

UNTITLED ALASKA PROJECT
(A.K.A. THE CIRCLE)

"My Three Sons"
(PILOT)

written by
John August

WHITE DRAFT 2.18.03

TEASER

1

FADE IN

1

We open on a stretch of two-lane blacktop that cuts through a dense pine forest. Wisps of fog cling to the trees. The distant mountains are capped with snow year-round.

It's daylight, but the sky is dark. A storm is coming.

TITLE OVER:

**ALASKA HIGHWAY
10 MILES WEST OF THE CANADIAN BORDER**

Far in the distance, a MAN emerges from the woods. He crosses to the center of the empty road, where he drops to his knees.

CLOSE ON the man, exhausted and desperate. His clothes are muddy and torn, bloody in places.

His name is Bobby Satchel. He's 26.

Kneeling in the middle of the empty road, he looks both ways for any approaching car. Nothing. But then, from behind a curve, he sees headlights. A semi truck is approaching.

Bobby waves his arms to flag down the truck. If he has to, he'll throw himself in front of it.

Finally, we hear a WHOOSH as the truck downshifts. ENGINE BRAKES engage. The truck stops in the middle of the road -- the shoulder isn't wide enough to hold it.

The DRIVER, 40 and burly, climbs down from the rig. Unzips his jacket. He has a revolver strapped to his belt, just in case.

The Driver approaches. Looks at Bobby, his face and hands covered with scratches.

BOBBY

I need your help. It's my brother.

(closer)

He's still out there.

CUT TO:

2 EXT. RESCUE STAGING AREA - DAY

2

Two pickup trucks ROAR past, revealing State Trooper DARRYL VAN DER KAMP (23) as he finishes a Nextel call. Just a year out of the academy, he has a boyish enthusiasm that shows through even when he's trying to be commanding.

He calls out to the MEN who climb out of the trucks, along with their DOGS:

VAN DER KAMP
Need you to sign in over there.
Grab a walkie and a vest.

"Over there" is a folding table next to Van Der Kamp's truck, where a VOLUNTEER is handing out equipment to the growing search party -- FIFTEEN LOCAL MEN and counting.

Hearing a HORN, Van Der Kamp turns to see a State Trooper truck pull in. Van Der Kamp walks over to meet up with Lieutenant RAY MATHERS (40's). Strongly built and naturally athletic, Mathers is the paradigm of the Alaskan State Trooper. He oversees 100 men and 100,000 square miles.

VAN DER KAMP (cont'd)
Lieutenant.

MATHERS
What have we got?

Both Mathers and Van Der Kamp are Troopers, but different kinds. Van Der Kamp wears the green uniform of the fish-and-wildlife division, while Mathers is law enforcement. If Mathers ever wore his uniform, it would be blue.

The men walk together.

VAN DER KAMP
Two brothers, Glenn and Bobby Satchel. They work for a backwoods tour company out of Delta Junction. They were scouting out a new route when the older brother, Glenn, fell and cracked his skull. Couldn't walk. Younger brother stayed with him overnight, then hiked out this morning to get help.

MATHERS
Where's the chopper?

VAN DER KAMP

Grounded. We're trying to pull one out of Fairbanks.

MATHERS

Alright. We've got maybe three hours of daylight. Get on the phone to the Mounties in Dawson. We're going to need them if this crosses over the border. Then break the men into four-man teams. We'll off-road as far as we can, then go in on foot.

VAN DER KAMP

Understood.

MATHERS

Where's the brother?

CUT TO:

3

EXT. BEHIND VAN DER KAMP'S TRUCK - DAY

3

Bobby Satchel is sitting on the tailgate of the truck, wrapped in a blanket, nursing a cup of coffee. Without the panic, we now see that he's handsome and thuggishly charming. Wily rather than clever, he's quick to find more trouble than he can handle.

Mathers approaches.

MATHERS

You're Bobby Satchel?

(a nod)

Ray Mathers. What happened to your brother?

BOBBY

I already told the other guy everything I...

MATHERS

Now you're going to tell me. What happened?

BOBBY

This time yesterday, my brother and I were hiking across some rocks. Nothing big. He was up ahead when he slipped, went down.

(MORE)

BOBBY (cont'd)

I didn't think it was that bad,
because he got right back up.
Then he fell again, backwards.
Right on his head. You could hear
something crack.

MATHERS

Was he conscious?

BOBBY

In and out. I walked with him as
far as I could. But his leg was
busted up, too.

MATHERS

So you left him.

BOBBY

No! I mean, not then. It was
starting to get dark, so I built a
fire. Tried to keep him talking.
First light, I took off for the
highway. I thought it was only a
mile or two. It was a lot more.

MATHERS

How close can you get us to him?

A long pause.

MATHERS (cont'd)

How close?

BOBBY

My brother had the GPS in his
backpack. It broke when he fell.

MATHERS

So you don't know where you left
him?

BOBBY

I tried to go as due south as I
could. But I don't know. I guess
I kind of panicked.

(beat)

Look, he was hurt pretty bad. If
we don't find him by dark...

MATHERS

We're gonna find him.

- 4 EXT. THE FOREST - DAY 4
- VARIOUS SHOTS: The four SEARCH TEAMS move through the dense woods, where dirty snow still lingers in the shadows. Each of the searchers wears a bright orange vest. Many have guns and packs.
- Van Der Kamp's group crosses a stream. The SEARCH DOGS happily bound through the water. The men look up as a SEARCH HELICOPTER flies over.
- 5 EXT. MORaine FIELD - DAY 5
- Mathers and his crew reach a field of small boulders at the base of a mountain, the detritus of an ancient glacier. These may be the rocks Bobby was describing.
- 6 EXT. STAGING AREA - DAY 6
- FOUR WOMEN -- wives, mothers and daughters of the searchers -- begin setting up Coleman stoves for coffee and food. More vehicles have arrived, forming a small village.
- Heavily bundled KIDS play hide-and-seeK around the trucks. Bobby Satchel is still sitting on the truck's tailgate, now being examined by a PARAMEDIC.
- 7 EXT. HIGH TRAIL - DAY 7
- As the sun sinks closer to the horizon, a wind picks up. Mathers stops to give instructions to the chopper:
- MATHERS
Do continuous passes along the east side. We've got the west side covered for now.
- CHOPPER PILOT (ON RADIO)
Understood.
- VAN DER KAMP (ON RADIO)
Unit 2, over.
- MATHERS
Go ahead.
- VAN DER KAMP (ON RADIO)
Lieutenant, we found him.

8 EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

8

Hidden deep in the heart of the woods, this tranquil glen opens to the sky. Mathers arrives to find Van Der Kamp and three other MEN huddled over a motionless body on the ground.

MATHERS

Get these men back!

As Van Der Kamp herds the searchers away, Mathers kneels over the lifeless body in the pine needles. GLENN SATCHEL was 32, with a round, friendly face. Heavier than his brother, but still fairly athletic.

MATHERS (cont'd)

Did anyone touch him?

VAN DER KAMP

I did. I checked his neck for a pulse.

Mathers carefully looks over the body, never touching it. He's surveying the scene, silently cataloging everything he sees.

Since Glenn is lying on his back, we don't see much of the HEAD TRAUMA, but it's clearly significant. Glenn's left leg has been bound with bandanas and sticks to make a crude SPLINT.

Reaching over to his right, Mathers runs his fingers through the cold COALS of a small campfire.

Bobby Satchel arrives with another group of SEARCHERS. He's out of breath from running.

He sees Mathers leaning over the body of his older brother.

BOBBY

Is he..?

