

RED HARVEST

"The Road to Poisonville"

Written by

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Based on Red Harvest

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TEASER

EXT. MIAMI, FLORIDA - DAY

A large van drives the streets towards a palatial estate, which has been swarmed over by angry crowds.

The fifth estate is out, watching the crowd turn their ire towards that van. They're brandishing signs saying remarks like "St. Cloud fucks kids" or "St. Cloud's a diddlier."

They stand in front of the van, rocking it back and forth.

The van rev's it's engine, which pushes the crowd back. The van continues on its way, as it's pelted with all manner of things.

The gate opens to the estate, and the van rolls into the gate with multiple khakied security personnel standing at the gate, brandishing firearms.

The crowd understands how guns work, and they back away from the gate.

The gate closes with a loud clank, and security returns to the van, waiting for their boss to exit.

The van opens. It's like the van gave birth to more mooks. One man leaves the van in a gray suit and peach button-up.

ARNOLD ST. CLOUD (50's, slimy suave, he/him) looks at his mansion, raises his arms from his sides, looking like he's on top of the world.

INT. MIAMI VILLA - DAY

The interior security detail rise as St. Cloud enters the villa, the TV blaring expert info on the protest outside.

One unlucky guard scrambles to change the channel on television - not so fast though.

ST. CLOUD

It's fine boys, no worries 'round here. It's gonna be all over soon...

St. Cloud motions for his Domo (30's, asian, built like a brick shithouse, he/him) with a clap of his hands.

Domo steps forward, and glances at his watch.

DOMO
An hour, sir.

ST. CLOUD
Then, I'm packing up.
(pleasantly)
Keep the vultures out, eh?

Domo nods, then motions for security to post up.

On TV -

REPORTER (V.O.)
For those just joining us, Arthur
St. Cloud, alleged human trafficker
and rapist, has been released after
a mistrial.

INT. MIAMI VILLA, ST. CLOUD'S ROOM, DAY

The bay windows are open, and the curtains are flowing from
the ocean breeze.

St. Cloud is standing at his bed, with a gym bag lying on top
of it. It's not clothing in that bag.

A US passport, followed by a UK passport sit in the bag.

Stacks of loose currency - dollars, quid, euros - bundled up
with rubber bands.

The television in his room is tuned to the same news channel.

REPORTER (V.O.)
The mistrial followed as multiple
witnesses recanted their
testimony...

A gruff older man gives his soundbite for the press.

SA GORDON
We believe that Mr. St. Cloud may
have manipulated his witnesses into
silence. Frankly, we don't expect
to re-attack this case, as our
witnesses have all gone quiet.

St. Cloud zips up his bag.

EXT. MIAMI VILLA - DAY

A pair of guards smoke besides a wall.

A sneeze is heard behind them.

SMOKING GUARD

You fuckin' sneeze?

NON-SMOKING GUARD

Sounded like someone else sneezed.
You don't think they're climbing
over the walls, do ya?

SMOKING GUARD

You wanna check, don'tcha?

NON-SMOKING GUARD

Well, it might be that new guy.
Let's just fuckin' go, alright?

The smoking guard rounds the corner where he heard the sneeze and stops.

A man in black, stands behind the guard. Knife in sheath, pistol holstered, sling bag on his back.

This is the Continental Op, better known as CHARLES PIKE.

In one smooth motion -

Pike strips the handgun from the guards' hand, breaks the gun down to barrel and grip and throws the guard to the ground.

Pike then rushes the downed guard and stomps his groin in.

The second guard, advances to his coworker's aid -

Pike's knife is drawn and thrown like a thunderbolt.

The second guard's down in less than a heartbeat.

The first guard tries to raise an alarm, but closes his mouth as Pike draws his suppressed handgun and aims at his head.

Pike raises his finger to his lips.

Silence.

INT. MIAMI VILLA - DAY

St. Cloud jiggys through the villa, bebopping with excitement.

He stops, realizing he's missing something.

A pair of earbuds come out of his pocket, and he stuffs them in his ears.

Yacht rock in stereo kicks up to 11 and he continues to bebop towards another room.

St. Cloud doesn't even notice that guards that were posted inside are now dead, bleeding out all over the villa.

INT. MIAMI VILLA PANIC ROOM, DAY

St. Cloud opens his safe.

It's a pharmacy in there.

He takes several bound and sealed packages and packs them into his gym bag.

His eyes glance over to the CCTV wall of screens, then he sees Domo lying on his coffee table, with a hole in his forehead.

St. Cloud spins to the door and tries to run.

Pike stands in his way, pistol levelled at his hip.

St. Cloud raises his hands in surrender.

BLACK

INT. MIAMI VILLA PANIC ROOM - DAY

St. Cloud slowly starts to come to - bound in a chair.

Pike sets up a tripod and cellphone, set up right in front of St. Cloud.

ST. CLOUD

Hey man, please, let me go. I got money, I got drugs, just, whatever you want my man, I'll give it to you.

Pike picks up the bag, examines the contents inside, and pours all of the items onto St. Cloud.

ST. CLOUD (CONT'D)

Who's paying for this man? Someone's got deep pockets, and, I got even deeper ones... Don't, don't do this.

(MORE)

ST. CLOUD (CONT'D)
Please, whatever you're doing, I
got a family, little girls, a
son...

Pike checks the cellphone, adjusting the camera frame, and
from his own bag, he produces a can of lighter fluid.

Pike sprays the entire can all over St. Cloud.

ST. CLOUD (CONT'D)
PLEASE! Please don't do this! Let
me go! I know I'm sick, and I need
help. I'm gonna go get help now, if
you just let me go, okay? PLEASE!

The cellphone rings, and Pike answers it. He turns to St.
Cloud, as the video call starts.

It's a 16 year old girl. Haunted. Wounded.

St. Cloud tenses up.

ST. CLOUD (CONT'D)
YOU MOTHERFUCKER! YOU KNOW WHAT
YOU'RE DOING?! YOU'RE GONNA BURN ME
ALIVE, WELL, MY FRIENDS'RE GONNA DO
THE SAME TO YOU! YOU'RE GONNA BE
FUCKING DEAD. YOUR FAMILY'S GONNA
BE FUCKING DEAD. I'MA FUCK THE
BULLETHOLES I LEAVE IN THEIR HEADS
AND THEN I'M GONNA---

Pike removes a flip lighter from his pocket.

He lights it.

ST. CLOUD (CONT'D)
(quiet)
No.

Pike tosses the lighter onto St. Cloud.

Fire.

EXT. VILLA - DAY

A banshee wail echoes through the empty house, and then the
villa ignites, fire erupting from the windows.

The crowd watches, and cheers.

Eventually, someone calls 911.

EXT. CHANNEL BEHIND VILLA - DAY

Pike approaches the dock sitting behind the villa.

A boat arrives, the DRIVER (40's, he/him, tanned) motions for Pike.

DIVER

Where to?

Pike points to the other side of the channel.

PIKE

Over there.

Pike climbs aboard, handing the driver a wad of bills.

The boat takes off and drives away from the crime scene.

PIKE (V.O.)

I used to be an idealist.

(beat)

Once. But, idealism doesn't pay the bills...

