

MIKE
They're mad at me for getting bit?

BENNY
Bad for tourism. Like that movie.
Tiburón.

MIKE
Tiburón?

Benny makes a huge chomping action with his teeth.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Jaws.

BENNY
Yeah. What do you want to eat?

MIKE
Just trying to get a burger.

BENNY
(gets bartender's attention)
Tim! Hey. Two burgers for me,
okay? And two beers. For me. I'm
very thirsty.

The bartender gives him a look, but puts in the order.

MIKE
(to Benny)
Thanks.

BENNY
(quietly, concerned)
So... the doctors. They put it
back on?

He glances sympathetically toward Mike's groin.

MIKE
It wasn't... Sure. They were
amazing.

BENNY
Good.

The bartender brings their beers. They clink glasses.

BENNY (CONT'D)
And what is your line of working?

MIKE

Insurance.

BENNY

(voice low)

Yes? So people pay you, or you'll
burn down their shop?

MIKE

What? No.

BENNY

Where I come from, that's insurance.

MIKE

No.

BENNY

Ah. And what brings you here, if I
may ask?

MIKE

(long beat; troubled)

What brings me here. I wish there
was an easy answer to that. You?

Benny leans in, seriously, privately.

BENNY

In the world, there are currents.
Always moving, flowing, crossing.
We may want to choose our way...
but in the end these larger forces
take us where we need to be.

Beat. Mike stares at Benny like he's a shaman.

MIKE

Well. I have to say, your
philosophy beats any answer I have.

BENNY

Philosophy? No, that's how I got
from Cuba.

Ah. Mike nods. They toast to that.

INT. MIKE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Mike is standing in front of the old air conditioner unit,
trying to cool off. The stream of air is barely a breeze.
He hits the only other button. The stream blasts like a jet
engine, nearly knocking him over.

The PHONE RINGS, startling him. The ancient jangling phone on the bedside table. Mike turns off the a/c, and answers.

MIKE
(into phone)
Hello?

SONNY (V.O. ON PHONE)
I got a lead on that lady. Come by
in the morning if you want.

MIKE
Dad? How did you know where I'm
staying?

But Sonny's already hung up.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA STREET - LATE NIGHT

The street is now a taped-off CRIME SCENE. Open manhole, cop cars, crowd control, lights. Uniforms and crime scene techs are around what we assume is a body. But when we push closer we see -- BODY PARTS, laid out. Gunked-up from being in the sewer, but pretty recent. No head, so far.

CRIME SCENE TECH (O.S.)
Got another!

Everyone moves aside, and a hazmat-suited TECH carries in a HUMAN LEG. When he puts it down with the others and wipes off some sewage... we see it has a plaster CAST on it.

EXT. DOCKS - MORNING

Mike approaches Sonny's Bar. Before he enters, he notices an older man (RAY-RAY), down the dock hosing off a boat. Mike recognizes him. Mike looks down the dock other way and sees another man, BUZZ, also older, unloading boxes of seafood. Mike knows this guy, too. He heads into --

INT. SONNY'S BAR - CONTINUOUS

The decor is homey, rustic, and Florida-nautical; a huge FISHING NET is strung across the ceiling, with big round FLOATS along it here and there. Sonny's behind the bar, restocking it. Mike walks up.

MIKE
I saw Ray-Ray and Buzz out there.

SONNY
Yes, I was able to offer needed
employment to a couple of loyal and
retired police officers.

MIKE

You put your old crew back together.

Sonny just stares back, not offering anything.

SONNY

You wanted my help, as I recall.

He jerks his toward a booth near the back -- to where Officer Andy Boone sits, finishing his breakfast.

Then Mike notices a collection of SOUVENIRS for sale behind the bar. Among them are SHOT GLASSES. They have an alligator on one side, and say FLORIDA on the other.

MIKE

Can I buy one of those?

SONNY

The glass?

Sonny picks up a shot glass, slides it across to Mike.

SONNY (CONT'D)

From me to you. A present.

MIKE

Thanks. You're almost caught up.

He pockets the glass, heads back to Andy's booth, and sits.

MIKE

Officer.

