

INTIMATE ENEMY

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. FIELDS -- DAY

Blue sky stretches endlessly over a mixed terrain of prime farmland, open prairie, and boreal forest.

A creek in spring flood ribbons through farmers' fields stubbled with the golden stalks of last year's grain.

SUPER: "NORTHERN ALBERTA, CANADA"

Scattered through the fields, oil pumpjacks bend and lift like giant insects feeding.

Stacks that flare natural gas, seven stories high and thin as phone poles, emit thirty-foot flames that lick the sky.

A Honda Civic moves alone along the prairie road.

A police squad car follows at a distance, getting closer, its red lights strobing.

It reaches the Civic, which pulls over. The squad car pulls in behind. On the door is the crown insignia of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

SERGEANT GUY BELANGER, 50, gets out of the squad car. Ironed duty uniform of grey and blue. A stern Gallic face.

He approaches the driver's door of the Civic.

At the wheel, LIV GARDNER, late twenties, lowers her window. Her down-market clothes and modest car can't dim her aura of corporate elegance. But in her gaze is the clear-eyed watchfulness of a girl who grew up poor.

BELANGER

Liv Gardner?

He has a faint Quebec French accent, but the authority in his manner says he considers this chunk of the West his turf.

LIV

I'm going by Palmer.

BELANGER

Liv Palmer it is.

He hands her a slip of paper.

BELANGER

A website -- user name and password.
The background you wanted.

LIV
 Thanks. Next, I need to meet
 Wainwright.

Belanger considers this.

BELANGER
 Get the job with the lawyer?

LIV
 You're looking at his new paralegal.

BELANGER
 His office assistant is Cheryl Loeb.
 She and her parents are Wainwright's
 neighbors. They babysit his daughter.

LIV
 Daughter?

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF SPIRIT CREEK -- DAY

Liv's Civic crosses flat prairie grassland. The paved road
 runs parallel to a railroad track. Ahead lies a small town.

A weathered grain elevator stands on one side of the tracks.

On the other side is the town, where no building is taller
 than the grain elevator.

A sign reads: "SPIRIT CREEK, 2,300."

EXT. SPIRIT CREEK -- DAY

Liv's Civic slowly cruises Main Street. It's not long, but
 it is wide.

About a dozen dusty cars and pick-up trucks are angle parked
 in front of unpretentious businesses: drugstore, cafe, ladies'
 wear, video store, hardware store, bingo hall.

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE -- DAY

The office is drably utilitarian. Fluorescent lights, a
 drooping fichus plant, filing cabinets heaped with folders.

Liv stands before a messy desk, listening to the ruffled man
 who sits behind it: O'HARA, the town's only lawyer.

O'HARA
 My wife will bless you. She can't
 wait to start her maternity leave.
 (calling)
 Cheryl?
 (to Liv)
 Cheryl will show you the ropes.

CHERYL LOEB, 18, pokes her head through the door. An open-faced farm girl, she regards Liv with cheerful curiosity.

INT. OFFICE RECEPTION AREA -- DAY

Liv sits close to Cheryl behind Cheryl's desk, both of them examining a spreadsheet on the computer screen.

CHERYL

Mister O'Hara said you live in Calgary. I was there once.

LIV

The Stampede?

CHERYL

Yeah, kinda for tourists. But I loved the city.

LIV

Hey, let's go one day. I'll show you the sights.

Cheryl beams at her.

INT. TOWN HALL -- NIGHT

Over two hundred townspeople sit in two blocks, an aisle down the middle.

Most men wear jeans and baseball caps. Their murmuring is that of an uneasy mob. These people are angry.

The object of their anger is Sergeant Belanger, sitting at the head table. Uniformed officers stand at the exits.

Beside Belanger sits STAN SOMMERVOLD, 45, a florid man, beefy like a middle-aged quarterback.

Liv and Cheryl, arriving late, squeeze in among people standing at the back of the hall.

A few people in the crowd are on their feet, challenging Belanger.

YOUNG WOMAN

I'm afraid to put my daughter on the school bus. It goes right past Wainwright's road.

LABORER

Bastard spikes the access roads with roofing nails. I've had over twenty flats. Who pays me for all them tires, all that downtime?

INDIAN RIG HAND

I been out of work over a month with
all this sabotage. Why can't you
dumb Mounties nab this guy?

Belanger listens stoically, like a man being stoned.

SOMMERVOLD

(to the rig hand)

Ron, let's keep the questions polite.

Liv leans in to Cheryl.

LIV

Who's he?

CHERYL

The mayor. Owns an oilfield
contracting company. Half the guys
here work for him.

A young man saunters up the aisle and hands the mayor a
document. He's DALE SOMMERVOLD, about 20. Tight jeans,
muscled build, hair that's bad-boy messy.

Someone whistles and there's a smattering of applause. Dale
grins at the admiration as he strolls back to his seat.

Liv turns to Cheryl again, a question in her eyes.

CHERYL

Dale Sommervold, the mayor's son.
Hockey hero.

SOMMERVOLD

(scanning the document)

Looks like most of you signed the
petition.

A few more people jump to their feet.

REALTOR

You bet I did. I can't sell a single
damn house. Buyers know this
criminal's on the loose.

FARMER

If Wainwright comes onto my land,
can I shoot him?

BELANGER

Of course not, Hank.

SHRILL WOMAN

French faggot!

There are nervous titters of laughter.

SOMMERVOLD

Enough, Dora!

An officer ushers two men down the aisle.

MICKEY HAVELOCK, mid-thirties, has the groomed good looks of a tennis star, and the easy-going affability of man who's comfortable being a leader.

PAUL HAVELOCK, a couple of years older, has an equally affable manner, but with the subdued air of an academic.

Sommervold brightens as he sees them.

SOMMERVOLD

Folks, let's give a warm welcome to Phoenix Resources. Mister Cormick Havelock and his brother Paul.

The crowd's applause is spontaneous and loud.

LABORER

Go, Phoenix!

Laughter ripples through the hall. Mickey smiles graciously and waves.

He and Paul sit down at the head table beside Sommervold and Belanger.

A woman in the front row stands up. NOREEN LOEB, mid-forties, has a sun-weathered face and an armload of documents.

NOREEN

Mister Havelock, I have a question about your new gas plant. Do you still intend to have pipelines stream sour gas right by the edge of town? We all know the gas is as toxic as cyanide.

ABEL LOEB, mid-forties, a careworn man in farmer's coveralls, gets up beside his wife.

ABEL

What assurance can you give us that if a pipeline ruptures, residents won't be poisoned, like my boy?

A respectful hush falls over some of the crowd, but there are many groans, a sound that says: "Here they go again."

Liv looks a question at Cheryl. Cheryl shrugs, embarrassed but also proud.

CHERYL

My mom and dad.

SOMMERVOLD

Abel, Noreen, this here's an information meeting about the sabotage. You're out of line.

The crowd cheers.

The Loeb's sit down, tight-lipped. Cheryl looks cowed.

Seizing an opportunity, Liv grabs Cheryl's hand and leads her down the aisle.

Mickey suddenly gets to his feet.

MICKEY

With the mayor's permission...

Sommervold makes a deferential gesture of approval.

Mickey comes around the table, eliminating the barrier between him and the crowd.

Liv and Cheryl reach the front row where the Loeb's sit as outcasts, flanked by vacant seats.

Liv ushers Cheryl in, then sits beside them, sending a clear message of solidarity. Liv's seat is on the aisle.

Noreen and Abel watch her in surprise.

CHERYL

(whispering)

This is Liv, the new paralegal.

LIV

(whispering)

I hear you're protesting sour gas. I'd like to help. I'm good at legal research.

Abel gratefully shakes Liv's hand.

The crowd watches them in sullen silence. Stan Sommervold glares at Liv.

MICKEY

Ladies and gentlemen, I appreciate these questions -- all of them. This is your town, and I respect every opinion.

There's grumbling from the crowd. Mickey lifts his hands in mild protest.

MICKEY

Respect -- that's the only way to work together. If we do, we can build a wonderful community for you and your kids. Nothing's impossible if there's a will to harvest the abundance of resources the good Lord's blessed you with. But, together we face a challenge -- this evil-doer who's threatening your jobs and security. I'm working closely with Sergeant Belanger and your mayor, and--

A door slams. People turn in their chairs. A woman gasps.

TOM WAINWRIGHT walks in. Early thirties, fit and powerful, he wears worn work clothes and a battered Stetson with a hawk's feather stuck aslant in the band. The intensity of his glance could silence barking dogs.

He stalks up the aisle, heading straight for Mickey.

The crowd watches in stunned silence.

Tom reaches Mickey and stops. Tom's hand whips around to his back pocket and he pulls out an envelope.

TOM

Your blood money. Shove it up your ass.

He rips the envelope in two and throws the pieces in Mickey's face.

Mickey flushes in fury. He lunges.

Tom blocks Mickey's arms, deflecting the attack with the skill of a barroom brawler.

Officers rush in and pull them apart.

Two officers restrain Tom, pinning his arms to his sides.

Mickey hauls back to swing at Tom, his fist a white-knuckled rock.

Liv jumps up. She springs between them.

LIV

No!

She's facing Mickey, shielding Tom.

Mickey stares at her in surprise.

Paul and Belanger are suddenly there, pulling Mickey away.

Tom throws off the two officers. He turns and stalks down the aisle. The door slams closed.

Every eye in the hall turns back to Mickey. And Liv.

EXT. MOTEL -- NIGHT

Rain pelts the lamp-lit sign that reads: "SIDE TRAX MOTEL."

Beside the motel, railroad tracks stretch away across the rain-darkened prairie.

INT. MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Rain clatters against the window.

The room is dark except for the bluish light of a computer screen.

Liv sits in bed tapping at her laptop.

ON THE LAPTOP SCREEN

a photo appears, a publicity shot of a woman of about 30, standing at an easel that holds a painting of a hawk.

Belanger's recorded voice on the computer file adds commentary.

BELANGER (V.O.)

Joanna Wainwright, Tom Wainwright's
late wife. An artist of some repute.
Died last year after a long illness.

BACK TO LIV

who studies the woman's face with interest.

EXT. MAIN STREET -- NIGHT

Hunched in the rain, Liv unlocks an office door.

INT. O'HARA'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Crossing the dim reception area, Liv closes the window blinds. Then switches on the lights.

She opens a filing cabinet drawer and pulls out a folder.

A thud from the inner office surprises her, and she quickly replaces the file.

Cautiously, she opens the inner office door.

Cheryl lies on her back on the couch, her blouse undone. Dale Sommervold lies sprawled on top of her.

Caught, the lovers stare at Liv in fear, like third-world suspects in a police interrogation.

Liv can't hide her surprise.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE O'HARA'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Liv hunches in the rain as she walks down the deserted street. Cheryl catches up, holding her jacket over her head.

CHERYL

Please, Liv. His dad would kill him
if he knew. And my folks...

Liv stares at her in mock bewilderment.

LIV

Whose dad? I have no idea what you're
talking about.

Impulsively, Cheryl plants a grateful kiss on Liv's cheek. She runs back to the office door and disappears inside.

EXT. NATURAL GAS PROCESSING PLANT -- NIGHT

A thirty-foot orange flame lashes at the windswept rain. The flame's roar is as loud as a jet.

It blazes atop a natural gas flare stack, one of five that stand like sentinels around the gas processing plant.

Supermarket-size, the plant is two-stories of concrete and steel, bristling with feeder pipelines and flare stacks.

Razor wire fence surrounds the site. The sign on the open gate reads: "PHOENIX RESOURCES INC. TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED."

Under stark yard lights, a dozen construction workers in rain slickers labor at building a new wing to the plant. The wing is near completion.

The plant faces a paved road, but on all other sides the pine forest rises to the stormy sky.

EXT. FOREST EDGE -- NIGHT

A rifle barrel juts out through pine boughs.

The rifle scope's cross-hairs slowly range over the construction workers at the plant.

Tom Wainwright holds the rifle. Rain dribbles off the brim of his Stetson with the slanted hawk feather.

The rifle's cross-hairs range on, passing workmen on a scaffold, then tracking a pipeline, then rising to a window.

Through the window is a wall with gauges.

Tom fires. The window shatters. The workmen freeze.

The cross-hairs snap to another window. Another shot explodes the glass.

Then to a third window, a third shot.

Workmen drop tools, run to the parking lot, scramble into pick-up trucks. In the plant, sirens wail.

The trucks race through the open gate to the road.

Tom lowers the rifle. Looks at his watch. Looks at the plant, waiting.

The rear of the plant explodes in an orange ball of flame.

INT. HOTEL SUITE, GRANDE PRAIRIE -- DAY

The suite is comfortable but far from luxurious.

Paul stands, grimly looking through forensic photos of the bombed gas plant.

Mickey paces, haranguing on his cell phone.

MICKEY
 (on the phone)
 Fuck your orders. This is war,
 Belanger. If you don't get more
 men, I will.

The door opens. Liv hurries in.

LIV
 (to Paul)
 How bad? Anyone hurt?

PAUL
 No, thank God.

He hands her the plant photos. She flips through them, appalled at the damage.

LIV
 Bastard.

PAUL
 And I was going to ask Mickey for
 something to tide me over. Marlene's
 going to need a C-section, but I
 canceled the insurance.

LIV
 Oh, Paul.

MICKEY
 (on the phone)
 Tomorrow, you hear?

Mickey snaps his phone shut in disgust. Turns to Liv.

MICKEY
 I don't want you here anymore. Go
 home to Houston.

LIV
 (dismayed)
 What?

PAUL
 He's right, Liv. This has gone beyond
 nails on the roads. Wainwright's
 dangerous.

MICKEY
 I swear I'd kill the son-of-a-bitch
 if--

LIV
 But I'm in. The Loeb's trust me.
 All I have to do is get near
 Wainwright, get his trust--

MICKEY
 One of the security guys can--

LIV
 No, Mickey, me. I know what to look
 for, evidence that'll hold up in
 court.

MICKEY
 I don't want you near this maniac.
 End of discussion.

Liv is about to protest further, but holds back. Changing tack, she drops the photos on the desk with a grim look.

LIV
 I just talked to New York. No
 extension -- the consortium says
 that's final. We have three weeks.

Mickey and Paul look at her, stunned.

Paul sinks down onto the sofa and groans.

Mickey slams his fist on the desk in frustration.

MICKEY
 And the Chinese money?

Liv shakes her head.

LIV
They're afraid Wainwright will just
hit the plant again.

Paul leans forward, elbows on knees, head down, like he's
trying not to be sick.

PAUL
Sweet Jesus. This is the end.

MICKEY
No. The three of us built this
company, and the three of us will
keep control--

PAUL
Sure, until the money men take us
over for twenty cents on the dollar.

MICKEY
Christ, the plant can process ninety
million mcf a day. We could pay off
the loan ten times over.

LIV
If we could be pumping in three weeks.
Which we can't.

For a long moment they're all silent, lost in the hopelessness
of the crisis.

Mickey takes a deep breath.

MICKEY
Bullshit.

Liv and Paul look at him, curious but skeptical.

MICKEY
Cut some corners, Paul. Get back on
line quick and dirty before the loan's
due. Once we're pumping, I can coax
the Chinese money.

