

The Ones

by Case Parks

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FADE IN:

EXT. ARIZONA DESERT - NIGHT

A CAMPFIRE crackles in the desert stillness. The MILKY WAY casts faint light on the DARK MESAS below.

Two figures sit silhouetted by the fire.

A HOPI ELDER (70) weathered and wise, studies the fire.

His GREAT GRANDSON (10), wide-eyed, innocent, watches him, worn-out Converse sticking out from his blanket.

HOPI ELDER

(softly)

My grandfather told me this day
would come. When the world would
grow loud and fast... people would
stop listening to their hearts and
trust only the mind.

(a beat)

And fear would spread like fire.

The Elder stirs the fire. The boy follows the rising sparks.

HOPI ELDER

But he said just when the world
seems the darkest, a new light
will appear. (looks up to the
stars)

A SHOOTING STAR skates the sky, or perhaps something else.
The Elder watches it go, a quiet, knowing smile on his face.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE SUV - MOVING - DAY

A white SUV moves through endless cornfields, small against the flat horizon.

GREEN DAY'S "Good Riddance" plays, bittersweet against the somber mood inside.

CHANCE (40), Native American, slender, full sleeves of tats and kind, disarming eyes, the last person you'd expect the future to depend on.

ADELA (40), Latina, natural beauty, grounded, wise, Buddha-calm. The family's quiet compass.

CRUZ (10), long-haired like his dad. Sensitive, impatient, and zero interest in your advice, no matter how good it is.

ZOEL (17), her mom's clone minus the zen. Sharp, blunt, and the first to tell you you're full of shit or that she loves you.

HOPI ELDER (V.O.)
Souls from many worlds will
return.

CRUZ'S EYES SNAP OPEN – disoriented – back to his Nintendo.

Chance drives on silently mouthing the lyrics as he watches the passing fields like they're memories.

GREEN DAY
It's something unpredictable but
in the end, it's right.

CHANCE
(soft, voice cracks)
I hope you had the time of your
life.

Adela looks at him.

ADELA
You ok?

Chance takes a moment then nods, drying his eyes with his worn-out, too-tight Nirvana T-shirt.

CHANCE
(soft)
Yeh.

They pass a DOOMSDAY BILLBOARD, faded and half collapsed: THE END IS NEAR, but someone has spray-painted over "NEAR" in bright orange: JUST THE BEGINING.

CRUZ
They spelled beginning wrong.

ZOEL
(glances at sign)
Maybe they were in a hurry... saving
the world and all.

CRUZ
Still kinda ruins the vibe.

ZOEL
Oh my God, this is taking forever.

ADELA
I know... we're almost there.

CRUZ
Tengo hambre.

ADELA
Can you wait until we get there?

CRUZ
Sí... Is grandma going to be ok?

Adela looks at Chance who's barely keeping it together.

ADELA
I'm not sure, bubbee. (soft) We'll
know more when we get there.

Zoel rubs Cruz's head. He shrugs her off and sinks back into his Nintendo.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - MORNING

They park in the back row of a half-empty lot. Engine off. For a beat they just sit, relieved the trip is over.

Chance steps out, quick stretch, then lights a cig.
Cruz climbs out mid-game, glued to his Nintendo Switch.
Zoel rolls out with BEATS headphones on, scrolling her phone.

CHANCE
No. No screens. Leave 'em here.

ZOEL
I'm taking my phone.

CHANCE
You'll survive.

ADELA
Let 'em. (to Chance) They might
need the distraction.

Chance concedes, again. They make their way toward the entrance in silence. Zoel and Cruz lead the way.

An ELDERLY WOMAN (70's) sits outside, unlit cigarette in hand, eyes red and hollow.

Cruz notices her and slows. He stares, seeing more than just a sad lady on a bench.

The woman stares ahead, lost.

Zoel glances back, catches him staring.

ZOEL
Cruz. Come on.

He hurries to catch up.

They wait by the door, Zoel scrolls, Cruz glances at her again.

ZOEL
(quietly)
Go sit with her.

Cruz looks at her surprised.

She shrugs, doesn't look up.

At the doors, Chance takes one last drag.

CHANCE
We help her go, we're out. Not
like last time.

He's about to stub it out, stops. He sees her now, truly sees her, unlit cigarette, hollow look, empty space beside her.

He hesitates, looks to Adela, eyes flicking toward the woman.

CHANCE
Give me a second.

He eases over, sits beside her, and offers her a light. She accepts.

CHANCE
Goes fast, doesn't it?

She huffs a bitter laugh, nods.

WOMAN
Forty-two years. Feels like five
minutes... and forever.

CHANCE
Means you did it right.

That lands.

He takes one last drag, stubs it out.

CHANCE

Your husband always said you were
the brave one. The one who held
everything together.

Something in her loosens, not a collapse, just a tiny shift.

WOMAN

(snorts, half-smile)
Yeah... that sounds like him.

She wipes one eye with the heel of her hand, more annoyed at
the tear than anything.

Chance stands and heads inside.

Zoel turns to Cruz with a tiny "I told you so" smirk.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

CHANCE'S MOM (75), white, with a yellow JAUNDICE TINT, lays
comatose with TUBES DOWN HER THROAT AND IN ARMS.

CASEY (45), linebacker build, in his Sunday best stands beside
her with bible in hand. He pulls back the sheet, revealing a
swollen, dark purple leg.

A beat.

CASEY

(barely audible)
I'm sorry.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Chance speaks with the HEAD NURSE. We can't hear them, but we
see it in his face, the way his shoulders drop.

He turns to Adela. She already knows.

INT. HOSPITAL SECURITY ROOM - DAY

A FEMALE SECURITY OFFICER (30s), bored but sharp, half-watches
a wall of monitors, half-admires the HEAD NURSE on duty.

The Nurse checks her funky braids. Calm confidence.

Security officer adjusts her collar unconsciously.

Chance steps into frame – PIXELATION EXPLODES like a snowstorm. Resolution drops, timecode glitches a frame.

The Officer clocks it, toggles:

LOBBY CAM – crisp 1080p.

HALLWAY CAM – crisp.

Chance walks away. Head Nurse pops back into high def.

The Officer blinks at the screen, confused – heads into–

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY – CONTINUOUS

P.O.V. OFFICER: Everything's normal. Funky braids at her station. Chance and family walk past, somber. Chance makes eye contact – nods.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM – DAY

Casey paces like an alpha male who's lost control.

WENDY (45), his submissive high school sweetheart, and heart of their local church, watches him pace.

Chance and family walk in. The long-awaited greetings are subdued.

CASEY

Look who finally made it.

Chance makes brief EYE CONTACT with Casey, nods, then a GENUINE SMILE to Wendy.

CHANCE

It's good to see you Wendy.

WENDY

I'm so glad you guys made it.

Everyone exchanges quiet hugs and smiles, except Chance and Casey. Wendy grabs Cruz by the shoulders.

WENDY

Would you look at this little future heartbreaker.

Cruz looks embarrassed. Casey smiles without meaning to.

Chance approaches the bed with reverence, gently smoothing his mother's messy gray hair.

ADELA

We left as soon as we found out.
It was a nightmare getting here.

Wendy's eyes light up with a warm, approving look at Zoel.

WENDY

My goodness, you're the spittin'
image of your mama.

ZOEL

Thank you.

Cruz approaches the bed but stops when he sees her leg. Chance covers it with the sheet, pulls Cruz close, reassuring.

CASEY

Don't worry, little man, she ain't
hurtin' no more. Them machines are
all that's keepin' her alive...
We've been waitin' on your dad so
we can turn 'em off and she can go
to heaven.

Casey can't look at his mom when he says it.

Chance leans down to Cruz. His expression softens.

CHANCE

Hey buddy, you still hungry?

Chance looks at Adela, she gets it.

ADELA

Hey guys, let's go see if there's
anything worth eating in the
cafeteria.

WENDY

You guys must be exhausted, coming
all the way up here from Mexico.
Mind if I join ya?