Andy finishes his eggs. Then slides the PRINTOUTS Mike gave his Dad over to Mike.

ANDY

To be clear: I'm a stickler for procedure. What's right and what's not. Privacy. Miranda. Ethics. So on.

Pause. As if Mike's supposed to answer.

MIKE

Understood.

ANDY

Out of respect for the Chief, who after all gave me my start, I had some men look out for this BMW. And here's where it is now.

He holds out a slip of paper with an address on it. Mike reaches for it. Andy pulls it back.

ANDY (CONT'D)

But first? And maybe it's the unreliable haze of memory that's told you everyone down here is rubes and morons? But that "insurance check" story just embarrasses you.

MIKE

Agreed. Truth is, I'm investigating privately. And my employer is concerned for the woman's safety.

ANDY

So am I.

Andy's eyes stay locked on Mike's. Mike is sincere.

MIKE

What I can assure you is that she's safer being found by me... than by anyone else who'll try if I don't.

Long beat... then Andy hands over the address.

EXT. SONNY'S BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Sonny stands outside the front door, squinting at Mike walking away. After a beat, he calls to his guy down the dock.

SONNY

Ray-ray! Come here a second.

EXT. USED CAR LOT - DAY

One of those independent lots, with little colorful flags strung up, and prices written in big white numbers on the windshields. Mike is looking at Delly's white BMW, prominently displayed for sale out front near the road.

A friendly SALESMAN approaches. Mike is friendly back.

SALESMAN

(re BMW)

Just came in. You wouldn't believe the mileage. As new as any new car you can buy.

MIKE

Why would someone give it up?

SALESMAN

You never know. Sometimes people
get into something over their head.

MIKE

I hope that's not the case. Mind
if I look inside?

With a gracious gesture, the Salesman opens the door, and
Mike slides into the driver's seat.

SALESMAN

You can see, nearly new.

Mike is looking around as if casually, but not. He opens
the glove compartment. Checks the door pockets.

MIKE

Did she buy something else, I hope?
Be hard to be without a car, here.

SALESMAN

Yeah, I put her into a nice 2016
Lexus. Everyone's a winner.

Mike feels under the passenger seat -- and pulls out TWO
PARKING TICKETS. Both for expired meters. The address of
both violations is the same: FLAGLER STREET.

INT. PALM'S MOTEL - MIKE'S ROOM - DAY

The shot glass is on the dresser, now. Mike's on his
laptop, finding the address on the tickets on Google Maps.
But the wi-fi is super slow. Opening the page at dial-up
speed. His CELL PHONE RINGS. Iris. He answers.

MIKE

(into phone)

Hey.

INTERCUT:

INT. POLICE STATION - PHILADELPHIA - DAY

Iris is at her desk. Her partner Dunney is nearby, but
occupied. She keeps her voice low.

IRIS

(into phone)

Gotta ask you about something.

MIKE

Okay.

IRIS
You heard about the dismembered
body that turned up in the sewer?

MIKE
"What a waste?"

IRIS
What?

MIKE
Oh. I thought you were telling a
joke. No, I didn't hear.

IRIS
Someone dumped a body down a storm
drain. They brought me in on it.

MIKE
You're in Homicide now?

IRIS
No. The vic ID'd as Gil Franco.

Silence. Mike feels himself go cold, a little.

IRIS (CONT'D)
Mike?

MIKE
Yeah.

IRIS
Gilbert Franco. You know him?

MIKE
Yeah. He was in the Program.

IRIS
I know. His ex-wife said.

MIKE
How'd he die?

IRIS
Still waiting. But being chopped
up didn't help any.
(pause)
She said he owed Moss Yankov.

Mike doesn't respond.

IRIS (CONT'D)

Which answers my involvement. You want to tell me about yours?

MIKE

Moss isn't a killer.

IRIS

I know you need to think so. But I'm trying to help you out, here.

MIKE

(wry smile)

I remember using that line on suspects and other idiots.

IRIS

Mike. Come in and talk to me, let's get you on the right side of this.

MIKE

I can't. I'm not in Philly.

IRIS

You left town?

MIKE

I didn't leave town. I'm not in town.

IRIS

Where are you?