Paul looks uncomfortable. Liv even more so.

PAUL
What corners?

MICKEY
You're the engineer, you decide.
I'll work the carrots and sticks --
cut the mayor in.

Liv holds up her hands to stop him.

LIV
 I can't hear this. Not and stay
 in-house counsel. Anyway, Mickey,
 you're forgetting Wainwright. As
 long as he's out there...

Mickey looks at her, and in his silence is a furious
 acknowledgment that he is powerless against their enemy.

Paul stands up.

PAUL
 I better get to the plant.

Paul leaves. Mickey pick up the photos.

Liv comes up to him from behind. Lays her cheek between his
 shoulder blades. Grips his biceps. Presses herself against
 his back.

He drops the photos, turns, and pulls her tightly into his
 arms. She wraps her arms around his neck. Their kiss is
 deep and passionate.

She pulls back first.

LIV
 October's so far away. Let's get
 married now.

MICKEY
 And break my mother's heart? Darlin',
 she's invited three hundred people.

Liv nods, accepting.

LIV
 I know. It'll be lovely.

She kisses him even more passionately.

EXT. HOTEL LOBBY -- DAY

Liv and Paul stand on the curb, about to go their separate
 ways.

PAUL
 I wouldn't have given in.

LIV
 You don't love me.

PAUL
 Who says?

LIV
 Your wife.

Paul chuckles.

She kisses his cheek.

LIV
Give her my love. She's got a sweet
man.

PAUL
Liv. Be careful.

EXT. TOM'S FARM -- DAY

Liv's Civic stops at the entrance to the farm lane.

Beside it stands a mailbox with hand-painted black lettering that reads: "WAINWRIGHT."

She takes a breath, steeling herself.

Then drives up the long dirt lane. On both sides, flocks of sheep graze on windswept pastures.

She pulls up in front of the house and gets out, nervously eyeing the place.

Part timber, part stone, with a wide weathered porch, the house is the work of several generations. Though it's seen better days, it has a look of defiant permanence.

Liv sees a scruffy border collie playing with something the size of a baseball, bunting it with its nose.

But it's no ball, she realizes. It's a lamb's skull. She can't suppress a shiver.

The dog bounds to her. She stiffens. The dog sniffs her. Then trots off to resume its game.

She climbs the porch steps.

A windchime clangs above her head -- it's made of rust-pitted screwdriver shafts, the handles cut off.

She takes a breath, steeling herself. Knocks.

No answer. She opens the door, pokes her head in.

LIV
Hello?

Silence.

INT. NATURAL GAS PROCESSING PLANT -- DAY

Mickey, Paul, and Stan Sommervold, all in hard hats, walk through the damaged control room, side-stepping construction debris and laborers.

Nail guns thud.

Power saws whine.

SOMMERVOLD

Twenty-one days?

PAUL

Twenty.

SOMMERVOLD

Mister Havelock, I got men working round the clock. But the building code...

Mickey slaps him on the back, a pal.

MICKEY

Stan, you get me back on line in time, there's a bonus. Condo in Hawaii sound good?

Sommervold's torn, but interested. Very interested.

SOMMERVOLD

Just pumping? That I can do.

INT. TOM'S LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Liv ventures into the room.

It looks surprisingly pleasant. Wood plank floors, colorful braided rugs, a woodstove, a homey clutter of newspapers.

A wood carving of a hawk in flight hangs from the ceiling.

There's a large painting of an elk in snowy woods, a powerfully beautiful image. It's signed: "JOANNA WAINWRIGHT."

LIV

Anybody home?

Silence. Except for a very faint lilt of music -- a country fiddle. Following the sound, Liv goes through to the

KITCHEN

where dishes are stacked messily in the sink.

The fiddle music is coming from a radio.

A window looks out over fields.

The kitchen table is littered with papers, documents, bills. Liv pokes through them, searching for anything incriminating. She reaches for a letter.

TOM (O.S.)
Looking for me?

Liv spins around.

Tom stands in the doorway. His Stetson with the feather shadows his face.

LIV
Yes.

TOM
Why?

LIV
I hear you're the saboteur.

His face is stony.

LIV
Okay, bad joke. Actually, I'm doing
legal research on sour gas.

His eyes narrow, appraising her.

LIV
For Abel and Noreen Loeb. Their
group. I'm documenting the
environmental concerns of landowners.

A back door slams.

MOLLY
Daddy!

MOLLY WAINWRIGHT, 5, comes tearing in. She's in a frayed sun dress.

She clutches a scrawny kitten which she lifts eagerly for Tom to see.

MOLLY
His eyes opened up!

The kitten squirms in panic and clamps its claws on Molly's bare arm. She whimpers at the scratches, suddenly scared.

Tom lifts the kitten off her arm and flips it over in his palm. On its back, the kitten relaxes, instantly subdued.

With his other hand he runs a finger gently down the kitten's belly.

Pleased, Molly copies him, stroking the downy tummy.

Liv can't help staring at Tom, admiring his trick, and surprised at his tenderness.

TOM
It's Liv Palmer, right?

LIV
Word gets around fast.

TOM
When you make friends with the Loeb's,
yeah.

He holds out his right hand.

TOM
Thanks. You surprised the hell out
of Havelock.

Liv hesitates, then forces herself to shake his hand.

INT. TOM'S PICK-UP TRUCK -- DAY

Tom and Liv, with Molly between them, drive across a field, bumping over gopher holes.

Tom drives fast, but his elbow rests casually on the lowered window.

Liv, though, has to stiff-arm the dashboard for balance.

Molly, balancing a coloring book on her knees, calmly peels paper off a crayon.

Woods back the field, and three flare stacks rise above the trees, their orange flames lashing the sky.

Liv jots details in a notebook.

LIV
Those flares burn all the time?

TOM
You can read a newspaper at midnight.
There's another by my west pasture.
Phoenix flares off raw gas a stone's
throw from my flock.

LIV
Noreen said there was damage to your
house?

TOM
Seismic testing. That's how the oil
and gas boys explore -- drill holes
and drop dynamite. The shock waves
show the reserve pools.

LIV
Sounds dangerous.

TOM
One explosion cracked my foundation.
Fractured the aquifer, too, so sour
gas got into the water table. That
aquifer supplied the water in my
taps.

LIV
It's enough to make anyone want to
fight back.

Tom ignores the invitation to open up further.

He pulls up near his fence line beside a

POND

where he and Liv get out. Molly stays in the truck, crayoning
in her book.

As Tom and Liv reach the pond's edge he motions her to stay
back a few feet.

He pulls matches from his pocket and lights one, then squats
down and holds the flame an inch above the water.

It catches fire. Small teeth of flame flicker over a surface
area as big as a swimming pool.

Startled, Liv steps forward to watch. Water, burning.

It lasts a few seconds. Then dies out.

TOM
Elk drank here, and deer. Then
Phoenix used it as a dump for their
waste. Now, anything that drinks
this water gets sick. Kills them,
little by little.

LIV
Ever think of just packing up and
leaving?

TOM
This is my home, not Havelock's. He
should get the hell out.

LIV

Sure, but companies like his often make farmers a good offer. Is that what you tore up at the meeting?

TOM

Just returning it.

LIV

Why?

TOM

Would've told me something I don't want to know.

She looks at him, a question in her eyes. He meets her gaze.

TOM

My price.

It's an answer Liv didn't expect.

He starts back to the truck. She follows.

Liv notices a clearing cut into the edge of the woods like a bay in a lake.

Inside it is an odd shape: a mass of sticks hanging from the trees in a formation as big as a car.

LIV

What's that?

EXT. CLEARING AT THE WOODS' EDGE -- DAY

Molly, giggling, tugs Liv by the hand, pulling her closer to the mass of sticks.

Suspended from high branches, there are hundreds of sticks, each about the size of an arm.

They form a shapeless jumble.

Tom stands at his truck and leans back against the hood, arms folded, watching Liv with a smile in his eyes.

Led by Molly, Liv approaches the stick mass with a skeptical look.

Is something hidden inside? No, there are spaces big enough to see right through.

Molly suddenly stops.

And Liv does too as she sees it: the sticks form a man.

He's stupendous. Arms slightly spread, legs planted wide, he looks out over the woods and fields, alert and vigilant. He's not arty, but primitive and earthy.

It shocks a thrilled laugh from Liv.

Tom nods, smiling. Molly jumps up and down in glee.

MOLLY

My mom made him. He's the Watcher.

Liv takes a few steps sideways.

The Watcher blurs.

She steps back to the right spot, and again the sticks perfectly align.

TOM

People come from all over. Finland. Chile. A guy from Germany did a documentary.

LIV

It must have taken her months.

TOM

Two years. For her, that was fast.

Pleased by her obvious interest, Tom beckons her down a path into the woods.

EXT. CLEARING INSIDE THE WOODS -- DAY

The grassy clearing, rimmed by woods, is a peaceful mini-meadow alive with spring wildflowers and butterflies.

In the center is an apple tree frothed with white blossoms.

Liv strolls with Tom past the apple tree.

Molly skips behind them, picking wildflowers.

Tom leads Liv to a white picket fence.

Surrounded by grass, it looks odd, not fencing anything in or out. It's just a house-long stretch of slats.

At one end the slats gleam with glossy paint. The middle section is weathered and blistered, and a bird's nest bristles between two slats.

At the other end the paint is almost completely worn away, exposing rough gray wood. There's a jagged broken slat, and another has fallen into the grass.

TOM

She started this about ten years ago, just a half dozen pickets. She'd add a few more every year, paint each new section white. Never touched up the old sections.

LIV

What was she trying to say?

TOM

Time taking its toll? We can't fix what's in the past?

LIV

Yet we keep on building anew.

Tom gives her an intense look.

TOM

People take the answers they need. Guess that's what art does.

He looks back down the path.

TOM

For me, this land has the answers.

LIV

To what?

He bends and picks a shoot of grass. Rolls it between his fingers.

TOM

Ever hear of the 'eat wild' farming movement?

LIV

Sorry, I'm a city girl.

TOM

But you've heard of organic.

LIV

Sure.

TOM

Take that up a notch. Animals raised on pasture grass only, no grain feed, so no herbicides. Rotational grazing, so no need for chemical fertilizers. No indoor crowding that brings disease, so no need for antibiotics. It's taken me years to get this land drug-free.

LIV

So that's why you won't leave.

He tosses the grass. Looks at her.

TOM

I won't leave Joanna.

LIV

Ah. Her art works.

TOM

Her. Phoenix killed her. She's
buried right here.

(pointing to the tree)

That apple tree's her headstone.

EXT. DRILLING SITE -- DAY

Forest surrounds a gas wellhead that's boarded up and roped off.

A sign on the boarding reads: "PHOENIX RESOURCES INC. KEEP OUT."

Two crew trailers stand in the overgrown grass.

The forlorn aspect of the trailers, plus the boarded-up wellhead, indicate that this well has been abandoned.

A yellow SUV -- a shiny new Expedition XLT Sport -- is parked between the trailers. Beside it is a dusty old Dodge.

INT. TRAILER -- DAY

Dale Sommervold closes the door behind him and scans the trailer. A desk and filing cabinet stand with their drawers open and empty.

Three crew cots with bare mattresses lie at the far end. On one is a jumble of army-issue type blankets.

A dozen empty beer cans litter the floor.

The blanket nest stirs. A head pops out. It's Cheryl. She giggles.

Dale grins and leaps onto the cot. They wrestle and tumble to the floor together, laughing.

As they sit up, leaning back against the cot, Dale grabs a beer can tab off the floor. He takes Cheryl's left hand and slips it over her ring finger.

DALE

Don't say I never give you nothin'.

She swats him playfully. He grins.

Dale turns serious. He pulls from his pocket a jeweler's ring box. Hands it to Cheryl.

DALE

See if this fits better.

Cheryl's eyes widen. She opens the box. A diamond ring.

She melts, deeply moved. But she doesn't take out the ring. Anxiety clouds her face.

CHERYL

We'd have to leave.

DALE

You said you wanted to.

CHERYL

But my folks ... Oh Dale, not yet.
I can't.

She hands back the box. Disappointed, Dale takes it. Cheryl throws her arms around his neck, almost in tears.

CHERYL

I hate this stupid war.

They kiss with all the fervor of frustrated love. Then start pulling off their clothes as fast as they can.

INT. MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Liv lies asleep. Through the half-open curtains, moonlight silvers the room.

The door crashes open.

Liv sits up with a gasp, clutching the sheet to her.

Three men burst in, flashlight beams slicing the room. They wear black ski masks and carry crowbars.

They swarm in, smash Liv's laptop computer on the desk, smash her bedside lamp.

A burly man rips the sheet off Liv.

His flashlight beam rakes her body.

Wildly, she tugs at her skimpy sleeveless tank top to cover herself. She wears no panties. Cringing, she draws her legs up tight.

Another man yanks out drawers and dumps the clothes. Rips all the clothes from the closet and hurls them.

The third man upends a gasoline jerry can and sloshes the contents over the scattered clothes.

The burly man leans close to Liv's ear.

BURLY MAN
Get out of town, cunt.

Suddenly they're gone.

The room is dark.

The open door creaks on one hinge.

Liv scrambles out of bed.

She winces as her bare foot grinds something sharp -- a shard of the broken lamp.

Tires squeal.

Through the door Liv glimpses a truck's red tail lights.

She stumbles to the door.

In the darkness, she gropes for the light switch on the wall.

A hand slams her arm against the wall.

Liv screams.

A man's bulk fills the dark doorway.

Liv struggles in panic to break his grip on her wrist. She frees her arm, but as her hand passes the light switch the man snatches her by the waist.

He yanks her backwards against him so hard she gasps in terror. He holds her tight.

TOM
Don't. Gas fumes. One spark, this
room goes up like a bomb.

He lets her go, and Liv spins around, astonished to see it's Tom.

His eyes drop to her thin tank top. It barely covers her.

A blush fires her cheeks.

She looks desperately at her clothes scattered across the floor, all soaked with gasoline.

Tom takes her hand and pulls her outside.

EXT. MOTEL -- NIGHT

Tom pulls off his denim jacket and wraps it around Liv's shoulders.

She thrusts her arms in the sleeves and tugs the front closed. It's far too big for her, a comfort to her embarrassment.

Two rooms down, a door opens and a shirtless man in track pants steps out, blinking.

TOM
(to the man)
Call the fire department. And don't
go in that room.

Tom takes Liv by the hand and leads her toward his truck. It's across the parking lot, slewed sideways in his haste.

Liv stumbles over the asphalt, wincing in pain.

Tom looks at her foot. It's bleeding profusely. Her face is white.

Tom lifts her in his arms and carries her to the truck.

EXT. LOEBS' HOUSE -- NIGHT

A modern but modest farm house. The barn looms, a black shadow beyond the yard lights.

Tom carries Liv through the open door. Noreen holds the door open for them.

INT. CHERYL'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

The stuffed animal collection and ruffled bed-skirts on the twin beds give the atmosphere of a little girl's room.

Liv sits on the edge of a bed, still shaken.

Cheryl, on her knees, bandages Liv's foot.

