ALASKA

“Gravedigger”

written by
John August

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NOTE:

Because of Alaska's arctic setting, "DAY" and "NIGHT" don't always mean what you'd expect.

For scripts set in the summertime, we will be using the term "BRIGHT NIGHT" to designate the time from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m., when the kids are asleep but the sun is still shining.

Likewise, winter scripts will use "DARK DAY" to indicate normal daytime hours when the sun has never risen.

"Gravedigger" is a summer script.
FADE IN:

Morning rises on a tranquil ocean bay, fed by glaciers in the nearby mountains. The tree-lined peaks continue right down to the shoreline, as if the whole world had recently flooded.

TITLE OVER:

CHATHAM STRAIGHT
15 MILES NORTHWEST OF JUNEAU

The water is mirror-still. The last wisps of fog still cling to the surface. A beat, then we...

CUT TO:

A PADDLE,

pulling back the water. Lift, turn, dig. Lift, turn, dig. The movement is hypnotizing. A fan of water drips off the edge of the blade with each stroke.

Our canoeist is a very old Native man named CARL COODAY. It’s not clear what he’s paddling to or from. This may just be his morning constitutional.

The paddle drags the water. Turns. The canoe begins to slow. Carl looks to his right. Paddles a few more strokes.

A BODY

is floating facedown in the water. It’s a woman, fully clothed in a red dress. Her ankles and arms are milky-white.

Carl seems completely unsurprised to see a dead woman floating here. He uncoils a length of hemp rope and begins to tie it to the woman’s ankles.

CUT TO:
EXT. SHORELINE FOREST - DAY

The canoe is pulled halfway onto the shore. The woman’s body lies beside it.

We find Carl with a shovel, turning back the dirt. He digs just like he paddles: no hurry, no wasted motion.

The animals of the forest are very active: birds CHIRPING, insects BUZZING. It’s going to be another beautiful summer day.

Carl stops his work, winded. He holds the shovel in his right hand, looking down at his left arm. It hurts.

He leans against the shovel for support. The blade digs into the soft earth.

Carl presses against his chest, where his heart should be beating. It isn’t anymore.

With a GASP, the old man collapses halfway into the grave he was digging. Just like that, he’s dead.

A beat, then we slowly RISE UP to reveal that this is one of FOURTEEN GRAVES on this forest beach, each marked with a handmade cross.

Carl Cooday has been very busy.

CUT TO:

OPENING TITLES

END OF TEASER
EXT. SHORELINE FOREST - DAY

Chief Medical Examiner PAUL VICO oversees a team of four uniformed CRIME-SCENE ANALYSTS. Vico is sweaty and grumpy.

VICO
Gentlemen! This is not a race!
We do not try to dig the bodies
out. We only move the dirt away.

Carefully leaning over an exposed grave, he uses a chopstick to push mud from a partially-decomposed hand. Near one finger, he finds a tarnished silver ring. He lifts it up with the chopstick, sliding it into his hand.

As Vico reads the inscription...

MATHERS (O.S.)
He left the jewelry on.

Vico looks up to see Lieutenant RAY MATHERS, just arrived.

VICO
He wasn’t a collector. He just buried ‘em.

Vico stands, sealing the ring in a plastic baggie.

MATHERS
How many?

VICO
We got fourteen graves. So far, one body per. Even split male-female. Plus a woman on the shore. Looks like the old guy had a coronary digging her grave.

MATHERS
The old guy have a name?

VICO
Carl Cooday. Lived out here by himself forty years. Married couple from town found him this morning. He’d been dead a few days.

MATHERS
Theories?
They begin to move down to the shore.

VICO
Well, any time you’re looking at this many corpses, you gotta think serial. But this guy doesn’t fit any profile.

MATHERS
He was a loner.

VICO
Him and half of Alaska. No, he’s too old, too isolated. Apparently, he never went into town. Hard to get new victims if you’re not willing to mingle.

At the water’s edge, Vico pulls back the translucent plastic over the woman’s body. (We never get a good look at what they’re examining.)

VICO (cont’d)
You got rope marks around the ankles. Probably a match with what we found in the canoe. But look at the tissue abrasion. The body was already swollen from salt water when the rope was attached.

MATHERS
She was already dead.

VICO
Yup.

MATHERS
Drowned?

VICO
We won’t know until we check the lungs. But I doubt it. Look here. Lazy stitches running across the abdomen. I think she died on the operating table. Med student sewed her up.

A beat, trying to make the pieces fit.

MATHERS
I still don’t see how she ended up here.
Neither do I. But I don’t think Carl Cooday killed these people. He just put ‘em in the ground.

INT. PHARMACY - DAY

A combination pharmacy, post office and coffee shop, the tiny store splits the difference between folksy and professional.

TITLE OVER:

PUTNAM PHARMACY
JUNEAU

LYNNE PUTNAM (32) talks with Mathers while her husband JOHN (34) finishes up an order, neatly sliding pills across his tray. The Putnams are a wholesome, attractive married couple with a bit of Samaritan smugness.

Lynne Putnam hands Mathers a small stack of mail.

LYNNE PUTNAM
Carl never came into town, so we’d go out to see him. Bring him his mail, his prescriptions, make sure he knew how to take them. Just check up on him in general.

MATHERS
That’s what you were doing out there this morning?

LYNNE PUTNAM
Exactly. When he wasn’t there, we started looking around.

JOHN PUTNAM
That’s when we found the body.

LYNNE PUTNAM
Bodies, I guess.

She’s clearly a little rattled by the experience.

MATHERS
How long did you know Mr. Cooday?

JOHN PUTNAM
Four years. That’s how long ago we bought the business.
LYNNE PUTNAM
Carl didn’t have any friends. But it wasn’t that he was unfriendly.

MATHERS
What medications was he taking?

JOHN PUTNAM
I’ll give you a list. But it’s nothing out of the ordinary. Nothing that would explain...

LYNNE PUTNAM
Lieutenant Mathers, Carl Cooday didn’t kill anybody, I know it in my heart. He and I had several conversations. He had taken Jesus as his savior.

Mathers notes Lynne Putnam’s sincerity.