MATHERS

Dead. Just like you left him.

CUT TO:

9 GORGEOUS AND DISTURBING TITLE SEQUENCE

9

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

10 EXT. EDGE OF THE FOREST - DUSK 10

His wrists in handcuffs, Bobby Satchel is loaded into a ROARING helicopter by an AIR SUPPORT TROOPER. Bobby's eyes burn with a cold fire.

At the treeline, Ray Mathers watches as the chopper lifts off.

11 EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DUSK 11

Mathers heads back to the crime scene, where Van Der Kamp is finishing up photographing the body and surrounding area.

VAN DER KAMP

I've got all four sides. Near, medium and far. I used my badge as an index for size on the close-ups.

He hands over three rolls of film. Van Der Kamp is almost embarrassed to ask:

VAN DER KAMP (cont'd)

Lieutenant...

MATHERS

Why do I think this is a murder?

VAN DER KAMP

Pretty much.

MATHERS

Come here.

The men kneel down next to Glenn Satchel's body.

MATHERS (cont'd)

Bobby said his brother fell on a rock. You got a head wound, could be from a rock. But it's not from around here -- he said they walked a while.

VAN DER KAMP

On a broken leg.

MATHERS

You got a splint down here.
Compound fracture, bone sticking
through the skin. But where's the
blood?

VAN DER KAMP

There's a little.

MATHERS

Just what gravity pulled out. His
heart had already stopped when the
leg got broken.

Van Der Kamp considers the implication. Mathers stands.

MATHERS (cont'd)

Now look around. You've got two
sixty-pound backpacks leaning
against that tree...

VAN DER KAMP

(realizing)

Glenn couldn't carry his with a
concussion and a broken leg.
Maybe Bobby carried both of them?

MATHERS

Two backpacks and his brother.
You're as strong as he is. Could
you do that?

VAN DER KAMP

No.

MATHERS

You also got ashes from a
campfire. Bobby says he stayed
here from dusk until dawn. That's
ten hours. But there aren't
enough ashes here for a 20-minute
fire.

VAN DER KAMP

He set it up to match his story.

MATHERS

Or created a story to cover what
happened. All that's true is that
a rock killed his brother. Bobby
should know. He was holding it.

Van Der Kamp looks around, humbled but still excited.

VAN DER KAMP
When do we move the body?

MATHERS
We don't. Paul Vico is coming up
out of Anchorage.

VAN DER KAMP
Vico himself?

MATHERS
He'll be here first light. Only
problem is, all this pretty yellow
tape isn't going to do much to
frighten off a bear with a
hankering.

VAN DER KAMP
Do you want me to stay? I can
stay. I can guard the scene.

That was certainly Mathers's plan -- but he's glad to see Van
Der Kamp taking the initiative.

MATHERS
Why do I get the feeling you're
not entirely satisfied with the
fish and wildlife division?

Van Der Kamp smiles.

MATHERS (cont'd)
See you in the morning.

12

EXT. DELTA JUNCTION DINER - NIGHT

12

Sitting on the outskirts of the only road in town, the diner
is actually the front section of a low-slung house. The NEON
SIGN is lit, though several letters have burnt out.

Mathers's truck sits out front, along with several local rigs.

VALERIE (V.O.)
'Course I know Bobby Satchel.
Seems like half my job is keeping
track of him.

13 INT. DELTA JUNCTION DINER / KITCHEN - NIGHT

13

VALERIE COOPER (40's) owns and runs the diner. She's lasted 25 years in the backwoods, ten without a husband. She and Mathers are talking as she hangs up her apron and changes into her Village Public Safety Officer uniform (basically just a coat and hat).

In the background, a heavysset DISHWASHER is hosing off plates.

VALERIE

When I took this job, the old VPSO gave me his "asshole list." He said, every time a car gets stolen, girl gets beat up, check the names on this list. Odds are, one of these guys did it. Bobby Satchel was at the top of that list.

MATHERS

Has he done time?

VALERIE

Six months for arson. Got out a year ago.

MATHERS

What did he burn?

VALERIE

His girlfriend's trailer. Then a couple months ago, the Fairbanks police were out here, asking him questions about some missing dancers.

MATHERS

What was the connection?

VALERIE

The Satchel family owns a backwoods charter company, so they're in and out of Fairbanks a lot. Bobby knew at least two of the girls. But nothing ever came of it.

14 INT. DELTA JUNCTION DINER / MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

14

Mathers and Valerie emerge from the swinging door that separates the kitchen from the dining area. There are only eight tables and the counter. Half the seats are full.

A FORTY-YEAR OLD MAN seated at the counter smiles at Valerie. Broadly built, with a lazy beard, he's both pathetic and a little intimidating.

CUSTOMER

Evening, Valerie.
(gesturing to her officer
hat)
There some trouble?

VALERIE

No trouble. Eat your soup.

Chastened, the man goes back to his meal. Valerie leads Mathers down the counter.

MATHERS

What can you tell me about the
victim?

VALERIE

Glenn? He and his brother were
night-and-day. When he'd come in,
it was always, "Morning, Mrs.
Cooper. How's business?" Glenn
married a girl from Ontario,
sweetest thing you ever met.
They've got a house in town.

Sixteen-year old JOSH COOPER is changing the ribbon on the register.

VALERIE (cont'd)

Josh, this is Lieutenant Mathers.
(to Mathers)
My son.

MATHERS / JOSH

Good to meet you.

VALERIE

(to Josh)
I need you to close up. If Frank
can't pay, don't push it. I'll
deal with him tomorrow.

Valerie works the combination on a safe beneath the counter. She takes out her revolver. Checks it, then holsters it.

MATHERS

Where does Bobby live?

VALERIE

With his father Elias, about 30 miles out.

MATHERS

Can we get a warrant?

VALERIE

Could be tough. The village magistrate is a horse's-ass named Bill Ivanhov. He's friends of the Satchels.

MATHERS

Shouldn't matter.

VALERIE

Shouldn't. But it will.

15 INT. IVANHOV'S WORKSHOP - NIGHT

15

Borough magistrate BILL IVANHOV (50) is an artist of some acclaim, working in a very specialized niche. He uses wood-burning tools -- which look like soldering irons -- to create elaborate images on knotted planks of pine.

Mathers and Valerie stand near Ivanhov as he works, tiny curls of smoke rising from his canvas. Ivanhov feels no need to make eye contact.

IVANHOV

People think a magistrate is just a poor man's judge, but it's completely different. Most of the cases that come before me, there's no prosecutor, no defense attorney, just me and the perpetrator, figuring out the right thing to do.

Ivanhov finally looks over at them. He wears magnifying glasses to aid his work.

IVANHOV (cont'd)
Val will tell you. I take my
responsibility to these people
very seriously.

MATHERS
Good to know.

IVANHOV
Which is why I will never give you
a warrant to search the Satchels'.

He hangs his iron in the rack.

VALERIE
He's got good cause, Bill.

IVANHOV
He's got nothing but an innocent
boy in jail, grieving for the loss
of his only brother. He hasn't
got a shred of conclusive
evidence, which is why he needs to
turn the Satchel home upside-down
looking for some nail on which to
hang a flimsy argument.

Mathers doesn't rise to the provocation.

MATHERS
I take it you're friends with the
Satchel family.

IVANHOV
I admire the way in which they
live.

MATHERS
And how is that?

IVANHOV
Elias Satchel puts his boys first,
always has. They're living the
way people used to live. With
integrity. Which is why I know it
is impossible that Bobby killed
Glenn.

Ivanhov unclamps his plank from the easel.