Noreen fusses with the bathrobe they have dressed Liv in.

Liv looks out the window by the bed. Down in the yard she can see Abel and Tom talking beside Tom's truck.

EXT. LOEBS' HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Tom opens his truck door. Abel's behind him.

ABEL
Who called?

TOM
Don't know. They just said...

Reluctant to go on, he climbs in behind the wheel.

Abel peers through the open window.

ABEL

Said what?

TOM

(quoting)

Your girlfriend's leaving town. In a box.

INT. CHERYL'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Noreen picks up Tom's discarded denim jacket.

NOREEN

Now you make yourself right at home. You can stay just as long as you want.

LIV

Noreen, thank you... so much.

NOREEN

Don't be silly. You're one of us.

Noreen folds Tom's jacket with sharp vigor, an outlet for her anger.

NOREEN

Stan Sommervold and his hooligans have a lot to answer for.

Cheryl throws Liv a nervous glance.

INT. HALLWAY, LOEBS' HOUSE -- NIGHT

A night-light barely illuminates the dark hall.

Favoring her good foot, Liv limps toward the bathroom.

The bathroom door opens, startling her.

Abel pushes a wheelchair out. In it sits a young man.

The young man stares up at Liv with vacant eyes and slack jaw, drooling.

Liv stiffens in revulsion.

INT. LOEB'S KITCHEN -- DAY

Sun streams in the windows.

The breakfast table is mostly cleared, leaving jars of jam and cartons of juice and milk.

Cheryl washes dishes in the sink. Liv dries them.

Wiping a plate, Liv watches Noreen hold the screen door open as Abel pushes the young man in his wheelchair onto the porch.

CHERYL

He's a year older than me, and a lot smarter. Got accepted at med school. He was working to make his tuition -- roughneck on a sour gas rig. There was a bad upset. The gas knocked him down.

The screen door closes.

Liv watches in pity as Abel wheels his incapacitated son into the shade.

LIV

Will he get better?

Cheryl shakes her head.

Liv's cell phone in her pocket rings. With a furtive glance at Cheryl, she sets down the plate and pulls out the phone.

LIV

Hello?

INT. O'HARA'S OFFICE -- DAY

Liv stands in front of O'Hara's desk.

LIV

Sorry, but... it's family.

O'HARA

No worries. We can bumble along for two days.

EXT. GAS PROCESSING PLANT -- DAY

Mickey strides across the parking lot to intercept Stan Sommervold.

Sommervold ambles toward the main door, taking a swig from a can of Coke. Seeing Mickey, he smiles.

Mickey reaches him and whacks the can from his hand. Coke splashes Sommervold's shirt and the can clatters on the asphalt.

MICKEY

There's just one enemy. And it's not the legal secretary.

Sommervold gapes at him, pawing Coke off his shirt.

STAN

But she's been visiting him. Helping
the Loeb's. I thought--

Mickey kicks Sommervold's leg out from under him. Sommervold
collapses, sprawling.

MICKEY

Don't think.

Sommervold struggles onto his hands and knees. Mickey kicks
him in the gut.

MICKEY

There's just one enemy, and I want
him driven out.

EXT. HOUSTON -- DAY

Steel and glass office towers gleam in the sun.

SUPER: "HOUSTON, TEXAS."

EXT. PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTION -- DAY

A taxi glides up a driveway graced by stately weeping willow
trees and bountiful flower gardens.

The taxi pulls up in front of a white building pillared and
porticoed to resemble the mansion of an Old South plantation.

Liv gets out of the taxi.

INT. GREENHOUSE -- DAY

A moist and ferny Eden of orchids and bougainvillea.

A white-uniformed NURSE is on her way out.

NURSE

Twenty minutes until her session,
Ms. Gardner.

Liv nods. She stands beside a worktable laden with orchids
where CHRIS GARDNER, 23, pale and fragile looking, sits
opening a gift-wrapped box.

Chris's movements are slow and deliberate, as though requiring
an energy she doesn't have but is trying hard to muster.

She lifts out girl-gifts: a gauzy scarf, a bar of Belgian
chocolate, a lavender sachet, dainty butterfly earrings.

Looking up at Liv, she manages a wan smile.

CHRIS

Santa Liv. In April.

Liv bends and gently kisses Chris's cheek.

LIV
May, actually.

Chris looks away, flustered that she didn't know.

Liv pulls a chair close and sits, and starts fitting one of the butterfly earrings into Chris's pierced ear.

Chris picks up the other earring and toys with it, admiring its iridescent wings.

CHRIS
Remember the hummingbird?

She looks into Liv's eyes, deadly earnest.

CHRIS
Why would they show us a life we
couldn't have?

Liv takes the earring from her and fits it in Chris's other ear.

LIV
They thought it was a treat. A day
with hummingbirds instead of
cockroaches.

CHRIS
But we couldn't live there. Never.

LIV
Would you like to?

Chris nods.

LIV
Then I'll buy you a farm.

CHRIS
With horses, please. And a collie
dog. And pheasants.

Liv smiles, enjoying the game. But only for a moment.

LIV
If only... Chris, I haven't taken
any salary for three months. None
of us have.

Chris looks bewildered, and suddenly scared. Though the real world doesn't always make sense to her, Liv's anxious face does.

Chris hugs her. Tears glisten in her eyes.

CHRIS

Don't leave me, Livvy.

Liv holds her close, forcing back her own tears with difficulty.

LIV

Get better, okay? So you can come home with me?

INT. OFFICE -- DAY

Sitting across the desk from an administrator, Liv scans an invoice, trying not to show her alarm.

LIV

I see the cost of her treatments has gone up, too. Could I... I mean, could we defer these fee increases, just for a couple of months?

ADMINISTRATOR

Ms Gardner, if you want to reconsider--

LIV

No, no. She's getting better all the time.

EXT. MEADOW -- EVENING

Black smoke curls into the sky.

Orange flames shiver across a mound of burning, charred shapes. Though indistinct, they bear a sickening resemblance to small bodies.

Liv closes her car door and approaches the burning pyre.

Tom kneels beside the fire, his back to Liv, bending over something she can't see.

The fire crackles so loudly he didn't hear her arrive.

Liv's mouth opens in horror.

In the fire are the charred corpses of over two dozen sheep.

Tom is kneeling over one that's alive, but barely, its neck matted with blood.

LIV

My God, what happened?

Tom's head jerks up to her.

Her breath catches at the sight of his face, streaked with dried blood, dirt, and sweat. He looks exhausted.

He holds a needle and thread. His hands glisten with blood.

TOM
Dogs ripped their throats. I've
been patching up the ones that made
it.

He points toward the next field, beyond his fence, where a
half dozen cages stand empty.

TOM
Somebody brought them here and let
them loose.

He wipes his forehead with his grimy coverall sleeve. His
expression is hard as he resumes the awful task of suturing.

Despite herself, Liv is moved to sympathy.

LIV
Tom, what can I do to help?

He looks up at her, his weary face softening.

TOM
(nodding at his truck)
See to Molly? I'm almost done.

INT. TOM'S TRUCK -- EVENING

Molly, upset and scared, sits hugging her knees.

Liv slides in beside her.

Molly looks up, anxious.

Hesitantly, Liv puts her arm around the little girl's
shoulders.

Crayons and a coloring book lie open on the seat. Liv points
to a half-colored picture of a dinosaur.

LIV
Nice turkey.

Molly looks startled, then laughs.

MOLLY
No. A dinosaur.

Liv offers her a trio of crayons.

LIV
Which color do you think his tail
should be?

Molly picks green, and starts crayoning.

As she works she snuggles close, resting her head against Liv.

Touched, Liv gently fingers Molly's hair.

Liv looks through the windshield at Tom as he carries the traumatized sheep to the rear of the truck.

In the rearview, she can see him hefting the sheep onto the flatbed. He lifts out a shovel.

He trudges back and shovels dirt onto the smoking pyre. The dirt smothers the flames.

INT. MOLLY'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Molly lies in bed, her eyelids drifting shut. Liv sits on the bed's edge, closing a children's storybook.

Faint radio music drifts up from downstairs -- a Country & Western singer crooning a ballad.

Molly's eyes close.

TOM (O.S.)
She likes you.

Liv glances over her shoulder.

Tom stands in the doorway, cleaned up. His hair is damp from showering, and he's in fresh jeans and T-shirt.

TOM
She misses her mother.

Moved, Liv smooths the sleeping child's hair back from her forehead.

Tom comes in. Liv fusses with Molly's blanket, not wanting to look up at him. He's standing very close to her.

Downstairs, the radio segues into a rollicking fiddle tune.

TOM
Dance?

He takes Liv's hand and pulls her up.

His arm wraps around her waist and he sweeps her out to the center of the room.

Liv is astonished -- they're dancing a silly quick-step to the music!

He's surprisingly good, like Fred Astaire doing a Country & Western send-up.

She's flustered, but Tom holds her so tightly against him she can only follow.

Then, suddenly, he lets her go, looking a little flustered himself.

TOM
Noreen's afraid I'll end up a cranky
old hermit. So, tell her we danced.

Pulling herself together, Liv tugs down her T-shirt, appalled to find her nipples as hard as nuggets.

It's not lost on Tom.

LIV
We have to talk.

INT. TOM'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Tom fills the kettle at the sink.

Liv stands in the doorway.

LIV
Everyone knows you're behind all the
sabotage. You just haven't got caught
yet.

He says nothing. Shuts off the tap.

LIV
This war has turned ugly, Tom, and
someone's going to get hurt. Or
worse.

He sets the kettle on the stove. Pulls a teapot down from a cupboard.

TOM
You take cream and sugar?

LIV
You can only lose. Everyone who
fights back does. Believe me, I've
looked through all the law books.
You cannot win.

Tom wheels around. He dumps the teapot in the sink and stalks out.

Liv closes her eyes in frustration.

INT. HOTEL SUITE, GRANDE PRAIRIE -- NIGHT

Mickey sits on the couch, tapping at a laptop computer.

Paul stands looking out the window.

Liv paces between them.

LIV
Sommervold sent in those dogs, didn't
he. Mickey, this has got out of
hand. Wainwright has a little girl,
for God's sake.

Paul turns from the window.

PAUL
She's right. We can't be hurting
people.

LIV
Or breaking the law. We have to do
this within the law.

Mickey focuses on his screen. Only the set of his mouth
betrays his anger.

MICKEY
Light crude's up four, gas up seven.
I mean to get us what's ours.

EXT. LOEBS' GARDEN -- DAY

Abel wheels a wheelbarrow of compost down a garden row toward
Noreen, who's on her knees with a trowel, digging.

Liv kneels beside Noreen and opens a package of seed peas
for her.

NOREEN
My mother used to say, 'Plant three
rows of peas. Peace of mind, peace
of heart, peace of soul.'

Noreen and Abel share a small smile.

Liv admires their affectionate companionship. She looks
around, taking in the gentle beauty of the day. Swallows
wheel overhead in the vast blue sky.

She sees Cheryl on the porch, holding a glass with a straw
for her brother in his wheelchair. A troubling sight for
Liv.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

A truck with crew cab barrels along a gravel road that cuts
through dense pine forest.

INT. TRUCK -- DAY

The young driver sips from a coffee thermos. He's relaxed, but concentrating on the road.

Mickey sits beside him, tapping at a BlackBerry.

Paul, in the back, smiles as he hands a photograph over the seatback to Mickey.

Mickey chuckles at the picture.

MICKEY

What is he now, four?

PAUL

Six. Some uncle you are.

The engine backfires. Then again.

Mickey shoots the driver a puzzled glance.

MICKEY

What the hell?

The driver is clearly bewildered. The backfiring accelerates into fierce, irregular bangs.

MICKEY

Pull over. Shut it off.

The driver turns the wheel, heads for the shoulder.

The banging under the hood now sounds like something demented.

Paul snatches the fire extinguisher from its clamp.

EXT. ROAD -- CONTINUOUS

The truck veers toward the ditch.

The hood explodes.

INT. TRUCK -- DAY

From beneath the dashboard, flying shards of metal razor into the driver. He screams, clawing at his bleeding crotch.

EXT. TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

The truck rolls once, then crashes to a halt.

Mickey crawls out of the cab, his face bleeding.

Blinking in shock, coughing, he scrambles on hands and knees back toward to the others.

The driver's eyes are closed. Blood seeps from his mouth. He's unconscious or dead.

Paul gasps for breath, in terrible pain, struggling to free himself.

Mickey reaches out to him.

Paul gropes for Mickey's hand.

Mickey grabs Paul's arm and pulls.

Paul screams in agony.

The engine bursts into flame. It knocks Mickey back, breaking his grip on Paul.

He scrambles back to Paul, desperate to free him, but the engine fire is so hot he has to shield his face from the heat.

He can't get close enough.

Sparks shower Mickey's hair. He bats them off.

His sleeve starts to smoke. He can't stay.

He falls on his back and crab-crawls away.

A final scream from Paul.

The truck explodes in a massive ball of flame.

EXT. CEMETERY, HOUSTON -- DAY

Black-clothed mourners ring an open grave in which a casket lies strewn with flowers.

Paul's eight-months pregnant wife, blank-eyed in grief, stands gripping the hand of her young son. Other Havelock family members stand behind her.

Beside her is Mickey. His face is cut and bruised and haggard with grief.

Paul's wife tentatively raises her free hand, trembling, as though to touch Paul in the grave.

Mickey, torn apart by her gesture, reaches out to help her. But she, adrift in her despair, doesn't notice.

Mickey drops his arm. There is nothing he can do to help his sister-in-law -- and it's killing him.

INT. GRANDE PRAIRIE AIRPORT -- DAY

Mickey and other passengers disembark from an aircraft.

Amid these smiling visitors and composed business people, Mickey alone is absorbed in a dark agenda. He gazes ahead, as though at Spirit Creek, with loathing.

INT. HOTEL ROOM -- DAY

Mickey and Liv sit on the edge of the bed.

Liv stares numbly ahead as she takes in the news.

MICKEY

The investigation proves it. Somebody filled the tank with gasoline. That'll make a diesel engine either stop -- or explode.

LIV

Murder. And I almost fell for Wainwright's act. Felt sorry for him.

Mickey's face is so hard, his voice so raw, he's like a different man.

MICKEY

You were right -- get evidence. Whatever it takes. Sleep with the bastard if you have to.

Liv is taken aback. But she knows how deeply he's hurting over Paul, and says nothing.

EXT. TOM'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Dale's yellow SUV barrels up Tom's lane. It lurches to a stop in front of the house, and Dale gets out, then Mickey.

Tom's border collie bounds up to them, barking. Ignoring the dog, Mickey picks up a fist-sized rock and pitches it at the living room window, shattering the glass.

Dale opens the hatchback of the SUV. He pulls out a crowbar.

Mickey pulls out a baseball bat and a jerry can.

Mickey climbs the porch steps. Lifting the bat, he takes a vicious swing at the wind chime. It crashes to the ground.

Dale looks hesitant, but follows Mickey inside.

The dog runs back and forth in distress, barking furiously.

INT. TOM'S LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Mickey upends the jerry can and dumps oil on the couch, the easy chair, the rug, fouling everything.