ADELA

Please do. I need a break from
these guys.

Chance gives Wendy a warm embrace, everyone leaves. He returns to his mom and gently takes her hand.

CASEY

You know she never wanted this, to be kept alive by machines.

CHANCE

I know... what happened?

CASEY

Neighbor found her passed out in the backyard.

CHANCE

How long's she been here?

CASEY

A week.

CHANCE

A week?

CASEY

Hospital called us. I just assumed they called you too.

CHANCE

Do Steven and Sally know?

CASEY

Haven't spoke to 'em in years.

CHANCE

They're your kids... You don't think they might want to see their grandma one last—

CASEY

(cuts him off)

They quit returnin' my calls. So, I quit callin'.

Chance resists the urge to shame him. Turns back to mom.

FATHER JIM (50), in full priest's collar and black shirt, enters quietly, nods to Casey, and steps beside Chance.

FATHER JIM

Chance.

CHANCE

Jesus... Jim?

FATHER JIM

It's good to see you.

CHANCE
(clocks the outfit)
Never saw this coming.

FATHER JIM
The Lord works in mysterious ways.

CHANCE
She sure does.

FATHER JIM
Your brother's kept us all up to
date on your travels over the
years.

Chance fakes a smile, aware the updates were tainted.

FATHER JIM
I'm sorry about your mom, Chance.
She was a good lady. When I was a
senior playin' football with your
brother here, your mom gave me a C
in English when I know I was
failing.

CHANCE
Well, you gotta support the team,
don't ya.

FATHER JIM
Anyway, I wanted to stop by and
offer my deepest condolences to
you and your family.

CHANCE
I... we... really appreciate that.

FATHER JIM
Also, your brother asked if I'd
perform her last rites.

Chance starts to smile, then realizes they're not kidding.

CHANCE
Thanks Jim, but she's good. She'll
be fine.

CASEY
No. I asked Father Jim to give her
the final blessing. He's doing it.

Chance puts a hand on Jim's shoulder. Jim's eyes flutter as he
scans the room, a soft gasp.

P.O.V. FATHER JIM – the air around Chance’s mom shimmers with a faint, translucent golden aura, like heat waves on a summer road. The energy FIELD surrounding her feels alive.

CHANCE

You feel it, don’t you?

A small, involuntary laugh-sob slips out. Half awe, half relief. He’s humbled, reverent.

CHANCE

(whispers)

Thanks for your love, Jim.

Jim steps back, looks at Casey who sees nothing, and leaves.

CASEY

What just happened? I donated five hundred bucks to the church so Father Jim would bless Mom.

CHANCE

You mean Jim? You paid Jim five hundred bucks so Mom doesn’t go to hell. (turns to mom) what a deal.

Chance floats his open hand above her heart and softly hums “Good Riddance.”

CASEY

You know everyone thinks you’re a joke.

CHANCE

And by everyone you mean you and your cheerleaders.

CASEY

Oh, you think you can heal her? Mom never believed in your bullshit... it’s demonic.

CHANCE

Right. Can’t be love... gotta be demons.

CASEY

Only Jesus can heal.

CHANCE

Can you just shut the fuck up? Please. I can feel she’s ready, but she’s clinging to this world out of fear.

CASEY

Oh, you can feel it, huh? I'm
gettin' Jim back in here now.

Chance steps between Casey and the door.

CHANCE

No. Mom doesn't need Jim... she
wants us.

CASEY

(voice cracks a hair)
I'm trying to save her soul.
(soft) I need this.

For a moment he's not tough, just a son about to lose his mom.

Chance steps forward with a calm confidence, gaze sharpening.

CHANCE

You're saving Mom's soul? Really?
The lady who spent her entire life
helping everyone but herself.

Chance leans in, close enough to get hit. Casey stiffens, ready
to swing.

CASEY

What're you gonna do?

With lightning reflexes Chance pokes Casey's third eye, pushing
his head back.

P.O.V. CASEY — a GOLDEN FIELD radiates from his mom. It fills
the room.

Chance leans in and whispers.

INT. LIVING ROOM — NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

STEPHEN (9) and SALLY (6), both in princess dresses and playing
tea party, freeze as a drunk CASEY (35) looms over them.

CASEY

What the fuck are you doing? Take
that off, you look like a queer.
Don't do that anymore... ever.

CHANCE (V.O.)

You spent your whole life treating
people like shit.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM – DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

CHANCE

Take, take, take, take, take –
that's all you've ever done. And
now... now you've found Jesus and
you're the righteous one.

Chance looks up knowing he's being heard.

CHANCE

They don't get it... they're not
ready. (back to Casey) This is
supposed to be a sacred moment...
and you're fuckin' it up. Like
always.

CASEY

What... what did you?

CHANCE

I didn't do anything. You did.
Just go. Please... just get the fuck
outta here.

Casey, rattled like never before, leaves without a word.

Chance turns toward the window, repressing his anger. He
notices an empty Gatorade bottle, pauses, then slaps it away.

A deep breath, now calm, back to his mom.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY – DAY

Wendy and Adela walk past the SECURITY GUARD and HEAD NURSE,
quietly talking. The guard is animated, pointing back toward
the SECURITY ROOM. Then she spots Adela. Goes quiet.

Zoel and Cruz trail behind, eating ice-cream sandwiches.

Casey sits alone in the waiting room, hands clasped, barely
holding it together.

A tear slides free.

Wendy stops.

WENDY
(soft, surprised)
What's he doing out here?

They watch him in silence.

WENDY
We'll meet you guys in there,
okay?

Adela nods, knowing this is Chance's doing.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Adela and the kids enter. Chance stands by the bed, emotional but focused, his hand hovering over his Mom's heart.

ADELA
What did you say to your brother?

CHANCE
She's ready.

The kids circle the bed. Zoel and Cruz each take a hand.

Adela steps in and takes Chance's place.

C.U. - Grandma, a sliver of a smile.

Zoel glances down, her hand involuntarily tightens.

The heart monitor flatlines. Alarms start screaming.

A GOLDEN FIELD bursts from her body and fills the room. It's playful, alive, rippling through everyone's FIELD.

Zoel and Cruz are the only ones who see it.

It brushes over Cruz's face, he closes his eyes and lets it in. His breath slows, a micro-smile flickers - not 'she's gone,' but 'she's never gone.'

Zoel stares, frozen. She looks back at her hand, like... did I just do that? She's shaken quiet. Holy shit, this is real.

Adela doesn't move. One hand over her heart and one on her forehead. Eyes wet, steady. She isn't watching the monitors, she's listening to something else. Midwifing the FIELD.

This is not her first time.

Chance looks up, arms out, and shuts his eyes – soaking it in.

Panicked NURSES rush in, followed by Wendy and Casey.

The FIELD wraps Casey in a cocoon of pure love, acceptance.

He feels nothing. Only rage.

SMASH TO BLACK.

An '80s song hits hard – R.E.M.'s "It's the End of The World As We Know It," or something equally defiant.

MAIN TITLES: "THE ONES."

INT. WHITE FORD F-150 – DAY – MOVING

Casey drives in a silenced rage past endless farmland. Wendy turns from the window and takes his hand.

WENDY

You okay?

CASEY

He did something... I know he did.

WENDY

Honey.

CASEY

Those machines woulda kept her
alive for years.

WENDY

For heaven's sake, Chance wouldn't
hurt a hair on her head.

CASEY

And what the hell was he smiling
for?

He mimics Chance's pose at the foot of the bed.

Wendy just looks at him. Seriously?

EXT. CHANCE'S MOM'S FRONT PORCH – DAY

Dying plants fill the porch. Overgrown yard.

Cruz watches his dad pat himself down, pants, shirt, backpack getting more annoyed.

Chance scans the porch.

CHANCE
She loved her plants.

Adela and Zoel peer through the window at the barking inside.

CRUZ
I gotta go!

ADELA
Check your backpack.

CHANCE
I did.

ZOEL
Check again.