MATHERS
You never noticed anything unusual before today?

JOHN PUTNAM
No.

LYNNE PUTNAM
Well. That’s not really true.

John gives his wife a silencing look, but she goes ahead anyway.

LYNNE PUTNAM (cont’d)
Last few months, Carl said he’d been visited by spirits.

MATHERS
Spirits?

LYNNE PUTNAM
The dead.

JOHN PUTNAM
We thought it was just an Indian thing. You know, a metaphor.

LYNNE PUTNAM
Maybe he really was talking about the dead.
INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Vico and a CRIME LAB TECH hoist a black body bag onto a long white cafeteria table, the kind with attached benches. This bag is just one of nine already set up in this impromptu morgue.

TITLE OVER:  
DZANTI’I HEENI MIDDLE SCHOOL  
JUNEAU

Vico wipes his brow. Tells his man...

VICO  
Go find the principal. See if this school has air conditioning.

TECH  
What if it doesn’t?

VICO  
Then it’s going to smell worse in a couple hours.

As the Crime Tech heads off, he crosses ROGER PRESCOTT and ALISON HARPER, just arrived. Each has an overnight bag.

PRESCOTT  
Dr. Vico, what’s the special today?

VICO  
You flew all the way from Anchorage and that’s the best cafeteria joke you could come up with?

PRESCOTT  
(to Harper)  
Careful, he’s grouchy.

VICO  
I’m hot, I’m tired, and I’ve got five more bodies coming. Rest of my team is out at the site.

HARPER  
How can we help?

Vico takes a clipboard off a nearby body bag.
VIC

Can you write neatly?

She takes the clipboard with a smile.

HARPER

I’m a lawyer, not a doctor.

PRESCOTT

Have you been able to ID any of the bodies?

VIC

Not yet. But we already checked the records, and there aren’t fourteen people missing in Juneau.

PRESCOTT

So where did these bodies come from?

EXT. CHATHAM STRAIT - DAY

A 25-foot COAST GUARD BOAT cuts through the same quiet bay we saw earlier. It would be a beautiful day for a tour, if only there weren’t pressing business.

INT. COAST GUARD BOAT - DAY

Mathers rides with a young Coast Guard PETTY OFFICER.

MATHERS

If a body ended up in the bay, how long before it drifted out to open water?

OFFICER

Probably never would. Current doubles back on itself. That’s why the whales come through here. Keeps the food all in one place.

The officer gestures to an outcropping on the shore.

OFFICER (cont’d)

See over by those rocks? Least once a month we’ll get a call about a canoe that’s drifted away. Half the time, it ends up there.
MATHERS
So if you were to dump something
in the bay, same place every
time...

OFFICER
Odds are it would end up the same
place every time. Like clockwork.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - BRIGHT NIGHT
Assisting Vico, Harper begins filling out a new form. She
checks her watch. Surprised...

HARPER
Is that really the time?

Vico checks his watch.

VICO
Ten ’til ten.

Harper looks out the windows, where it could easily be mid-
afternoon. Something about the sound and the stillness feels
like night, however.

HARPER
I don’t know if I can get used to
this daylight thing.

VICO
Wait ’til winter. It’ll all even
out.

Back to the body he’s examining, Vico shines a penlight into
the corpse’s mouth.

VICO (cont’d)
Minor laceration of the
thyroarytenoid* muscle. T-H-Y-R...
*[THY-roh-uh-RET-in-oid]

HARPER
I know how to spell it. My
boyfriend, Jeff, is finishing his
ENT residency back East. I helped
him study for his boards.

A beat. Playfully lecherous...

VICO
So you like doctors?
HARPER
Love ‘em.

Vico continues his work, checking out the rest of the mouth.

VICO
Is he gonna move to Alaska?

HARPER
To be determined.

Noticing something unusual...

VICO
Huh.

HARPER
Huh what?

VICO
This man has a wisdom tooth growing in sideways. He never had it removed.

HARPER
Is that unusual?

VICO
It’s a little too familiar.

CUT TO:

A FAX MACHINE

printing a forensic report. We are...

INT. PRINCIPAL’S OFFICE – BRIGHT NIGHT

Vico takes the first page of the report. The rest is still printing. Harper waits patiently.

VICO
That man’s name is Henry Banks. Resident of Juneau.

HARPER
How do you know him?

VICO
Came through my office last spring.
Vico hands her the paper. She looks through it.

**HARPER**
You performed an autopsy on him in April. “Accidental death.”

**VICO**
Death by stupidity. He tried to swallow a Monopoly hotel. Choked on it.

**HARPER**
So it wasn’t a homicide.

**VICO**
Absolutely not.

**HARPER**
After you examined him, his body should have been returned to his family for burial.

Vico takes the just-finished second page out of the fax machine.

**VICO**
Transportation rec. Shows we shipped him home to Juneau. Green Mountain Cemetery here in town.

**HARPER**
So how did he end up on a muddy beach instead?

**VICO**
Maybe he wanted a change of scenery.

**EXT. CEMETARY - TWILIGHT**

Prescott emerges from his rental car to find Harper, Vico and Mathers waiting for him.

**TITLE OVER:**

**GREEN MOUNTAIN CEMETARY**
**JUNEAU**

Prescott is nursing a coffee, unhappy to have been woken up so early.
PRESCOTT
Tell me this couldn’t have waited until morning.

MATHERS
It is morning.

The foursome begins to walk toward the cemetery office.

HARPER
I saw the sun go down over there. But then it came right back up.

PRESCOTT
Sort of like our mysterious bodies.

EXT. DEEPER IN THE CEMETARY - DAY

CLOSE ON a granite marker reading:

Henry Banks
1974 - 2003

We REVERSE to find the foursome approaching with cemetery director is GERALD LEPAGE (45), whose innate paranoia is heightened by this early hour. Even with his very thick glasses, one senses he’s nearly blind.

LEPAGE
You can see here, there must be some mistake. No one has disturbed Mr. Banks’s grave. The grass is grown over.

Mathers runs his fingers through the grass, checking that it’s intact.

VICO
Twenty hours of daylight. Grass grows quick.