MATHERS

If the Satchels are such decent people, what are you so afraid we're going to find?

IVANHOV

Lieutenant Mathers, you of all people know that everyone has private matters best kept out of public scrutiny. I'm not about to let you harass this family.

Mathers doesn't let his temper get the best of him.

MATHERS

We can get a warrant from a District Court.

IVANHOV

Fairbanks is 200 miles roundtrip. Enjoy your drive, Lieutenant.

With that, Ivanhov switches off his lamp and leaves the workshop. Once he's out of earshot...

VALERIE

He lied. It's only 190 miles.

MATHERS

By the time we get a judge it'll be morning. I have to meet the medical examiner at the site.

(beat)

You said Glenn Satchel had a wife?

VALERIE

Mary. She lives in town.

16

INT. GLENN AND MARY SATCHEL'S HOME - NIGHT

16

The Satchels' home is a one-story prefab, assembled on-site in an afternoon. Still, it's fairly homey inside: handmade curtains, book-lined shelves and many photos of the happy couple.

Sitting at the kitchen table, MARY SATCHEL (22) holds both hands around a mug of tea, trying to keep them from shaking. She looks younger than her years, more high school than housewife. It's 11:15 at night.

MARY

I met Glenn four years ago. My family hired him to fly us into the backwoods. Literally from the moment I met him, I couldn't imagine living without him.

As she says this, she realizes her unimaginable has come true. She pushes back her ninth round of tears.

Mathers and Valerie sit across from her.

VALERIE

It's okay, honey.

MARY

It's not okay. It's not. I don't know what I'm going to do. What do I do?

A beat as Mary composes herself. Then suddenly, to Mathers:

MARY (cont'd)

You think Bobby killed him?

MATHERS

Do you?

MARY

I can't imagine it. But things are always a lot worse than I imagine.

A quiet moment. Mary looks up from time to time, fidgety.

MARY (cont'd)

I'm sorry. I'm just more emotional anyway. This on top of it...

MATHERS

Why are you more emotional?

Mary doesn't answer.

VALERIE

You're pregnant, aren't you honey?

Mary half-smiles, half-winces. It's true.

VALERIE (cont'd)
 Just a couple months?
 (Mary nods)
 Listen, there's nothing to be
 afraid of.

Headlights sweep across the wall. We hear a TRUCK pulling up to the house. By Mary's expression, there certainly is something to fear.

CUT TO:

17 EXT. GLEN AND MARY SACHEL'S HOME - NIGHT 17

Glenn and Bobby's father ELIAS SACHEL (70) climbs out of his truck. The paterfamilias is a rosy man with hungry, empty eyes -- he always seems to be looking through you.

ELIAS
 Mary!

Mary is at the front door, along with Mathers and Valerie. Mary's face shows a visible panic. This man is not your ordinary in-law.

ELIAS (cont'd)
 (to Mathers and Valerie)
 This is my son's house! You
 people have no right to be on this
 property! You are trespassing!

VALERIE
 Now Elias, we're just talking with
 Mary here.

ELIAS
 Out. Out!

MATHERS
 This is Mary's house. It's her
 decision to talk to us.

Elias points his arthritic finger at Mary, like a witch casting a curse.

ELIAS
 You tell them to leave.

MATHERS
 Don't try to intimidate her.

ELIAS

Who are you to come onto my land,
arrest my boy...

MATHERS

This isn't your house.

Elias suddenly tries to strike Mathers across the face.
Mathers blocks the blow and holds the old man's arm tight.

MATHERS (cont'd)

And that didn't just happen. But if
it were to happen, I'd be arresting
you, too. Do you understand?

He lets Elias's arm go.

MARY

You have to go.

Mathers and Valerie look back to Mary -- she's talking about
them.

MARY (cont'd)

Both of you have to go right now.
I'm not going to answer any more
questions.

VALERIE

Mary, you don't have to...

MARY

Go. Now.

18 INT. MATHERS'S TRUCK / DRIVING - NIGHT

18

Mathers is at the wheel. In the passenger seat, Valerie takes
off her hat.

VALERIE

When you're a village officer, you
spend ninety percent of your time
dealing with drunks and bears.
Best thing about both of them is,
eventually they get tired and go
home. It's the long-haul crazies
you gotta worry about.

Mathers smiles.

MATHERS

I don't think Elias Satchel is crazy. I'm guessing he has a stronger moral code than most. He just can't imagine his boys doing wrong.

VALERIE

Mary knows better.

MATHERS

She knows a lot more than she's saying.

VALERIE

So what do we do? As long as Elias is around, she's going to keep stonewalling us.

Mathers turns on his windshield wipers as a light snow begins to fall.

MATHERS

We come back in the daylight and find a way around that wall.

19 EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

19

The same light snow falls on Trooper Van Der Kamp, who leans back against a log, finishing a protein bar. The foil wrapper CRINKLES as he tucks it into his pocket. It's the only sound for miles.

The night is completely still, just the tops of the trees swaying in a light breeze.

Van Der Kamp hunches back and closes his eyes, ready for a nap. Our attention moves from the Trooper to a tarp-covered bump -- the body of Glenn Satchel.

From there, we move to the yellow police tape at the perimeter of the site. An unattached piece dangles down, gently swaying back and forth. Looking past it, we notice

A LIGHT

in the darkness. Small, a flashlight. Someone is coming.

CLOSE ON Van Der Kamp. Snow lands on his eyelashes.

A long beat, then Van Der Kamp suddenly sits bolt upright. He heard something. He looks around, finally spotting the flashlight moving in the distance.

VAN DER KAMP

Hello?!

(no answer)

Hello!

The light stops moving. Then it disappears completely.

PUSH IN on Van Der Kamp as his heart climbs into his throat. Standing up, he digs for his flashlight. His radio falls onto the dirt. He considers grabbing it, but instead unholsters his gun.

He turns back to where he last saw the light.

VAN DER KAMP (cont'd)

Is somebody out there?!

With his gun in his right hand, and the flashlight in his left, Van Der Kamp carefully sweeps across the trees. At every moment, we suspect there's something just outside his beam of light.

CLOSE ON Van Der Kamp's boots, as he carefully moves forward. The faintest trace of snow is clinging to the pine needles.

Reaching the nearest line of trees, Van Der Kamp again sweeps his light through the darkness. We follow the beam as it leaps from trunk to trunk, until

A SHOT

rings out in the night.

Van Der Kamp falls back against a tree. CRIES OUT in pain and surprise. GASPS, with blood GURGLING in his lungs.

ANOTHER SHOT.

The flashlight drops to the ground. A gentle snow falls across the beam, flakes melting on the lens.

We HOLD for a long beat, then...

FADE TO BLACK.

20 EXT. SKY - DAY 20

A helicopter descends upon us.

21 EXT. EDGE OF THE FOREST - DAY 21

Mathers leads PAUL VICO (48) out of the chopper. Vico is the Chief Forensic Examiner for the State of Alaska, sort of an über-Quincy. A bear of a man, his sloppy appearance belies an obsessive streak that can manifest as impatience, anger or arrogance. He seems to have no barometer for when he's pissing people off.

Mathers and Vico have known each other for years. They're friendly colleagues, not to be mistaken as friends. They don't chat. They don't send Christmas cards.

Walking away from the chopper...

VICO

I went by your office last week. There was so much dust on the desk, I thought they were checking for fingerprints.

MATHERS

I'm no good indoors. And I don't want to live in the city.

VICO

Paris is a city. New York is a city. Anchorage is a hundred thousand people huddled together for warmth.