Chance makes a show of unzipping the front pocket. Finds it.

CHANCE
Found it.

He tries the lock. Misses twice. Stares at the door.

CHANCE
(soft, low)
Wow.

Adela stares, the dog barking, Cruz about to pee. She takes the key and inserts it without a word.

INT. CHANCE'S MOM'S HOME - DAY

The door opens to the gagging smell of poop and a hyperactive BORDER COLLIE PUPPY. Garbage is scattered everywhere.

Trinkets and clutter fill every space. One wall - a shrine to Chance's family travel photos.

ADELA
Oh my God. (to puppy) Oh my God!
(to the smell)

ZOEL
I'm not staying here.

ADELA
Cruz. (points) Bathroom.

CHANCE
That motherfucker.

Cruz sprints down the hall. Chance scans the disaster and starts gathering bottles to protect his mom's memory.

ZOEL
I'm sleeping in the car.

CHANCE
We got this. Open the windows, air
it out.

ADELA
We need to find a hotel.

That stings Chance. He opens the nearest window.

CHANCE
There's only one place in town,
and she (looks at Zoel) won't last
a minute.

Zoel kneels to pet the puppy.

ZOEL
I'll take my chances.

Chance grabs a bag and starts picking poop up off the floor.

CHANCE
(under his breath)
That motherfucker.

Chance kneels down, loses balance, almost touches the poop. A long beat. Just him and the smell.

CHANCE
(barely audible)
I'm trying so fuckin' hard.

Cruz walks back in wearing an ANDY WARHOL BLONDE WIG.

CRUZ
Can I have this?

ADELA
Cruz. (overwhelmed)

CRUZ
It's cool.

Cruz checks himself in a mirror, digging his new look.

CRUZ
I like it.

Zoel watches her dad frantically clean.

ZOEL
What are you doing?

CHANCE
What does it look like I'm doing?
Help me.

Zoel glances at her mom – like say something.

ADELA
Let's go find a place, get food.
We'll clean tomorrow.

CHANCE
What about the dog?

ADELA
He's coming with us.

ZOEL
Ow! (looks at ankle) Something
just bit me.

Chance keeps scooping.

ADELA
Chance.

CHANCE
Okay, okay, okay.

ADELA
What're you guys hungry for?

CRUZ
Chinese!

ZOEL
I think he's got fleas.

EXT. THE INN MOTEL – PARKING LOT – DAY

The Inn is a single-level U-shaped motel frozen in the '60s, and spotless. Not sad. More like a work of art.

A MEXICAN FAMILY grills by the pool. TWO WOMEN lean against a car watching TWO KIDS ride bikes around like this is home.

Chance and family take it in. Cruz's wig is a little crooked.

CRUZ
They got a pool.

ZOEL
This place is rad.

CHANCE
I think these people live here.

CRUZ
Can we go swimming?

CHANCE
I guess... let's see if they have a room first.

INT. 60'S MOTEL - MAIN OFFICE - DAY

THE OFFICE is a time capsule - original paneling, rotary phone, motel postcards under glass.

KINSEY (40), sun-browned, Midwest-beautiful, lights up when she sees Chance.

KINSEY
If you walkin' through that door ain't a sign from heaven, I don't know what is. I was just thinking of you.

Chance with his lil smirk.

CHANCE
What were you thinking about?

KINSEY
My life... and the ones that got away.

Chance stares into Kinsey's eyes - searching.

CHANCE
Knights Ferry... we skipped school, you kept worrying your parents were going to find out.
(MORE)

CHANCE (CONT'D)
 You sprained your ankle and I had
 to carry you back to the car.

Kinsey shakes free from Chance's hypnotic gaze.

KINSEY
 Yeah... that... that was...

CHANCE
 That was a good day.

KINSEY
 What are ya doin' here?

CHANCE
 Hoping you have a room.

Chance looks out the window – Adela and Cruz by the pool – Zoel
 takes pictures like she's never seen America like this.

CHANCE
 We're only here for a night.

Kinsey studies the life that got away. She swallows it.

KINSEY
 You did good for yourself, Tonto.

CHANCE
 Tonto good.

EXT. MOTEL POOL – DAY

Cruz tests the water with his hand.

CRUZ
 You going swimming?

ZOEL
 Nope.

CRUZ
 Mom?

Adela watches the kids on bikes – mothers chatting. One makes
 eye contact and nods, Adela nods back.

Across the lot, Kinsey hugs Chance. It's longer than an
 old-friend hug.

C.U. Chance – his spine stiffens, catches breath. He pulls back, clears his throat and wipes his eyes.

CHANCE
(trying to joke)
You... smell like a memory.

Kinsey laughs, but it fades as she sees his face.

KINSEY
You ok?

A long beat.

CHANCE
(softly)
Thank you.

As he turns away, Kinsey presses a hand to her heart.

EXT. 60'S MOTEL POOL – DAY

Adela watches them.

CRUZ
Mom? Mom? Mom?

ADELA
I don't think so.

CRUZ
Doesn't uncle Casey have a pool?

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT – DAY

A run-down strip mall. Chance and family head toward a sun-faded sign – "THE GREAT WALL."

Cruz and Zoel lead the way. Cruz avoiding the cracks.

ZOEL
You saw it, didn't you?

CRUZ
Yeh. I always see it.

Zoel looks back at Chance and Adela.

ZOEL
They didn't.

Chance scrolls his phone. Adela worries about the pup.

ADELA
The woman at the inn. You knew
her.

CHANCE
Yeh... Kinsey.

Adela watches him. A beat. Chance notices.

CHANCE (CONT'D)
She lost her kid. (She stares) I
don't want to talk about it.

ADELA
Okay... I like her.

Straight back to his phone.

CHANCE
It's a thirty-minute drive. What
should we do?

ADELA
We shouldn't leave him alone.

CHANCE
He'll be fine. (looks at Cruz) You
wearing that inside?!

CRUZ
Yep.

Cruz and Zoel step inside.

Chance shakes his head - can't help but smile.

The door swings open - JORGE (20s), full tats, eyes low, sees
everything - slides out.

ELLA (20s), dark everything - clothes, liner, nails. Uneasy.
Not wanting to be remembered, follows.

Door starts to close, Jorge catches it without looking back.
Holds it.

CHANCE
Gracias.

Jorge moves on. No acknowledgment.

Chance pauses. Turns. A flicker – something... familiar. He watches them get into a beat-up '90s muscle car.

INT. STRIP MALL CHINESE RESTAURANT – DAY

THE GREAT WALL wouldn't pass any health inspection. A thin, sticky film on everything.

Cruz and Zoel sit alone with open menus. Zoel is UNIMPRESSED – Cruz couldn't care less.

Chance orders at the counter, glances back at the kids.

Cruz stares off, daydreaming. Zoel notices a table of LOCAL TEEN GIRLS – pretends she doesn't care.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT – BATHROOM – SAME

Adela studies herself in the mirror. Tired eyes. She forces a small smile, just to see if she still can.

She splashes water on her face. Deep breath – show must go on.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT – DAY

Adela returns as Chance sets the food down. He feels her fatigue. Heads to the bathroom.

Zoel notices the teenagers whispering. One girl locks eyes and smiles. Zoel smiles back. The girls giggle. Zoel looks away.

ADELA

This place is surprisingly good.

ZOEL

This place is... not good.

ADELA

Here, try the chicken. It's good.

Zoel stares at chicken. Then at her mom... I don't eat meat.

ADELA

It's good. Come on. Just a little piece.

Zoel waves chicken away, annoyed by everything.

One of the girls walks by, bashful. Zoel instantly softens.

ZOEL
(quiet, genuine)
Hi.

The girl smiles back and keeps going.

Zoel follows her, then catches herself.

KENNY (40) and JEN (40) walk in wearing matching ADIDAS GEAR and CROCS.

Kenny's a corn-fed gentle giant with a long '80s mullet. Small-town ways are in his DNA. He will help out anyone in need.