LEPAGE
Listen, my office looks out over the whole cemetery. Digging a grave is a lot of work. It takes hours. It’s not like someone could just sneak in here and do it without me noticing.
PRESCOTT
Mr. LePage, I mean no offense. But with those glasses, I bet there’s a lot you don’t see.

HARPER
We’d like to exhume the casket.

Alarmed...

LEPAGE
No. You can’t, legally. Not without the authorization of the state chief medical examiner.

VICO
That’d be me.

Vico hands LePage a form out of his back pocket.

LEPAGE
This is insane. You honestly think someone has been desecrating these graves?

MATHERS
Let’s find out.

We MOVE BEHIND the gravestone, letting it fill the frame. When we EMERGE on the far side, it is now...

LATER.

Mathers and two MEN from Vico’s team are digging up the grave. It’s dirty, back-breaking work.

Four feet down, they hit a major rock. It’s much larger than the width of the grave, and would obviously have to be removed in order to go deeper.

Mathers TAPS it with his shovel blade. Looks up to Prescott, Vico, Harper and LePage at the grave’s edge.

MATHERS
Well. We could probably break it up with a pickaxe.

PRESCOTT
Mr. LePage should have a pickaxe. After all, they would have needed one when they dug this grave the first time.
HARPER
Except they never dug it, did they?

LEPAGE
What are you implying?

MATHERS
I don’t think anyone was ever buried here. You or somebody working for you has been dumping these bodies in the bay.

With a hand from Vico, Mathers climbs out of the grave.

HARPER
Who was responsible for digging the graves?

LEPAGE
I’m not going to answer any questions. Not until I get a lawyer.

PRESCOTT
Yeah. A lawyer’s a pretty good idea right now.

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

INT. CEMETARY OFFICE CRY ROOM - DAY

Consisting of a couch and two wing-back chairs, this area is intended for family members overwhelmed by losing loved ones, or having to pay the associated costs.

Prescott and Harper meet with LePage and his ATTORNEY, a curly-haired woman who doubles as the town’s top realtor.

ATTORNEY
My client will cooperate only if he’s granted full immunity from prosecution.

HARPER
Excuse me?

ATTORNEY
That’s the offer on the table.

A look of disbelief between Harper and Prescott. He nods. You handle this idiot.

HARPER
To begin with, you’re not in a position to be making offers. Cooperating with a murder investigation isn’t a negotiable right. It’s the law.

LEPAGE
Who said anything about murder?

HARPER
This began as a suspected homicide investigation. Until we talk with you, we can’t rule out foul play.

ATTORNEY
Please don’t address my client.

HARPER
I was answering your client’s question. If you’d like to do that job...

ATTORNEY
I don’t appreciate your tone.
HARPER
(politely)
We’re investigating fourteen dead bodies. Sorry if I don’t sound cheery.

Prescott suddenly chimes in, ignoring the defense attorney altogether.

PRESCOTT
How do you think the town is going to react when they find out you’ve been throwing away bodies?

ATTORNEY
This interview is over.


PRESCOTT
If I were a shotgun-toting bear hunter who found out my dear mother had been dumped in Chatham Strait...

LEPAGE
I don’t know anything about that!

HARPER
So who does?

ATTORNEY
As your attorney, I strongly advise you...

LEPAGE
Shut up, Lois!

LePage is now really sweating. He feels the walls closing in around him.

LEPAGE (cont’d)
Look, I really don’t know what’s happening here. I hired a man to dig the graves, and I truly thought that’s what he was doing.

HARPER
Who’s the man?
LEPAGE
Ooto Olsson.* He’s been working for me for six, eight months.
[Swedish: OO-too OHL-son]

HARPER
You have an address?

LEPAGE
I do.

PRESCOTT
Alright. We’re going to need that, and the records of everyone who was supposed to be buried here in the last year. Plus your financials and anything else Lt. Mathers needs for his investigation.

LEPAGE
Okay. Alright. Anything you want.

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY
Harper walks with Prescott back to his car. She’s reading through pages from a ledger.

HARPER
Get this: Mr. LePage started buying caskets from a new supplier about four months ago.

PRESCOTT
Let me guess. He found a bargain.

HARPER
He was buying them for a hundred and selling them for over a thousand.

PRESCOTT
What do you want to bet he was buying the same coffins over and over again?

HARPER
You think LePage knew what was going on?
On one hand, he’s a fool if he didn’t. On the other hand, he may be a fool.

Harper smiles.

I want the gravedigger, this Ooto Olsson. Sounds like he’s the mastermind behind this idiotic scheme.

Mathers is going out to find him right now.

Prescott puts his briefcase in his car.

Morbid as it is, I’m happy it worked out this way. Think about it: we’ve got fourteen bodies and not one homicide. Not bad for a long day’s work.

We’ll count our blessings.

See you back in Anchorage.

He climbs in and SHUTS the door.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

We follow MATHERS’S TRUCK as it drives along the bay, glints of sunlight coming off the water.

EXT. RUNDOWN HOUSE - DAY

Mathers’s truck pulls up to a stop in front of a rundown, ramshackle house. It doesn’t look like it could weather a strong breeze, much less an Alaskan winter.

TITLE OVER:

RESIDENCE OF OOTO OLSSON
JUNEAU
Along the road, a broken fence separates wilderness from rural decay -- a torched car on the front lawn, sunbleached clothes hanging on the line. The bent mailbox has been lashed to the post, after having been driven over a few times.

An angry dog barks ferociously as Mathers gets out of the truck and puts on his ID lanyard. The dog is chained to a tree, pulling with all his strength, trying to break free and attack.

**MATHERS**
(yelling)
State Trooper! Anyone home?

A beat, then a dishelved woman named CARLA OLSSON emerges from the broken screen door. She’s 27, but it’s hard to pin her age at a glance. Around her eyes she looks much older. There’s a desperation and exhaustion you usually only see after great tragedy.

She’s clearly nervous, and seems unaccountably cold -- she holds her arms tight. Yelling at the dog...

**CARLA**
Batty, shut up! Shut up!

Eventually, the dog quiets down.