END TEASER

ACT 1

CHYRON: 12 MARCH, 202X

EXT. PERSONVILLE SUBURBS - DAY

This is Personville. A modest city of around 250,000 residents, safely dwelling in Northern California. It's idyllic, but, it also harbors a corrupt history that we'll go over later.

But for now, we start to focus on a man, jogging in his neighborhood.

This is DANIEL WILLSSON (late 20's, he/him, charismatic), and he's just run 2 miles today.

He waves to cars driving in the opposite direction, dodges kids walking to school, and runs past the high school cross country team in the opposite direction.

Finally, Daniel stops at a fairly modest two-story house. He approaches the door and enters.

INT. WILLSSON HOUSE - DAY

A young woman, in a robe, sits at the kitchen table, drinking her coffee. She reads the news from her phone and notices Daniel walk into the kitchen.

The woman, JOSEPHINE WILLSSON (late 20's, she/her, supermodel-hot) sets her phone down and reaches for Daniel to give him a hug.

DANIEL

Babe, I'm all sweaty.

JOSEPHINE

(French-accent)

But you haven't started your other morning workout...

She kisses him, and he really likes it.

DANIEL

Oh, I, I should really get that workout started, eh?

JOSEPHINE

Oui.

Daniel picks Josephine up and carries her upstairs to continue their workout routine.

INT. WILLSSON HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM

Josephine sits on her side of the bed, reading more on her phone.

JOSEPHINE

Daniel, what is the problem with your politicians?

DANIEL (O.S.)

Honey, if I had all the time in the world, I couldn't even start trying to explain things...

JOSEPHINE

I mean, look at this Gobelin orange on the news...

DANIEL

Well, I didn't vote for him, but I'm sure my dad did.

JOSEPHINE

Of course your father would side with such swine.

DANIEL

Well, that's one thing I didn't inherit thank god.

Daniel enters the bedroom, from the shower. He's in his underwear, trying to find his work clothes.

A chime on her phone sounds off, declaring there's someone at the front door.

JOSEPHINE

We have company?

DANIEL

It's probably the paperboy dropping off the early edition.

JOSEPHINE

I'll go get it for you.

Josephine gets off of the bed, kisses Daniel on the cheek and heads downstairs.

EXT. WILLSSON HOUSE - DAY

Josephine opens the door, to reveal a newspaper, properly folded in half, as well as a tiny box resting on an envelope and a ribbon tied around the box like a gift.

She bends down to pick up the box and card, and opens the envelope.

The note says: "Bullets are cheap."

Josephine looks confused, and looks at the box. She pulls the ribbon off of the box and opens it.

It's a .45 bullet.

As Josephine tries to put the easy puzzle together, she sees a man jog past the house. He waves at her, smiling, then resumes his jog.

INT. WILLSSON HOUSE, KITCHEN- DAY

The Willsson household now has extra guests in the kitchen. Josephine and Daniel sit at the table, as a detective sits next to them, taking notes.

Entering from the front door, is a large, old-timey Irish cop. The kind of cop that spins a baton and says there's nothing to see here. This man of law and order is CHIEF NOONAN (50's, he/him, rosy cheeked).

CHIEF NOONAN

Oy, Cavanaugh, pull back a sec?

DETECTIVE CAVENAUGH (30's, he/him, permanent scowl) finishes his notes, and stands to address the chief.

DET. CAVENAUGH

Sir?

CHIEF NOONAN

You get everything you needed?

DET. CAVENAUGH

Yeah chief. We're just about finished here.

CHIEF NOONAN

Good. Let's get this show on the road then.

DANIEL

Chief Noonan?

The chief turns around.

CHIEF NOONAN
Yes, Mr. Willsson?

DANIEL
This, this might be a tall order,
but, would you be able to provide
some kind of personal protection,
like a guard or two or something?

CHIEF NOONAN
'Onestly Mr. Willsson, if I could,
I would. But, I got my boys working
on other cases around town. We're
stretched too thin as it is.

DANIEL
Working cases? What's the last case
you finished, a case of whiskey?

Chief Noonan steps up to Daniel, and stares him down.

CHIEF NOONAN
Boy... You'd be on your ass and
your woman would be scrubbing the
blood outta your undies if you
weren't the Mayor's son.

DANIEL
He's not the mayor.

CHIEF NOONAN
Oh, well, who brought the
businesses here after the mine
dried up? Who bankrolled building
new housing and public utilities
around here, eh? The same bastard
that would shitcan me if I ever
laid a hand on his goldenboy...

Daniel backs down.

CHIEF NOONAN (CONT'D)
Now, do me a favor, and stay put.
Work from home or whatever the fuck
it is you do at the paper...

Daniel and Josephine sit down at the table, and console one
another as the Chief and his detective leave the house.

CHYRON: 28 MARCH, 202X

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

B-roll of the city plays before we transition to the Tenderloin.

INT. PIKE'S APARTMENT - DAY.

It's a barebones apartment. Nothing too fancy on the walls, barely furnished. It's a lonely place.

In the bathroom, Pike sits in his bathtub, filled with water and ice. His right hand holds a glass of scotch. His eyes are shut.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST OFFICE - DAY

It's an office with some paintings, some books, a leather couch to lay on, and a doctor behind a desk. THE DOCTOR (60's, she/her, matronly) sits at her desk, writing down information on her notepad.

THE DOCTOR

Mr. Pike?

Pike is lying on the couch, wearing a suit. His left arm is extended out, fidgeting with a cigarette. His eyes are closed.

PIKE

Yes?

THE DOCTOR

How was your weekend?

A brief flash of a burning skeleton, screaming, pops into Pike's mind.

Pike's eyes open up.

PIKE

I had to go out of town for work this past weekend.

THE DOCTOR

Oh? Where did you go?

PIKE

Miami. 48 hours.

THE DOCTOR

Did you at least go and have some fun?

Another flash of Pike, slamming Domo's head into the glass coffee table. Domo tries to roll over and get up, but Pike places the barrel of his handgun to his forehead and pulls the trigger.

Pike returns to the couch, and plants his cigarette in between his lips.

PIKE

Not really. I did go out on the water for a bit.

Another flash of Pike, tossing his knife and the pieces of his handgun into the ocean, watching them sink.

Returning to the office, Pike reaches for his lighter, and brings it up to the tip of his cigarette.

THE DOCTOR

Mr. Pike, there's no smoking.

Pike puts the fire from the lighter out and removes the cigarette away.

PIKE

Sorry Doc.

THE DOCTOR

Have you been taking your medication?

A flash of Pike at home shows him pounding whiskey in a glass, chomping on a bouquet of medication, and chain smoking as he sits at his barren kitchen table.

PIKE (V.O.)

As needed.

Pike sits back up and looks at the doctor.

THE DOCTOR

One last question, Charles.

Pike stares the doctor down.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Are there any thoughts or feelings like you want to hurt yourself, or others?

PIKE

No.

INT. PIKE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Pike's phone alarm goes off, and he sets the glass down, and gets up out of the tub.

He looks himself over through the mirror. Pike traces his hands over the scars from injuries over the years. He stops at the weathered tattoo of the 101st Airborne on one shoulder.

He reaches for something on the countertop: a cigarette and lighter. He lights it, and walks into the bedroom, taking a hit every now and then.