Kenny's glued to his phone watching a game. The teenage girls giggle. He follows their eyes to Chance's family.

Chance walks out and instantly recognizes his childhood friend.

CHANCE
Kenny Cox!

KENNY
No fuckin' way!

They stare each other up and down.

KENNY
Nice shirt.

CHANCE
Nice hair.

They hug like old friends.

KENNY
I swear I was just telling Jen
about that time you almost drowned
doing a gainer off the rope swing.

He gestures to Jen, who smiles and gives Chance a big hug.

Jen's a high-maintenance, God-fearing Midwest beauty who uploads daily TikTok dances because... that's what she likes.

JEN
Look at you, all grown up.

CHANCE
You guys look great.

Jen turns to Adela and the kids.

JEN

And who are these beautiful people?

CHANCE

This is Adela, Zoel, and Cruz.
This is Kenny and Jen – we grew up together.

KENNY

What are ya doin' here?

CHANCE

Come to see my mom.

JEN

How is she? God, I love your mom.

CHANCE

She passed away today.

JEN

Oh my gosh! I'm so sorry.

KENNY

Fuck!

CHANCE

Yeah. It was unexpected.

KENNY

I'm sorry to hear that, man.

Chance nods. Awkward silence.

KENNY

Where y'all stayin'?

CHANCE

Was hoping to stay at the Inn but–

KENNY

No no no no, you guys are staying with us. We got tons of room. Tons! Big-ass game room, pool, ATVs the kids can ride.

CHANCE

(to Adela)

I don't know.

KENNY

You know I won the lottery, don't ya?

CHANCE

I did not know that.

ADELA

That sounds great. We'd love to.

KENNY

I can't believe this. How crazy is this?

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

Cruz and Zoel lead the way - stoked.

Chance's arm around Adela - relieved.

Adela looks concerned. Where's the pup?

ADELA

Where is he?

CHANCE

Probably sleeping.

Chance reaches the window. The puppy's winning a tug-of-war with what used to be the steering-wheel leather wrap.

Chance exhales. A beat. Resisting detonation, he looks up, slow 360. The smirk returns.

CHANCE

(to himself)
You're hilarious.

INT. CASEY & WENDY'S KITCHEN - DAY

A tidy, lived-in country kitchen. A Bible verse on the wall.

Wendy dices vegetables as Casey reaches for the garage door.

WENDY

And if Cruz ain't the spittin' image of Chance when he was little. (beat) Let's have 'em over for dinner Tuesday.

CASEY

Why would we do that?

WENDY

They're family.

She holds his look. He opens the door and disappears.

INT. CASEY'S GARAGE - DAY

Half man-cave, half gym. Football game on mute. Casey stares at his high-school trophies behind the bar.

FLASHBACK: FRONT YARD - DAY

Casey (10) throws a football to his DAD (30s), ex-military top-dog type. Second place doesn't exist.

DAD

You gonna aim sometime today... or just throw and pray?

Casey throws a perfect spiral. No acknowledgment.

He zips it back harder than needed and Casey fumbles.

DAD

Jesus, you catch like a little girl. Don't be afraid.

Casey rears back, hurls a perfect spiral - dad doesn't flinch - nails him square in the chest.

DAD

That's what I'm talking about. No wimps in this house. Be a man!

BACK TO SCENE

Casey takes a shot - checks phone - scrolls to Sally's number.

Thumb hovers over SALLY's number. Deep breath. Taps CALL, freezes, ends it.

He stares at the screen - jaw tight.

The door from the kitchen cracks open. Wendy peers in.

WENDY

They're coming over Tuesday. And...
Adela and Chance wanna do a little
celebration for your mom. Instead
of a funeral... just so you know.

She stares, hopeful but not backing down. Closes the door.

Casey stares at the shut door. Back to his phone.

He scrolls to FATHER JIM's number - thumb hovers - hits CALL -
it rings. Jim's voicemail starts.

Casey hangs up. Stares at the screen - Jaw tight. Tosses phone
into a chair. Un-mutes the game.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

A large BUCK stands at the tree line - completely still -
watching a car approach.

INT. FATHER JIM'S CAR - DAY

Collar loose, eyes red from laughing/crying. Classic rock low.
He's lit from the inside.

PHONE BUZZ: CASEY.

Jim sees the name and smiles. He glances at the clear road,
grabs phone - too late. Missed it.

He taps RETURN CALL.

BEEP - VOICEMAIL.

FATHER JIM

Casey, listen, what happened at
the hospital - wow.

Another CALL comes in. He instinctively checks it and the phone
slips, bounces near the gas pedal.

He curses, stretches for it - can't quite reach. Unclips
SEATBELT. Got it.

He pops back up.

A BUCK stands dead center in the road.

A sharp inhale—

SMASH TO BLACK.

Casey's voicemail: TWO HEAVY THUDS — car hitting deer, then tree. No skids. Classic rock plays on underneath the silence and the rustle of leaves in the wind.

INT. MINI-MANSION GAME ROOM — SUNSET

The ULTIMATE MAN CAVE — full bar, pool table, top-of-the-line golf simulator.

Jen watches Cruz and Zoel battle MarioKart 8 on a massive TV. A quiet longing in her eyes.

Adela trails the puppy who's exploring the space.

ADELA

You guys ok down here?

Neither respond.

JEN

Whatever y'all want, help yourself. We got pop in the fridge. Doritos. Candy.

They pause the game and turn to Jen.

CRUZ

Thank you.

ZOEL

Thank you so much.

JEN

They're so polite.

Adela smiles. Yeh, sometimes.

JEN

Want something besides a beer? I used to bartend... martini, margarita, blackberry mojito?

ADELA

Blackberry mojito... hmmm?

JEN
Kenny only drinks Coors if you can
believe that.

They head upstairs.

The game continues – engine revving, button mashing.

ZOEL
(focused on screen)
Love you, lil bro.

Cruz doesn't look at her.

CRUZ
Yeah.

He leans forward, locked in.

EXT. MINI-MANSION BACK DECK – SUNSET

A resort-nice spread: turquoise pool, string lights, outdoor kitchen, U-shaped lounge with fire pit.

Kenny's mid-story, golf club in hand reenacting his miraculous comeback. Chance can't stop smiling.

KENNY
I'm two down on eighteen. Smoke it
off the tee and stick it fifteen
feet for birdie. Tanner shanks it
into the water... takes a drop,
shanks that one in the water and
fuckin' loses it. Throws his clubs
in the water. You remember Tanner
and Kinsey, don't ya?

CHANCE
I do. (beat) Was she in a wreck?

Kenny, now serious, sits down beside Chance.

KENNY
A bad one... drunk driver. Her son
was killed.

FLASH CUT TO:

EXT. THE INN MOTEL - PARKING LOT - DAY

Chance pulls back from the hug, eyes wet. He already knows.

EXT. MINI-MANSION BACK DECK - SUNSET

CHANCE

Damn.

KENNY

Took Tanner a year to walk again.
Then one day... he just killed
himself.

CHANCE

Fuck.

Silence. Kenny lights a pre-rolled joint. Passes it to Chance.

KENNY

You still smoke?

CHANCE

I do.

Kenny watches Chance admire the rising smoke.

KENNY

You good?

Chance takes a slow, grateful hit like a pro.

CHANCE

I'm cool.

KENNY

So what happened? We were best
friends, then nothing. Not one
call. Kind of a dick move if you
ask me.

CHANCE

I know. I'm not good at looking
back.

KENNY

Your brother said you were in some
jungle cult. Like Jim Jones shit.

CHANCE

He's an idiot.

KENNY
So you're not in a cult?

CHANCE
Do I look like a cult guy?

KENNY
Your brother's turned into quite
the zealot.

CHANCE
I know, right.

KENNY
So, what do you do for a living?

CHANCE
Hmm. (beat) It's hard to explain
to someone who thinks I'm in a
cult.

Adela opens the back door and the puppy rockets out.

ADELA
Your turn!

Chance kneels and lets the pup attack him.