22 EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY 22

Mathers, Vico and the two air support Troopers (from the day before) duck under the yellow tape. As Mathers approaches the center of the clearing, he finds not only is his Trooper absent, but Glenn Satchel's body is missing.

MATHERS

Van Der Kamp?! Van Der Kamp!

VICO

I'm guessing there's supposed to be a body.

Mathers finds Van Der Kamp's radio, abandoned in the dirt. He barks out to one of his men...

MATHERS

I want dogs here. Now!

23 EXT. FOREST / MILES AWAY - DAY 23

BARKING DOGS lead Mathers, Vico and a SUPPORT TEAM down a steep hillside. Vico is not one for long hikes, but he's doing the best he can.

24 EXT. DEEPER IN THE FOREST - DAY 24

One of the dog team LEADERS calls out:

LEADER

Here! Lieutenant!

Mathers bounds over to him. The Leader pulls back his dog, rewarding him with a favorite toy for a job well done.

MATHERS

(to Leader)

Call in the location.

TIME SLOWS as Mathers approaches a fallen tree, its mossy bark peeling away from the wood. In the shadows, we see a white hand. We follow it up to find the hidden body of Glenn Satchel.

Tucked beside Satchel's body is another man, lying on his face. He wears a STATE TROOPER parka, with two bloody holes cut through his back.

Mathers holds his ground as Vico moves past him.

VICO

This your man?

MATHERS

It is.

The dog team Leader calls Mathers over:

LEADER

Lieutenant!

He wants to show Mathers something on the GPS. Meanwhile, Vico kneels down, examining Van Der Kamp's body.

Mathers calls over...

MATHERS
Don't touch anything.

VICO
What's the problem?

MATHERS
(re: the GPS)
We're in Canada.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

25 INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY 25

ROGER PRESCOTT (45) and ALISON HARPER (30's) walk towards camera. Both wear suits and overcoats, carrying briefcases. Their footsteps ECHO in the nearly-empty halls. By the Maple Leaf flags, it's apparent we are in...

TITLE OVER:

**WHITEHORSE GOVERNMENT CENTRE
YUKON TERRITORY, CANADA**

Prescott is the Assistant Attorney General for the State of Alaska -- half-politician, half-pitbull. Friendly but somewhat imperious, he normally works behind the scenes, setting the prosecution agenda. However, he does get directly involved when needed. He's the big guns.

Harper is the state's new Special Prosecutor, responsible for bringing the largest cases to trial. Precise and focused in the courtroom, she has a knack for nearly-surgical feats of logic that can reduce a defense to ribbons. Outside the courtroom, she's considerably more vulnerable. She's slow to trust anyone, even herself.

CUT TO:

26 INT. NEAR A CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY 26

Mathers and Vico, still wearing their field clothes, stand as Prescott and Harper approach.

PRESCOTT

Gentlemen, this is Alison Harper.
She's our new Special Prosecutor.

Both Vico and Mathers seem to be caught a little off-guard.

VICO

Paul Vico.

MATHERS

Ray Mathers.

HARPER

Pleasure to meet both of you.

She shakes their hands.

PRESCOTT
Harper used to work for the
Justice Department in D.C. We
stole her away last week.

MATHERS
(to Harper)
So you're going to be working with
Frank Thompson?

HARPER
Actually, no.

PRESCOTT
She's replacing Frank.

VICO
What happened to him?

PRESCOTT
He couldn't do the job. I'm
betting she can.

27 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

27

CLOSE ON a large topographic map, spread out on a conference table. A man's thumb measures the distance between an orange sticker and the U.S./Canada border.

JUNIOR
As you can see here, the bodies
were at least a kilometer within
Canadian territory.

Prescott, Harper, Vico and Mathers sit across the table from three stoic Canadians. One is a UNIFORMED MOUNTIE, evidently a commander. The other two are the Junior and SENIOR legal counsellors for the region.

All three Canadians are polite and professional -- but understandably territorial.

HARPER
The locus of the crime was clearly
within U.S. borders, specifically
under the jurisdiction of the
Alaska State Troopers.

MATHERS

Someone went out there last night to get Satchel's body. Figured if they got rid of it before an autopsy, we wouldn't have enough evidence to prosecute.

(beat)

They weren't counting on the body being guarded. They shot Van Der Kamp. Suddenly, they had two bodies to move and not enough time to do it.

JUNIOR

So your theory is, rather than move the bodies west, this "person" or "people" carried the bodies east across the border?

With some exaggeration, he traces the route on the map.

SENIOR

(to Mathers)

You think they deliberately moved the bodies into Canada to complicate the investigation.

VICO

We're all sitting in a conference room rather than looking for a killer. I'd say it worked.

Harper injects, hoping to defuse some of the rising tension.

HARPER

This is not the first time an investigation has crossed the border. Be it drug trafficking or terrorism, our governments have a long history of cooperation.

JUNIOR

In those cases, we're interfacing with a federal agency. If you want to bring in the FBI, I'm sure we could coordinate through them.

Both Mathers and Vico bristle at the suggestion. Prescott's had enough:

PRESCOTT

Gentlemen, this isn't about jurisdiction, or protocol, or an imaginary line that divides us. We are not divided. We are exactly the same.

(re: Junior)

You keep pointing at this map like it's reality, and it's not. Take a look at a bigger map. We are living at the edge of the world. Right now, we are closer to Finland than we are to FBI headquarters, so the suggestion that we should defer to their better judgment is insulting.

Everyone knows better than to interrupt.

PRESCOTT (cont'd)

One of our Troopers is dead. If it were one of yours, and somehow he ended up on the wrong side of the fence, you should damn well believe we wouldn't be wasting your time debating the obvious.

(beat)

All of us in this room have the same job. We are responsible for upholding the law under next-to-impossible circumstances. So don't talk to me about a line. We are that line.

Chastened, the Junior counsellor holds his tongue.

SENIOR

(to the Mountie)

Where are the bodies now?

MOUNTIE

Here in Whitehorse. They're doing the autopsies this afternoon.

HARPER

We'd like Dr. Vico to supervise.

The Senior counsellor looks to the Mountie, who shakes his head.

HARPER (cont'd)

Witness.

SENIOR

Done. Our medical examiner will take the lead.

VICO

Actually, I have a facility back in Anchorage. We could fly the bodies out this aftern...

Off Prescott and Harper's looks --

VICO (cont'd)

But here should be fine. Fine.

28

INT. BASEMENT LAB - DAY

28

CLOSE ON Darryl Van Der Kamp, as he lies in peaceful repose. Suddenly, he begins to turn over, as if shifting in his sleep.

WIDER, we see that his unclothed body is being rotated by the FORENSIC TEAM. They need to look at the wounds. (The shots penetrated from chest to back.)

The team leader is GOTTLIEB, who is essentially Vico's Canadian equivalent. He's understandably annoyed to have Vico looking over his shoulder.

VARIOUS SHOTS: Forensic cameras document the wound sites. Ultraviolet light sweeps over the white skin, looking for latent prints.

Technically, Vico is not allowed to touch the body, but he often gets in the way, leaning in close to get a better look.

A scalpel draws along the flesh. There's no blood to speak of -- it's like cutting into rubber. Forceps pull the skin apart. Examining what they find:

GOTTLIEB

Laceration of the iliocostalis, likely in an attempt to remove bullet or fragment.

VICO

They also nicked the T10.

GOTTLIEB

T9.

VICO
I don't know about Canadians, but
this man was American. That's his
T10.

Vico nudges his way in, leaning close as he counts the
thoracic joints up from the sacrum.