**CARLA (cont’d)**
(to Mathers)
Yeah? What do you need?

She approaches Mathers at the fence, if only to keep him from coming onto her property.

**MATHERS**
I’m looking for Ooto Olsson.

**CARLA**
He’s not here.

**MATHERS**
Do you live here with him?

**CARLA**
I do. But he’s not here.

**MATHERS**
My name is Ray Mathers. I’m with the Alaska State Troopers.

**CARLA**
Hi.
She nervously shakes his hand, then pulls her arm back to her chest.

    MATHERS
    Are you his wife?

    CARLA
    Yeah. Carla Olsson.

    MATHERS
    When do you expect your husband back?

    CARLA
    Hard to say.

    MATHERS
    How long has he been gone?

She genuinely has to think.

    CARLA
    A day maybe. It’s hard, with the days so long. You lose track.

    MATHERS
    When was the last time you slept?

    CARLA
    Oh, I was actually just sleeping before you came.

    MATHERS
    Really. What day of the week is it?

    CARLA
    (a little unsure)
    Saturday.

    MATHERS
    It’s Tuesday. How long have you been tweaking, Carla?

She just stares at him, not sure if he’s fishing or if he really knows the truth.

    MATHERS (cont’d)
    Couple days? A week?

Carla backs away from him. Mathers pushes the gate aside. Follows her.
MATHERS (cont’d)
Are you smoking or shooting up? I’m guessing the latter. That’s why you don’t want to show me your arms.

CARLA
Look, I don’t know where Ooto is.

MATHERS
Is he out getting more crystal meth for you?

CARLA
Oh, like I’m the one with the problem.

MATHERS
Your teeth are falling out, you have bruises on your arms and you live in squalor. I’d say you have a problem.

She doesn’t even try to argue.

MATHERS (cont’d)
You have any kids?

CARLA
No.

MATHERS
Great. One thing you’ve done right.

She nods. She’d be crying if her wiring weren’t so screwed up.

MATHERS (cont’d)
Your husband, he’s in some serious trouble. And if he’s half as high as you are right now, he could be dangerous to himself and other people. If you care about him at all, you’re gonna take me to him before anyone gets hurt.

(beat)
Now, do you know where he is?

CARLA
He has a trailer. It’s about an hour away, up one of the fire roads.
MATHERS
You know the way?

She nods.

MATHERS (cont’d)
Right then. First we’re going to feed that dog of yours, and then we’re going to go.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Harper and Vico walk down the rows of tables, matching up bodies to cemetary records. Vico takes a clipboard off a closed bodybag, checking the stats.

VICO
Female, Black. Early forties.

HARPER
Loretta Jones.

Harper hands him the file. He checks it over. Seems like a match. He places both the clipboard and the file folder on top of the bodybag, then moves to the last corpse in the row.

VICO
Last one.
   (checking clipboard)
   Male, Caucasian. Early twenties.

Harper looks through the possible files -- only two left.

HARPER
All I have is women.

VICO
So we got an extra body.

HARPER
Someone who was never supposedly buried at Green Mountain.

VICO
Looks that way.

HARPER
Do you know the cause of death?
Both Harper and Vico stare at the zipped-up body bag.

VICO (cont’d)
Just when it was looking easy.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUNEAU AIRPORT / PARKING LOT - DAY

Prescott walks down a row of cars, pulling his overnight bag. He tosses his keys to a male RENTAL ATTENDANT.

PRESCOTT
Pleasure as always.

The Attendant nods. A beat later, Prescott’s cell phone RINGS. He answers it without stopping.

PRESCOTT (cont’d)

He stops, listening more carefully.

PRESCOTT (cont’d)
Okay. I’ll be right there.

He hangs up. Turns and starts walking back the way he came. Calling over to the Attendant.

PRESCOTT (cont’d)
Rick! I’ll need those keys back.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Prescott joins Harper and Vico examining the extra body. We don’t get a very good look at it -- for the best, really, because the body’s in pretty rough shape.

VICO
Man died of heart failure.

PRESCOTT
This kid’s 25 years old, tops.
VICO
Wasn’t cholesterol that killed him. Massive drug overdose. Some sort of amphetamine, probably crystal. Fried him from the inside out.

HARPER
Was he a junkie?

VICO
No way. Arms are clean, no tracks. Except for this bruise on his shoulder.

We go CLOSE ON a blackened patch. It’s unpleasant, but not gruesome or bloody.

VICO (cont’d)
Crystal is like gasoline cut with battery acid. It melted through the muscle.

PRESCOTT
You think he did it himself?

VICO
No. Someone shot him up with enough to kill him. Probably enough to kill an elephant.

HARPER
You think it was a homicide.

VICO
Absolutely.

PRESCOTT
So we’ve got a killer after all.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST NEAR THE WATER - DAY

We COME UPON Mathers’s truck as it makes its way down a dirt road. It’s not quite 4-wheel time, but that winch might come in handy.

TITLE OVER:
FIRE ROAD SW-83
OUTSIDE JUNEAU
As the truck stops, we REVEAL a battered camper trailer sitting on cinderblocks with an equally mistreated Ford out front.

Mathers climbs out of the truck. He’s parked quite a ways away, just to be safe.

INSERT SHOT:

Mather’s satellite phone RINGS. The display reads: HARPER. The call goes unanswered.

CUT TO:

INT. CAMPER TRAILER - DAY

From SOMEBODY’S P.O.V., we look out through the dirty curtains, spotting the white STATE TROOPER truck parked in the distance.

A NEW ANGLE reveals an improvised double-boiler RATTLING on the camper stove, with a drip pipe leading to a gallon container. A second Coleman stove has a different brew bubbling up and smoking.

This isn’t just a camper. It’s a meth lab.

BACK TO:

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Mathers crosses around to the passenger door, where Carla Olsson climbs out. As he talks, Mathers keeps one eye on the trailer at all times.

MATHERS
Is your husband alone?

CARLA
I don’t know.

MATHERS
Who else would be here with him?

CARLA
I don’t know.
MATHERS
A buyer or a seller? Carla?

Off her non-answer...

MATHERS (cont’d)
Your husband’s cooking meth, isn’t he? That’s why he has the trailer out in the middle of nowhere.