CHANCE
Say you've lived a thousand lives.
Male, female, every race, culture,
saint, sinner, rich, poor... you've
killed people.

KENNY
Jesus.

CHANCE
I'm just saying you've done it
all. Now... what would happen if you
could remember every life you've
ever lived.

KENNY
I'd be rich and famous.

Chance's smile thins to the shallow response.

KENNY
What're you gettin' at?

Chance takes a slow, purposeful hit from the joint.

CHANCE
That's what I do.

KENNY
What are we talking about here?

CHANCE
I help people remember.

KENNY
What?

Jennifer walks outside holding a bottle of white rum.

JEN
We're out of limes.

KENNY
Okay.

JEN
Go get some.

KENNY
Now?

JEN
Adela wants a blackberry mojito.

CHANCE
I'll go with ya.

INT. FLOPHOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A once-nice rental turned crash pad: fast-food bags, empty bottles, ashtray overflowing. Aggressive rap blasting.

The Driver (30), in Reds attire, digs through clutter. He finds a lighter, Ella grabs it, takes a hit.

ELLA
I can't believe this is my life.
Actually... I can.

Jorge appears in the doorway. Hesitates.

Ella sees him, then notices his look.

He kills the music.

JORGE
Let's do this.

INT. TESLA CYBERTRUCK – MOVING – NIGHT

Johnny Cash plays low. Bugs thud against the glass. Kenny taps the wiper icon – dry swipe – bugs smear.

CHANCE
That's better.

KENNY
Fuckin' spaceship and I can't clean the window.

They ride in the hum of tires and Cash.

CHANCE
What's with The Inn? Place is a time capsule.

KENNY
After Taylor and Tanner died... she needed something to take care of. She lets homeless families stay there till they get back on their feet. For free.

Chance nods. The road unspools. Nothing else to add.

CHANCE
How come you guys didn't have kids?

KENNY
We tried... a lot. Just didn't happen.

He shrugs like it's fine. It isn't.

Up ahead: FENMAN'S – neon buzzing, a lone island of light.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD – NIGHT

Flashing lights strobe the tree line. Jim's convertible is crumpled around the tree. Classic rock faint from the radio.

Paramedics load FATHER JIM onto a gurney. He's alive. Barely.

DANIELS (40s), steady, unflappable, sweeps his flashlight slowly across the asphalt.

McGUIRE (30s), sharp-eyed, eager to prove it, takes in the scene. Checks her phone.

Text from DEB: You're not going to believe my day.
 She pockets the phone , leans into the car, cuts the music.
 Silence.
 Daniels stops. Stares at the asphalt.
 No skid marks.

SMASH TO:

EXT. FENMAN'S PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Neon buzz. FENMAN'S sign. Crates of berries under humming fluorescents.

Kenny noses the CYBERTRUCK up to the pumps.

 CHANCE
 You know this is electric, right?

 KENNY
 You're so funny. I can't see.

 CHANCE
 I got it.

Kenny opens the door - IRON MAIDEN blares at concert volume.

 CHANCE
 Jesus.

 KENNY
 Need anything?!

 CHANCE
 Blue American Spirits!

 KENNY
 Don't scratch my spaceship!

Chance grabs the squeegee and drags it across the windshield.
 The rhythm accidentally syncs to Maiden. He's... kinda into it.

INT. GAS STATION/MARKET - NIGHT

IRON MAIDEN pounds. Crates of produce - "Fresh Local" sign.

TOMMY (20), a skinny clone of Kenny, '80s-glam mullet,
 sleeveless Maiden tee. He expels a vape cloud.

TOMMY
Nice do, bro!

KENNY
What?

TOMMY
Respect. (points to his hair)

Kenny half-gets it, nods, heads for PRODUCE.

EXT. PARKING LOT - GAS STATION/MARKET - NIGHT

Chance puts the squeegee away and heads inside.

A STRAY DOG approaches, tail low, hopeful. Chance kneels and scratches its neck.

CHANCE
Hey, amigo.

Tail starts wagging. The fluorescent lights flicker.

The dog stops. Looks off camera - waits.

Nothing.

Back to Chance. Tail wagging.

INT. GAS STATION/MARKET - NIGHT

Kenny sets limes, blackberries, and a case of Coors on the counter. Tommy slides a pack of American Spirits to Kenny.

TOMMY
Need anything else?

KENNY
I'm good.

TOMMY
Lighter?

KENNY
Nope.

TOMMY
Lotto?

KENNY

Nope.

TOMMY

Windshield wiper fluid?

A beat. Kenny smirks... that's synchronistic.

KENNY

Actually, I'll take two gallons of fluid... a lighter... And twenty lottos – ten for me, ten for you.

TOMMY

Hell yeah.

Chance enters, smiles at the resemblance between them.

CHANCE

What's your band called?

TOMMY

Huh?!

KENNY

What?!

CHANCE

Bathroom?!

They point in perfect sync – Kenny notices. Uncanny.

KENNY

How old are you?

TOMMY

Twenty-one.

KENNY

What's your mom's name?

TOMMY

Tracy Hubbard. (to Chance) Not sure how clean it is!

Chance thumbs up and disappears down the hall.

KENNY

Hubbard, huh...

Kenny studies Tommy – weirdly familiar.

INT. GAS STATION BATHROOM – NIGHT

A broken vent fan SCREECHES, drowning out the Maiden.

There's piss on the seat, piss on the floor. Chance reluctantly tiptoes in, making sure his laces don't touch anything.

EXT. PARKING LOT – GAS STATION/MARKET – NIGHT

Kenny struts out feeling good about himself.

He dumps everything into the passenger seat – limes roll into the back.

KENNY

Fuck!

He gets in, closes the door, and reaches between the seats to save them.

EXT. PARKING LOT – GAS STATION/MARKET – NIGHT

A '90s MUSCLE CAR creeps in and stops at the entrance. Jorge sprints inside. Ella posts at the door, scanning.

INT. TESLA CYBERTRUCK – NIGHT

Kenny sits up. Spies the gunman – freezes. Eyes dart to the bathroom door, praying it doesn't open.

INT. GAS STATION BATHROOM – NIGHT

Chance glances at his laces again.

He pauses.

A faint ringing – barely there.

He looks up... listening.

Nothing.

Back to the floor.

INT. GAS STATION MINI-MARKET - NIGHT

Tommy is turned around scratching lottos.

Jorge points a gun at Tommy's head.

JORGE

Yo, fuckin' rock star, let's go!

Tommy turns, sees the gun, and passes out.

Jorge leaps the counter and struggles to open register. He kicks Tommy to wake him.

JORGE

Despierta, bitch! I'm not playin'!

Ella rushes in to help.

ELLA

What'd you do to him?!

JORGE

He fuckin passed out. Open it!

Ella leans over and pops the drawer open. Tommy blinks awake and locks eyes with her.

TOMMY

Ella?

She yanks her hoodie up and bolts.

Jorge pockets cash, then searches under the tray.

Nothing.

Jaw tightens. He searches for the safe.

JORGE

Where is it?

He points the gun back at Tommy. Tommy passes out.

JORGE

Oh, you motherfucker!

He explodes. Shoves the chip display onto the floor. Flips the register over.

INT. TESLA - NIGHT

Kenny watches the meltdown. His eyes dart to the bathroom.

KENNY
Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck.

INT. MUSCLE CAR - NIGHT

Ella watches the meltdown. She's gone.

ELLA
Go, go!

The Driver punches it.

Jorge sprints after them like a wild animal. He stops in the middle of the street and watches them drive away.

INT. GAS STATION/MARKET - NIGHT

Chance exits the bathroom, drying his hands with a paper towel. The place is wrecked. Tommy, pale, wobbles to his feet.

CHANCE
You good?

Tommy gives a weak nod.

EXT. GAS STATION PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Kenny leans out the window, frantic, motioning Chance to stay inside.

Chance steps out anyway. He turns and spots Jorge.

KENNY
Run!

Jorge locks eyes with Chance and charges.