Dale uses the sharp end of the crowbar and slashes Joanna Wainwright's elk painting.

Mickey swings the baseball bat at lamps, at glass-encased photos, shattering them all.

INT. TOM'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Mickey reams dishes out of the cupboards. The dishes smash on the floor.

Dale plugs the sink drain, turns on the taps full blast, then walks away.

INT. TOM'S MUD ROOM -- NIGHT

Mickey grabs Tom's rifle off its rack. He yanks out drawers until he finds rifle shells. He loads the gun.

Dale watches, uneasy.

EXT. TOM'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Mickey stands in the yard, aiming Tom's rifle at the upstairs windows, and shoots then out one by one.

Dale, who's had enough, tosses the crowbar and baseball bat into the open hatchback of the SUV.

MICKEY

Not done yet.

EXT. TOM'S BARN -- NIGHT

Bleating sheep run out in a panicked stampede.

Mickey and Dale race after them, whooping and waving their hands.

The sheep tear off in all directions, disappearing into the night.

The dog races back and forth, desperately barking.

EXT. TOM'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Dale and Mickey march back to the SUV.

The dog cuts them off, tearing back and forth in front of Mickey, barking.

Mickey lifts the rifle, aims at the dog.

Dale is shocked.

DALE

Hey!

Mickey glares at him. Aims again at the dog. Shoots.

The dog collapses.

Dale winces.

Mickey tosses the rifle into the SUV.

Tom's truck comes barreling up the lane.

Dale, seeing Tom, picks up the crowbar from the open hatchback.

Tom pulls up, jumps out, leaving Molly in her car seat.

In one swift moment Tom takes in the broken windows and the bad odds: two men, Dale with a crowbar, and him alone with no weapon.

TOM
(to Molly)
Stay there.

With his eyes on Mickey, he takes off his Stetson, readying for a fight, and tosses the hat in his truck.

He shuts the truck door.

Stands between Molly and the two invaders.

TOM
Get off my land.

The SUV is a barrier between Tom and Mickey.

MICKEY
Time you got off.

Then Tom sees the dead dog. Blood dribbles from its head, soaking the earth.

Enraged, Tom lunges at Dale, grabs the crowbar from Dale's hand.

Swinging around to come for Mickey, Tom smashes the crowbar at the SUV's windshield. It shatters.

Mickey backs up in fear.

Tom smashes the SUV's headlights.

Raising the crowbar high, he stalks toward Mickey.

Mickey cringes and squats in the dirt, covering his head with his arms.

Dale hurls the baseball bat at Tom, hitting his back.

Tom whirls around.

Dale jumps in the driver's seat. The hatchback is still open.

DALE

Get in!

Mickey scrambles to his feet and dives into the back, sprawling.

The SUV roars off down the lane, blind without its headlights, the open hatchback bouncing on its hinges.

INT. MICKEY'S HOTEL ROOM, GRANDE PRAIRIE -- NIGHT

Liv stands at the window, looking out.

At the Canada Forest Products site, logs piled three stories high extend the length of a city block.

A giant incinerator stack belches sparks and smoke into the night sky.

The door opens. Liv spins around. Mickey walks in.

LIV

Where were you?

MICKEY

Business.

He goes to the mini-bar. Pulls out scotch, a glass, ice.

LIV

I talked to the office. We can't make payroll. Do you think... will you get the plant on line in time?

Mickey pours scotch into his glass, his back to her, his face hard.

MICKEY

Working on it.

Liv steps closer in sympathy, in solidarity, but it's like he's set up a barrier between them. He still hasn't looked her in the eye.

LIV

Mickey, it's hopeless trying to dig up evidence from Wainwright. He's too careful.

Mickey gulps a mouthful of scotch.

LIV

So here's a better idea. All I need
is something that belongs to him.

Mickey turns. She has his full attention now.

INT. BELANGER'S OFFICE -- DAY

Tom stands in front of Belanger's desk.

BELANGER

Havelock and ...?

TOM

Dale Sommervold.

BELANGER

Complaint acknowledged.

Belanger settles back in his chair, arms folded. If he
intends to move, it won't be anytime soon.

Tom looks at him in disgust.

TOM

For the insurance. Or I wouldn't
have bothered.

BELANGER

Sad, isn't it? I'll have as much
success finding who trashed your
place as finding who trashed the
Phoenix rigs.

Tom stalks out.

INT. TOM'S BARN -- DAY

Dispersed among wooden birthing pens are about twenty ewes
Tom was able to round up, the remnants of his flock.

Some of the pens are splintered and damaged from Mickey and
Dale's assault.

Tom is so tired he's running on grim determination as he
uses a crowbar to pry a board off an unused pen.

He tosses the crowbar and carries the board with its bristling
nails over to a damaged pen, where he grabs a hammer.

The ewes bleat and jostle. Tom turns to see what's disturbed
them.

Liv stands at the open barn door.

Tom indicates the board he's holding.

TOM
Mind taking the other end?

Liv comes in and lifts the end of the board.

Tom fits his end against a post.

TOM
Sorry. You've already done so much.

Her smiles says: No problem.

Tom raises the hammer.

A lamb wriggles out from the neighboring pen and scampers between his legs.

He steps back to avoid it, jarring his handhold on the board. It slips, and a nail gouges his palm.

Blood oozes.

TOM
Shit.

He puts down the hammer, grabs a rag from a shelf, and presses it against his palm to stanch the bleeding.

He looks around for the lamb.

Liv's eyes are glued to the rag. It's blue plaid, from an old shirt.

She drops her end of the board.

LIV
Wait. It could get infected.

Taking his elbow, she leads him to a sink and turns on the tap. It's a grimy barn sink, but the water runs clean.

She guides his hand under the running water.

He still holds the rag in his other hand, but his concentration is on her as she gently washes his wound.

LIV
Iodine?

He indicates a shelf above the sink. She takes down the bottle of iodine and a box of bandages.

Tom's eyes stay on her face as she sprinkles iodine on his wound, dries his hand with her shirt-tail, then smooths on a bandage over the cut.

Done, she looks up at him.

The warmth in his eyes says it all: her touch has vanquished his despair.

He suddenly glimpses the lamb scampering out the door.

He tosses the rag and goes after the lamb.

Liv steps over to the rag lying in the straw on the floor.

She glances around to make sure Tom isn't looking. He's gone out after the lamb.

She picks up the rag with its bright patch of blood, and jams it in her pocket.

EXT. DRILLING SITE -- DAY

Liv prowls between the abandoned wellhead and the two trailers.

She slowly circles one trailer, surveying the scene.

She stops beneath the trailer window and studies it.

Then picks up a rock and throws it at the glass, shattering it.

INT. TRAILER -- DAY

Liv walks through the trailer toward the broken window.

She pulls from her pocket the blue plaid, bloodstained rag.

She rips off a wide strip with plenty of blood. Lays it on the windowsill so it's caught in the jagged edge of glass.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

The gravel road is deserted except for two stopped cars: Liv's Civic, on the shoulder, and Belanger's squad car on the road beside her, facing the opposite way.

They sit at their steering wheels, windows down.

LIV

It'll look like he broke the window
and climbed through, ripping his
shirt. Then went to the other trailer
and poured gas and burned it.

BELANGER

When will you do that?

LIV

Tonight.

INT. MICKEY'S HOTEL ROOM, GRANDE PRAIRIE -- DAY

Liv stands by Mickey's bed as he pulls shirts from a drawer and shoves them in a suitcase that lies open on the bed.

LIV
Where are you going?

MICKEY
If we're pumping in time I can coax
the Chinese money. Gotta do that
face to face.

LIV
When do you leave?

MICKEY
Few hours.

That sobers Liv.

LIV
So... I do this alone.

Seeing how tense she is, Mickey takes her in his arms.

MICKEY
Soon as that trailer burns, this is
over.

She stands stiffly in his embrace.

He pulls away to look at her. He's happy.

MICKEY
We're going to make it, darlin'.
Once he's locked up, we're home free.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- NIGHT

Liv's Civic moves alone along the deserted road. All around her open farmland stretches into the darkness.

Dry lightning flashes high in the clouds.

INT. LIV'S CAR -- NIGHT

Liv drives, determined in her mission, but nervous.

She fiddles with the radio dial, stopping when she hears an up-tempo Country & Western tune.

The music's so cheery it should buck her up, but it doesn't. It's the tune she and Tom danced to.

Headlight beams appear in her rearview mirror. They quickly get closer. So close that Liv winces at their glare.

The vehicle is right on her tail, but behind the bright lights it's an indistinct black hulk.

It bugs hers. Why doesn't the guy just pass her?

The headlights' high beams flash on and off. Then again, and again.

Liv tenses. He's after her!

She hits the gas.

The vehicle behind speeds up too, sticking on her tail.

Its horn blares. She flinches.

She spots a neon sign, a gas station on the next road.

She races toward it.

EXT. GAS STATION -- NIGHT

Liv's Civic races into the gas station, where it slows.

INT. LIV'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Liv is horrified to see that the place is closed. No people.

She grips the wheel in fear as the pursuing vehicle roars in after her.

EXT. GAS STATION -- CONTINUOUS

Liv's car races for the other exit.

The pursuing vehicle sprints around her and cuts her off.

INT. LIV'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Liv jabs the lock control, locking all her doors.

Above her, lightning flashes.

She can now see that the vehicle is a yellow SUV. A man jumps out. Dale Sommervold -- raising his hands in surrender.

EXT. GAS STATION -- MOMENTS LATER

Liv stands leaning against her car door, still recovering from the fright.

Dale stands in front of her, a worried man.

LIV
Legal advice? You should be talking
to Pete O'Hara.

DALE

Hell no, I won't tell anyone from this town. But you're okay -- kept quiet about me and Cheryl. And you're almost like a lawyer, right?

Liv regards him cautiously.

LIV

What do you want to know?

Dale tugs off his baseball cap and plows a hand through his hair to steady himself.

DALE

You know the truck that blew up, killed those two guys?

LIV

Sabotaged.

DALE

It wasn't no sabotage, it was an accident!

His outburst startles Liv.

Dale moves to the car's hood. Thuds back heavily against it.

DALE

The night before was Donny Pierce's stag. We got plastered. Hell, I've known Donny since kindergarten.

He heaves a tortured sigh.

DALE

Dad asked me to fill in at the pumps on the late shift. Tim Harvey was set to take the Phoenix execs out to a rig next morning, so he drove in that night to fill 'er up.

Dale lowers his head. Liv can see his shoulders tremble. She's holding her breath.

The first drops of rain splat on her windshield.

DALE

I been helping out at Dad's pumps since junior high. Gas in the red ones, diesel in the black. Don't know how I could've...

In misery, he lifts his face to Liv. Tears stream down his cheeks.

INT. GRANDE PRAIRIE AIRPORT TERMINAL -- NIGHT

Liv hurries through the terminal, her hair and jacket damp from the rain.

She sees Mickey sitting in an open bar, drinking a beer. She catches his eye and motions for him to come to her.

INT. TERMINAL -- MOMENTS LATER

Liv and Mickey stand in a quiet spot away from the hubbub of passengers.

Mickey looks grave as he takes in the news.

MICKEY

What did you tell him?

LIV

That he should get a lawyer. And I'd keep his secret. Nothing can bring back Paul.

She gives Mickey a hug of comfort. He doesn't respond.

She steps back.

Tugs her damp jacket closed, shivering from the chill.

LIV

Anyway... this changes everything.

He shoots her a questioning look.

LIV

Tom Wainwright. He's innocent.

MICKEY

Of murder, maybe. But he can still kill Phoenix.

LIV

Mickey, I won't go through with the arson. Not now. I won't hurt Tom any more.

MICKEY

'Tom?' Jesus, whose side are you on?

Her cheeks flare an angry red.

LIV

You have no right--

MICKEY

I'm trying to save us, God damn it!
Are you with me or not?

She's about to snap back, but stops herself. Holds up her hands in a gesture that says: "I don't want to fight."

LIV

Give me one more chance. I think he might be ready to sell. If I strike out, I'll burn the trailer tomorrow.

MICKEY

I already tried. He's insane about that land.

LIV

Exactly -- you tried. Let me.

INT. TOM'S LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Tom hammers the woodstove pipe back into shape. Like almost everything else here, it was damaged in the vandalism attack.

Liv comes down the stairs.

LIV

She's asleep. Finally.

Tom glances up. He looks like he hasn't slept for days.

Liv walks slowly through the room, still unnerved by the shambles of Tom's house.

The broken windows, where rain beats against tacked-on plastic sheeting.

The couch and armchairs blackened with oil.

The cardboard boxes overflowing with the debris Tom has crammed into them: broken lamps, ripped books, the carved wooden hawk, now a headless torso with just one wing.

Liv stops at the elk painting hanging askew on the wall, the canvas slashed.

The wanton destruction disturbs her deeply. At a sudden thought, she spins around to Tom.

LIV

The artworks in the woods. The
Watcher. Did they...?

TOM

No.

Wearily, he tosses his hammer onto the ruined couch.

TOM
How about a drink? I could use one.

INT. TOM'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Broken chairs.

Boxes of smashed dishes.

Linoleum tiles warped and curled from the sink-overflow flood.

Tom opens a cupboard and reaches up into the top shelf.

TOM
Ever had Saskatoon-berry wine?
Homemade.

He jerks his hand back with a sharp intake of breath.

Wine dribbles over the shelf.

TOM
(under his breath)
Bastards.

He tugs a glass splinter out of his thumb. It produces a bead of blood.

Liv rushes to turn on the tap.

Tom shakes his head -- the cut is nothing.

But Liv pulls him to the sink, guides his hand under the water.

Tom turns off the tap.

He flattens both hands on the counter, stiff-armed, and lowers his head -- a man at the end of his tether.

TOM
Can't even offer you that drink.

She watches him in genuine sympathy, but also in hope. This is her chance to ask what she came for.

LIV
Tom, what will you do now?

He looks at her, and his eyes narrow as if he's gauging her.

TOM
Care for a toke instead?

She gapes at him: Is he serious?

He opens a drawer, pulls out a cookie tin and opens it. Inside is a sandwich baggie full of grass, and a rolled joint.

TOM

Like the wine, homegrown.

A laugh bubbles out of Liv.

Tom smiles.

INT. TOM'S LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Tom leads Liv through the room, passing the wrecked furniture. There's no place to sit.

But when he starts up the stairs, Liv stops. What's she signing on for?

LIV

No... we shouldn't wake Molly...

TOM

Please, Liv. I need to talk to you.

INT. ATTIC STAIRWELL -- NIGHT

The stairwell is narrow and dim.

Tom leads the way.

Liv follows, clearly nervous.

They step into the dark

ATTIC

where Tom goes to a shelf that holds an oil lamp. He strikes a match and lights the lamp.

It spreads a golden pool of light around him.

TOM

One room they didn't wreck.

In the mellow light, Liv sees that the attic is crammed with generations-old furniture and bric-a-brac.

Tom sits down on a leather couch so old the leather is brittle and cracked. But woolly sheepskins draped over it look soft.

Rain beats on the roof and spatters the window.

TOM

When my old man had a few and yelled at me, I'd come up here till it blew over.