Gradually, Pike gets dressed, putting on a suit and tie. He grabs his phone and leaves his apartment.

EXT. PSYCHIATRIST OFFICE - DAY

Pike exits the office, and proceeds to light another cigarette. He takes a hit, and stops when he feels his phone vibrate.

He pulls the phone from his jacket pocket, and examines the text he received.

Text: "DEBRIEF - 1 PM"

Pike stubs out the cigarette and leaves for work.

EXT. COLUMBUS BUILDING, SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

The streets are all busy, and Pike enters his office building amid the hubbub and buzz of the day.

INT. COLUMBUS BUILDING - DAY

Pike enters the building, and approaches the open elevator. He punches in the floor button, and leans against the wall, waiting to get to his floor.

INT. CONTINENTAL AGENCY - DAY

Pike exits the elevator, and walks through a frosted glass door that says "Continental Agency."

After that threshold, there is row upon row of empty desks, with empty chairs, and computers that aren't even plugged into anything. Pike walks through these monuments to office drones and heads to his boss's office.

A young woman sits behind a desk with three monitors, and a headset is attached to her phone. This woman is VELMA (20's, she/her, no nonsense), and she's the last hurdle before Pike meets the boss.

VELMA

Afternoon, Mr. Pike.

PIKE

Afternoon, Velma. Is he in?

VELMA

Yes sir. I'll just let him know you're ready.

Velma pushes a button on her desk.

VELMA (CONT'D)

He's here, sir.

VOICE

Send him in.

Pike nods towards Velma, then enters the office behind her.

INT. CONTINENTAL AGENCY, THE BOSS' OFFICE

Pike walks in, and makes a beeline for the bar. He pours himself some whiskey, and walks over to the desk in the center of the office.

Walls filled with books, shelves made of mahogany, paintings on the walls, and a oaken desk with three chairs. Two on one end, the other, a fancy leather chair, sits, facing away from Pike.

PIKE

Sir?

The fancy chair turns to reveal a high definition television, transmitting a video call displaying the OLD MAN (70's, he/him, scowling), looking at Pike.

OLD MAN

Sit down.

Pike sips from his glass and gradually walks to his chair, and sits down.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
First things first, welcome back.

PIKE
Thank you.

OLD MAN
You enjoy Miami?

PIKE
Wasn't bad. Would have liked to
have stayed longer, but, you know,
it was getting too hot out there.

OLD MAN
The client was extremely satisfied
by the way.

PIKE
Well, I wouldn't want to disappoint
anyone...
(sips whiskey)
What am I doing here?

OLD MAN
I got your psych eval back...

PIKE
Passed with flying colors, I
reckon?

The Old Man rises from his chair on screen and slams a manila
folder, an inch thick and stamped to bejesus and back.

OLD MAN
You're slipping, Pike.

PIKE
What?

OLD MAN
The psychiatrist noticed you were
distant, and she had to pull you
out of your deep contemplation to
just get a fucking word out of you.

Pike, in his defense, pulls a cigarette out and lights it.

PIKE
So?

OLD MAN
What's going to happen if you flip,
or snap, eh?

(MORE)

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
Are we going to have to bring you
in and bury you out in the fucking
Sierras or are we gonna let you
sink to the bottom of the bay?

PIKE
You know me, I'm straight as an
arrow.

OLD MAN
You're a great asset to the agency
Pike, but, I can't take the risk of
you over the edge when it counts...

PIKE
Won't be a problem sir.

OLD MAN
Well, I just got another assignment
for you. It should be a milk-run,
lack of violence in this one.

PIKE
Babysitting? You know you want me
out there to handle the kinda work
no one really wants to touch, Old
Man...

OLD MAN
No. I don't. Minute you lose it,
we'll end up disavowing you and
you'll be at the mercy of the
courts and you'll end up shackled up
with---.

PIKE
I get it. I'll take it. Where's the
job?

OLD MAN
VELMA! Get in here!

Velma enters the office with a folder and hands it off to
Pike.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
POI is Daniel Willsson and his
wife, Josephine. Daniel is the
editor in chief of the Personville
Dealer, the local newspaper. His
dad is the CEO of Bayside LLC, a
holding company, as well as the
owner of Bayside industries.

PIKE

So, what's the story here?

OLD MAN

The younger Willsson's life is being threatened... Local PD is dragging their feet, and can't figure out who threatened them.

PIKE

What'd they use?

OLD MAN

A box and a bullet with a note.

Pike opens the folder, and finds a copy of the same note Josephine saw earlier.

PIKE

Bullets are cheap...

(beat)

Who else did you try to throw at this?

OLD MAN

Well, I didn't slot in Linehan because he's too busy out in Santa Barbara. Foley's out in Vegas, which means he's out of pocket until the beginning of next month.

PIKE

So, you want me to babysit?

OLD MAN

That's the goal. I mean, yeah, it's a babysitting job, but, it's a break. It'll help you get your center back.

PIKE

What do you know about center?

The Old Man stares daggers at Pike from 3000 miles away through the television.

OLD MAN

I was burning down Southeast Asia with the Phoenix Program while you was just a twitch in your daddy's balls, boy. I might know a bit about finding one's center.

Pike looks down in disappointment, away from the Old Man.

PIKE

Fine... I'll take the fucking job.

Pike closes the folder, and looks back up at the Old Man on television.

PIKE (CONT'D)

Where and when do I need to be in place?

OLD MAN

ASAP.

EXT. PERSONVILLE DEALER - DAY

Daniel's newspaper publisher, just to show that print isn't dead. It's kinda on life support.

INT. PERSONVILLE DEALER - DAY

Daniel sits at the bay window of his office, staring out, surveying the city like he's about to lay out some thesis'.

His assistant editor DORY (40'S, She/Her, smart) enters the office, to speak.

DORY

Daniel?

DANIEL

(turns around)

Yes? Oh, Dora, what's up?

DORY

First off, you okay?

DANIEL

Oh, that whole thing that happened a couple weeks ago... Yeah, Josephine and me are just fine.

(beat)

We don't look fine, do we?

DORY

Well, just between us girls...

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Just between us girls...

DORY (CONT'D)

You've been here nonstop, writing something, and, honestly, you smell like you could use a shower...

DANIEL
(sniffs)
I'm not that bad. I got a shower-in-a-can in here.

Daniel sifts through his desk.

No dice.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Shit...

DORY
Daniel, I'm sure Josephine misses you, so, go home. Take a break.

DANIEL
Shit, you're right.

DORY
Anything else you want me to do before you leave for the day?

DANIEL
Just make sure the evening run is good to go.

Daniel grabs his things and leaves the office.

EXT. PERSONVILLE SUBURBS - DAY

Daniel's car pulls into the driveway of his home, and gets out. He dashes to the door and opens it.

INT. WILLSSON HOUSE - DAY

Josephine sits on the couch, looking rougher than the first time we saw her.

DANIEL
Jo, you okay?

JOSEPHINE
Daniel? Oh, thank god, you're home.

DANIEL
Dory said I should go home, probably because I smell pretty bad.

JOSEPHINE

Oh.

(takes a breath)

You could hardly notice it.

DANIEL

Funny.

Daniel sits down next to Josephine, and brushes the hair from her face.

JOSEPHINE

So, the people I contacted about
our issue got back to me.