MIKE

Florida.

IRIS

Florida. Your family okay?

MIKE

For now. Just trying to keep it that way.

Pause. Iris is worried for him. She glances at Dunney, turns away so she's just talking to her ex-husband, quietly.

IRIS

Why are you in Florida, Mike?

MIKE

Same reason as everyone is, I guess: it seemed like a good idea at the time.

IRIS

(beat)

I don't like how you sound. Did you see your father?

MIKE

Yes.

IRIS

(shit)

Listen to me. I know it's your worry but you're not him, okay?

MIKE

I know what I'm not, Iris. What I am, though... that's still an open question.

IRIS

Then come back. You can't figure out Right from Wrong in a place that doesn't recognize the concept.

ON MIKE'S LAPTOP the page finally opens. At the address where Delly got her tickets is a bar: GATORS TAIL LOUNGE.

MIKE

When did people stop caring about punctuation?

IRIS

What?

MIKE

Gotta go. Talk to you later.

He hangs up. Iris looks concerned.

EXT. GATORS TAIL LOUNGE - NIGHT

The street sign at the corner says FLAGLER. Mike approaches.

INT. GATORS TAIL LOUNGE - NIGHT

Mike walks up to the bar. He picks up a napkin with "GATORS TAIL" on it. Holds it up to the BARTENDER.

MIKE

I know a place with an extra apostrophe if you want one.

BARTENDER

What?

MIKE

I'm supposed to meet JoAnne, but I don't remember what place. Does she come in?

BARTENDER

Yeah. Usually around nine.

MIKE

(nods)
Creature of habit.

Mike heads out.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - LATER THAT NIGHT

A 7-11-type place across from the Gators Tail lounge, with a full view of it. Mike's at the counter, keeping an eye on the lounge as the CLERK hands him coffee.

CLERK

You a gambling man?

MIKE

(startled)
What?

The Clerk slides a scratch-off lottery ticket to him.

CLERK

Scratch-it ticket. The man before you left it. Already paid for.

The Clerk puts a QUARTER on the counter so Mike can scratch the ticket. Mike looks at it. Looks at the display of tickets, so many chances to win... The pull is so strong.

MIKE

Not gambling if I didn't pay, right?

He scratches off the ticket with the quarter. Doesn't win.

Then, THROUGH THE FRONT WINDOW, Mike SEES DELLY drive up in a 2016 Lexus, and park on the street. Mike hides behind a Doritos display, watches Delly get out -- she doesn't put any money in the meter, of course -- and go into the lounge.

EXT. GATORS TAIL LOUNGE / INT. MIKE'S CAR - NIGHT

Later. Down the street some, Mike sits in his rental car, staking out the lounge. He finishes his coffee, bothered now by Iris's call. A beat, then he dials his phone.

INT. MOSS' HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moss' CELL PHONE rings on the bedside table, where it sits next to a little jar of Vicks. A beat, then Moss comes in from the bathroom with a little toothpaste still on his lip, and grabs the phone.

MOSS
(into phone)
Yeah?

MIKE
(on phone, filtered)
Did you kill Gil Franco?

MOSS
What?

INTERCUT:

INT. MIKE'S CAR - SAME

MIKE
Or have him killed?

MOSS
What the fuck? Why would you ask me that on the phone?

MIKE
Easy question. Answer it.

MOSS
Is this line tapped?

MIKE
No.

MOSS
Are you working with the cops?
Jesus, are you a cop?

MIKE
Yeah, Moss, my entire disgrace and downfall from the Philadelphia Police Department was an elaborate trick, just to snare you. Fuck off.

MOSS
You fuck off.

MIKE

We had a deal. Guys pay up and no one gets hurt, and definitely not killed.

Moss nervously tries to be very careful and talk in code.

MOSS

Okay, look... any "contracting," or "consulting" work, between us, like for services of certain entirely legal natures... inasmuch as they put the, what do you call, onus...

MIKE

Wow, you sound even more guilty trying not to sound guilty. Is this your first phone call?

MOSS

(pissed off)

I don't know about anyone getting killed, asshole! No.

Long pause. Mike knows he's lying.