LIV

Mine got mean. My sister and I got
the hell out.

They share a small smile of surprise at this common ground.

Tom lights the joint. Inhales. Holds it up for Liv to take.

INT. TOM'S LANE -- NIGHT

A white Cadillac, its wipers beating in the rain, pulls up
near the mailbox marked, "WAINWRIGHT."

Dale gets out of the passenger seat. He leans into the open
door.

Stan sits at the wheel.

DALE

You don't need to pick me up.

SOMMERVOLD

Awful wet walk back from the quarry.

DALE

No problem.

SOMMERVOLD

Suit yourself. Trash it in the pit
and head home.

Dale shuts the door. The Cadillac drives off.

Wearing no hat, Dale tugs up the collar of his jacket.

EXT. TOM'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Dale stands scanning the windows. There are only a couple
of lights on, including a faint one in the attic.

He goes to Tom's truck and climbs in behind the wheel.

Shaking off the rain, he pulls a flashlight from his pocket,
flicks it on, bends to see the wires under the dashboard.

EXT. TOM'S LANE -- NIGHT

Tom's truck drives down the lane, soundless in the din of
the downpour.

INT. ATTIC -- NIGHT

Rain drums the roof.

Liv and Tom lounge against the couch back, laughing, their
private tensions eased by the gentle high of the grass.

TOM

Olivia?

LIV

Olive Oil at school. I hated it.

TOM

(baying like a wolf
at the moon)

O-livia. O-O-O-livia.

She grabs the edge the sheepskin under his head and rubs it in his face.

LIV

Very funny, Mister Wolf in Sheep's
Clothing.

Tom roars with laughter.

Liv breaks up too.

They both loll against the couch back, laughing as though she said something hilarious.

She wipes away tears of laughter rolling down her cheeks.

He takes another drag of the joint, hands it to her. She takes a drag.

Their laughter calms down, easily and naturally.

They both stare lazily ahead at the night-black window.

Windswept rain hits the glass like fistfuls of sand.

Tom's expression turns serious.

TOM

I used to go out on nights like this.
Hit Havelock's rigs.

He looks at her.

TOM

You know that, don't you.

Liv is instantly sober, instantly alert.

LIV

Tom, you don't have to tell--

TOM

It's okay. I want you to know.

He heaves a heavy sigh.

TOM

I'm so damn tired of fighting. He started it, drilling, taking over. So I fought back. Really got into it, too -- fooling him, beating him. Primitive, huh?

EXT. TRAILER -- NIGHT

Tom's truck drives up the access road and stops.

Dale gets out. He hurries through the rain to the trailer.

INT. GRANDE PRAIRIE AIRPORT TERMINAL -- NIGHT

Mickey stares out a wall of windows where rain sheets down on the runways. He's listening to a woman's voice drone over the loudspeaker.

WOMAN'S VOICE

...WestJet apologizes for the inconvenience of the delay.

Mickey angrily turns to a woman beside him, a young mother with two kids.

MICKEY

Three fucking hours?

The woman hustles her children away from him.

Mickey stalks to a bank of seats where bored travelers read newspapers or stare at their feet.

He sits down, slouches back, drums his heels in twitchy irritation.

Suddenly he sits up very straight, an idea taking hold. He checks his watch.

INT. AIRPORT PARKING LOT -- NIGHT

Mickey gets into his parked SUV, a company car. Lettering on its side reads: "PHOENIX RESOURCES."

He races for the exit.

EXT. AIRPORT GAS STATION -- NIGHT

Mickey impatiently pumps the gas nozzle, filling a red plastic jerry can with gasoline.

Beyond the canopied gas pump island, rain pounds all around him.

When the can is full he hefts it into the SUV, setting it on the floor behind the diver's seat.

He wedges it in beside Tom's rifle, which he took when he trashed Tom's place.

INT. TRAILER -- NIGHT

A flashlight beam ranges over the jagged glass of the broken window.

It passes over the shred of rag snagged on the glass.

Rain drums the trailer roof.

Holding the flashlight is Dale.

The door opens at the far end of the trailer.

Dale whips around.

Cheryl ducks in out of the rain. She stops as her eyes meet Dale's.

CHERYL

What's wrong?

DALE

Nothin'.

They come to each other, Dale setting the flashlight on a cot. They share a quick, desperate kiss.

Cheryl takes his face in her hands to look at him.

CHERYL

No, something's wrong. What?

He's about to speak, but hesitates.

He touches his forehead to hers. Grips her arms.

DALE

This damn town. Everybody hates everybody.

CHERYL

I know. So stupid.

She straightens up, looks him in the eye.

CHERYL

You still got that ring?

It surprises him.

CHERYL

I want to, Dale... if you still do.

He grins as though she just lifted all his cares and woes.
He pulls her into his arms and hugs her tight.

DALE

I got a buddy in Calgary. We can
bunk with him. I'll get a job.
We'll start a new life.

They kiss -- this time with hope.

INT. ATTIC -- NIGHT

Liv and Tom still sit on the couch, but he's leaning forward,
elbows on his knees, hands dangling between his legs.

TOM

Joanna got caught in a sour gas
release just before Christmas.
Vomiting, headache, slurred speech.
The experts said the levels were
safe. She bounced back... or so we
thought.

He stares out the black window.

TOM

By May her headaches were so bad she
couldn't work. Coughed from morning
till night. Started forgetting
things. One night I came home, found
Molly crying in cold bathwater, and
Joanna sitting in the pasture staring
at the moon.

Liv watches his back in horrified silence.

TOM

I'd take Molly to the hospital and
Joanna didn't know who she was. In
the end, she didn't even know me.

His head sags. His shoulders shake. He struggles to hold
in his pain, but can't. He sobs.

Liv reaches out to him, overwhelmed with pity. She squeezes
his shoulder.

He reaches over his shoulder and covers her hand with his.

Then he sits up straighter, letting go her hand. He swipes
his eyes with his sleeve, quickly getting control of himself.

TOM

They diagnosed lupus -- immune system
disease. I said screw that. It was
Havelock.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

He killed my wife, poisoned my land,
all to make money. So I hit him the
only way he understands.

Tom lowers his head, rakes both hands through his hair.

TOM

I swear, Liv, if it was just me they'd
have to kill me to stop me. But
they've wrecked my daughter's home.
What if next time they hurt her? Or
you.

He flops back against the couch.

TOM

Havelock wins.

Liv gapes at him.

TOM

You've seen these lawyers' agreements
with farmers. Can I still make a
deal?

She jumps up, walks to the window so he can't see her
excitement.

LIV

Yes... yes.

She covers her mouth with her hand to bottle up her joy.

TOM

Can Pete O'Hara broker it?

LIV

We'll get you a deal. A good one.

Tom comes up behind her, takes her by the shoulders, turns
her to him.

TOM

I'm sorry if you hoped I could hold
out. Sorry to let down my friends.

She stares at him, shaken by his faith in her.

Tears spring into her eyes. In shame, she lowers her head
and covers her face with her hands.

TOM

Don't. I'll be okay. Really, I
will. Please... don't cry.

But Liv can't hold back the tears of shame.

Tom slips his finger under her chin. She shivers at his touch as he lifts her face to his.

TOM

Please, Liv...

He strokes her cheek. His lips brush hers -- a kiss that's tentative but hopeful.

Liv stifles a gasp, shocked at the desire that flares in her.

Tom pulls his head back. His eyes search hers for a sign.

She gives it, bringing her mouth to his, her lips parting.

Tom pulls her to him with a hungry kiss.

She pulls back, but only to look at him in wonder. Her hand slides over his cheek, back around his neck. Her other hand slides down his throat, down into the V of his shirt.

His arm slips around her waist and he backs her up to the couch -- slow steps like they're dancing.

When her legs touch the couch she thuds down on it. Then sits forward to the edge, just to get nearer him.

She flattens her hands on his thighs -- a gesture that should mean she's pushing him away. But her hands betray her -- she wants him.

He groans at her touch. He opens her legs -- slowly like it's part of the dance.

Her breath catches.

He kneels between her legs.

They're face to face.

His arm slides to the small of her back and he jerks her forward so her back arches, thrusting out her breasts.

He undoes her blouse, slips it off. Then her bra.

She pulls off his T-shirt.

As his hands caress her breasts, her eyelids tremble. Her head lolls back against the sheepskins.

He stands up, breathing hard, and unzips his jeans.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- NIGHT

Cheryl's old Dodge pulls out from the access road onto the county road.

INT. CHERYL'S CAR -- NIGHT

Cheryl hums contentedly as the wipers beat back and forth in the rain.

With one hand on the wheel, she fluffs her hair in the rearview mirror, smiling.

Ahead, out of the black rain, a vehicle comes speeding toward her.

She tenses: while primping she'd veered to the left.

She turns the wheel, gets back to the right side of the road.

The vehicle cannons past her throwing up a rooster tail of muddy water.

It's an SUV, and on its side is the lettering: "PHOENIX RESOURCES."

EXT. TRAILER -- NIGHT

Leaving the trailer, Dale ducks through the rain to Tom's truck and climbs in behind the wheel.

INT. TOM'S TRUCK -- NIGHT

Dale shifts into gear and starts toward the access road.

He glances in his rearview for a last look at the trailer, smiling to himself.

Headlights ahead startle him.

A truck, coming fast.

Dale jerks the wheel to avoid a collision.

EXT. TRAILER -- NIGHT

The wheels of Tom's truck slip in the soupy gravel.

The truck veers off the road and slews into the ditch.

INT. MICKEY'S CAR -- NIGHT

Mickey sees the truck hit the ditch.

He brakes fast and stops.

He's surprised to find anyone here -- and furious. It screws up his plan.

He glowers at the stopped truck.

Slewed with its rear end in the ditch, its headlights shine in his eyes, making him squint.

Behind the glare the truck itself is indistinct in the darkness.

MICKEY

Shit.

Mickey opens his door.

EXT. LOEB'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Liv sits in her car in front of the house, and looks ahead blankly through the rain.

She's overwhelmed by all that's happened.

INT. LIV'S CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Liv holds her cell phone, listening to a voice-mail prompt...

MICKEY

... leave a message, I'll get back to you.

LIV

(with forced brightness)

Mickey, great news. He's ready to sell. Call me as soon as you land.

She sets down the phone. Her chin trembles. Ashamed and bewildered, she can't stop the tears.

EXT. ACCESS ROAD -- NIGHT

Rain pounds the gravel at Mickey's feet.

He crosses the road to the truck in the ditch.

Suddenly he stops cold, staring down at it, recognizing it. Wainwright's truck!

Someone climbs out. He's just a moving shape, indistinct behind the bright headlight beams.

He shouts up to Mickey, his voice muffled by the rain's din, though his angry tone is clear enough...

DALE

That you... Havelock?

He reaches back into the truck's flatbed and lifts out a shovel.

Mickey stiffens in fury. There's only one thing Wainwright could be doing at this Phoenix site. Sabotage.

The man moves to the truck's front wheel. It's mired in mud.

DALE

Fuck...

He grabs a hat from the truck and jams it on.

Then starts up the slope of the ditch, stepping into the headlights' beams.

Mickey watches, frozen.

The man is just a silhouette now, backlit by the headlights' glare. So is his hat.

But to Mickey that Stetson with its feather is unmistakable. Wainwright's hat.

The man raises the shovel to balance himself on the uneven lip of the ditch.

Mickey lurches back a step in fear. That's exactly how Wainwright came at him last night with the crowbar!

The man keeps coming.

DALE

Hey...!

Terrified, Mickey looks helplessly around him.

Wainwright's attacking with the shovel, and there's no one to stop him!

Mickey runs back to his SUV, flings open the rear door, grabs Tom's rifle.

MICKEY

Stop!

The man keeps coming.

Mickey cocks the rifle.

MICKEY

Stop right there, you fucking maniac!

But the man is crossing the road, stalking Mickey, the shovel in his hand an ugly weapon.

Mickey panics.

He shoots.

The man topples.

Moans in the mud.

Hauls himself to hands and knees.

Starts to crawl.

Mickey shoots again.

His victim sprawls.

Lies still.

Mickey cautiously walks forward.

He reaches the body, looks down at the face.

His mouth drops open in horror.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE O'HARA'S OFFICE -- DAY

The sky is bright blue after the night's rain. Spirit Creek basks in the sunshine.

People on the street briskly go about their business.

INT. O'HARA'S INNER OFFICE -- DAY

O'Hara sits back in his chair, his eyes wide in astonishment. Liv stands before him. O'Hara whistles softly.

O'HARA
Wainwright'll be lucky to keep the
shirt on his back.

LIV
Maybe Phoenix will be so glad it's
over, they'll be generous.

O'HARA
And pigs might fly.

CHERYL (O.S.)
Mister O'Hara?

INT. O'HARA'S OUTER OFFICE -- DAY

O'Hara and Liv join Cheryl at the window in the reception area and look down at the street below.

There, three police squad cars pull up outside the RCMP office down the block.

Belanger gets out of the lead car.

People are converging from all directions -- walking out of stores, crossing the street, running down sidewalks.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE O'HARA'S OFFICE -- DAY

Liv and Cheryl and O'Hara join the crowd forming around the squad cars.

Liv grabs a farmer's elbow.

LIV
What happened?

FARMER
Dale Sommervold's dead. Murdered.

Cheryl freezes.

Horrified, Liv grabs her hand.

The crowd presses in, excited, their voices rising...

REALTOR
There he is!

RIG WORKER
We got the bastard now!

An officer opens the rear door of a squad car and pulls out Tom, his hands cuffed behind his back.

Liv gasps.

LIV
Tom!

He turns to her voice, but can't see her in the crowd. His face is a mask of confusion, anger, and fear.

Another squad car door opens and Liv glimpses Molly sitting in the back seat, rigid in fear, her face white.

Two officers lead Tom toward the RCMP office.

Cheryl collapses.

Liv catches her as she falls.

Unable to support her, she lowers Cheryl to the ground.

Through the thicket of people's legs Liv sees the RCMP door close behind Tom.

EXT. HOUSTON, TEXAS -- DAY

Steel and glass office towers glint in the sun.

SUPER: "HOUSTON, TEXAS. FIVE MONTHS LATER."

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET, HOUSTON -- DAY

Manicured lawns surround sumptuous homes in an enclave overlooking the 7th fairway and golf course lake.

On the lawn of a stunning, modern, Spanish mission style house is a "FOR SALE" sign.

EXT. HOUSE -- DAY

Mickey and a real estate AGENT stroll beside the pool in genial conversation MOS.

Liv trails behind them, her eyes drifting to the water.

She stops.

Stares into the pool.

Mickey notices.

He gestures for the agent to continue on into the house, which she does.

Mickey goes to Liv.

MICKEY

Laps every morning. Nice way to start the day.

Lost in thought, she doesn't look up.

MICKEY

We need to decide, darlin'. I don't want to come back from our honeymoon still homeless.

She looks up at him, his words finally sinking in. She makes an effort to be enthusiastic.

LIV

It's beautiful. Lots of room. Chris would love the bedroom overlooking the garden.

MICKEY

Let's not rush that. She's used to where she is.

LIV

She wants to live with me.

MICKEY

So do I.

Liv bites her lip.