DANIEL

The, people that we agreed to
contact for our issue.

JOSEPHINE

Oui. They are sending someone over
ri--.

A knock raps at the door.

Daniel and Josephine, slowly get up from the couch. Daniel motions to the baseball bat next to the door, and Josephine hands it over to him.

Josephine takes her phone and looks at who's at the door.

Daniel slowly walks to the door, baseball bat in his right hand.

He reaches for the door, but stops.

Josephine taps on the audio button on the second screen.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)

Who's there?

EXT. WILLSSON HOUSE - NIGHT

The suns setting now, and Pike is at their front door. He's wearing a long coat, black ballcap, and rugged clothing now. He keeps his head low as he addresses Josephine.

PIKE

I'm your contact with the
Continental Agency, Mr. Pike. Can I
come in?

INT. WILLSSON HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel lowers his guard, sets the baseball bat against the wall closest to him, and reaches for the door lock.

JOSEPHINE

Daniel, don't!

Daniel stops.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)

(to phone)

How do we know you're who we asked about?

PIKE (V.O.)

Look, it's cold out here, and I'm honestly not in the mood. I just drove out here, and it's been a long, terrible day.

DANIEL

Well, like the lady said, how do we know you're you?

PIKE

(sighs)

Okay, hang on.

EXT. WILLSSON HOUSE - NIGHT

Pike digs into his coat pockets and pulls out a weathered and faded card. He holds it up to the camera.

PIKE

Charles Pike, Continental Agency.
You called us...

INT. WILLSSON HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Josephine makes out the words on the black and white doorcam, and then nods for Daniel to open the door.

Pike enters the house, shutting the door behind him with his right foot.

Daniel and Josephine step back from Pike as he starts to remove his long coat and ball cap.

PIKE

It was a bit of a drive from San Francisco to get here, so, you'll excuse my temper.

DANIEL

O-of, course.

(to Josephine)

Hon, could you get our guest a cuppa coffee?

JOSEPHINE

Yes. Three coffees, coming right up.

Josephine heads to the kitchen as Daniel sizes up his potential bodyguard. He then extends his hand to shake Pike's. Pike stares at the hand long enough for Daniel to put it back to his right side.

DANIEL

Daniel Willsson, Personville Dealer.

PIKE

Charles Pike, consultant.

Pike makes a motion for Daniel to sit down.

DANIEL

Thank you. Sorry, this is all just, unexpected...

PIKE

Believe me, I get it.

Pike sits down across from Daniel. Josephine returns from the kitchen and sets down three cups of coffee.

JOSEPHINE

Please, I'm sure a little coffee might help you feel a bit better.

Pike takes one of the coffee cups, and removes an airport bottle size of whiskey from his coat. He pours it in, and takes a long drink from the mug.

DANIEL

I'm sorry, was that---

Pike lowers the coffee cup back onto the coffee table and reaches into his pockets to produce his cigarettes and lighter.

JOSEPHINE

I'm sorry we don't sm---.

Pike lights a cigarette and takes a hit. He bellows smoke from his nostrils and mouth like a dragon, then uses the coffee cup to drop his ashes into.

PIKE

I'd like to hear your story, if you don't mind.

DANIEL

Well, uh, I'm the editor of the local paper, and, one day, my wife finds this giftbox and card at our front door.

JOSEPHINE

I thought it was Daniel being a smart-alecky. Sorry, English was not my first---.

PIKE

Continue.

DANIEL

So, she opens the box and finds the note, and lets out this banshee cry--.

PIKE

Do you still have the box and card?

DANIEL

Uh, no... The police department have it as evidence.

PIKE

You have smart cameras around the house, did you review them, see if anyone was around that could have dropped it off?

DANIEL

We did, but, we didn't notice anything outside of the paperboy.

PIKE

Anything register on motion detectors around the house?

DANIEL

Just the paperboy...

PIKE

You don't think someone paid the paperboy to deliver those things, do you?

DANIEL

I don't really know...

Pike drops the cigarette butt into the coffee mug, a tiny hiss coming from the cup.

JOSEPHINE

We sent your agency pictures of everything before the police took everything away.

PIKE

I know. Did the crime lab take a look at the box and card?

JOSEPHINE

I would like to think they did.

PIKE

But they haven't said a thing, have they?

DANIEL

The police chief thinks we were making it up.

PIKE

He's not a good police officer.

DANIEL

Other than the fact that he's all sorts of fluffy and rose-cheeked?

PIKE

He's not treating this as serious... And, seeing that the cops have everything, I can't really go off and look for who sent you that crap.

JOSEPHINE

So, you're leaving?

PIKE

No. Not yet anyway. I need to take a look around the place. At the very least, I can do an evaluation around the house, make sure you'll be safe in case.

JOSEPHINE

In case of what?

PIKE

In case the threat's real.

DANIEL

You don't think that a threat
against my life is real?

PIKE

It's been two weeks, and, it looks
like you two have seen better days.
It smells---

Pike sniffs the air.

PIKE (CONT'D)

---rather, musky in here.

DANIEL

Well, it's not like we've ever been
threatened before!

PIKE

First time for everything.

Pike stands up and starts walking around the house.

DANIEL

Josephine, go upstairs and freshen
up.

Josephine nods and Daniel follows Pike around the house. Pike
stops at a window.

PIKE

Motion sensors on the windows. What
about the doors?

DANIEL

Yeah, there are sensors on the
doors too.

PIKE

You using one of those services,
like ADT? Or something like Ring?

DANIEL

We have Ring.

PIKE

Hmmm.

Pike continues to walk around the ground floor of the house.

PIKE (CONT'D)
Can I see your phone?

Daniel hands Pike his phone and he starts reviewing the app. He flips through the app, and then pulls his own phone out of his pocket. He takes a picture of the information listed, and then hands Daniel his phone back.

DANIEL
I could have just, texted that to you...

PIKE
I'd rather you not have my contact info.
(beat)
Do you have location services set on your phones?

DANIEL
Well, only when we use the apps.

PIKE
What does Josephine do throughout the day?

DANIEL
She, uh, does stuff...

PIKE
You don't know what your wife does for a living?

DANIEL
I know what she does for a living... She's a designer for one of the boutiques in town.

PIKE
Does she do the same thing, have location services turned off on her phone too?

DANIEL
I, I don't really play around with my wife's phone.

PIKE
Neither of you have a find my phone app?

DANIEL

We do. But, we do our best to not lose our phones...

Pike stands at the staircase leading up.

PIKE

Can I come up.

DANIEL

Yeah, just stay away from our bedroom.

Pike starts up the stairs, Daniel following him.

As Pike ascends the stairs, he sees family photos of a younger Daniel, and his family. He stops at that photo, and studies it.

PIKE

Willsson... The Bayside guy?

DANIEL

Wow, you didn't even know that?

PIKE

Your dad pay for this?

DANIEL

No... It's just us, and whatever money we'd saved up...

PIKE

You didn't take a dime of his money?

DANIEL

Nope. My late mother took the divorce settlement she got and put me through Princeton. I became a European news reporter for the AP, and, that's when I met---

PIKE

Must be nice.

DANIEL

What school did you study at?

PIKE

(turns away)
Rakkasan Shah-i-kot Valley, 2002.