CARLA
He just makes enough for us.

MATHERS
Yeah, I believe that. Does he have a gun?

CARLA
No. Never.

INT. THE TRAILER - DAY
CLOSE ON a man’s trembling hands as he loads a cheap .22 calibre -- classic Saturday night special. The hands are filthy, covered in grime and sores.

EXT. THE ROAD - DAY
Mathers points to Carla.

MATHERS
Back behind the truck. Now.

CARLA
Don’t hurt him. He’s not a bad man. Really.

Yet, she obeys Mathers. Moves behind the truck. Mathers unholsters his weapon while inching towards the trailer.

MATHERS
(yelling)
State Trooper! I need you to come outside with your hands up!

There’s no movement from inside.

MATHERS (cont’d)
Mr. Olsson! I have your wife here...
INT. TRAILER - DAY

MATHERS [O.S.]
...she'd really like you to come
out and talk with us.

For the first time, we reveal OOTO OLSSON (30). Once a
strapping Swede, six years of homemade meth have left him
skinny, feral and paranoid. He’s well on his way to becoming
Gollum.

He’s crouched by the door, gun ready.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Mathers slowly approaches, his weapon at ready.

MATHERS
Mr. Olsson?

ANGLE ON Carla, turning as she spots a SECOND MAN creeping out
of the woods behind her. He is heavyset, a biker, carrying a
9-millimeter. He puts a finger to his mouth. Be quiet.

INTERCUT

Mathers approaching the trailer.

Ooto inside.

The Biker taking aim at Mathers.

Carla, choosing sides. At the last moment...

CARLA
No!

Mathers turns. With a hunter’s eye, he finds his mark and
FIRES, dropping the biker with two shots.

Carla SCREAMS, freaked out of her mind.

INT. THE TRAILER - DAY

Hearing the gunshots, Ooto panics. He SLAMS himself against
the dinette table, which collapses.

The Coleman stove falls off it, the bubbling cauldron spraying
everywhere. Ooto SCREAMS in pain as the boiling liquid hits
him.
Smoke rises, and then a SPARK.

EXT. THE ROAD – DAY

The trailer EXPLODES, blowing out the glass with licks of flame. Mathers isn’t knocked down, but he turns away by reflex.

Carla watches in wide-eyed horror. A beat, then the smoldering door of the trailer opens and

A FLAMING MAN

falls out. It’s Ooto, obviously, but it seems more like his ghost. He walks away from the smoking wreckage, step after step.

Carla runs towards him. Mathers catches her. Holds her back with one arm while keeping aim on Ooto. Just in case.

The burning man finally falls.

The flames live longer than he does.

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

EXT. WRECKAGE OF THE TRAILER - DAY

Harper and Mathers walk-and-talk past the still-smoking hull of the trailer, while UNIFORMED TROOPERS do a line-sweep of the area in the background.

HARPER
So this man, Ooto Olsson, had two jobs: gravedigger and drug manufacturer.

MATHERS
You’re familiar with crystal meth?

HARPER
Not really. Back East, the drugs we saw were mostly import-export.

Mathers picks up a small, charred canister.

MATHERS
Meth is homegrown. Basically, fertilizer, allergy medicine, some sort of solvent. Everything you need to make it is close at hand.

HARPER
So, you can’t stop it at the border.

MATHERS
You can’t stop it at all. You’ll see whole villages fall to it. These two men who died, they weren’t even big players. It’s a do-it-yourself addiction.

As they move behind the trailer, we see what Mathers wanted to show her: stacks of coffins, many covered with tarps.

HARPER
And here are all the caskets. Ready for resale.

MATHERS
According to the wife, Olsson took the gravedigger job during his last bout of sobriety. A few months ago, he started doing more crystal. That’s when the bodies stopped getting buried...
HARPER
...and started getting dumped in the bay. Still doesn’t explain our John Doe.

MATHERS
You said he died of crystal overdose. That’s a connection.

HARPER
It was a homicide. We need a motive.

MATHERS
First you need a name.

HARPER
Vico’s working on it. He took the body back to Anchorage.
(beat)
Truth is, with Olsson dead, we may have lost are only lead.

MATHERS
We’ll find something.

As she examines the stacks of caskets...

HARPER
Ironic. Olsson had all these coffins, and now there’s not enough of him left to bury.

INT. VICO’S LAB / ANCHORAGE - DAY

Vico is on the phone, the twisty cord stretching across half the lab as he tries to continue his work on the extra male victim. We don’t see much of the body, staying more on Vico.

VICO
(on phone)
The body I’m working on has a needle puncture in the right hip bone. Mostly healed, no sign of infection. Which gets me thinking, this guy might be a bone marrow donor.
(listening)
Uh-huh.
(MORE)
VICO (cont'd)
We found the body in Juneau, but since the only hospital that can do a bone marrow transplant is here in Anchorage, this guy probably came up to your hospital. Uh-huh. How quick can you get me a list of male donors in the last six months?

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE IN ANCHORAGE - BRIGHT NIGHT

A modest home in a fringe neighborhood of Anchorage. It’s still bright enough to do needlepoint outside, yet all the porchlights are on. It’s probably nine o’clock at night.

TITLE OVER:

RESIDENCE OF VIRGINIA LARSON
ANCHORAGE

Vico walks the house, carrying a supply bag. His messy VW van is parked at the curb.

Vico RINGS the bell.

INT. LIVING ROOM / HOUSE IN ANCHORAGE - BRIGHT NIGHT

CLOSE ON a framed photograph of SCOTT LARSON, 22. He’s a very good looking kid, classic Abercrombie and Fitch.

WOMAN’S VOICE
Scott moved down to Juneau last year.

A woman’s hand picks up the photograph. We reveal VIRGINIA LARSON (46), mother of the deceased. She’s a somewhat brittle woman overwhelmed by conflicting emotions.

VIRGINIA
We’d had some arguments, personal matters. We both agreed it would be best if he moved out.

She hands the photo to Vico. Virginia’s daughter AMY (13) stands off to the side. She’s a very thin, pale girl. Unhealthy.