MICKEY

All I mean is, you need to think about what she needs.

LIV

Freedom. Like everybody.

MICKEY

Doctors, Liv. Trained staff. You can't handle her if she has another relapse.

(gently)

Darlin', I want to come home to you, not a hospital.

He guides her by the elbow to get her moving. They walk together.

MICKEY

Come on. Still two houses to see, and more tomorrow.

LIV

Mickey, I... can't do tomorrow.

MICKEY

Oh?

LIV

The trial. It starts Monday. I'm going.

He stops.

MICKEY

You're not serious.

LIV

They may call me as a witness. I was at his place that night, remember?

MICKEY

They might not call you for weeks, maybe months.

LIV

I'm going, Mickey. I don't believe he did it.

MICKEY

Jesus, he's a criminal. He admitted it to you.

LIV

Sabotage, yes. Not murder. He's not capable of it.

MICKEY

How would you know? You barely know him.

Liv looks away, hugging herself as if she's cold, avoiding his eyes.

MICKEY

What's going on, Liv? You don't concentrate at work. Don't pay attention to our friends. Don't even seem to care about the wedding. Doesn't our marriage deserves your whole commitment?

LIV

Of course... but what's happening to Tom Wainwright is a goddamn lynching.

MICKEY

Bullshit. They don't prosecute without evidence.

LIV

I don't know what their case is. Belanger won't return my calls, and--

AGENT (O.S.)

Mister Havelock?

The agent stands in the doorway with an amiable smile.

LIV

(to Mickey)

Buy it if you want... it's fine.

She hurries away from the house.

INT. GREENHOUSE -- DAY

Liv holds up photos of bedrooms for Chris to see.

LIV

From this one you can see the garden. But if you like the yellow room better, it's yours.

Chris isn't looking at the photos. She's staring out the glass wall, high up, looking at the clouds.

CHRIS

Hawaii. That's far, far away.

LIV

We'll only be gone two weeks.

CHRIS

The wedding, first. So far away.

LIV

Just next month. It'll happen before
you know it.

Chris puts her hand on the glass as though wanting to push
through it.

Liv covers Chris's hand with her own.

LIV

You have to hang on until then.

INT. COURTROOM, GRANDE PRAIRIE -- DAY

A plain, windowless room, packed with spectators.

The DEFENSE LAWYER and SMYTHE, the prosecutor, wear black
robes over shirts with high Victorian collars.

The JUDGE wears a black robe with red lapels, like a dour
Dickensian magistrate

Liv sits at the back to avoid the people from Spirit Creek.
These include Noreen and Abel Loeb, who sit near the front,
anxiously concerned for Tom. And Stan Sommervold, ashen-
faced in his mourning for Dale.

Tom sits in the prisoner's dock, a bench behind a knee-high
partition to the left side of the judge.

Tom wears a brown suit, white shirt, and tie, like a good
domesticated citizen. The effect is humiliating, like a
costume. And the months in jail have leached the sun's
burnish from his skin.

Yet none of this diminishes his aura of strength. He looks
straight ahead, stone-faced.

SMYTHE crisply concludes his opening statement.

Liv tensely listens.

SMYTHE

And so, enraged by the vandalism of
his home, Tom Wainwright followed
Dale Sommervold to this lonely spot
in the woods -- followed him with
brutal intent. And there he shot
him -- twice -- in cold blood. The
evidence is indisputable. An
abandoned truck, stuck in the ditch
near the victim's body, was Tom
Wainwright's truck.

(MORE)

SMYTHE (CONT'D)

The murder weapon, also found near the body, was Tom Wainwright's rifle.

He pauses, eyeing the jury, to let that sink in. Liv lowers her head in dismay.

SMYTHE

And nearby was a scrap of shirt, stained with blood. Tom Wainwright's shirt and, based on the DNA analysis, Tom Wainwright's blood.

Liv's head jerks up. She stifles a gasp.

INT. COURTROOM -- LATER

The defense lawyer sits fumbling through papers on his desk. He's a legal aid hire, tired and unprepared. He gets to his feet.

DEFENSE LAWYER

Milord, I...

He hesitates, unsure. He turns back to the papers, fingers them. Looks up meekly.

LAWYER

Milord, I'll need some time to find that information...

The judge is not impressed.

Liv closes her eyes in despair at the lawyer's incompetence.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

The gravel road cuts through farmers' fields golden with September's crop of grain.

Running parallel with the road is a steel pipeline whose diameter is about that of an oil drum. It lies in a trench a stone's throw from the road. The top of the pipeline is a few inches lower than the top of the trench.

A grassy shoulder slopes from the road down to the trench.

A dozen or more welders in face guards are at work in the bottom of the trench, their torches sparking.

Mickey strolls along the trench edge like a general reviewing his troops, highly pleased with what he sees. Walking beside him, an inspector, PINVIDIC, writes on his clipboard.

PINVIDIC

The set-back is fine, Mister Havelock.

(MORE)

PINVIDIC (CONT'D)

But the clearance -- I'm afraid it's barely regulation.

Mickey's good humor is unruffled.

MICKEY

Don't be afraid -- that's no way to go through life.

Pinvidic doesn't comprehend Mickey's bantering tone.

MICKEY

'Barely' is a pass, right?

PINVIDIC

Well... yes.

Mickey chuckles and slaps him on the back.

MICKEY

Well, good.

INT. HALLWAY, HOLDING CELLS -- DAY

Liv walks past a corridor of holding cells beneath the Grande Prairie courthouse.

INT. MEETING ROOM -- DAY

The utilitarian room has a half dozen plastic tables with chairs.

At a couple of the tables, inmates sit with wives and other visitors, quietly talking MOS.

Liv sits at a table as far from the others as possible. She's so nervous she squeezes her hands together in her lap.

A door opens.

Escorted by a guard, Tom walks in. Like the other inmates, he's in blue prison coveralls.

The guard leaves him and Tom walks straight to Liv. There's a faint smile in his eyes, as though just seeing her lifts some of his burden.

He stands looking across the table at her.

TOM

I'm so glad you came.

LIV

How are you, Tom?

He sits down across from her.

TOM
Noreen said you quit Pete O'Hara's
months ago. You okay? Back in
Calgary?

LIV
I'm fine.

She looks around.

LIV
Nobody watches you here?

TOM
Sure, a guy in that booth's watching
every move.

He indicates a window with darkened glass.

TOM
I'd set off sirens if I kissed you.

Shaken, Liv looks away, trying to compose herself.

TOM
Molly's with the Loeb's. Got a letter
from her.

He pulls a paper from his breast pocket, smooths it on the
table for her to see.

Liv picks it up -- a crayoned drawing.

TOM
I think it's their dog. See the
tail?

Liv smiles.

LIV
How is she?

TOM
Wants to go home.

Misery clouds his face.

Liv, fighting tears, hands back the drawing.

Tom carefully folds it and slips it back in his pocket.

He gives her an earnest look.

TOM
Liv, I didn't do it.

LIV

I know. And I have good news. I talked to a top defense attorney in Edmonton. Warren McLeod. He's agreed to take your case. All you have to do is call him.

Tom looks surprised.

TOM

Can't. I'm up to here in debt, and I already owe for the lawyer they gave me. Turns out legal aid isn't free.

LIV

I'll pay for McLeod. I'll be glad to pay.

His smile is tender.

TOM

Liv, these criminal lawyers charge a fortune. Like, two hundred thousand up front. You don't have that kind of money.

She's about to speak, but hesitates. Decides to try a new tack.

LIV

Your truck and your rifle. How did they get there? Even your hat.

He gives her a bleak look.

TOM

No idea. I do know my rifle was stolen when Dale and Havelock trashed my house. My truck too, the night after.

LIV

Havelock?

TOM

Caught the two of them red-handed.

Liv is surprised, and disturbed, but contains it.

TOM

What I can't figure is that blood-stained piece of my shirt. I've never even been at that place.

Liv flattens her hands on the table to steady herself.

LIV
Sign with McLeod. Please, Tom.
I'll get the money.

He shakes his head.

TOM
Not smart to change horses mid-stream.
Anyway, the law's the law -- they
all learn from the same books.

LIV
No, it's not like that. You need
someone with skill, experience.
Call it killer instinct, whatever--

Tom stops her by reaching across and taking her hand.

TOM
I can't tell you how much it means,
that you believe in me. But this is
my fight. I won't let you ruin
yourself.

He squeezes her hand.

TOM
Hey, I've got the truth on my side.

Feeling something under his fingers, he lifts his hand off
hers, and sees her diamond ring.

Liv draws her hand back, almost squirming.

Tom looks at her, a question in his eyes.

LIV
I... should have told you. I'm
engaged.

Taking it in, he nods stiffly, slowly.

TOM
Of course... it's been months.

LIV
Before that.

He frowns, as if unable to absorb it.

LIV
Tom, having the truth on your side
won't save you. I know. I'm a
lawyer.

He stares at her.

TOM
Paralegal, you said.

LIV
I lied. Look, I know the law, the system, the way the courts work. And judges. You cannot put your faith in that inept legal aid counsel. If you do, you'll go down.

TOM
Why did you lie?

LIV
I wanted you to trust me.

The words are such a mockery, she plows on.

LIV
McLeod's team can have him up to speed overnight, and with him you have a chance. Sign him, today. I'll cover it. I make a great deal of money.

Tom's still struggling to catch up.

TOM
You practice law?

LIV
No. I'm a corporate lawyer. In the States.

TOM
Where?

LIV
Save yourself, Tom. No one else can.

TOM
Where, damn it?

She hesitates for one last, agonized moment. Then, knowing it's the only way to make him act, she goes for broke.

LIV
Houston, Texas. I'm vice president and general counsel for Phoenix Resources. I'm engaged to Mickey Havelock.

He stares at her in utter shock.

Then suddenly gets to his feet so fast he knocks over his chair.

Liv jumps up.

LIV
Hate me all you want, but sign McLeod.

TOM
Get away from me. Guard!

LIV
Don't be a fool, Tom. I'll pay!

Two guards arrive on the double and flank Tom.

TOM
(to Liv)
You fucking people -- you and your
blood money. I'd rather rot here
for the rest of my life than--

LIV
And Molly? Are you willing to let
her rot too?

Tom glares at her as though he'd like to kill her with his bare hands.

INT. LAW OFFICE -- DAY

WARREN MCLEOD's wood-paneled office verges on opulence.

The lawyer himself exudes the calm confidence of success.

Across his desk, Liv sits in the client's chair.

MCLEOD
I'm glad you persuaded him, Ms.
Gardner. But I hope you understand
that I fight to win.

LIV
Meaning?

MCLEOD
I may call you to testify that you
were with him the night of the murder.

LIV
Why? You have his statement that I
was. If the Crown will stipulate,
you don't need me.

MCLEOD
If they won't, I do.

LIV
Not smart.

(MORE)

LIV (CONT'D)

I'd have to tell the judge what Tom told me -- that he did sabotage Phoenix property, hundreds of thousands of dollars worth. Not a great way to build sympathy for your client.

They gauge each other, a stand-off.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

The welding team of the previous day has moved further along the pipeline, and are still at work.

Pinvidic, standing alone at a completed section, runs his finger over a weld. He's not pleased by what he sees.

He steps out of the trench and climbs up the grassy slope to the road where several Phoenix trucks are parked.

Mickey stands talking to the foreman MOS.

Seeing Pinvidic's frown, Mickey sends the foreman ahead, out of hearing.

PINVIDIC

These welds, Mister Havelock, I'm afraid they're under par. I'm afraid all this haste--

MICKEY

There you go again, being afraid. It's Henry, isn't it?

PINVIDIC

Yes.

MICKEY

Henry, my crew's fast and good, because they know they'll earn a big bonus. Anybody ever give you a bonus, Henry?

Pinvidic's expression is rueful.

PINVIDIC

No.

MICKEY

Not enough respect, either, I bet. Like your wife. She took the house, right?

Pinvidic gives him a sharp look.

MICKEY

Divorce is a bitch, Henry. But you approve these welds, you'll find a fat bonus buys a hell of a lot of respect.

EXT. COURTHOUSE -- NIGHT

Liv stands at the foot of the staircase looking at the windows, some lit, others dark, since the workday is over.

She stands completely still. Only the tension in her face betrays the battle raging in her mind.

A security guard at the main door has his eye on her.

Liv notices the guard.

She turns and walks away.

INT. GAS PROCESSING PLANT -- DAY

Mickey quickly shepherds Liv into a private office and closes the door. He's trying to keep calm after what she has just told him.

Liv is no calmer than he is.

MICKEY

Investors will bail. Share price will collapse. It could kill Phoenix.

LIV

McLeod can't save him -- the evidence is too strong. But maybe I can. He's innocent.

MICKEY

So are you. If you keep quiet, no one will ever know.

LIV

Mickey, they have the rag--

MICKEY

They don't know how it got there. Don't worry, I'll stand by you.

LIV

He'd spend the rest of his life in prison. Lose his daughter. I can't let--

Mickey suddenly takes her in his arms. Hugs her tight.

MICKEY

I'm only thinking of you. How hard they can come down on you. You could be looking at prison yourself.

Liv stands rigid in his embrace.

LIV

You think I don't know that? Planting evidence... obstruction of justice. Maximum five years. Plus being disbarred...

She pulls away. But she's unsteady on her feet, and grabs a chair and sits.

LIV

Oh, God...

She leans forward and buries her face in her hands.

Mickey crouches in front of her. He strokes her hair to calm her.

MICKEY

It's that soft heart of yours. You're a wreck. You'll feel better once we're in Hawaii.

He lowers her hands. Squeezes them.

MICKEY

Sun and sand and as much of me every night as you can take.

She manages a wan smile, sniffing. Slides her hands free to wipe away her tears.

MICKEY

And I've been thinking, you should have a pre-nup agreement. It's only fair. How does this sound -- half of all revenues from Spirit Creek in perpetuity.

Liv's hands go still on her wet cheeks.

LIV

You're offering me... a deal?

He pulls her to her feet. He's smiling with hope.

MICKEY

Come on, darlin'.
(MORE)

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Let's settle this and get married
and have the life we've worked so
hard for, the life we deserve. It's
what you want, I know it is.

She stares at him for a long moment.

LIV

I did... for so long...

MICKEY

Sure, you've worked harder than
anyone.

LIV

(quoting Tom)

But it would tell me something about
myself I don't want to know. My
price.

Mickey frowns, not getting it.

LIV

I won't let Tom go to prison for a
crime he didn't commit. If McLeod
doesn't make a breakthrough soon,
I'll tell him I planted the rag.
I'll testify.

EXT. HOTEL, GRANDE PRAIRIE -- NIGHT

Liv's car pulls into the hotel parking lot scattered with
cars and oil rig workers' trucks.

INT. LIV'S CAR - SAME

Liv pulls into a spot at the edge of the lot and stops.

She opens her door.

A hulking shape lumbers out of the darkness. Stan Sommervold,
drunk but charged with fury.

He grabs fistfuls of Liv's jacket and hauls her out of the
car.

She gasps at his roughness.

He slams her against the side of the car.

Her head snaps back and hits the edge of the roof.

She staggers sideways, slumping into the V of the open door.