Daniel looks confused at Pike, then follows him up to the rest of the second floor.

INT. WILLSSON HOUSE, 2ND FLOOR - NIGHT

Daniel turns on the lights upstairs and the pair walk around.

PIKE
You two had kids?

DANIEL
No. We're working on it though.

PIKE
You have anything on these windows up here? Sensors?

DANIEL
No.

PIKE
Cameras?

DANIEL
One on top of the garage.

PIKE
Garage door opened with a remote?

DANIEL
Of course.

PIKE
I think I've seen enough.

INT. WILLSSON HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Pike, Daniel and a cleaned up Josephine gather in the living room, sitting across from one another.

PIKE
Okay. Your house seems fairly secure on the ground floor. You have some access to some security devices like motion sensors and cameras.

DANIEL
That's good.

PIKE

I'm still going to say that you're still not safe.

JOSEPHINE

Why?

PIKE

Sensors are good and all, camera's too. They'll at least tell the cops someone came around here. But, you don't have a place to go to in case someone breaks in and tries to kill you.

Pike pulls something from the small of his back and sets it on the coffee table.

PIKE (CONT'D)

9mm Glock. 17 plus 1 in the chamber.

DANIEL

We're not keeping a gun in this house!

PIKE

Believe me, you'll want one. If bullets are cheap, then they won't mind if they're paying the price, right?

JOSEPHINE

Daniel, may--.

DANIEL

I'm not going to be intimidated by whoever is doing this!

PIKE

So, what have you been doing to draw so much of a threat Mr. Willsson.

DANIEL

Do, do you know the history of this town?

PIKE

No. I don't know a damn thing.

DANIEL

Well, between us, Personville is about to blow up.

PIKE
(squints)
What?

DANIEL
In the, uh, social sense. Does that
make sense?

PIKE
No. But, go on.

Pike sparks another cigarette and reclines back.

DANIEL
Thirty years ago, about 200 acres
of land were purchased in
Personville. Since, most of the
people around here were farmers, no
one really had an issue. You know
who bought it?

PIKE
No.

DANIEL
Bayside Holding Company. The parent
company of Bayside, a all-in-one
delivery and sourcing store.

PIKE
Like Amazon?

DANIEL
Like Amazon. Except, not as strong
across the world. They're there,
but, their impact is a little
higher then Temu or other knockoff
horseshit.

PIKE
So, Bayside Holding buys land out
here. Then what?

DANIEL
A population of farmers, and a
couple bad growing seasons bites
everyone in the ass. They can't
keep up with the loans, and they're
in this death spiral.

PIKE
So, Bayside offers to pay the debt
to get their land...

DANIEL

Right. So, Bayside Holdings decides to make this little town into a self-sustaining community. People work for Bayside Delivery, they live in Bayside family housing, they shop at Bayside shops, and, little by little, the moms and pops start leaving town with financial windfalls.

PIKE

So, the population jumps as people flock to Bayside.

DANIEL

You know who runs all of Bayside, who the real mayor is, yeah?

PIKE

Your dad?

DANIEL

Exactly. I have all of the evidence, encrypted on my work computer, and on a cloud drive that I know the password to.

PIKE

What's stopping you?

Pike facepalms, then realizes what he said.

PIKE (CONT'D)

Right... The threats...

DANIEL

So, I think my dad knows what I've been doing, and he's trying to silence my truth.

PIKE

Uh huh. How much does he know about your expose?

DANIEL

I talked with everyone. Ex-politicians, former executives, quality assurance technicians, instructors, you name it, I found someone who would set the record straight.

Pike stubs out his cigarette into his coffee cup.

Daniel feels his phone vibrate, and he picks it up.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Oh, it's the paper...
Hangonhangonhangon! Hello? Dory?

PIKE
Who's Dory?

Daniel turns the phone away and covers the mic.

DANIEL
(whispers)
She works at the paper--
(normal voice)
Dory, what's going on? A fire?
Okay, I'll be right down!

Daniel hangs up and starts grabbing his coat and other things to get moving.

PIKE
A fire?

DANIEL
Yeah, fire alarm's going off in the
printing room.

PIKE
If the fire department's going to
handle it, why are you going?

DANIEL
I need to make sure everyone's
okay. That's what a leader does.

Daniel opens the living room door and starts to walk out. He then pokes his head back into the living room.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Are you good to drive?

Pike gives Daniel a thumbs up.

INT. PIKE'S CAR - NIGHT

Pike is driving a 1974 Dodge Monaco, painted primer black. It's got bench seating, an AM radio, and still takes Leaded gasoline if it's still available. It's a dinosaur.

Daniel observes the interior's state. There are empty cigarette packs scattered along the dashboard, a pine-tree air freshener, and several cans filled with cigarette butts and ash.

DANIEL
You, you have a very, uh, rustic vehicle...

PIKE
Its just a work car.

DANIEL
What kind of organization do you work for?

PIKE
You really want to know?

DANIEL
Well, it might be a good idea to know what we're buying into...

PIKE
You really don't want to know...

DANIEL
That bad?

Pike glances at Daniel with the look that says "Yes."

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Oh.
(beat)
Turn right here.

EXT. PERSONVILLE DEALER - NIGHT

The Monaco parks in a disabled parking spot. Pike pulls the Glock he's had behind his back and puts it into the glove compartment. Pike then hangs up a disabled placard from the rearview mirror and opens the door.

DANIEL
You, uh, can park there?

PIKE
Yeah, don't worry about it. Where do we go from here?

DANIEL
This way.

The pair rush towards the crowd gathered, watching the building fire being fought by the Personville Fire Department.

A couple officers stand nearby, providing crowd control.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Excuse me, officer?

OFFICER #1
I'm sorry sir, I can't let anyone through.

DANIEL
I'm the editor of the paper, I need to know what's happened so far!

OFFICER #1
Well, why didn't you say so?

Daniel is about to break the cordon, but is stopped anyway.

OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)
Standing orders sir, no one can come through.

DANIEL
Will you check?

OFFICER #1
Not even for you, sir.

Daniel and Pike head the opposite direction away from the crowd.

PIKE
Now what?

DANIEL
I got an idea, I'll go check around the other side of the building.

PIKE
No. We go together, no separating.

DANIEL
Fine... let's go then.

Pike and Daniel jog over to the other side of the building, down some alleyways. A lone individual stands in this alleyway, shadowed in the dark, watching their work.

PIKE
You know that guy?

DANIEL

No... but, I can find out. Stay here.

Daniel starts to approach the arsonist, Pike following a few feet behind him. The arsonist turns to see Daniel, and stands there.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Hey friend, do I know you?

ARSONIST

No.

A pair of individuals, from other shadows in the alleyway emerge and confront Pike. Pike spins to address the pair behind him. One of them pushes Pike down, and the other drop kicks Pike in the ribs. Pike's breath deflates like a Patriots football.

Daniel turns around to see Pike getting his ass kicked.

ARSONIST (CONT'D)

Hey, don't worry about him--.

Daniel turns back to the Arsonist, whose embracing him with an arm. Daniel feels two pops of something in his stomach, and the Arsonist lets him go.

ARSONIST (CONT'D)

You should worry 'bout yourself...