Jorge grabs a fistful of Chance's NIRVANA tee and yanks him forward, stretching the collar.

Chance doesn't resist.

A beat –

Something shifts.

The air... bends.

Chance looks at him. A goofy "I KNOW YOU" smile spreads.

INT. TESLA CYBERTRUCK – NIGHT

Kenny's POV: a shimmering, bluish FIELD blooms around Chance. Forty feet wide. Alive.

EXT. GAS STATION PARKING LOT – NIGHT

The FIELD engulfs Jorge. His grip tightens... then relaxes.

Confusion bleeds through his rage.

FLASH – A door SLAMS open.

FLASH – A boy under a couch, eyes wide.

FLASH – Hands gripping his face.

BACK TO SCENE.

Chance leans in. Soft. Certain.

CHANCE

Es wird dir gut gehen... Es wird dir
gut gehen. Ich verspreche es.

SUBTITLES: You're going to be okay... You're going to be okay. I promise.

Jorge's grip loosens. His eyes are wet, bewildered.

FLASHBACK:

INT. WWII LIVING ROOM – DAY

A BANG at the door. A GERMAN FATHER'S eyes dart to a terrified BOY (10). As if routine, father lifts the couch, boy dives underneath.

The MOTHER and her TWO DAUGHTERS sit on the couch nervously whispering in German.

The door flies open. Two Nazi soldiers sweep through.

UNDER THE COUCH: the boy's face. Terrified. Eyes locked on boots pacing inches away.

The mother's foot trembles. Stops tapping.

The boots stop.

Silence.

Then... they leave.

The room exhales.

The father rushes over, lifts the couch.

The boy crawls out, shaking.

The father drops to his knees, grabs his face with both hands.

GERMAN FATHER

(urgent, steady)

Es wird dir gut gehen... es wird dir
gut gehen. Ich verspreche es.

SUBTITLES: You're going to be okay... You're going to be okay. I promise.

The boy nods, wanting to believe him.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jorge sees HIS HAND on Chance's cheek. Yanks it back. Sees the gun. Shame floods in. The gun clatters to the ground. Jorge bolts at impressive speed.

Chance exhales, oddly elated. He notices the paper towel in his hand. Wipes prints from gun. Admires Jorge's speed.

INT. TESLA CYBERTRUCK - NIGHT

Kenny's speechless. Chance slides in buzzing, still clutching the paper towel.

CHANCE

Holy shit... that was intense.

He feels the collar of his ruined Nirvana tee.

CHANCE

Aw, c'mon... really?

(a beat)

Did you see how fast he was?

KENNY

What the hell was that big –
(mimes sphere) – fuckin' thing?

CHANCE

You saw it?

Kenny scans the air like it might still be there.

CHANCE

Hmm... (to himself) I never do. (to
Kenny) You'd think it'd be the
opposite, right?

Kenny hypnotically nods for an awkward amount of time.

Chance sneezes into the paper towel and balls it. He shoots–
clinks off the can. Winces. Shrugs.

P.O.V. SECURITY CAM – PARKING LOT: A pixelated Chance shoots.
It clinks off the trash can. Comes to rest beneath the pole.

CHANCE

Okay, we goin' or what?

KENNY

What?

CHANCE

Mojitos, amigo.

KENNY

I... I don't know what's happening.

CHANCE

Apúrate, chingao'.

Kenny eases out. Chance spots JORGE sprinting down the street.

CHANCE

There he is.

KENNY

Oh shit.

Kenny starts to turn away.

CHANCE
No no no, pull up beside him.

KENNY
No, I'm not.

CHANCE
Come on... do it, do it.

KENNY
Are you fucking insane?!

CHANCE
I forgot to tell him something.

Kenny reluctantly matches Jorge's speed. Chance leans out the window. Pure joy.

CHANCE
Danke, dass du mich aufgenommen
und geliebt hast.

Jorge slows to a stop. Catching his breath, he watches them drive away. Already changed.

INT. TESLA CYBERTRUCK – NIGHT

Chance pulls himself back inside. Sits with it.

KENNY
What is happening?

CHANCE
That was so crazy.

KENNY
What is happening?

Kenny watches Jorge shrink in the rearview mirror, rattled.

INT. CASEY'S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Casey stares at the ceiling. Wendy rolls over and drapes an arm across his chest.

WENDY
Can't sleep?

CASEY
Just thinkin'.

Casey stares at the ceiling.

INT. CHILDHOOD HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

DAD (30s), drunk in a white tank top, squares off with MOM (30s), who won't back down. CHANCE (5) stands beside her with Spider-Man toy in hand.

DAD
Everybody in this town knows.
(looks at Chance) Every time I
look at him I think about what you
did - he's not my son.

Chance flinches, eyes shift to Spidey.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

CASEY (11) stands in the dark, listening. Helpless.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Casey stares at the ceiling, then turns to Wendy.

CASEY
Am I a good person?

Only the soft sound of Wendy's snore answers him.

INT. TESLA CYBERTRUCK - NIGHT

They sit in silence. Kenny stares at his front door.

KENNY
She's not gonna believe me.

CHANCE
I wouldn't tell her.

KENNY

Dude, I tell her everything.

CHANCE

Okay... this'll be interesting.

Chance adjusts his warped NIRVANA collar. Resigned.

They both get out.

INT. MINI-MANSION KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jen and Adela play with the pup. Jen filming for a post.

Kenny and Chance set groceries on the counter.

JEN

Are they fresh?

Jen samples the blackberries.

KENNY

The market?

JEN

They're good.

She notices Kenny's weird energy.

KENNY

I, uh... gotta go pee.

He hears himself, winces. Chance fights back smile.

JEN

O-kay?

He exits.

JEN

(to Chance)

Have you run into anyone from back in the day since you've been back?

CHANCE

A few. You know, small town, big universe.

INT. MINI-MANSION - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Kenny mutters to himself reliving Fenman's. He flushes, looks in mirror, and sees a faint, green FIELD surrounding him.

He blinks. It's there. He blinks harder. Still there.

Kenny waves a hand - the FIELD ripples - he freezes. He grips the sink, equal parts awe and panic.

KENNY

Okay. Okay... (bigger) Nope.

EXT. FENMAN'S GAS STATION/MARKET - NIGHT

The cruiser pulls in, light bar pulsing, siren off. Iron Maiden BLASTS from inside.

Daniels steps out. Spots the tire marks near the front door. McGuire's already heading inside.

INT. GAS STATION / MARKET - CONTINUOUS

The bell dings - MAIDEN blares. McGuire takes in the chaos. Daniels notices Tommy behind the counter, pale and rattled.

MCGUIRE

Hey, can we kill the Maiden?

Tommy cuts the music, leaving the hum of fluorescents.

DANIELS

You alright, Tommy?

TOMMY

I... never had a gun in my face before.

DANIELS

You get a good look at 'em?

TOMMY

I... don't remember.

Daniels notices his tremor. McGuire suspects something.

INT. BACK OFFICE – SECURITY MONITORS – MOMENTS LATER

Cramped room, dated screens. Daniels observes with arms folded. McGuire runs the playback.

PUMP CAM: CYBERTRUCK noses up to the pumps. Resolution drops.

Inside angles: REGISTER CAM, AISLE CAM – all clear. Kenny steps in at a crisp 1080p.

DANIELS
That's Kenny Cox.

PUMP CAM: A pixelated Chance gets out and grabs a squeegee.

MCGUIRE
Who's that?

Chance enters. Pixelation explodes like bad weather.

MCGUIRE
What just happened?

McGuire toggles between feeds. Each degrades as Chance enters.

REGISTER CAM: A grainy Kenny pays and walks outside.

PUMP CAM: Kenny jumps in Cybertruck at a crisp 1080.

A car eases into frame and stops at the door. A SHAPE (JORGE) darts inside, a smear of pixels. Another SILHOUETTE (ELLA) stands guard. No faces. No plates.

MCGUIRE
What's going on?

Daniels leans in.