VIRGINIA (cont’d)
I hadn’t spoken to Scott for a few months...
AMY
Six months. Not since the operation.

VIRGINIA
She’s right. Probably six months. I assumed he was still living there.
(simply)
I assumed he was still alive.

Vico senses he’s in the middle of some awkward family dynamics, heightened by the sudden news of Scott’s death.

VICO
Actually, we can’t say for certain the body we have is Scott. There was damage.

VIRGINIA
Oh.

VICO
So it would help if you could give me a blood sample to match.

VIRGINIA
Me?

VICO
Yes. If you don’t mind.

VIRGINIA
I suppose Amy’s had enough needles in her life.

Virginia takes a seat. Vico pulls supplies from his kit. While we usually see him handling dead people, Vico’s quite good with living ones as well. He effortlessly keeps up a conversation while preparing to take the blood sample.

VICO
So, Amy. You were the one that got Scott’s bone marrow.

AMY
Yeah.

VICO
Lucky that you and Scott were a match. Only a one-in-four chance, even for a brother and sister.
AMY
We were always a lot alike.

VICO
What kind of cancer did you have?

AMY
Leukemia. I still have it.

VIRGINIA
The transplant didn’t do what we hoped.

VICO
I’m sorry.

AMY
Odds weren’t that good anyway.

A beat to acknowledge that, then Vico is ready to actually draw blood.

VICO
You’ll feel a sting.

Virginia looks away as the blood fills the vial.

VICO (cont’d)
A bone marrow transplant is very expensive.

AMY
Two hundred thousand dollars. Insurance wouldn’t cover it.

A look from Virginia to Amy.

VICO
How did you pay?

VIRGINIA
We held a fundraiser, a pancake breakfast.

VICO
That’s nice.

He finishes with the blood sample. Presses a cotton ball into Virginia’s arm.

VIRGINIA
That’s Alaska. Everyone helps each other out.
EXT. HOUSE IN ANCHORAGE - BRIGHT NIGHT

Vico is about to get back into his van when Amy comes up from behind.

AMY
Dr. Vico?

Amy clearly doesn’t want her mother to know she’s talking to him.

VICO
Hi. What is it?

AMY
She’s not telling you everything.

VICO
Okay.

AMY
The reason why Scott and my mom weren’t talking was because he didn’t like girls. Not in that way.

VICO
Oh. I don’t know if that’s important now, but it’s good you told me.

AMY
Also, the pancake breakfast? We only made $8,000 dollars.

VICO
So how did you get the rest of the money?

AMY
Scott did it. I don’t know how.

INT. TWO-BEDROOM APARTMENT - DAY

Mathers talks with TED ZIERING (23), a lanky waiter at the town’s best restaurant.

TITLE OVER:

BAYVIEW APARTMENT COMPLEX
JUNEAU
Ted is putting away groceries as he talks. This is the first he’s heard of Scott’s death, so he’s still processing.

TED
Scott was a good friend, but he was a crappy roommate. He was always late with the rent or borrowing stuff without asking.

MATHERS
How did you meet him?

TED
At the restaurant. We were both waiters. Turned out we had mutual interests.
(beat)
Preferences.

MATHERS
Were the two of you roommates or something more than that?

TED
Just roommates. Definitely. Some lines you do not cross.

MATHERS
Was he involved with drugs?

TED
No way. Total straight-arrow. Never even saw him drunk.

MATHERS
Either of these men look familiar?

Mathers shows him photos of Ooto Olsson and the dead biker.

TED
No. And not his type, if that’s what you’re asking.

MATHERS
What was his type?

TED
Preppy. Older, sometimes. Honestly, I never met anyone he was seeing. He was kind of secretive that way.

A beat.
MATHERS
When was the last time you saw him?

TED
Spring. Maybe not even. One day I got back from work and he was gone. Took a lot of his stuff, not everything.

MATHERS
You didn’t report him missing?

TED
He emailed me a couple days later. Said he was going down to Los Angeles. He’d always talked about wanting to be an actor.

MATHERS
When was the last time you got an email from him?

TED
Couple weeks ago.

MATHERS
(surprised)
Scott’s been dead at least four months.

A beat. Genuinely perplexed…

TED
So who’s been sending the emails?

MATHERS
Probably the same person who came to get Scott’s stuff.

(closer)
I think they were looking for something.

CUT TO:

LATER

Three UNIFORMED TROOPERS work with Mathers to search the apartment from top to bottom. They search behind every drawer, TAP along every baseboard.
In the kitchenette, Mathers pulls the refrigerator away from the wall. Shines a flashlight into the space behind it, where he finds a manila envelope. Fishes it out.

He dumps out the envelope on the counter, spilling out several thousand dollars in cash and a small mini-DV videotape.

Picking up the tape, Mathers turns to Ted.

**MATHERS**
Did Scott have a videocamera?

**TED**
No, I do. Scott always borrowed it without asking.

CUT TO:

LATER

Ted hooks up his videocamera to the TV. Puts in the videotape.

We see Mathers reflected in the black TV glass, until the picture comes up.

**VIDEO FOOTAGE**

We’re in a bedroom. Scott Larson, shirtless, moves past the camera, which is evidently tucked behind something, hidden away. From this perspective, we mostly just see the bed.

**A MAN’S VOICE**
You are so damn sexy. And the worst part is, I think you know it.

Another man’s bare back crosses the lens. With a cocky smile, Scott sits the man down at the foot of the bed, then disappears below frame. It’s left to our imagination exactly what Scott’s doing down there, but it certainly seems pleasurable.

**INTERCUT MATHERS AND TED**

watching the screen.

**TED**
I know that guy. He’s the pharmacist.
Indeed, the man receiving oral gratification is the Samaritan pharmacist from the start of the show, John Putnam.

CUT TO:

INT. PUTNAM PHARMACY - DAY

John Putnam appears calm as can be. He and his wife Lynne talk with Mathers.

JOHN PUTNAM
What can we do for you?

MATHERS
We’re trying to piece some things together. I’m wondering if any of these men look familiar to you.

One at a time, he shows photos of the Dead Biker, Ooto Olsson and Scott Larson. Mathers is trying to gauge John Putnam’s reaction, but the man gives up nothing.