Daniel looks down, and sees he's got some red on his stomach. He wipes it away, but, it won't go away. Daniel's eyes widen, as he hits the ground, knees first, then finishes falling onto his face.

The Arsonist motions to his other guys, and they walk away from the burning building and their prey.

The Arsonist stops near a dumpster, carrying a lump of plastic. He breaks the plastic thing down, and throws one portion into the dumpster.

Further down the alley, the Arsonist tosses the other piece into a storm drain.

Pike, slowly gets back up, spitting up a bit of blood, and then, he sees Daniel on the ground.

PIKE

Fuck...

Pike stumbles to Daniel's body, and rolls him over. He sees the wounds, and he's gone.

Pike hears Daniel's phone going off, and he reaches into his coat. It's from Josephine. He answers.

JOSEPHINE (V.O.)
Daniel, is everything okay?

PIKE
Josephine... it's Pike.

JOSEPHINE (V.O.)
Pike?! Where's Daniel?

Pike rolls back and sits down on the street.

PIKE
He's... He's gone Josephine.

JOSEPHINE (V.O.)
Gone where?

PIKE
He's dead...

END ACT ONE

ACT 2

EXT. PERSONVILLE DEALER - DAYTIME

The fire's out. That's good, right? Well, that's good, but, then there's this other part, where there's now a crime scene behind the building. Personville PD have cordoned off the scene, and investigators are speaking to Pike.

DET. CAVENAUGH
Anything else to add mister Pike?

PIKE
Nah. Can I get the hell out of here now?

DET. CAVENAUGH
Sure. Here's my card--.

Cavanaugh hands Pike his card.

DET. CAVENAUGH (CONT'D)
You hear anything, you let me know, got it?

Pike nods, then slides the card into his pocket. He walks away from the alley, and as soon as he reaches the parking lot, he sees a bar across the way.

PIKE
Fuck it.

Pike enters the bar.

INT. THE 39TH STEP - DAYTIME

A large, Alan Hale lookalike, that goes by BILL QUINT (50's, he/him, dopey), sits at the bar, musing that it's 5 o'clock somewhere. The bartender has been here all night, and, even with the fire, and apparent murder, business is now starting to die out.

QUINT
(hammered)
Look, as soon as I finish this pint, I'm gonna go and leave this pisshole of a bar.

BARTENDER

Sir, it's seven in the morning!
What kinda guy sits here and drinks
all night?

PIKE

Guys like him and me. Get him
another pint, and I'll take glass
of Johnnie Red.

Pike saddles up next to Quint as he pulls a 20 out of his
wallet, and places it onto the bar. The bartender takes the
20, and fills another pint glass for Quint, then fills a
small glass of scotch for Pike.

PIKE (CONT'D)

Keep it.

The bartender takes the 20 and puts it in the till.

QUINT

I know you friend?

PIKE

Bill?

QUINT

ANDY!

PIKE

BIIIILLLLL QQQUUUINNNNTTT!

QUINT

AAAAANNNNNDDDDDDYYYYY CARRRUTHERS!

The pair embrace with great joy, and then take their drinks
in hand!

QUINT (CONT'D)

Shit man, Andy Carruthers... Last
time I saw ya, was, what?

PIKE

Atlanta, Bill. Remember, the hotel
strike?

QUINT

Right around the same time of them,
uh, miss Atlanta kidnappings,
right?

PIKE

Right. I'm glad somebody found them
girls safe and sound.

QUINT

Amen to that!

Pike and Quint take another large drink from their glasses.

PIKE

So, yeah, Bill, what brings you, a sophisticated businessman, out here to Pers---.

QUINT

Poisonville?! What brings me to Poisonville? Oh, well, it ain't the fuckin' weather...

The Bartender's hands ball into fists, and as Pike sees him, Pike stares him down. The bartender loosens his fists, and returns to wiping down the bar.

PIKE

If it ain't the weather, then, what is it?

QUINT

Oh, well, fuck... I, I came out here for work. Guys like us, ain't easy findin' work that calls to our profession.

PIKE

Bill, you never really told me what you did for a living?

QUINT

Well, just between us and me, I'm hired help.

PIKE

What, like a day laborer?

QUINT

Nah, I work private security for Lew Yard.

PIKE

Who?

QUINT

Yard is a guy who's looking to get the fiery fuck outta here. He's on the downwards turn, you know that?

PIKE

On the downwards turn with who?

Quint takes another drink from his pint.

QUINT

Shit, everyone. Starkey's tired of his shit. Whisper, want's whatever Yard's got, and the cops have pretty much shut his whole business down?

PIKE

Bill, I'm not from around here, so, I don't know a goddamn thing about the place.

QUINT

Well, Yard, on the DL, was running a successful, uh, production company.

PIKE

Like what?

QUINT

Movies... You know, the uh---.

Quint takes his hands, makes one point, and then he makes the other form a circle.

PIKE

Porn.

Quint laughs, then takes another sip.

QUINT

Well, yeah, it's legal... But, there were other things they was filming. Like, the sorta stuff that's really illegal, especially when it involves barnyard animals.

Pike laughs, then sips from his scotch.

PIKE

Mister Hands?

QUINT

Yeah, pretty much.

PIKE

And you liked working for him?

QUINT

Are you high? I didn't wanna do shit-all with the guy.

(MORE)

QUINT (CONT'D)
I just watched the production
studio, and that was about it.

Pike lights up a smoke, and uses an almost empty pint glass
from Quint to start ashing into.

PIKE
How'd the secret get out?

QUINT
Some asshole who's the son of the
asshole that runs this town,
started asking questions, and then,
one fuckin' day, the vice cops roll
in, and they kick the doors and
shit down, everything.

PIKE
What happened to your boss?

QUINT
Why do you think I'm leaving town?

Quint stands up, stretches and shifts his weight, trying not
to lose his balance from all the drinking.

PIKE
Bill, what happened to your boss?

QUINT
He rabbited on us. Left some of his
guys who worked there the longest
to take the wrap.
(beat)
Now, excuse me, I gotta use the
bathroom.

Quint walks to the pool table and undoes his fly. He then
lies on top of the pool table inserts himself into the corner
pocket. Pike stops him, then drags him outside.

EXT. THE 39TH STEP - DAYTIME

Pike drags Quint out into the alleyway, and turns away while
Quint gets himself put back together.

QUINT
What in the pluperfectfuck did you
do that for?

PIKE

You were about to be arrested and called a public nuisance, as well as a sex offender...

QUINT

Why's that a problem? I got the same as that bartender and any other swinging dick in city limits!

Pike turns back around and takes Quint and throws him into a small hill of trash bags.

PIKE

How you wanna get outta town Bill? In chains, or under your own fuckin' power Bill.

Quint shakes his head and stands up, taking an offensive stance. Pike, loosens up, and waits for Quint to throw the first punch.

Quint throws a left jab, countered by Pike's left arm. Pike sweep-kicks Quint and knocks him on his ass again.

PIKE (CONT'D)

Tell me what I wanna know Bill, and I'll send you home on a fuckin' greyhound. You try to resist, then, I'm gonna drag you on that grayhound myself.

Quint slowly gets back up and glares at Pike. He adjusts his goods, and zips his fly back up.

QUINT

Let's go for a walk then.

EXT. DOWNTOWN PERSONVILLE - DAYTIME

Pike and Quint walk the streets of Personville, watching the town come alive as the sun rises.