A pixelated Jorge points a gun at Tommy's head. Tommy faints.

McGuire smirks. Tommy's story checks out.

Jorge's rage spikes. He shoves the register onto the floor.

The car peels out. Just a smear of pixels.

Jorge jumps the counter and sprints out of frame.

Chance re-enters the frame. Pixels around him wobble like a heat haze. Edges crawl. The timecode glitches.

DANIELS
Freeze. Back it up a little... play.

Chance pauses at the counter, then steps outside.

MCGUIRE

That's not the camera. It's him.

A pixelated Jorge rushes back into frame. Grabs Chance.
ALL FEEDS GO TO SNOW.

A beat.

Something white bounces off the trash. The pixelated Cybertruck pulls away.

All video is perfect 1080p. McGuire and Daniels share a look.
What the hell just happened?

DANIELS

Bag the gun and that towel by the trash.

Daniels stares at the gun and paper towel in 1080p.

DANIELS

Let's go talk to Kenny.

INT. MINI-MANSION KITCHEN — NIGHT

Kenny hears Adela and Jen laughing. He peeks around the corner.

P.O.V. KENNY — shimmering FIELDS surround both: Adela's large and deep purple; Jen's soft aqua, smaller with gaps. Something is restricting Jen's flow of energy.

Jen steps closer to Kenny. Their FIELDS merge.

JEN

Did you know that Chance is a shaman?

KENNY

I...

Kenny sees Chance by the pool, puppy at his feet, his forty-foot blue FIELD washing over the nearby plants. They feel it.

KENNY

... did not.

Adela steps beside Jen. Her FIELD pulses.

Jen's FIELD expands. Gaps close. The aqua warms.
Alive. Responsive. Neither woman notices.

ADELA
You two should come visit us.
It's... magical.

JEN
They lived in the jungles of Peru!

Kenny just stares, processing. A tiny nod.

JEN
I wanna go there. Let's go!

Jen hands him a Coors, still talking with Adela.
Kenny glances at Chance. Back to his Coors. Nods.

KENNY
(to himself)
You got this.

He takes a long slow sip.

A warm golden glow bleeds into the edge of Kenny's vision.

He turns. Zoel stands in the doorway, studying her dad, completely unaware that she's the one glowing.

She looks down at her hands. Back up. Says nothing.

Kenny follows the glow as it expands. It reaches Jen first. Her aqua field shifts, warms, expands.

Then Adela. Her deep purple field pulses as Zoel's golden glow washes over it.

Kenny looks back to Zoel. Then to Chance. Blue field, forty feet wide.

Zoel's is bigger.

Kenny takes another slow sip of his Coors. Says nothing.

Zoel shifts - "hey" - still watching her dad.

Kenny steps outside, turns back to say something.

She's gone.

He turns back.

Chance is practicing his golf swing.

EXT. MINI-MANSION BACK DECK

CHANCE
Saw your golf simulator. Not gonna brag but... scratch golfer.

KENNY
What? Yeah... good for you... It's back. I see it. Around the girls too.

CHANCE
You look kinda freaked out.

KENNY
I am freaked out. What the fuck is happening?

Chance gives a slow hand wave. The FIELD ripples.

CHANCE
How about a toast.

Chance picks up his mojito and stares up to the stars.

CHANCE
To my mom. One of the OG volunteers for this... shit show. A true pioneer. Thank you.

Kenny raises his beer. Doesn't quite understand. Drinks anyway.

A beat.

Something in the air settles him.

KENNY
She always made me feel like family.

CHANCE
She knew you were.(takes a hit - voice goes funny) Literally.

Kenny stares at Chance like he's a cult leader. Chance sees it. A small smirk. He's been waiting for this.

CHANCE
Fuck it. Come closer.

KENNY
Wait, what? No no no fuck no, I can't take nothin else.

CHANCE
Relax. Close your eyes.

Kenny hesitates. Nods. Chance aims his palm at his third eye.

KENNY
I don't.

His eyes pop back open.

KENNY
Oh no no no no, fuck no bro.

CHANCE
Quit being a pussy. Relax, you'll
remember what matters most... in
this life or another.

Kenny exhales, shuts eyes again. A beat.

KENNY
Wait. I see something.

CHANCE
Cool... just let it come.

**INT. INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL – CLASSROOM – WINTER DAY
(1890)**

Bare brick, frosted windows. Rows of NATIVE AMERICAN CHILDREN
in identical uniforms. All with short hair. Stare in silence.

A BOY (8), at the front of the class, blinks back tears. A long
braid at his feet. A NUN (50) raises the scissors again – snip.

At the back: a GIRL (10) holds the hand of her BROTHER (9),
both still in traditional clothes, long hair.

POV: GIRL – the Nun advances, yanks the BOY from our grasp.

He struggles to break free. Desperate. Calls out.

BROTHER
(in Hopi)
Help me!

NUN
No more Indian talk!

The boy pulls hard. A SLAP. The room doesn't breathe.

A muffled voice bleeds in.

 CHANCE (V.O.)
Kenny... Kenny.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. MINI-MANSION BACK DECK - NIGHT

Kenny's eyes snap open. Chance stares. A little smirk.

 CHANCE
Right.

Kenny checks the length of his mullet.

 CHANCE
It's still there... unfortunately.

Kenny scans the air around Chance.

 KENNY
It's gone... How is this possible?

 CHANCE
To be honest, I have no idea. Some
people are ready to see. Some
aren't.

 KENNY
Were you... my sister?

Chance nods, leans back and re-lights the joint.

 CHANCE
And apparently... Speedy Gonzalez at
Fenman's.

EXT. CORNFIELD - NIGHT

Jorge drops between the rows. Chest heaving. Headlights sweep
the stalks. Closer.

EXT. MINI-MANSION - BACK DECK - NIGHT

KENNY

Oh my God... I forgot that happened.

CHANCE

He saved me -

EXT. CORNFIELD - NIGHT

FLASHES: German soldiers in gray uniforms crash through a cornfield. An OHIO CRUISER creeps past. Searchlights rake the rows. Lives stutter and overlap - timelines collapsing.

EXT. MINI-MANSION - BACK DECK - NIGHT

CHANCE (CONT'D)

- took me in after they took my parents. Hid me. Fed me. Risked everything for me.

EXT. CORNFIELD - NIGHT

Jorge squeezes eyes shut. Breath slows. The lights pass. Silence holds. Jorge exhales... different.

EXT. MINI-MANSION - BACK DECK - NIGHT

CHANCE (CONT'D)

And tonight, in the middle of nowhere, we find each other. And I save him. How perfect is that?

KENNY

What?

CHANCE

Think about it, Adela craving a blackberry mojito. The bug-smearred windshield. The stray dog. The piss-soaked bathroom... You know I didn't even go.

KENNY

What?

CHANCE
 Couldn't. Too gross. (grins)
 Still destiny. Still a holy-shit
 moment.

EXT. MINI-MANSION - FRONT YARD - NIGHT

A POLICE CAR pulls into Kenny's driveway with lights off.
 Daniels and McGuire approach door. Daniels checks phone.

DANIELS
 Jim's out of surgery. Looks like
 he's going to make it.

MCGUIRE
 Wow.

INT. MINI-MANSION - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Jennifer opens the door. DANIELS and MCGUIRE wait on the step.

DANIELS
 Evening, Jen. Kenny around?

JEN
 Something wrong?

DANIELS
 Just wanted to ask him a few
 questions about tonight.

She nods - hiding it.

JEN
 Oh... okay. I'll get him.

She closes the door, already moving toward the back patio.

EXT. BACK DECK - NIGHT

JEN
 Cops are here. They want to talk
 to you. What's going on?

Kenny glances nervously at Chance. No reaction at all.

KENNY
I'm not sure.

INT. KENNY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kenny opens the door, trying to be casual.

KENNY
Roland.

DANIELS
Kenny. There was a robbery at
Fenman's tonight. Saw your truck
there. Know anything about it?

KENNY
No.