MIKE

Moss. If I bring Delly home -- is she safe?

MOSS

Safe? Yeah, she's safe, what the fuck? Do you know where she is?

Long pause.

MIKE

I'll bring her back. But if hear that anything happened to her, if she breaks so much as a nail, I swear to god I will serve you up.

MOSS

Serve me up? Are you kidding me?

MIKE

Like whipped cream on a goddamned sundae.

(beat)

Now I have to pee.

MOSS

What?

MIKE

Drank coffee. Rookie mistake.

MOSS

(lip curled, pissed)

Mike -- next time you call me, it
better be with news.

Moss hangs up. Mike hangs up.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Mike hurries up to the counter and the Clerk, keeping an eye outside at Delly's car.

MIKE

Bathroom key?

CLERK

Customers only.

MIKE

I bought coffee. You sold it me.

CLERK

You left.

Beat. Whatever. Mike takes a packaged MUFFIN from a display at the counter, sets it down firmly in front of the Clerk, and slaps down three dollars.

CLERK (CONT'D)

(nodding at SIGN)

Two for three dollars.

Mike takes a second muffin. Holds his hand out for the key.

CLERK (CONT'D)

The men's room is busy.

MIKE

Then give me the lady's room key.

CLERK

You're not a lady.

MIKE

You know what that is? Gender bathroom discrimination. If you do not have a gender-neutral bathroom on the premises, you are required by law to honor my bathroom of choice. So give me the fucking key, or get ready to be famous.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - MOMENTS LATER

ON THE WOMEN'S ROOM DOOR. We hear a FLUSH. Then Mike comes out. He looks out the store's front window -- and SEES DELLY crossing from the Gators Tail lounge to her car with a good-looking YOUNG MAN. Laughing, pretty drunk, they get into her Lexus. Shit. Mike tosses the women's room key to the Clerk as he passes the counter... darts back to take his two muffins... and dashes out the door.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Delly is turning her car around, and nearly catches Mike in the headlights as he crosses the street. But he shields his face and she drives past him without noticing, the Young Man in the passenger seat beside her.

Mike gets to his car, jumps in, heads off the way she went.

EXT. STREETS/INT. CAR - NIGHT

Following Delly's car. Mike loses sight of it... dammit!... then he spots it, and follows at a distance.

At a RAILROAD CROSSING, the LIGHTS start flashing, and Delly has to stop. Mike worries he's going to have to come up too close behind her. But suddenly she guns it and darts across the intersection. The gates come down. Now Mike is stuck.

Or is he? As the TRAIN ROARS CLOSE, Mike's gambler self kicks in and he stomps the accelerator and goes for it as the TRAIN HORN BLASTS, weaving around the gates and barely making it as the train thunders through.

There's that adrenaline rush he's been missing.

EXT. STREETS/INT. MIKE'S CAR - NIGHT

Mike cruises slowly along in an old neighborhood not far from the beach. Has he lost Delly and the guy? Then he spots a weathered old sign: "SALT-AIR VACATION BUNGALOWS 1BR/2BR." There's an arrow pointing up an old road.

EXT. SALT-AIR BUNGALOWS - NIGHT

A scattering of separate old bungalows with screen porches, rustic rentals strewn through the sandy pines. FIND MIKE easing his car quietly up the dirt road... until he spots Delly's car outside Bungalow #9. A light is on, inside the bungalow. She's in there with the young man.

Mike backs slowly away until he's out of sight, and waits.

IN HIS CAR, Mike settles in. Opens a muffin to eat. Sits quietly, bothered. He opens the glove compartment and takes out the STOLEN HANDGUN. Rests it on his lap. Sits there in his car, thinking. Off Mike --

INT. MIKE'S SUV - NIGHT - DRIVING (**FLASHBACK**)

Mike drives Delly home. Same as before, except now she has her Coffee Bean drink. Staring out the window. A beat --

DELLY
You ever want out?

MIKE
Of what?

DELLY
The life you're in. Not like, end it. But change it.

MIKE
(wry smile)
What, and give up all this?

She looks at him.

DELLY
Keep some of it. Leave the rest.

He looks over at her. She's serious.