QUINT

Y'know, Yard isn't the only game in town.

PIKE

You said that, but, I haven't heard anything else come my way on that plot line.

QUINT

Because man, the other two are just as bad, maybe worse than Yard.

PIKE

Any of them have a thing against the newspaper?

QUINT

It wouldn't surprise me if Willsson the younger had something to do with Yard, or Whisper, or the Finn.

PIKE

Tell me what I need to know about them, so, if I get into trouble with them, then I can find a way out of it.

QUINT

So, you're gonna end up getting into trouble like you did in Atlanta. It's gonna cost you some cash.

PIKE

How much?

QUINT

Double what Yard was paying me.

PIKE

And that was?

QUINT

Two-hundred grand.

Pike extends his right hand for Quint to shake on it, and Quint does.

QUINT (CONT'D)

I want my money by the time we finish this walk.

PIKE

You'll get it. Just, tell me what's going on out here.

EXT. THE LUCKY MINER, DAYTIME

Across the street and the Lucky Miner, Pike sits on a park bench, day drinking, wearing sunglasses. He's looking over there.

QUINT (V.O.)

First thing's first. Whisper. Kids
name is Mike Thaler. Worked in LA
before Poisonville got repopulated.

MIKE "WHISPER" THALER exits the Lucky Miner, swarmed by a couple of his goons. He's on his phone. He's in his early twenties, has a light complexion, and wears the finest in clothing, a criminal that's good at hiding it.

THALER

(RFK Jr voice)

I don't care what Yard's guys said,
they need to fuckin' leave or shits
gonna get worse. I mean it.

Pike looks towards the five man entourage as they pass him. Thaler and Pike exchange glances, and Thaler continues to walk.

QUINT (V.O.)

They call him Whisper because on
account of the LA Outfit. Word on
the downlow said the mother fuckers
slit his throat for talking, and he
barely survived. Moved out here to
get back on his feet legit-like,
but, he got back in the game after
he did some work for someone high
up in town.

EXT. THE STARKEY COMPOUND - DAYTIME

A compound on the east side of town, looks like a car mechanics shop. There are several burly men working on cars, either piecing them together, or taking them apart. Car parts are scattered across the work center.

RENO STARKEY (30's, he/him, tatted up) stands next to his boss PETE FINN (50's, he/him, elder nazi) watches his boys work.

Pike stands on the corner, smoking, as he scopes the place out.

QUINT (V.O.)

Then there's Finn and Starkey.
Finn's the old man, and Starkey's
his protégé. Finn was a big fan of
"white power" back in the day, and
Starkey took to that like a fuckin'
fish to water.

As Finn and Starkey look at the yard, we now see that instead of a car being stripped, we're seeing a member of Yard's crew being skinned by someone in a tyvek suit.

PIKE (V.O.)
Starkey got the balls to take over?

QUINT (V.O.)
I don't think so. He thinks Finn's like a father figure. Poor bastard doesn't have it in him.

PIKE (V.O.)
What if someone talks him into it?

QUINT (V.O.)
Maybe, if you got the tongue, and you know how to get him to do it...

EXT. PERSONVILLE INDUSTRIAL AREA - DAYTIME

Pike is walking across the street to a office building. It looks like a few guys are wheeling boxes of obscene material into a van.

QUINT (V.O.)
And, my old boss. Lew Yard. Guy used to run the gambling bracket out here. He had a place out here, but, since the Indian casino down the highway opened up, he had to pivot to something else.

PIKE (V.O.)
Yeah, porno, like you said.

QUINT (V.O.)
Motherfucker got shut down for human trafficking. Cops picked up the girls, the videos, and threatened him to leave town, or, they were gonna put him in the pen.

PIKE (V.O.)
Where did the girls go?

QUINT (V.O.)
I dunno, probably got dropped off down the line, or flown out. Some guy in Miami may have had a hand in getting them out here. But, that guy's missing or some shit.

Pike keeps walking down the road, eying Yard's property being thrown out.

EXT. PERSONVILLE DOWNTOWN - DAYTIME

Pike and Quint return to the now-closed 39th Step.

QUINT
Fuckin' hell...

PIKE
Well, anyone else I should be
worried about around here?

QUINT
Look Carruthers, we walked around
town, we saw all the parties
involved, and now, we're sober as
birds. And now, you want more?!

PIKE
Anything else worth knowing?

QUINT
No man. I got nothing else.

PIKE
I find out any of this intel is
wrong, I'm going to come after you,
you know that right?

QUINT
Not if I get the fuck outta town,
fast.

Quint walks away, head over his shoulder every fifteen paces.
Pike continues to walk, now, to the suburbs.

EXT. WILLSSON HOUSE - EVENING

Pike returns to Daniel and Josephine's house, where a couple
patrol cars are parked. He approaches the house.

OFFICER #1
Hey, I remember you. Stop right
there!

Pike stops.

OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)
Who're you and what are you doing
here?

PIKE

I'm here to see Mrs. Willsson. It's about her husband, and her father in law.

OFFICER #1

Let me check.

The officer transmits a message on his radio.

OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)

I gotta guy here, says he's here to talk with Mrs. Willsson?

The officer puts his fingers on his earpiece, and then removes them.

OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)

Go right on in.

Pike enters the house.

INT. WILLSSON HOUSE - EVENING

Pike enters the house, and nods towards Josephine, who is grieving. She approaches Pike, stops, then slaps his face.

JOSEPHINE

You killed my DANIEL! YOU SHIT! YOU DIRTY MOTHERFUCKER! HIS BLOOD IS ON YOUR HANDS!

Josephine rears her hand for another slap, and as she swings, Pike grabs her wrist.

PIKE

Josephine. Please, stop... I get that you're mad, and you're hurting, but, you need to relax.

Josephine pulls her wrist back as Pike releases it.

JOSEPHINE

Relax?! Relax?! We were going to hire you to protect him, and now he's gone!

PIKE

I know. I know. Daniel, for the time that I knew him, believed he was doing the right thing, and, the right thing to do now, is stay here and bring those murderers to justice...

JOSEPHINE

You're staying?

PIKE

Yeah. But, you need to get out of here. Act hysterical, run off, go on vacation. Come back later on, or, don't.

Josephine kisses Pike on the cheek.

JOSEPHINE

Thank you mister Pike.

Pike leaves the house, the door closing behind him. The news vans are all scattered in front of the house, people getting reactions from their neighbors and the like. As Pike walks further down the street, he notices a Rolls Royce sitting across the road.

The headlights flash, and Pike stops in his tracks. The Rolls starts up, and drives towards Pike. The car stops, and the passenger door opens towards Pike. Someone motions for Pike to get inside.

PIKE

I know you, friend?

From the darkened interior of the Rolls, emerges ELIHU WILLSSON (80's, he/him, labors to breathe).

ELIHU

No... But, we do need to talk.

PIKE

I need to get back to my clients.

ELIHU

I don't think so. I'm your client now, get in the car.

Pike shrugs and enters the Rolls.

END ACT TWO

BEGIN ACT THREE

EXT. ROLLS ROYCE - DAYTIME

Pike sits opposite Elihu, awkwardly.

ELIHU
Allow me to introduce myself Mister
Pike... My name is El---.