VICO (cont'd)
...T6, T7, T8, T9. Well, what do
you know? My apologies. Hmmm.

It's clear now he just wanted a better look at the wound.

CLOSE ON a zipper as it closes the bag over the body of Van
Der Kamp. With a SEAMLESS MATCH, the same zipper exposes the
body of Glenn Satchel.

GOTTLIEB
Glenn Joseph Satchel. Victim is
male, Caucasian. Apparent age is
consistent with reported age of 32.

Vico's attention is focused on Glenn's lower half. He makes a
sound that falls between throat-clearing and "Aha!"

GOTTLIEB (cont'd)
You disagree?

VICO
No. Thirty-two, Caucasian. But
he's not all the man he could be.

29 INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

29

Vico joins Mathers, Harper and Prescott in the hallway,
reviewing what's been learned. They're all headed for a
staircase at the end of the hallway.

VICO
Glenn Satchel was castrated.

PRESCOTT
Literally or figuratively?

VICO
Both testicles removed, along with
the vas deferens and glands.

MATHERS
How recently?

VICO

Years ago. The incision is completely sealed over. Scrotum retracted.

HARPER

(to Mathers)

Didn't you say his wife was pregnant?

Mathers nods.

VICO

Unless Glenn's got his jizz on ice somewhere, it's not by him.

PRESCOTT

Show of hands, everyone who thinks the real father is Bobby Satchel?

MATHERS

The wife was definitely hiding something.

HARPER

Like an affair?

VICO

Amniocentesis could tell you 100%.

HARPER

We can't force prenatal testing.

PRESCOTT

We don't need to. Glenn Satchel was a eunuch. He knew he couldn't have kids. Suddenly his wife is pregnant. He confronts the man he suspects knocked her up. Fight ensues, then a rock to the head.

(to Harper)

You can sell that to a jury, can't you?

HARPER

If we have enough forensic to back it up.

PRESCOTT

When is Bobby's arraignment?

HARPER

Four o'clock.

PRESCOTT

Do whatever it takes. I don't want that kid seeing daylight.

Coming around a corner...

MATHERS

What about Van Der Kamp?

VICO

Kid took two shots. Based on the damage, I'd say a rifle.

MATHERS

I want to start with the father. Elias Satchel. We can search his place this afternoon.

HARPER

I'll have a warrant waiting for you.

MATHERS

Van Der Kamp's parents live in Fairbanks. I'll stop by on my way.

PRESCOTT

Good. Tell them we're going to get the son of a bitch who did this.

30 INT. SMALL COURTROOM - DAY

30

Wearing handcuffs and an ill-fitting suit, Bobby Satchel is led into court by a GUARD. The tiny courtroom is crowded, with too many cases to get through and not enough time. A baby CRIES intermittently.

The men stop at a table, where Bobby awkwardly shakes hands with his attorney -- Bill Ivanhov. Ivanhov points out Bobby's father Elias, who has driven up for the arraignment.

**4TH DISTRICT COURTHOUSE
FAIRBANKS**

With minimal staff, Judge ELLEN QIMIRPIK (40, Inuit) manages to run her courtroom efficiently, although much less formally than expected.

The BAILIFF calls out the case:

BAILIFF
People versus Bobby Satchel.

Harper stands up at the prosecutor's table.

HARPER
Alison Harper for the State.

IVANHOV
Bill Ivanhov representing Mr.
Satchel.

HARPER
Your honor...

QIMIRPIK
(heading her off)
Both of you, up here please.

Harper and Ivanhov approach the bench.

QIMIRPIK (cont'd)
(to Ivanhov)
You're a magistrate. You can't be
his attorney.

Ivanhov hands over a signed letter.

IVANHOV
I've resigned my commission,
effective this morning.

As Qimirpik looks through the document --

HARPER
Your honor, Mr. Ivanhov was
already involved in this case in
an official capacity. If Mr.
Satchel is ultimately convicted,
he could have grounds for an
appeal based on competing interest
or inadequate representation.

IVANHOV
I intend to represent Mr. Satchel
to my fullest ability.

Qimirpik sets down the letter.

HARPER

The State may need to subpoena Mr. Ivanhov to testify. Mr. Satchel has the right to unencumbered counsel.

QIMIRPIK

Mr. Satchel has the right to choose his attorney. For better or worse, he chose you. Let's get on with this.

Harper and Ivanhov head back to their respective tables. Elias Satchel eyes Harper with a look of cold contempt.

Qimirpik nods to Harper.

HARPER

Your Honor, the state intends to prosecute the defendant for the murder of Glenn Satchel, a resident of Delta Junction. Given the defendant's prior convictions for violent acts, his experience as a pilot and his access to aircraft, we believe he is a uniquely high risk for flight. We ask that bail be denied, and that he be bound over for trial in Anchorage.

IVANHOV

Your Honor, Bobby Satchel lives in the same house he was born in 25 years ago. His family has lived in this state more than 40 years. His elderly father relies on him. There is zero risk of his going anywhere. Furthermore, the defense intends to show that this so-called murder was nothing more than an accident which has been horribly misportrayed by an overzealous State Trooper.

HARPER

Your Honor, already in the investigation of this crime, a law enforcement officer has been shot and killed.

IVANHOV

(interrupting)

Not by my client! My client was wrongly imprisoned at the time this officer was killed.

HARPER

The Trooper was killed while keeping watch over evidence in this case. We believe Mr. Satchel may know the identity of the killer, who was attempting to destroy the crime scene. That's two homicides with which he's involved.

IVANHOV

Nonsense!

QIMIRPIK

Enough. Mr. Satchel is bound over for trial in Superior Court in Anchorage. Bail is denied.

She BANGS her gavel.

31 EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY 31

Mathers's truck turns onto a private gravel road, clearly labelled "NO TRESPASSING." We are far out into no-man's land.

32 EXT. SACHEL HOUSE - DAY 32

Mathers climbs out of his truck. Valerie is already waiting for him.

We look up at the Satchel home. The structure is set deep in the forest, up three miles of gravel road. With its propane tank, well and generator shed, it's completely self-sufficient. You could live for a year up here without seeing another soul.

Mathers YELLS UP to the house:

MATHERS

State Troopers! We have a search warrant!

He holds up the sheet of paper, should anyone be looking. Waits a beat.

VALERIE

Elias should still be at the arraignment. Take him two hours at least to get back.

MATHERS

Let's be out of here by then.

CUT TO:

33

INT. SATCHEL HOUSE - DAY

33

Closing the front door behind her, Valerie follows Mathers into the living room. The house is spartan by any standard: dirty walls, old drapes, sagging furniture. Two rifles hang on the wall.

In all, it's a shelter, but not a home. No woman has been in this house in a decade.

Venturing into the kitchen, Mathers finds industrial-sized cans of beef stew lined up on the counter. Saltines by the case.

MATHERS

The mother is dead, isn't she?

VALERIE

Virginia Satchel. She died ten, fifteen years ago.

MATHERS

So who is Connie?

He points out a child's drawing on the refrigerator, the paper yellowed with time. The illustration shows four stick figures in front of the house, labelled "Daddy," "Glenn," "Bobby," and "Connie."

Connie is noticeably bigger than the other three. As Mathers steps back,

A GUNSHOT

BLASTS through the kitchen window from outside. As glass begins to rain down, a SECOND SHOT rips into the kitchen cabinets. Mathers and Valerie dive for the floor, unholstering their weapons.

Three more SHOTS blow through the kitchen. Mathers listens to the tone of the shots.

MATHERS (cont'd)
Rifle. One shooter.

