UNTITLED ALASKA PROJECT
(a.k.a. THE CIRCLE)

"My Three Sons"
(PILOT)

written by
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WHITE DRAFT  2.18.03
FADE IN

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:
EXT. RESCUE STAGING AREA - DAY

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?

EXT. BEHIND VAN DER KAMP’S TRUCK – DAY

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

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. MORAIN FIELD - DAY

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

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

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.
EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

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:

GORGEOUS AND DISTURBING TITLE SEQUENCE

END OF TEASER
ACT ONE

FADE IN:

10 EXT. EDGE OF THE FOREST - DUSK

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

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.

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EXT. DELTA JUNCTION DINER - NIGHT

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.
INT. DELTA JUNCTION DINER / KITCHEN - NIGHT

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 heavyset 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.
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.

INT. IVANHOV’S WORKSHOP - NIGHT

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.

INT. GLENN AND MARY SATCHEL’S HOME - NIGHT

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-wincs. 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:

EXT. GLEN AND MARY SATCHEL’S HOME – NIGHT

Glenn and Bobby’s father ELIAS SATCHEL (70) climbs out of his truck. The paterfamilias is a ropy 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.

INT. MATHERS’S TRUCK / DRIVING - NIGHT

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.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

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.
A helicopter descends upon us.

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.

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!

EXT. FOREST / MILES AWAY - DAY

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.

EXT. DEEPER IN THE FOREST - DAY

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:

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

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 behinds 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:

INT. NEAR A CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

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.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

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.

INT. BASEMENT LAB - DAY
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.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

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.

INT. SMALL COURTROOM – DAY

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

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

32 EXT. SATCHEL HOUSE - DAY

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

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.

EXT. BACK OF HOUSE – DAY

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.

EXT. EDGE OF THE FOREST – DAY

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

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

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.

OVER BY THE CARS
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.

EXT. ANCHORAGE COURTS BUILDING - DAY

Establishing.
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 sagittal 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.
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:

EXT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

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.

INT. SUPERIOR COURT - DAY

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
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

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 JUNCTION – DAY

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.
INT. TRUCK [DRIVING] - DAY

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.

INT. SEA PLANE HANGAR / GLENN’S OFFICE - DAY

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?
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:

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

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:

EXT. MOUNTAIN LAKE - DAY

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.

EXT. SATCHEL HOUSE - DAY

Establishing.

EXT. BEHIND THE SATCHEL HOUSE - DAY

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.

INT. HALLWAY IN JUDICIAL BUILDING (ANCHORAGE) - DAY

Harper walks with Prescott.

HARPER

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.

INT. DELTA JUNCTION DINER - DAY

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


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

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

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.

Harper is still looking at the bulletin board.

HARPER
He never found her?

VICO
Pieces.

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:

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