JOHN PUTNAM
I don’t recognize any of them. Do you, honey?

LYNNE PUTNAM
No. I don’t think they were customers. Certainly not regulars.

MATHERS
Alright.

Mathers pulls out a piece of paper.

MATHERS (cont’d)
Mr. and Mrs. Putnam, I have a search warrant for this location, along with your house and automobiles. This includes your business records, computer equipment and email accounts.

On cue, SEVERAL TROOPERS enter the pharmacy. Lynne is bewildered. John is visibly terrified.

LYNNE PUTNAM
What is this? What’s going on?
MATHERS
Mr. Putnam, we’d like to take you
to the village office for
questioning. It would be in your
best interest to cooperate.

LYNNE PUTNAM
I don’t understand what’s
happening!

JOHN PUTNAM
It’s nothing, Lynne. It’s a
mistake, that’s all.

EXT. PUTNAM PHARMACY - DAY

In the background, troopers are carrying out boxes of records.
Mathers walks over to Harper, who’s finishing up a phone call.

HARPER
Anything good?

MATHERS
The computer in the back office.
Putnam was sending email on Scott
Larson’s account. He wanted the
roommate to think Scott was still
alive as long as possible.

HARPER
Jackpot.

MATHERS
Putnam would have gotten away with
it too, if Ooto didn’t dump the
body the same place he always did.
Things have a way of circling
around down here.

HARPER
Tell me, honestly. Do you think
Putnam killed Scott himself, or
did he have Olsson do it?

MATHERS
He had Olsson do it. He wanted to
keep his hands clean.

HARPER
Either way it’s...
INT. HALLWAY NEAR PRESCOTT’S OFFICE - DAY

Harper and Prescott walk-and-talk.

PRESCOTT
Murder one.

HARPER
Absolutely.

PRESCOTT
You don’t happen to have a confession, do you?

HARPER
No. But we’ve got a pretty good case.

PRESCOTT
I’m the jury. Connect the dots for me.

They reach Prescott’s office.

INT. PRESCOTT’S OFFICE - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

Prescott goes through his phone slips while they talk.

HARPER
Alright, you’ve got John Putnam, well-respected town pharmacist. And Ooto Olsson, part-time gravedigger, full-time drug dealer. Olsson’s wife will testify that her husband knew Putnam and was illicitly buying allergy medicine from him. The same medicine Olsson used to make his meth.

PRESCOTT
Olsson’s wife is a meth addict. Her credibility is a problem.

He crumples up some of his phone messages. Tosses them.
HARPER
We back it up with invoices.
Putnam’s pharmacy was ordering
twenty times the amount of allergy
medicine you’d expect for a store
that size.

PRESCOTT
Good. But can we positively match
the drugs that killed Scott Larson
back to Olsson?

HARPER
Every cook has a different recipe.
Vico says the chemical signature
is unique.

PRESCOTT
It was Olsson’s batch that killed
him?

HARPER
Guaranteed.

Prescott is restless. Dubious.

PRESCOTT
So far, you can make a compelling
case that Olsson was involved in
Larson’s death. Problem is,
Olsson’s already dead. It’s
Putnam we want.

HARPER
Putnam and Olsson had a pre-
existing criminal relationship.

PRESCOTT
My wife and I drive over the speed
limit. That’s a pre-existing
criminal relationship.

Harper is unamused.

PRESCOTT (cont’d)
Fine. Just give me the motive.

HARPER
Scott Larson was blackmailing
Putnam. We have it on videotape.
PRESCOTT
No, what we have on videotape is two consenting adults engaged in sexual activity. It may be distasteful, but it hasn’t been illegal since 1980.

HARPER
Scott Larson was threatening to reveal the tape and expose the affair.

PRESCOTT
Prove it.

She’s frustrated, but knows he’s right.

PRESCOTT (cont’d)
If you can’t put a witness on the stand to show a pattern of blackmail, you don’t have a motive, which means you don’t have a case.

HARPER
John Putnam wasn’t the only one Larson was sleeping with. There are two other men on the tape. One we can’t identify.

PRESCOTT
Who’s the other?

HARPER
Hank Firestone. The state senator.

EXT. TENNIS COURTS - BRIGHT NIGHT

TWO COUPLES in their fifties finish up their match, shaking hands over the net. One of the men is State Senator HANK FIRESTONE, whose partner is his WIFE.

TITLE OVER:

SPRING VALLEY COUNTRY CLUB
ANCHORAGE

As the couples leave the court, they come upon Prescott, who was evidently waiting for them to finish. He has his jacket off, but he clearly came straight from work.
FIRESTONE
Roger! We haven’t seen you around much lately.

PRESCOTT
No rest for the wicked. I’d love a few minutes if I could.

FIRESTONE
Of course.
(to his wife)
Lois, I’ll meet you inside?

A consumate politician’s wife, she’s used to being sent away.

FIRESTONE’S WIFE
Roger, please say hello to Linda for me.

PRESCOTT
I will.

Firestone’s wife and the other couple leave the court. A few beats until they’re out of earshot.

FIRESTONE
I don’t like that look in your eye, Roger.

PRESCOTT
Scott Larson is dead.

A beat. Firestone is inscrutable.

FIRESTONE
I don’t think I know a Scott Larson.

PRESCOTT
Senator, I didn’t come here to trap you in a lie. I came to help you out of one.

Firestone begins walking away. The two men have the entire court to themselves.

PRESCOTT (cont’d)
There’s a videotape that shows the two of you together.

FIRESTONE
That’s impossible.
PRESCOTT
Why?  Because you bought the only tape?
    (following Firestone)
You bought a copy.  Scott Larson kept the original.  It’s already state’s evidence.

FIRESTONE
Evidence of what?

PRESCOTT
Murder.  Scott Larson was killed.  Shot up with so much crystal meth he had a heart attack.

Suddenly realizing the possible implication...

FIRESTONE
I had nothing to do with his death.

PRESCOTT
You’re not a suspect.  We know who did it.

FIRESTONE
So what’s the purpose of this visit?  A little advance notice on the end of my political career? My marriage?