VALERIE
You want me to call for backup?

MATHERS
How close is it?

VALERIE
Half hour. Maybe more.

Silence. The shooter has stopped. Mathers very carefully edges up to the shattered window. Valerie takes the far side.

With a quick movement, Mathers leans around the window frame and starts SHOOTING. Behind a distant wood pile, movement. A flash of metal.

Mathers ducks back as two more SHOTS rip into the window and wall.

MATHERS
Keep him shooting.

Before she can ask where he's going, Mathers runs down the hallway. Valerie presses back against the wall. Steels herself, then pops around to FIRE.

She's met with another BLAST. Just missed her.

34 EXT. BACK OF HOUSE - DAY 34

A chair SMASHES through a second story window.

Mathers climbs out after it. He slides down the shingled roof, then jumps down another ten feet to the ground below.

35 EXT. EDGE OF THE FOREST - DAY 35

We STAY WITH Mathers as he circles behind the woodpile, gun at ready. Up in the house, Valerie continues to FIRE, keeping the shooter's attention.

Reaching a good distance behind the shooter, Mathers SHOUTS OUT:

MATHERS
State Trooper! Drop your weapon!

The shooter stands. CONRAD "CONNIE" SATCHEL is six-foot-six and weighs in at nearly three hundred pounds.

Severe birth defects have left him physically and mentally malformed. Although 20 years old, he's like a giant eight-year old.

MATHERS (cont'd)

Put it down! Put it down!

Connie isn't aiming at Mathers, exactly, but he isn't inclined to drop the rifle either.

CONNIE

You're a police man.

MATHERS

I am. I need you to put that rifle down.

Over Connie's shoulder, we see Valerie approaching. She has her gun on Connie.

MATHERS (cont'd)

Is your name Connie?

CONNIE

How did you know?

MATHERS

Put down the rifle and I'll tell you.

Intrigued, Connie sets the rifle down. Connie holds his hands up. His fingers are bandaged and bloody. Several are obviously broken, sticking out at strange angles.

MATHERS (cont'd)

What happened to your hands, Connie?

CONNIE

(looking at them)
They had evil in 'em. Daddy had to fix 'em.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

36 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

36

On a cold, overcast day, about 50 MOURNERS gather for the funeral of Trooper Van Der Kamp -- his Academy GRADUATION PHOTO is on an easel. Van Der Kamp's female COUSIN (18) sings the Lutheran hymn "Ach Gott vom Himmelreiche."

COUSIN

(singing)

*Da werden wir mit Freuden Den Heiland schauen an,
Der durch sein Blut und Leiden Den Himmel aufgetan,
Die lieben Patriarchen, Propheten allzumal,
Die Märt'rer und Apostel Bei ihm, ein' große Zahl.*

As she SINGS, we move across the faces of Mathers, Prescott, Harper and Vico. Valerie is there with her son Josh, along with many other TROOPERS in uniform.

37 EXT. CEMETERY / NEAR THE CARS - DAY

37

Mathers finishes talking with Van Der Kamp's grieving PARENTS. Valerie intercepts him on the way to his truck, introducing a uniformed man, SERGEANT REICHARDT.

VALERIE

Lieutenant, this is Sergeant Reichardt from Fairbanks.

The men shake.

REICHARDT

Darryl grew up with my boys. For years, I tried to convince him to be a city cop, but his mind was set on being a Trooper.

MATHERS

I heard your men were out talking to Bobby Satchel about some dancers.

REICHARDT

Four girls went missing. Happens every year. These girls show up out of nowhere, use a fake name. If one day they're just gone, odds are they went back to the 48. Least that's what you hope.

MATHERS

What made you clear Bobby?

REICHARDT

He had good alibis for most of 'em. Became pretty obvious he wasn't our man.

A38 OVER BY THE CARS

A38

Harper and Prescott are having a quick conversation.

PRESCOTT

What's the word on Boo Radley?

HARPER

Connie Satchel has the intellectual capacity of a child. We can't even interview him, much less put him on the stand.

PRESCOTT

How come no one knew he existed?

HARPER

He was born and raised at that house. They wanted to keep him out of sight. If we push, we might be able to bring in the father on abuse charges...

PRESCOTT

I want Elias Satchel for murder one, nothing less. Bobby Satchel killed his brother, then Elias Satchel went out to cover it up. Shot a Trooper in the process.

HARPER

Then we have to get the conviction on Bobby first. Without it, we'll never sell premeditation for Elias.

PRESCOTT

Agreed. This is all up to you now.

38 EXT. ANCHORAGE COURTS BUILDING - DAY

38

Establishing.

39 INT. SUPERIOR COURT - DAY

39

We MOVE ACROSS the twelve men and women of the JURY. We're in the middle of the prosecution phase.

**STATE SUPERIOR COURT
ANCHORAGE**

At the prosecution table, we see one male ASSISTANT taking notes. Behind him, the courtroom is mostly full, with SPECTATORS and PRESS. Harper approaches the witness stand.

HARPER

I'm looking at a report filed by the Village Public Safety Officer on January 10th of this year. Bobby Satchel was issued a citation for drunk and disorderly conduct after leaving your bar.

She shows the document to the BARTENDER (30) on the stand. He's a reluctant witness who'd rather be anywhere else.

HARPER (cont'd)

Do you remember the incident?

BARTENDER

Bobby got drunk. He started throwing glasses.

HARPER

How did you stop him?

BARTENDER

I called his brother. He came and got him.

HARPER

By "his brother," you mean Glenn Satchel.

BARTENDER

Yeah. I didn't know there was another one at the time.

HARPER

Was Bobby appreciative of Glenn coming to get him?

BARTENDER

He didn't like it. But it wasn't anything. I mean, they'd fought before.

HARPER

"Fought?" Did you ever see Bobby and Glenn come to blows?

BARTENDER

Once or twice.

HARPER

Do you think it was once, or do you think it was twice?

(beat)

Or was it more than twice?

BARTENDER

It was twice. Two times.

HARPER

Were these arguments before or after Bobby was in jail?

BARTENDER

Both.

HARPER

So one argument happened before Bobby's arson conviction, and one happened after.

That was clearly meant for the jury. At the defense table, Bobby looks over to Ivanhov, who motions to let it go.

BARTENDER

I guess.

HARPER

These arguments escalated into fist fights. What was the outcome?

BARTENDER

One time, Bobby knocked Glenn out.

HARPER

So he must have hit him pretty hard.

TRANSITION TO:

Vico is on the stand. He's wearing his one "trial" suit.

VICO

Yes. The blow shattered the cranium right along the saggital suture. That's where the two parietal bones fuse together.

Vico gestures on his own head tracing the impact for the jury.

HARPER

In your examination, could you tell what direction the blow came from?

VICO

Yes, it was a downward stroke. We found fragments of bone driven into the lower calvarium -- the brain case.

HARPER

Glenn Satchel was six feet tall. So for the blow to come from above...

VICO

Glenn Satchel was probably sitting down. The blow came from someone standing behind him.

HARPER

What was the weapon?

VICO

Based on the impact, I'd say a rock.

CUT TO:

Gottlieb, the Canadian medical examiner, is on the stand.

GOTTLIEB

Probably a rock.

Ivanhov is pacing.

IVANHOV

In his statement, Mr. Satchel said his brother fell and hit his head on a rock. So that's consistent with your finding, right?

GOTTLIEB

Yes, possibly.

IVANHOV

You say a rock. Mr. Satchel says a rock. That's consistent.

In the audience, Vico grimaces.

MARY (V.O., PRELAP)

We would have been married three years in June.