MCGUIRE
You see anything?

KENNY
Nope. (beat) Everything happened
so fast... kinda a blur.

MCGUIRE
Why didn't you call it in?

KENNY
I don't know. I froze. My mind
just went blank.

DANIELS
Anybody with ya?

Chance steps into view making eye contact. Calm.

CHANCE
I was there. (lil smirk)

DANIELS
Chance Whitaker. When did you get
in town?

CHANCE
Today. (scans Daniels) Looks like
dreams do come true.

Something lands in Daniels. He lets it go.

MCGUIRE
You get a good look at 'em?

CHANCE
Didn't the cashier see 'em?

MCGUIRE
Not really.

CHANCE
I was in the bathroom the whole
time, but... you already knew that.

MCGUIRE
So you didn't see anything?

CHANCE
I wish I could help.

DANIELS
How long you in town for?

CHANCE
A bit.

Daniels nods once. Files it away.

DANIELS
Alright, appreciate your time.

Kenny gives Chance a loaded glance. Chance closes the door.

Daniels and McGuire reach their car and look back.

MCGUIRE
You know him?

DANIELS
I know his brother.

MCGUIRE
You hear that high-pitched
ringing?

DANIELS
I do.

INT. MINI-MANSION - KITCHEN - NIGHT

JEN
What was that about?

KENNY
Fenman's was robbed tonight.
Wanted to know if we saw anything.

JEN
Did you?

KENNY
Nope.

Kenny glances to Chance. Chance grins ear to ear.

INT. FLOPHOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ella peers through the blinds. Driver sits on the couch, staring at the bong rising above the trash.

DRIVER
Jorge is gonna be pissed, yo.

Ella continues to scan outside.

ELLA
Fuck him. He's the reason we're in
this mess.

DRIVER
Maybe he didn't recognize you.

ELLA
He said my name.

Ella sits down beside the Driver.

Door flies open. Jorge, breathless in ripped muddy clothes, crashes in. He slams the door shut. Peeks outside for a tail. The RAP keeps thumping.

DRIVER
Yo! There he is.

ELLA
What the fuck, man?! The cashier
you almost killed, I babysat that
lil fucker every Saturday for
three years.

Jorge takes in the room like it's new. He's disoriented.
What timeline is this?

ELLA (CONT'D)
Did you hear me?
(beat)
You gonna say something?

DRIVER
How much we get?

ELLA
Hola, motherfucker.

Jorge turns to Ella. Suddenly soft. Human. The bass too loud for this moment.

JORGE
I fucked up... I'm sorry.

DRIVER
How much did we get?!

Jorge tosses a crumpled wad on the table. Takes in the room like a first breath. Heads to his room. Closes the door.

Ella watches him go. She's rattled. Her anger has nowhere to stick. The RAP keeps blaring – wrong song for this feeling.

INT. FLOPHOUSE BEDROOM – NIGHT

Jorge rocks on a bare mattress. He fingers a small cross necklace, whispering. Muffled RAP bleeds through the wall. His breath slows. Rocking slows.

EXT. MINI-MANSION BACK DECK – NIGHT

Kenny sits on the edge of the couch, rocking – lost in thought. Chance leans back, quietly pleased with himself.

KENNY
As a kid you never... I mean...

CHANCE
(soft, matter-of-fact)
I was activated.

KENNY
So you are in a cult?

CHANCE
Freshman speech class. Some kid gave a speech on the Hopi Indians and the next thing I know I'm Richard Dreyfuss building a mashed-potato mountain.

INT. 1986 TOYOTA COROLLA - NIGHT - MOVING

Chance (20) barrels down the highway in a dented beater. Windows down. Mountain Dew in one hand, a half-open flapping map on the dashboard.

CHANCE (V.O.)
I jumped in my car headed straight
to the Hopi reservation.

EXT. ARIZONA HIGHWAY / REST STOP - MORNING

A GRANDDAUGHTER (20) and HOPI GRANDMOTHER (75) sell Kachina dolls, turquoise jewelry, and souvenirs at a roadside stand.

Chance walks over. Picks up a Kachina doll.

Grandmother whispers to granddaughter. She studies Chance, looks over his shoulder and subtly nods.

HOPI GRANDMOTHER
Sakwa Sohu Katsina. (points over
his shoulder)

Chance follows her finger. No one's there. Back to browsing.

HOPI GRANDMOTHER
Blueman.

CHANCE
(confused)
I'm sorry. Bloomin'?

GRANDDAUGHTER
Blue. Man. She's saying blue man.

Chance smiles. Sets down the Kachina doll. Heads to the restroom.

INT. FLOPHOUSE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jorge feels a presence. He shoots up ready to fight. He scans the room. Nothing.

EXT. HOPI RESERVATION - EVENING

Chance (20) sits on the hood of his car, surveying a desolate village of rundown homes patched with plywood.

CHANCE (V.O.)

I had no idea why I was there. I just sat, waiting for some kind of sign. Something. Anything. Finally, this dude about a thousand years old walks over, and I'm thinking... this is it.

A HOPI ELDER (80) approaches Chance. He stops twenty feet away, eyes fixed on the air past Chance. Not at him. Past him.

He begins to chant. Soft at first, but building into a deep, ancient calling.

Chance glances over his shoulder. Nothing. The Elder goes silent, turns, and walks away.

CHANCE (V.O.)

I felt kinda stupid. I mean, what was I expecting?

INT. 1986 TOYOTA COROLLA - MOVING - NIGHT

Moonlit desert. A long, slow SHOOTING STAR, or perhaps something else, rides the sky. It vanishes over a rock outcrop.

Chance veers off the road, chasing it. Rocks clank off the bottom.

CHANCE (V.O.)

But the grandma at the rest stop, the old dude chanting... I started thinking... is there a friggin' blue man behind me?

EXT. DESERT ROCK RING - NIGHT

Chance gets out. Notices a twenty-foot circle carved in the ground. He steps inside and turns in a slow cautious circle.

CHANCE

Okay, Mr. Blue Man... you there? Let me see you. Come on.

Chance stops turning. Dead silence.

CHANCE

Okay, that's cool... You probably think I'll freak out and run. Maybe I will, maybe I won't.

The air subtly RIPPLES. A blue light blooms behind him.

INT. FLOPHOUSE BEDROOM - NIGHT

P.O.V. JORGE - the room begins shimmering. A blue light fills the space. Jorge drops to his knees. His fear turns to wonder.

CHANCE (V.O.)

And dude, I'd never felt so much love in my life. This energy started moving up my body, and when it hit my heart... every life flashed in my mind. Thousands of them, past, present, future. All connected. I saw the perfection in every moment. It was pretty dope.

EXT. MINI-MANSION BACK DECK - NIGHT

Chance turns to Kenny like he's telling him a secret.

CHANCE

You wanna know the best thing?

KENNY

What?

Chance stretches his arms wide, mojito in one hand, joint in the other.

CHANCE

It's spreading. And once it starts, it doesn't stop.

Chance looks up to the stars and smiles.

KENNY

Wait. What are we talking about here?

CHANCE

It just grows and expands... and you
see more and more.

KENNY

More and more what?

Chance smiles like a proud parent.

CHANCE

Love, pendejo... love. What do you
think I've been talking about?

Kenny follows Chance's eyes to the stars. The night suddenly
too big and too quiet.

The puppy trots away with something expensive in his mouth.

FADE OUT.

MAIN TITLES: "THE ONES."

EXT. ARIZONA DESERT - NIGHT

A SHOOTING STAR skates the sky. Or perhaps something else.
The Elder watches it go, a quiet, knowing smile on his face.

HOPI ELDER

Souls from many worlds will
return, born into every land,
every color, every family.

GREAT GRANDSON

How will we know them?

HOPI ELDER

You won't. They'll walk quietly...
but they will be the first to
remember. And when they do -

CUT TO:

INT. KENNY'S GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Dark. Silence.

Zoel lies still. Eyes open. Just listening.

FADE TO BLACK.