MIKE
Weren't you just talking about our poor life choices?

DELLY
So let's change our luck. Find a highway. And we get the hell out.

"Change our luck." To a gambler, words hard to resist. He looks at her. She's looking right back. Beat.

MIKE
I need to pay off what I owe, first.

DELLY
Because if he gets his money, he'll be okay with you taking his girl?

MIKE
Because I need to.
(long pause)
Then maybe Chicago?

DELLY
Not Chicago.

MIKE
Why not Chicago?

DELLY
Just can't. Somewhere warm.

MIKE
(enjoying it now)
Hawaii?

DELLY
Too far. Florida?

MIKE
Nope.

DELLY
Why not?

MIKE
Never going back there.

Delly stares at him, oddly.

DELLY
You're from there?

MIKE
Yeah. Why?

DELLY
Just never thought of it as a place
people come from.
(beat)
My dad always talked about it like
some heavenly reward. You get good
grades this year we'll go to
Florida. I get a nice bonus we're
going to Florida. In my head it
got built up into this dreamland.
Pirates. Treasure. Exotic beasts.
I even read that the circus would
go down there to spend the winter.

MIKE
I'm not sure it ever left.

Beat.

DELLY
What's it really like?

MIKE

(thinks)

You know how in Philly, who your family is, where you live, where you went to school, it all matters? The best thing I can say about Florida -- Florida doesn't give a shit.

Delly looks out the window again as they drive.

DELLY

Sounds like we'd get along just fine.

Then PRE-LAP: GUNSHOTS!

INT. CAR/EXT. BUNGALOW - **RESUME**

Mike is startled from the memory by TWO SHOTS. They came from over where Delly's bungalow is. Mike grabs the handgun, checks the ammo, gets out. As he scurries toward the bungalow, somewhere ahead he hears a SCREEN DOOR SLAM.

Mike hurries along in the shadows, gun raised, and reaches Delly's bungalow. Tries the front door. It's unlocked. He enters --

INT. DELLY'S BUNGALOW - LIVING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Mike creeps in, through the screen porch... into the living area. Delly's clothes on the floor. He heads to --

INT. DELLY'S BUNGALOW - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mike enters carefully... and finds DELLY. Naked under the tangled sheets.

And dead. Very dead. Fresh BLOOD everywhere. Soaked into the sheets, spattered on the wall behind the bed. No young man in sight. No gun.

Mike stares. Shaken. He reaches for her, to see if there's a sign of life left... but in the distance: SIRENS. Shit. Someone called in the gunshots. He has to get out of here.

Looking around, he spots Delly's purse, finds her CELL PHONE in it -- and as he's taking it, he spots something else down in the purse:

A small, old GOLD COIN. Exactly the same as the one the metal detector guy had. Mike picks it up, and the LIGHT FLASHES off it like a hypnotist's trick... but now the SIRENS are getting closer, so Mike takes the coin and phone and runs out.

EXT. BUNGALOWS - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Running back to his car, Mike passes an OLDER WOMAN in the bedroom window of her bungalow, looking out to see what the shots were. Mike doesn't know he's been seen.

EXT. BUNGALOWS - STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Mike scrambles into his car, tosses the handgun under the seat, starts the car, turns it around, and speeds away.

He passes a TRUCK parked by the road, without noticing. In the truck is Sonny's man, Ray-Ray. He watches Mike go. Then picks up his cell phone.

INT. SONNY'S BAR - SAME

Behind the bar, Sonny listens on the phone, then hangs up.

INT. MIKE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Mike paces. Back and forth. Upset.

MIKE

SHIT!!!

(beat)

Shit shit shit shit!!!

There's THUMPING on the wall from next door. Mike picks up a shoe and hurls it HARD against the wall. No response.

He takes Delly's phone from his pocket, along with the GOLD COIN. Sets them on the dresser. Idly spins the gold coin, and when it stops spinning it falls beside the souvenir Florida SHOT GLASS. The gator with its hungry mouth open.

He knows he can't put it off. He takes a breath, and slowly punches a number into his phone. Waits. Then:

MIKE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Moss?

(beat)

I have news.

JUMP TO BLACK.

END OF PILOT