PRESCOTT
We need you to testify that Scott Larson was blackmailing you.

FIRESTONE
Never.

PRESCOTT
Then a killer is going to walk.

Firestone crosses around the far side of the net.

PRESCOTT (cont’d)
Listen, I don’t know what Scott Larson was to you.  You had every right to hate him.  But at some point, on some level, you cared for him.

Firestone nods, suddenly coming upon a new theory.  He looks dead at Prescott.
FIRESTONE
You’re loving this, aren’t you?
This is what you always dreamed of.

PRESCOTT
What are you talking about?

FIRESTONE
A chance to knock out the competition. One less opponent on the way to becoming governor.
Just remember, Roger. You have your own history of marital woes.

PRESCOTT
This isn’t politics, Hank.

FIRESTONE
It’s all politics.

PRESCOTT
It’ll come out one way or another. I’m giving you the chance to control it.

FIRESTONE
You’re giving me the chance to hang myself. It’ll be my name in the headlines, not some dead hustler.

PRESCOTT
He was more than that to you.

FIRESTONE
You’re right. Absolutely.

For the first time, we see a chink in Firestone’s armor, a real sense of loss.

FIRESTONE (cont’d)
The thing is, he’s dead. But I’m the one who’s getting buried.

PRESCOTT
You dug your own grave, Senator. Start digging your way out.

END OF ACT THREE
ACT FOUR

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Harper approaches the witness stand. We see John Putnam sitting at the defense table, along with his ATTORNEY.

TITLE OVER:

SUPERIOR COURT
ANCHORAGE

HARPER
Mr. Firestone, would you tell the court what do you do for a living?

Hank Firestone is calm and collected. He’s trying to seem less patrician and more common man.

FIRESTONE
I own a mining research company. I’m also a State Senator representing Anchorage. I’m in my third term.

HARPER
As a Senator, how often do you travel to Juneau for legislative business?

FIRESTONE
Usually twice a month.

HARPER
Where did you first meet Scott Larson?

FIRESTONE
At the Rosewood Inn. It’s a restaurant in Juneau. Scott worked there as a waiter.

In the audience, we find Prescott, along with Lynne Putnam, Virginia Larson and young Amy Larson.

HARPER
When was this?

FIRESTONE
Approximately a year ago.

HARPER
What was the nature of your relationship?
FIRESTONE
He was a paid companion.

This was clearly a mutually planned choice of words.

HARPER
Would you explain what you mean by that?

FIRESTONE
We would spend a few hours together in the evening. Occasionally the whole night.

HARPER
What did the two of you do?

FIRESTONE
Mostly we talked. Watched TV. We also had sexual relations.

He tries to say it as if he were talking about backgammon.

HARPER
How many times total did you see Scott Larson?

FIRESTONE
I’d estimate twenty to thirty.

HARPER
Did you care for Scott?

FIRESTONE
Yes.

HARPER
Did you love him?

FIRESTONE
Yes. He was a remarkable young man.

HARPER
When did you last see Scott?

FIRESTONE
Six months ago, he met me at my apartment in Juneau. He told me he needed one hundred thousand dollars.
HARPER
Did he explain why?

FIRESTONE
His sister needed a bone marrow transplant. I told him I was sorry, but I couldn’t give him that kind of money.

HARPER
What happened next?

FIRESTONE
Scott told me he had a tape showing the two of us together in bed, and that he would send it to my wife and my colleagues if I didn’t give him the money.

HARPER
What did you do?

FIRESTONE
I gave him the money. He gave me a videotape. I naively assumed it was the original. It wasn’t.

HARPER
Senator, do you hold any resentment towards Scott Larson?

FIRESTONE
No. Scott did what he thought he had to do. That’s all any of us can.

CUT TO:

INT. PRESCOTT’S OFFICE - BRIGHT NIGHT

Prescott sits with Firestone, who seems completely defeated. Firestone sips a scotch, while Prescott sticks with bottled water.

PRESCOTT
The jury sentenced Putnam to forty years, and that’s thanks to you. We could never have established a pattern of blackmail without your testimony.
FIRESTONE
Glad something good came out of it.

Firestone nods, a forced smile.

PRESCOTT
You holding up?

FIRESTONE
My wife left me.

PRESCOTT
Been there.

FIRESTONE
My kids are still figuring out how to approach the subject.

PRESCOTT
It’ll come in time. Normal life will resume.

A beat.

FIRESTONE
I don’t know. I feel like the person I was is dead. And the strangest thing is, I don’t miss him.

INT. VICO’S LAB - BRIGHT NIGHT

Vico is alone in the lab, closing up for the night. He pulls a cover over the body on the table, then fastens a “DO NOT TOUCH” Post-It note to it.

A voice from behind him...

AMY
Dr. Vico?

He turns to see young Amy Larson. She’s carrying a stack of file folders with colored tags on the edges.

VICO
Amy. How did you...

AMY
There wasn’t anybody at the desk.
VICO
Yeah. Joe’s wife had a baby. A girl.

Both just stand there for a beat.

AMY
I went to my oncologist. When we were done, they had all my files just sitting on the counter. So I took ‘em.

That’s what she’s holding.

VICO
I see.

AMY
I was wondering, if you’re not too busy...

VICO
Sure. Sure.

CUT TO:

LATER

Vico sits next to Amy, looking through her files. She points to a figure on lab printout.

AMY
I looked it up on the internet, and that one’s supposed to be higher, right?

VICO
Yeah, it’s the ratio that matters.

AMY
The ratio’s bad.

VICO
Yeah. It’s not good.

He flips to a new page. A beat before she finally asks the big question:

AMY
I’m going to die, aren’t I?
To his credit, Vico doesn’t reach for the quick denial. That’s not what Amy’s here for.

VICO
Yeah. We all do eventually.

AMY
But I’m going to die sooner.

VICO
Yeah.

AMY
What’s that like?

Put on the spot, Vico finds he doesn’t have a good answer.

AMY (cont’d)
That’s why I wanted to ask you. Because you’re like, the expert. No one else will tell me.

VICO
I don’t know much about death. I mean, I can tell you how and when and where people die. Everything else, it’s just...life.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END