CUT TO:

Ivanhov has Mary Satchel on the stand. She's more composed than we've seen before, but no less genuine.

Prescott is now in the courtroom, sitting directly behind Harper in the audience.

IVANHOV

Mary, in both of the coroners' reports, they found Glenn had been, for lack of a more delicate term, castrated. Is that correct?

MARY

He'd fallen on a fence when he was sixteen. The doctors couldn't...

IVANHOV

He lost both testicles.

MARY

Yes. He told me before we got married.

IVANHOV

He told you that he was incapable of having children.

MARY

Yes.

IVANHOV

And yet you're pregnant, isn't that right?

MARY

Yes.

Prescott leans up to Harper. WHISPERING --

PRESCOTT

What is he doing?

HARPER

No idea.

Back at the stand --

IVANHOV

During the deposition, everyone was very polite about this issue.

(to Harper)

And we appreciate that, truly. But I wonder if you would tell us who the father is?

MARY

Bobby.

IVANHOV

Glenn's brother. And how did that come to be?

MARY

It was Glenn's idea. He wanted a baby that was at least part of him. So he asked Bobby to be the donor. We went down to the Hoffman Fertility Clinic in Vancouver. It worked on the first try.

IVANHOV

(re: Bobby)

So this man accused of murder actually gave his brother the gift of life.

CUT TO:

A40 EXT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

A40

Harper and Prescott confer.

PRESCOTT

You'd think he gave him a lung,
not just sperm in a cup.

HARPER

Defense withheld evidence and
coached her on the deposition.
Her answers were clearly evasive.

PRESCOTT

I agree. But the pregnancy thing
was never key to the case. Your
job is to tell a story that
explains what happened. This one
was Cain and Abel, two brothers
and a rock to the head. I think
it played.

An AIDE gestures to Harper from the courtroom doorway.

HARPER

Reviews are in.

B40 INT. SUPERIOR COURT - DAY

B40

The BAILIFF hands the verdict back to the jury FOREMAN.

FOREMAN

In the case of the State of Alaska
versus Bobby Satchel, we find the
defendant not guilty.

ANGLE ON Harper. She's not used to losing.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

40 INT. COURTROOM - NIGHT

40

Harper and Prescott have the courtroom to themselves. The main lights are dim, leaving just the table lamps.

PRESCOTT

Right now, the only Satchel in custody has the IQ of an eight-year old. His brother just beat a murder rap, so he's not too likely to cooperate. And there's no physical evidence linking the father to Van Der Kamp's murder.

(simply)

I don't see how you can win.

HARPER

Elias had motive. He wanted to destroy the crime scene in order to protect his son. And his privacy. He also had opportunity...

PRESCOTT

And a heart condition. No jury is going to believe a seventy-year old man can carry two bodies four miles in the wilderness.

HARPER

He got Connie to carry the bodies.

PRESCOTT

So now we blame the mentally handicapped. That's a winner.

HARPER

It's what happened.

PRESCOTT

I believe you. But if I'm on the jury, I don't believe you beyond a reasonable doubt.

Frustrated, Harper stands up. She needs to move. She needs to look at things fresh.

HARPER

Okay, it's that night. You're Elias Satchel. You're at home. You just found out your eldest son is dead, and his younger brother has been arrested for killing him.

PRESCOTT

(deadpan)

Oh no. I'm grieving for my dead son. The only good one I had, apparently. A real saint.

HARPER

But you also want to protect Bobby. He is also your son. And he's the only able-bodied person you have left to run your business.

PRESCOTT

So I'm grieving, but pragmatic.
(off her look)
Tell me how to play this. Do I really think it was a terrible accident misportrayed by the evil government taxocracy? Or do I think Bobby really killed Glenn?

ANGLE ON Harper. A whole new thought...

HARPER

What if you know he did it?

PRESCOTT

How do I know?

HARPER

Because you told him to.

PRESCOTT

I told Bobby to kill his brother with a rock?

HARPER

And make it look like an accident.

Rolling with her theory, Harper comes back to the table.

HARPER (cont'd)
 Connie Satchel had all of his
 fingers broken multiple times. He
 told Mathers...

CUT TO:

41 EXT. TOK TOWNSHIP - DAY

41

MATHERS
 "They had evil in 'em. Daddy
 fixed 'em."

Harper and Mathers are walking to his truck.

HARPER
 Glenn Satchel was castrated.

MATHERS
 You don't think it was an
 accident. You think the father
 did it deliberately.

HARPER
 Vico agrees it looks like kitchen-
 table surgery, not falling off a
 fence.

They stop, letting us get a look at Tok's Main Street: two
 rows of quaint storefronts flanking a field of potholes. It's
 an Old West town in a strip-mall age.

MATHERS
 I'm inclined to believe you. Only
 question is, what would make a
 father castrate, then kill his
 oldest son?

HARPER
 I've got a warrant if you're up
 for a drive.

42 EXT. ROAD TO DELTA JUNCTON - DAY

42

We follow Mathers's truck through gorgeous woods on the narrow
 road. At times, it's easy to forget how dangerous this land
 is. The extreme isolation that keeps it so pristine also
 keeps it from being civilized. At every moment, you're one
 flat tire away from a survival situation.

43 INT. TRUCK [DRIVING] - DAY

43

It's two hours later and they're still not there. Finishing a new stack of paperwork, Harper checks her watch.

HARPER

I can't believe I used to complain about a 45-minute commute.

Mathers smiles. He has his hands on the top of the steering wheel. His WEDDING RING catches the light. If we hadn't noticed it before, we definitely do now.

HARPER (cont'd)

Vico was saying that Alaska is bigger than Texas and California combined.

MATHERS

And Montana. All three.
(beat)
You don't like it.

HARPER

I do. Mostly. It's a completely different country that happens to have the same flag. The people are nice, if sometimes a little odd.

MATHERS

Odd?

HARPER

I'm going to say odd. Theories?

MATHERS

Well, either you grow up here, and you're "odd" because of that, or you can't fit anywhere else, so you end up here by default.

HARPER

Which one are you?

MATHERS

I grew up here.

HARPER

What about your wife?

Half a beat. Mathers's relatively cheerful tone dissipates.

MATHERS

St. Louis.

HARPER

She must really love you. I know I couldn't live this far out. I mean, I'm in Anchorage and I'm still looking for a Starbucks.

MATHERS

What's a Starbucks?

HARPER

You're serious.
(he is)
They sell coffee.

MATHERS

Lots of places sell coffee.

HARPER

It's different. It's...
(she can't explain)
It's just different, and I'm still getting used to it.

44 INT. SEA PLANE HANGAR / GLENN'S OFFICE - DAY

44

The Satchel family business runs out of a repurposed warehouse. Glenn's desk is crowded with invoices and bills, along with photos of him and Mary.

While Valerie and Mathers sort through cartons of records, Harper is at Glenn's computer -- relatively new, with a flat-screen monitor. With a pencil, Harper totals a column of numbers.

HARPER

Something's missing.

Mathers and Valerie look over.

HARPER (cont'd)

It's an 80-meg hard drive, but the directories only add up to 60.

VALERIE

You think something's hidden?

MATHERS

We can take it back to Anchorage.
I'm sure Vico has a guy who can
get into it.

VALERIE

We've got a guy right here.

CUT TO:

45

INT. HANGAR / GLENN'S OFFICE - HALF AN HOUR LATER

45

Valerie's son Josh sits at the computer, the adults
surrounding him.

JOSH

The hard drive is partitioned into
two volumes. One of them is
protected.