He yanks her free of the door.

In terror she gropes the top edge of the door for balance.

He slams the door, crushing her fingertips.

She cries out at the pain.

He pulls open the door again and pushes her to the ground.

Asphalt skins her knees, her cheekbone.

SOMMERVOLD

I'll shut your mouth for good.

He kicks her in the ribs.

She curls up in agony, gasping for breath.

Two oil rig workers come running across the lot.

RIG WORKER

Hey! Lay off!

Enraged at seeing them come, Sommervold kicks Liv again.

SOMMERVOLD

You testify, I'll find you.

He lumbers away.

The two men reach Liv. Each takes one of her arms to help her to her feet.

She sees a car pull up at the end of a row of vehicles, sees Sommervold open the rear door and jump in.

Then she sees the driver.

Mickey.

He looks straight at her.

Their eyes lock.

The car wheels around toward the exit, pulls out, and is swallowed in the night traffic.

Liv's legs buckle.

The men grip her to keep her from falling.

EXT. LOEBS' HOUSE -- NIGHT

Cheryl opens the door, astounded to see Liv standing there. The screen door is between them.

Liv hugs herself, in pain, but the screen and the shadows obscure from Cheryl the bruising and the blood on Liv's face.

CHERYL

I don't know how you have the nerve.

LIV

Please, Cheryl... can I just come in?

Cheryl doesn't move. She's a solid barrier of outrage.

CHERYL

Dad visited Tom. We know all about you.

Liv nods in defeat.

LIV

Right...

She shuffles away from the door, starts to her car.

But the agony of her kicked ribs is too much. Faint from the pain, she staggers.

Then collapses.

INT. CHERYL'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Cheryl helps Liv lower herself onto the bed.

LIV

Have to get to court--

CHERYL

You need a doctor--

LIV

Tomorrow... have to testify--

CHERYL

Mom and Dad are out--

LIV

Didn't know where else to go... he said he'd find me...

Lying back, Liv tries frantically to wrench off her engagement ring, but her fingers are swollen from being crushed in the car door, the tips blue-black.

The ring won't budge.

LIV

Oh God... help me...

CHERYL

I'm calling the doctor.

INT. HOTEL ROOM, GRANDE PRAIRIE -- NIGHT

Mickey sits at the desk, hunched over, his head in his hands.

He sits up, takes a deep breath.

Picks up a pen and begins to write a note on a plain piece of paper with no letterhead.

INSERT - THE NOTE, as Mickey writes these opening words:

"Dear Mr. Smythe"

INT. PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

Smythe, the Crown attorney, in gym clothes, jogs on a treadmill.

His assistant hands him his glasses and Mickey's note.

Smythe jams on the glasses and reads the note.

INSERT - THE NOTE, which opens with:

"Dear Mr. Smythe, you may hear testimony from Olivia Gardner. You should be aware of her family's history."

Back to Smythe, who scans to the bottom. The note is not signed.

INT. COURTROOM, GRANDE PRAIRIE -- DAY

In the packed courtroom, the spectators look shocked at what they've just heard.

McLeod gravely walks away from the witness stand.

MCLEOD

Thank you, Ms Gardner.

In the prisoner's dock, Tom is more shocked than anyone. But he sits up straighter, as though cut loose from a chain.

Liv may just have set him free.

She is on the witness stand. Her forehead is scraped. A bandage bisects her cheekbone like a scar. She grips the handrail to steady herself. Her fingertips are bruised black.

But she holds her head high. Despite the pain, the humiliation, and the personal risk of having confessed, she has done the right thing.

Her gaze goes to Mickey, sitting at the back of the room, looking at her like she's his most dangerous enemy.

Smythe gets up to cross-examine Liv.

SMYTHE

Ms. Gardner--

He makes a show of stopping himself, as if bewildered.

SMYTHE

The many falsehoods you have confessed to trouble me, and must trouble this court when you tell us that you also rigged evidence to incriminate the accused in this homicide. Because we have to ask ourselves, which Olivia Gardner are we seeing today? The one who duped an entire community? Or the one who would now have us believe in a conspiracy involving her own fiancé and a respected RCMP commander?

As Liv struggles to find the right words, Smythe plows on.

SMYTHE

What could make a woman change so erratically, from someone coming into this community with hatred for the man she believed was ruining her company, to someone now trying desperate measures to get him acquitted? Ms Gardner, does your family have a history of mental illness?

Liv is too stunned to speak.

McLeod jumps up.

MCLEOD

Objection. Milord, of what possible relevance is an inquiry into the witness's ancestors?

JUDGE HILL

Mister Smythe?

SMYTHE

Milord, my line of questioning is pertinent to establishing the witness's mental competence.

JUDGE

Proceed.

SMYTHE

Ms Gardner, was your father diagnosed with schizophrenia?

Liv has to swallow hard before replying.

LIV

Yes.

SMYTHE

Is your sister an inmate of a psychiatric institution in Houston called the Willows, where she receives ongoing treatment for schizoaffective disorder?

LIV

A patient -- yes.

SMYTHE

Are you aware that schizophrenia is a mental disorder that is often hereditary?

LIV

In some cases, but not--

SMYTHE

Yes or no, please.

LIV

Yes.

SMYTHE

Are you further aware that this mental disorder often manifests itself in paranoid delusions of conspiracies?

LIV

Mister Smythe, I am not mentally ill.

SMYTHE

Were you with the accused, Tom Wainwright, in his home on the night of the murder?

Liv is glad to change the subject, and eager to give Tom an alibi.

LIV

Yes, I was. I was there with him for most of the evening.

SMYTHE

Not exactly. You were not there before nine p.m., and you were not there after eleven-thirty, both periods corresponding to the time frame when Dale Sommervold was shot,

(MORE)

SMYTHE (CONT'D)

according to the coroner's report.
Isn't that so?

LIV

I can't comment on the coroner's
report. I haven't seen it.

SMYTHE

You're not being asked about that,
but to attest to the fact that you
were not with the accused either
before nine or after eleven-thirty.
Yes or no.

LIV

No, I wasn't with him then.

Smythe picks up a file folder from his desk.

SMYTHE

The following morning, when the RCMP
arrested Tom Wainwright at his home
for the murder, they found illicit
drugs.

He reads from the folder.

SMYTHE

'Marijuana. One hundred and seventeen
grams. Also, drug paraphernalia,
including the remains of marijuana
cigarettes.'

He closes the folder.

SMYTHE

Did you and the accused share drugs
the night of the murder?

Liv grips the witness stand rail as the color drains from
her face.

LIV

We... smoked a little marijuana.

SMYTHE

Even though his young child was
present in the house?

LIV

Molly was asleep.

SMYTHE

So, on the very night after his house
was vandalized -- an event which he

(MORE)

SMYTHE (CONT'D)

reported to the police, accusing Dale Sommervold, and which, by all accounts, enraged him -- Tom Wainwright got high on drugs. When you left him alone, he was high on drugs, isn't that so?

LIV

He wasn't high. He wanted to talk. He's a good father... a good man.

SMYTHE

Your defense of him is bewildering, given your stated purpose in initially befriending him. Again, I ask, which Olivia Gardner are you today? The one who lied to an entire community in an attempt to entrap Tom Wainwright, or the one who spent hours with him alone doing drugs?

LIV

Look, I made a bad error in judgment when I planted the rag to implicate him in arson, but I didn't know it would used to charge him with murder.

SMYTHE

You still cling to this tale of arson? Ms. Gardner, did you burn a trailer?

LIV

No, I... changed my mind.

SMYTHE

And what triggered such a radical change of mind? Had you, perhaps, fallen under the spell of this man accused of a vicious murder? Ms Gardner, were you and Tom Wainwright lovers?

She opens her mouth, waiting for the flash of panic to subside.

Waiting is her mistake. She sees disgust on every face: spectators, judge, and jury.

SMYTHE

Please answer the question.

LIV

Yes.

Tom closes his eyes as if in pain.

INT. COURTROOM -- LATER

Belanger is on the witness stand. He looks relaxed and confident. Crisp uniform shirt and a fresh haircut.

BELANGER

This is the first I've heard of it.

SMYTHE

She never spoke to you of this elaborate scheme in which she would plant a blood-stained rag, then burn down a trailer for which you would arrest Tom Wainwright?

BELANGER

No. Never.

Liv is shocked at his lie.

INT. COURTROOM -- LATER

Mickey is on the witness stand, Smythe standing before him. Mickey looks edgy and anxious, like he hasn't slept.

Liv looks almost ill as she waits for his answer.

SMYTHE

In claiming she concocted this far-fetched plan to incriminate the accused, Olivia Gardner also claims she took you into her confidence. Did she confide such a scheme to you?

MCLEOD

I love her. I'll stick by her.

SMYTHE

Please, answer the question.

Mickey looks downcast.

MCLEOD

No. She didn't tell me anything.

His lie knocks a horrified breath from Liv.

She sees the jury's eyes flick from Mickey to her in damning judgment.

INT. HALL IN COURTHOUSE -- DAY

Liv walks slowly, still dazed, as people stream past her.

MICKEY (O.S.)

That went well.

Liv turns. Mickey leans against a wall, sipping a coffee.
He strolls over to her, all business.

MICKEY
I want your desk cleared out in two
days. You set foot after that, I'll
have security throw you out.

She's barely listening, engrossed in trying to twist her
engagement ring off her swollen finger.

MICKEY
You should've gone for the pre-nup,
darlin'. Now you've got squat.

He shakes his head with a sour smile.

MICKEY
Was he really that good a fuck?

She finally wrenches off the ring.

She drops it in his coffee.

LIV
Choke on it.

She walks away.

EXT. TOM'S FARM -- DAY

Cheryl's old Dodge chugs up the lane to Tom's house.

INT. TOM'S BARN -- DAY

Cheryl pours grain into a bucket and sets it inside a ewe's
pen. The ewe eagerly munches.

LIV (O.S.)
Can I do anything?

Cheryl looks up with a wry smile. Liv stands watching the
sheep eat.

CHERYL
Know how to de-worm a ewe?

LIV
I skipped that course in law school.

CHERYL
Yeah. Dad'll do it. I mostly come
to keep them company. They're like
people, you know? Hate to be alone.

EXT. TOM'S FIELD -- DAY

Liv and Cheryl walk the lane that wends through the field toward the woods.

A camera hangs around Liv's neck.

Knee-high wild grasses edge the lane, and a scatter of autumn leaves blown from the woods. Goldenrod nods in the breeze. A long V of geese sails overhead in the boundless blue prairie sky.

The scene is wildly beautiful.

Beyond the woods, Phoenix's flare stacks rise above the trees, their claws of flame scraping the blue.

Liv stops, lifts her camera, takes pictures of the flare stacks.

LIV
Overburden.

CHERYL
What?

Liv lowers the camera, taking in the beauty all around her.

LIV
Oil industry term. The vegetation they scrape off the land before they can drill. To Mickey, all this is overburden. Tom is overburden.

EXT. CLEARING AT THE EDGE OF THE WOODS -- DAY

The trees are a blaze of crimson and gold leaves.

Liv aims her camera at the Watcher, the monumental stick sculpture hanging from the trees. The figure remains vigilant in his guardianship of the fields and woods.

Liv snaps several pictures.

She lowers the camera, a revelation quietly dawning on her as she stares at the Watcher.

LIV
It's Tom.

EXT. CLEARING INSIDE THE WOODS -- DAY

Liv aims her camera at the picket fence.

Cheryl, with a tidying impulse, bends to pick up a fallen fence slat.

LIV

No, leave it.

Cheryl looks a question at her.

LIV

I can't save him. But there's a chance I might save his land. For Molly.

She takes several pictures of the fence.

She turns to the apple tree that marks the grave of Tom's wife. She snaps pictures.

She moves under the tree, aims up into its boughs, snaps more shots.

Butterflies flit around her. The leaves rustle gently, a living canopy over her.

It's too much for Liv -- this Eden in jeopardy. She drops the camera on its strap around her neck. Leans against the tree trunk for support. And cries.

Cheryl comes to comfort her.

LIV

Can't... save him...

CHERYL

I know how you feel. When I heard about Dale I thought I'd die.

LIV

Oh, Cheryl... I'm so sorry. This trial must be awful for you.

CHERYL

Like losing him again, every day.

Cheryl has difficulty holding back her own tears.

CHERYL

I keep thinking there's something I could've done to save him. If I'd stayed a little longer, maybe I could've stopped it...

LIV

Stayed?

Cheryl is lost in the sickening memory.

CHERYL

When I left the trailer he was happy.
(MORE)

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Oh, God, if I could just have that moment back...

LIV

The trailer? Are you saying--

Liv grips Cheryl's arms.

LIV

Cheryl, were you with Dale that night?

Cheryl realizes what she has let slip. She shrugs out of Liv's grasp, walks quickly toward the path.

Liv hurries after her.

LIV

Why didn't you tell the police?

Cheryl doesn't stop.

LIV

Cheryl, please, if you were there, maybe you can help Tom.

CHERYL

I can't.

LIV

Yes, maybe you saw something. Someone.

CHERYL

I didn't. Leave me alone. Nothing can bring back Dale!

Liv catches up to her. Spins her around. Cheryl looks afraid.

CHERYL

(breaking down)

My folks would die if they knew... I mean it, Liv, they'd throw me out.

She's sobbing. Liv takes her in her arms and holds her.

EXT. TOM'S HOUSE -- DAY

Liv and Cheryl sit side by side on the bottom step of Tom's porch.

Liv holds a stick with which she has drawn a diagram in the dirt at their feet. It's a crude map of the murder site: the access road, the abandoned well, the two trailers.

Liv grills Cheryl as though willing her to remember.

LIV
Any sounds? A voice? A distinctive
noise?

CHERYL
Rain. That's all.

LIV
Tire tracks?

CHERYL
In that downpour? I could barely
see to drive.

LIV
Who hated Dale enough to kill him?

CHERYL
No one. Everybody loved Dale. Except
Tom, I guess.

LIV
You don't believe he--

CHERYL
No, of course not. But I just don't
know anything...

Cheryl is drained.

Liv slumps. She has asked Cheryl every question she can
thing of. It's hopeless.

Still, refusing to give up, she drags the stick to the map
in the dirt.

LIV
Let's go through it again. You
arrived at about 8:30. You didn't
see Tom's truck -- if Dale drove it
in, maybe he parked it here, behind.
You went inside this trailer, and
Dale was there and you stayed with
him until--

Cheryl stands up wearily. She stares at the sky and bleakly
recites the nightmare she has re-lived for months...

CHERYL
Until I drove away, just as some
monster was on his way to kill him.
But I was too busy singing along
with Shania on the radio, and trying
not to hit a guy on the road, so I
wasn't there to stop--

LIV

Guy?

Liv jumps up, all attention.

LIV

What guy? What road?

CHERYL

County Road Two. I don't know who --
he passed me. Some Phoenix rig hand.
Tearing home in the rain, I guess.

LIV

Phoenix? How do you know?

CHERYL

Saw the logo. And all their cars
are the same. But what difference--

LIV

Cheryl, that driver might have seen
something. Seen the killer.