HARPER

Can you get into it?

JOSH

Just did.

The computer is in shell mode. A list of files scrolls past,
all numbers ending in ".jpg."

JOSH (cont'd)

They're photos. All about the
same size -- maybe from a digital
camera. They're in some sort of
slide show.

MATHERS

Open it.

A few CLICKS on the keyboard and he opens the program. We
don't see the images, just the expressions on their faces.
Whatever it is, it's best left to the imagination.

By instinct Valerie covers Josh's eyes.

JOSH

It's okay.

VALERIE

It's not okay.

Mathers puts his hand on the monitor. For the first time, we look at the screen, which shows gorgeous scenery: a lake backed by mountains. Mathers's hand is covering something horrible.

HARPER
(re: the photo)
Do you recognize where that is?

MATHERS
I've been there.

CUT TO:

46 EXT. MOUNTAIN LAKE - DAY 46

We OPEN ON a gorgeous landscape that matches the computer image. Along the edge of an icy lake, Paul Vico leads a FORENSIC TEAM.

He heads over to Mathers and Harper, who are keeping their distance.

VICO
We've got four women, pretty badly decayed. But I'd say young. Most of the jaws are intact, so we should be able to get an ID.

MATHERS
I'll call Fairbanks. I think we found their dancers.

47 EXT. SATCHEL HOUSE - DAY 47

Establishing.

48 EXT. BEHIND THE SATCHEL HOUSE - DAY 48

Elias Satchel is scavenging through a junk pile of rusted metal, the remains of various trucks and appliances he's owned over the years. It's not clear what he's looking for -- he seems trapped inside it all.

Mathers, Ivanhov and Sergeant Reichardt (the Fairbanks cop we met at the funeral) have come to talk with him.

Mathers shows Elias another photo from a stack.

MATHERS

This was Dina Gonzalez. She was 21. She'd been in Fairbanks less than a month.

Elias looks at the photo, his face inscrutable. Mathers shows him the final photo.

MATHERS (cont'd)

We think this was Roxanne Green. We don't know for sure because the jaw was shattered into so many pieces, we had to send it out to the FBI for reconstruction.

ELIAS

You think these pictures are going to shock me. Good luck. I have seen worse every day for the last 20 years.

IVANHOV

Elias, don't say anything. If the Lieutenant wants to arrest you, let him. We can handle this the right way.

Ignoring his counsel's advice, Elias talks directly to Mathers. They might as well be the only ones there.

ELIAS

You believe in evil, Lieutenant?

MATHERS

I do.

ELIAS

I never did. Fifty years, I had good times, bad times, but I never saw anything that made me lose hope. I even met a woman, young enough that she still wanted kids, so we did. Three boys. And from the time they could walk, there was something about them...

IVANHOV

Elias --

ELIAS

Shut up. I'm gonna talk, and no one's going to stop me.

(back to Mathers)

Connie is the only one screwed up on the outside. I'm sure the doctors are going to think he's an angel. But I've seen him kill a dog just to watch it die.

MATHERS

Is that why you broke his fingers?

ELIAS

Those hands would have choked me. Lord knows they tried.

MATHERS

What about Glenn? What did he do?

ELIAS

He was clever. Could make you believe anything. I honestly believed he was saved. He hadn't tried to rape anything in years.

MATHERS

After you castrated him.

Elias nods.

REICHARDT

When my men came to ask Bobby about the missing girls, you knew it was Glenn.

ELIAS

Had to be.

MATHERS

All this time, we thought Bobby was the bad seed. But he was the best of all of them, wasn't he?

ELIAS

No. These boys are all demons.

MATHERS

So why do you protect them?

ELIAS
Because they're my demons. A
man's gotta take responsibility.

49 INT. HALLWAY IN JUDICIAL BUILDING (ANCHORAGE) - DAY 49

Harper walks with Prescott.

HARPER
Life. Chance of parole in 30.

PRESCOTT
That's your offer?

HARPER
That's theirs.

PRESCOTT
Take it. That man's 70. If he
lives to be 100, I'll bake him a
cake myself.

HARPER
State psych is recommending
indefinite commitment for Connie.

PRESCOTT
Good.

HARPER
We can still go after Bobby for
obstruction and perjury.

PRESCOTT
He killed a serial killer. Jury
wouldn't know whether to hang a
noose or a medal around his neck.

HARPER
I agree it's difficult, but...

PRESCOTT
Hey, I believe in fighting losing
battles. But only the ones worth
winning. Let it go.

50 INT. DELTA JUNCTION DINER - DAY 50

Wearing an apron rather than her uniform, Valerie fills a
thermos with coffee.

VALERIE

Last week Bobby Satchel came in.
Sat right where you're sitting.

Mathers is across the counter from her, finishing his eggs.

MATHERS

How did he look?

VALERIE

Guilty. Scared. Apparently, he's
going to stay and run the business
by himself.

MATHERS

He doesn't have a pilot's license
anymore.

VALERIE

He doesn't have a prayer. I think
he knows he'll screw up. Month
from now, I'll be arresting him
for a bar fight, or trashing
someone's car.

MATHERS

Be careful. He's strong.

VALERIE

(matter of fact)
I have a gun. I'll shoot him if I
have to.

MATHERS

Someone will eventually.

She hands Mathers the thermos. He puts down a few dollars.

VALERIE

You gotta be kidding.

She slides the money back to him. Mathers reluctantly takes
it.

VALERIE (cont'd)

Lieutenant, I'll make you a deal.
We'll keep this little corner
safe. You take the rest.

MATHERS

Deal.

A smile as he leaves.

A51 INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

A51

Carrying a holder with two paper cups of coffee, Harper peers in a darkened office window. The nameplate reads "Lt. Mathers, Major Crimes."

A voice from behind her --

VICO
You looking for Ray?

Vico is coming back from lunch, cheeks still rosy.

HARPER
I am.
(re: the coffee)
I finally found a Starbucks.

VICO
What's a Starbucks?

HARPER
Exactly. Here.

She hands him one of the coffees. He smells it. Seems good.

VICO
(re: the office)
Ray doesn't come around much. Not
since his wife.

HARPER
Not since his wife what?

VICO
You never heard.

HARPER
I guess I didn't.

Vico's keys JANGLE as he sorts through them. He finds the one he wants. Unlocks Mathers's door.

B51 INT. MATHERS'S OFFICE - DAY

B51

Probably the last time we'll ever see this room. It's just your basic desk and chair, bulletin board full of clippings and photos. We don't focus on them as much as Harper's reaction as she looks through them.

51 EXT. HIGHWAY CONNECTOR - DAY 51

Mathers's truck pulls onto Highway 1, headed west.

52 INT. MATHERS'S TRUCK - DAY [DRIVING] 52

Willie Nelson is playing on the RADIO. Mathers has the thermos propped up on the passenger seat. The rest of his belongings fit in the back of the truck. He's not a man weighed down by material things.

For the first time, we're seeing Mathers at rest: no suspect to chase, no problem to solve. He's left alone with his thoughts -- his worst enemies.

B51pt. INTERCUT OFFICE B51pt.

Harper is still looking at the bulletin board.

HARPER
He never found her?

VICO
Pieces.

BACK TO MATHERS

There's an immense sadness to his eyes, the stoic grief of a man who's lost everything more than once.

He turns the radio off.

We HOLD ON him for a long, quiet beat.

TRANSITION TO:

53 EXT. ALASKAN HIGHWAY - DAY 53

In a PANORAMIC SHOT reminiscent of the opening scene, we watch as Mathers drives west, the only car for miles.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END