INT. PHOENIX OFFICE, SPIRIT CREEK -- DAY

A clerk flips through pages of a ledger as she cradles the
phone on her shoulder.

CLERK

May 27th? Let's see... only two
vehicles out that night.

INTERCUT -- TOM'S PORCH STEPS/PHOENIX OFFICE

LIV

Who signed them out?

CLERK

Ted Buchanan had one. Actually, he
signed it out the day before. And...
yeah, here it is. Mister Havelock
had the other.

EXT. HOUSE, SPIRIT CREEK -- DAY

A working man's house, the yard littered with kids' bikes
and balls.

Leaving the house, Liv comes down the walkway and gets into

HER CAR

where Cheryl sits in the passenger seat.

LIV

His wife says he was home, the weather was so bad. The car was here all night.

CHERYL

That leaves the boss.

Liv shakes her head as she starts the car.

LIV

He was on a flight to Houston.

CHERYL

Guess rain doesn't stops planes.

Liv shoots her a look -- a thought gripping her. She pulls out her cell phone.

INT. LIV'S CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Liv holds her phone as she drives.

LIV

(on the phone)

How long was that flight delayed?

She listens in surprise. Slowly lowers the phone. Stares straight ahead, her face a blank mask as her mind races.

CHERYL

Liv?

INT. GAS PROCESSING PLANT LOBBY, SPIRIT CREEK -- DAY

The gray-haired receptionist at the desk gapes over her bifocals at Liv, who's infamous here from her court appearance.

LIV

Where is he?

RECEPTIONIST

Why, you're -- I'm really not a liberty to--

Liv marches to a closed office door.

RECEPTIONIST

You can't go in there!

INT. OFFICE -- DAY

Liv pushes the door open.

Two men look up at her from a desk where they stand perusing blueprints. One's in coveralls.

The MANAGER, in shirt and tie, looks flustered.

LIV
Where's Mickey?

MANAGER
I'm not sure I should talk to you.

Liv looks through the glass wall that overlooks the plant floor where men in hard hats are at work.

LIV
The new feeder pipelines -- you brought them on-line already?
(a sudden realization)
Jesus, did Mickey even finish the inspections?

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

Mickey and a foreman, alone out here, stroll along the gravel road beside the pipeline where bulldozers sit idle.

They talk MOS, pointing to mounds of earth. Dug up to form the pipeline trench, this earth will re-cover the pipeline.

They both turn as a car pulls up.

Liv gets out.

LIV
We need to talk.

Mickey is irritated but unruffled.

MICKEY
(to the foreman)
Tell the office what we need. I'll be back in a minute.

The foreman climbs into his pick-up truck and drives off.

MICKEY
You try this stunt again, I'll get a restraining order. The judge is feeling mighty sorry for me since you admitted you're Wainwright's slut.

He starts walking to his car. Liv follows.

LIV
You said you were on the flight to Houston. But you drove back to Spirit Creek. Why?

MICKEY

You're nuts. I was in the office next morning at eight.

LIV

Maybe so. But the night before, you drove to the trailers. Somebody saw the vehicle, Mickey. Saw you on County Road Two, a minute from the access road.

He stops.

MICKEY

Who?

LIV

I think you went back to burn the trailer. Then at the last minute you decided not to. Maybe because the rain was too heavy -- I don't know, and I don't care. I just want to find out what you saw. At the site, or on the road. Maybe you saw the killer.

He stares at her. Can't believe it.

MICKEY

You want me to help save your lover boy?

He reaches out, puts his hand around her throat. She flinches -- but his touch is gentle, a lover's gesture.

MICKEY

If not for him, we could've been happy, don't you think?

LIV

Please, Mickey -- for once, be a human being. If you saw anything--

MICKEY

Yeah, I think we could've. But some things a man can't forgive. I just wanted to blow his brains out. You fucked him.

She wrenches his hand from her throat, furious.

But the words he just used suddenly sink in -- an abrupt enlightenment.

LIV

Blow his brains out? That's... what happened to Dale.

Slowly, in amazement, she pieces it together.

LIV

Dale drove Tom's truck there. To meet someone. But later someone else drove in. Someone who had Tom's rifle... stole it when he trashed Tom's house. And he used it to shoot Dale. My God... it was you.

MICKEY

You are crazy.

LIV

What did Dale ever do to you? He was loyal. Why kill him?

MICKEY

I didn't kill Dale!

They stare at one another, both aware that he has let something slip.

But Liv, in desperate bewilderment, can't put her finger on what it is.

And then the truth hits her.

LIV

You didn't know it was Dale. The dark, the rain... the truck... You thought you were shooting Tom!

Mickey's eyes bore into hers. In his silence Liv reads an icy, remorseless confession. It horrifies her.

LIV

You made love to me... Dale's body barely cold... Tom in shackles, in jail...

She takes a step back, trembling.

She turns abruptly.

Starts for her car.

Mickey's gaze stays locked on her.

Liv focuses on her car.

It looks so far away.

She followed Mickey too far.

She picks up her pace, trying not to look panicked, but walking so fast that one push and she'd break into a run.

She hears a car door slam.

She looks back.

Mickey is driving toward her.

Racing for her, stones spitting from his rear wheels.

She knows -- he means to run her down.

She runs for her car.

Mickey's coming so fast, he'll hit her in seconds.

She sees in horror that she can't make it to her car.

She veers off the road, runs down the grassy slope toward the trench. He can't follow her there.

But he does! He swerves and bumps down the slope.

Then veers sharply so he's barreling along between the road and the trench, parallel with both, the car at a crazily tilted angle on the slope.

Liv keeps running.

The sloped terrain is hard going.

Breaths saw in her throat.

She glances over her shoulder.

Mickey's gaining on her.

She runs on in terror.

She hears a thud. She glances over her shoulder.

Mickey's left front wheel has snagged on the trench lip.

To free himself, he backs up, bits of turf flying from under the wheels. Then rocks forward, spraying dirt.

Almost free, he gives the gas one last kick.

He's misjudged the loamy earth. It gives way, crumbling beneath his tire.

His car plunges forward, hits the pipeline with a sharp metallic crunch.

The car stops, tires spinning.

Liv stops, panting. Horrified at what she sees: the collision has ruptured a pipeline weld.

INT. MICKEY'S CAR -- SAME

Mickey freezes in fear.

The crack in the pipeline is as wide as a man's leg. Spewing invisible poisonous gas...

He leans across and throws open the passenger door.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- SAME

Mickey scrambles out.

He tumbles onto the grass.

Scrambles to his feet.

Liv watches.

He's running toward her. But he's unsteady, running erratically, his legs wobbly.

He staggers. Doubles over, retching.

He falls onto his hands and knees. Vomits.

He collapses on his stomach, his head lolling at the edge of the trench.

His eyes close.

Liv takes a step toward him -- a sheer instinct of pity. Then stops, her brain taking control -- he's unconscious, she could never lift him.

She holds her breath, clamps her shirt over her mouth and nose.

And runs.

As she runs she pulls her cell phone from her pocket.

She stumbles up the grassy slope.

On the phone she frantically thumbs the numbers "9-1-1", still keeping her mouth and nose covered.

She runs down the road toward her car.

But her legs are unsteady.

VOICE ON PHONE
Ambulance. What is your emergency?

Almost at the car, but out of oxygen, Liv staggers.

The phone falls from her hand, skitters across the gravel.

Collapses.

VOICE ON PHONE

Hello... what is your emergency?

She lies immobile, her cheek on the gravel, eyes closed tight with the agony of craving breath.

She gasps an involuntary breath.

Her eyes spring open, expecting death.

She gropes for the phone...

Then stops.

Suddenly lifts her heads.

The wind! It's blowing her hair in the direction of the ruptured pipeline. She's upwind of the poison gas -- safe!

She snatches the phone, scrambles to her feet, runs to the car.

INT. LIV'S CAR -- SAME

Liv drives, racing away from the pipeline.

She steers with one hand, holds her cell phone in the other.

LIV

Pipeline rupture... a man down...

INT. HALL IN COURTHOUSE -- DAY

Outside a door marked, "JUDGE'S CHAMBERS," Liv waits, tense with impatience.

The door opens. McLeod walks out, looking grim.

MCLEOD

You were right. Havelock bribed the weld inspector. Ordered substandard materials. Never even completed the weld x-rays.

LIV

Will the judge let me testify?

MCLEOD

He wants testimony, all right. But not yours.

INT. HOSPITAL MEETING ROOM -- DAY

The Judge, Smythe, McLeod, and a doctor stand as a nurse wheels Mickey in.

The change in Mickey is shocking.

In pajamas, he's unshaved, his hair mussed. Slumped in the wheelchair, he looks like frail old man.

JUDGE

Mister Havelock, we need to ask you
a few questions.

Mickey stares straight ahead, his gaze as vacant as a baby's. A fly crawls over his stubbled chin. He doesn't move.

The judge frowns, worried. Nods to McLeod.

MCLEOD

Mister Havelock, can you tell us
where you were on the night of May
twenty-seventh?

Mickey opens his mouth. Saliva drools from the corner of his mouth. The nurse bends to wipe his chin.

The judge and lawyers are clearly dismayed.

JUDGE

(to the doctor)
Prognosis?

DOCTOR

I always tell the families, hope is
the eternal duty.

JUDGE

(stern)
We're not family.

DOCTOR

The neurological damage is
irreversible.

INT. COURTROOM, GRANDE PRAIRIE -- DAY

Liv sits in the crowded courtroom as McLeod gives his summation.

McLeod paces slowly in front of the jury.

MCLEOD

Fact: Mister Havelock's criminal
acts in pushing through his gas plant
and its pipelines resulted in
appalling tragedy. The toxic gas
plume, born on the wind, killed
thirteen people in Spirit Creek.
Many more still suffer chronic effects --
numbness, fatigue, depression.

He stops pacing.

MCLEOD

Fact: Mister Havelock's car collided with the pipeline, causing the rupture. All because, as Olivia Gardner testified, he tried to run her down. Why? To prevent her from telling the authorities that it was Havelock himself who killed Dale Sommervold. To cover his many crimes, he tried to kill her too.

He looks into the eyes of the jury members.

MCLEOD

Ladies and gentlemen, Mister Havelock will never speak again. So we may never know exactly what happened that rainy night. But the facts we do know cast so much doubt on the prosecution's case, there remains only one clear path to justice for Tom Wainwright.

INT. BAR, CALGARY -- NIGHT

A college student hangout on a slow winter night.

A waiter sets down a cup of coffee on a table, then a bottle of beer and a glass.

Tom picks up the beer bottle. Takes a swing.

Cheryl stirs cream into her coffee.

TOM

Tough course?

CHERYL

Tough enough. But I'll get there.

TOM

Your dad's bragging already.
Paralegal in the family.

She manages a smile. They sit in awkward silence. She fiddles with her spoon. He picks at his beer label.

TOM

I've tried everywhere. It's like she dropped off the face of the earth.

CHERYL

That's how she wants it.

Tom sits forward, alert.

TOM

So you do know where she is.

CHERYL

I know she doesn't want anybody else to know where she is. She's been through enough.

TOM

I don't want to hurt her.

CHERYL

After what she did to you? She's my friend, Tom. Forget her. Go back home.

EXT. FARMHOUSE, SOUTHERN ALBERTA -- DAY

Snow blankets the farmland. Snow sparkles on pine boughs. Snow caps the tops of fence posts in downy mushrooms.

At the end of the lane a "For Sale" sign bears a red diagonal banner that reads: "Sold."

The old house is in need of repair -- some shingles missing, paint flaked off the clapboard. But it has a cozy appeal. Smoke curls from the chimney, and red-berried holly bushes flank the front door. Hanging from the porch eaves, a wind chime of brightly painted hummingbirds tinkles in a puff of breeze.

In the distance the snowy peaks of the Rocky Mountains are etched against the blue sky, clear cut as a promise.

EXT. BARN -- DAY

Liv's boots crunch over the snow-packed path to the barn.

She's in jeans and a frayed old ski jacket, her hair in a slapdash pony-tail. It's a far cry from her former corporate glamour.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Zeus, move your stupid butt!

Liv reaches the paddock railing.

LIV

He's an ass, he's got other ideas.

A donkey stands in the middle of the paddock. Chris yanks at the rope around his neck. The donkey doesn't budge.

Liv pulls work gloves from her pocket and tugs them on.

LIV

Which end do I take?

CHRIS

Wait.

Chris moves close and bends to speak in the donkey's ear.
Liv looks on, amused.

LIV

The mule whisperer.

Chris cups her hands over the donkey's eyes and scratches his hide, a sound like nails on sandpaper. Zeus sticks out his neck in donkey bliss.

Chris takes a step backwards into the barn. The donkey follows so as not to miss a moment of the scratching. Chris entices him all the way into the barn. Liv chuckles.

She hears a vehicle and turns. A truck chugs up the lane. Liv calls to the barn ...

LIV

Chris, the vet's here. You better
get that ewe ready.

(to herself)

And I better get the checkbook.

*

She pushes away from the railing.

The truck pulls up. Then she recognizes it -- and her heart skips a beat.

Getting out of the truck is Tom. He comes to her.

Pulling a letter from his pocket, he unfolds it and holds it out for her to see. A legal document.

TOM

You responsible for this?

Taken aback, she scans the page.

LIV

I... took photos. Sent them--

TOM

To this New York lawyer. He called.
Told me all works of art can be
copyrighted. And Joanna's are --
how'd he put it? -- 'bound to the
land.'

He re-pockets the letter.

TOM

I told him, hey give it a shot. And
damn if he didn't copyright my land.

Liv can't help smiling.

LIV
Has it worked?

TOM
He told the oil men any disruption infringes my copyright. That covers wells and pipelines, even local air pollution. They've cleared out, all around me. Shut down the flare stacks, abandoned the wells. How in hell did you think this up?

They look at each other for long moment. So much to say...

TOM
It took me all this time to find you, Liv. Or I would've come sooner. Had to convince Cheryl.

The tenderness in his voice throws her. She has to look away.

TOM
That a donkey I saw in the paddock?

LIV
He came with the place. Plus five hens and two sheep. I'm still pretty clueless, but my sister's living with me and she never met an animal she didn't like.

TOM
How do you like it...living like this?

LIV
In squalor?

TOM
In the country.

LIV
Love it. The mountains. The peace. The nights so black I can see rivers of stars.

He's looking at her so intensely, she has to look away again.

LIV
Tom, I'm so, so sorry... I only hope... you won't always hate me.

TOM
I'm kind of done with hate.

LIV

But you must... after everything I
did to you.

TOM

You saved me from prison.

LIV

I lied to you.

TOM

You saved my land.

LIV

I set you up.

TOM

And confessed it all in court. You
threw away everything, for me.

Liv doesn't dare believe what she's hearing.

TOM

Hate you? I think you're the bravest
person I've ever known.

Tears spring to her eyes. His forgiveness is the balm her
soul has craved. She swipes away a tear. Squares her
shoulders.

LIV

Show my sister how to worm a ewe?

He smiles. They walk toward the barn.

TOM

Molly wants you to come for Christmas.
Can I tell her yes?

Liv's smile in return overflows with "Yes."

FADE OUT.

THE END