PIKE
Elihu Willsson.

ELIHU
My reputation precedes me. I will
say that it's interesting to see
that the Continental Agency is
still operating. The agents may
change, but the mandate, did it
change too I wonder?

PIKE
How'd you figure that out?

ELIHU
I once requested assistance in a
little matter I had here a couple
years ago. I rescinded it once I
found some contractors who would
take care of it, no questions
asked.

Pike reaches for a cigarette. Elihu raises an oxygen mask and
green o2 tank. Pike stows the cigarette back into it's pack.

ELIHU (CONT'D)
I would advise you against that in
case you want this to be a very
short trip, Mister Pike.

PIKE
Gotcha... Where exactly are we
going?

ELIHU
My estate...

EXT. WILLSSON COMPOUND - DAYTIME

The Rolls drives through town, eventually arriving at the
Willsson compound, passing through a wrought iron gate.

The Rolls completes it's drive as it enters a massive garage with multiple classic cars.

INT. WILLSSON COMPOUND GARAGE - DAYTIME

The Rolls stops in it's spot. The doors open up, and aides to Elihu assist him out of the car, as Pike examines the cars from a distance. One of Elihu's aides rolls him into a wheelchair, stowing the o2 tank onto the wheelchair.

ELIHU

This way.

Pike follows Elihu into the cavernous interior of the mansion.

INT. WILLSSON COMPOUND LIBRARY - DAYTIME

Elihu and Pike finally enter the library, lined with faux-gold accessories and leatherbound books on mahogany shelves. Elihu parks his chair behind his desk and motions for Pike to sit down across from him.

PIKE

No thanks. I'll just stand.

ELIHU

Of course. So, a little bird told me you were in town to do a favor for my son.

PIKE

Your son requested my agencies assistance in some matters over protection.

ELIHU

I'm very aware of what my son asked.

PIKE

So, why didn't you help him, take in him and his family?

ELIHU

Because, by the time I found out, it was already too late.

PIKE

You knew?!

ELIHU

I did. I did because I do not believe the murder of my son was meant to silence him. It was meant to be a sign, to remind me that they were in charge.

PIKE

Who?

ELIHU

The foundations of this compound, as well as the ground laid for Bayside were built over the bones we'd laid to rest at the beginning.

PIKE

You don't mean?

ELIHU

Bayside was my first child. When my holding company saw the potential to build the perfect city, we bought the land and started to manage our resources.

Elihu rolls back from his desk and shows off a map of Personville in the 1800's.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

My partner, Daniel, wasn't very interested in city planning and management, so, I purchased his shares, and went to work.

A wall mural photographs of Personville in the past as a gold mine, a farming community through the depression up to the early 1980's.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

I had to rely on some classical methods to get my perfect city made.

PIKE

Bribes...

ELIHU

Such a horrible word. It's, more or less, non-taxable donations. I had to rely on illegal immigration to bring in the workers.

(MORE)

ELIHU (CONT'D)

And, when you have thousands of workers, building a city out of nothing, they lack certain outlets to motivate them.

PIKE

You did what every other fella with a billion dollars and a hard-on for power. You added more controls to keep the job going.

ELIHU

Whores. Drugs. Booze. The trifecta of dulling the senses of the masses. Obviously, I ran into difficulties at first...

Another mural of political headlines, posters, bumper stickers and the like for Personville.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

I had to reach out to other capitalists like myself. And, said capitalists couldn't move their wares without a blind-eye.

Elihu then points out the current city map of Personville.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

I ran the town through a shadow cabinet, and, whenever someone I put into place didn't want to play ball, then, we found them a nice place away from it all...

PIKE

This, this was what Daniel was working on then...

ELIHU

What was my son working on?

PIKE

An expose. It would have exposed you, but, I guess it's gone now.

ELIHU

Ah, what a pity...

PIKE

Yeah, kinda cold referring to your son's death and final work as a pity...

ELIHU

I, I shouldn't say that. He was of my blood, and, I thought that, by giving him the editor in chief job at the newspaper would have given him a chance at us mending our broken bond, but, I guess his death will have to do. Unless...

Pike, who's observing the posters, turns to Elihu.

PIKE

So, what's the point of telling me all this?

ELIHU

My son is dead... And I want his killers brought to justice.

PIKE

Then go to the police. They seemed concerned.

ELIHU

Well, the police are in on it. They all are. And, I think you're my best chance to taking my city back.

PIKE

Why me?

ELIHU

I know what you Continental Operatives do. I know you're capable of doing monstrous things for your employers. And, to fight monsters, I need a monster of my own.

PIKE

Never been called a monster before... that sounds---

ELIHU

I want two things. Just two---

Pike starts to walk away towards the doorway leading out.

ELIHU (CONT'D)

MISTER PIKE!

Pike stops.

ELIHU (CONT'D)
You will do these tasks, or you
won't get paid. And, that is what
you want, right, to get paid?

Pike turns around.

PIKE
How much are we talking here?

ELIHU
Three million dollars. And an
additional seven upon completion of
the job.

PIKE
What're your orders, if I take on
this job, I mean?

ELIHU
You find the person responsible for
my son's murder, and you render
your justice upon them. And then, I
want my city returned to my
CONTROL!

Pike approaches the desk and sits down.

ELIHU (CONT'D)
Not the mayor, not the chief of
police, not even the meth-addled
mercenaries and that little
whispery faggot that runs his gang
over at the Lucky Miner...

PIKE
So, find your son's murderer, and
get "your" town back under your
thumb.

ELIHU
That's the task at hand Mister
Pike. I know the task may sound
difficult, but, I will give you
carte blanche to proceed.

PIKE
Write the check out, and I'll start
right away.

EXT. PERSONVILLE DEALER - DAYTIME

The Rolls drops Pike off at the paper, and Pike returns to the Monaco. He climbs into the car and opens the glove compartment. He checks on the Glock inside, and shuts the compartment. He starts the car and drives off.

EXT. RED DOG LODGE - DAYTIME

It's an old motor lodge, single floor, several bungalows, painted red with a St. Bernard sign lit. It's got rooms, that's for sure.

Pike parks the Monaco in front of his room, 1102. He gets out, gathers his bags in the trunk and sets them on the asphalt.

Pike closes the trunk and heads toward the main office to check in.

INT. RED DOG LODGE ROOM 1102 - DAYTIME

Pike enters his hotel room, setting down his bags at the foot of the murphy bed. He sits down at the foot of the bed, and begins to remove his button-down and tank top. He runs his hands across the fresh bruises from earlier.

Pike walks into the bathroom and turns the water faucet. He takes one of the towels, dips it into the water, and starts cleaning dried blood.

After he finishes impromptu first aid, he returns to the living room, and removes a small bag filled with medication. The labels read "Vicodin," "Setraline," "Citalopram," "Oxycodone" and "Risperadone."

Pike shakes out a few pills from each bottle, and places them on the desk in the motel room. From his bag, a large bottle of "Fuck You" whiskey is set down. Pike reaches for the pile of pills and a glass and proceeds to get stoned and drunk.

INT. RED DOG LODGE ROOM 1102 - EVENING

Pike lies on the murphy bed, clutching the closed bottle of whiskey, eyes shut.

Pike's phone rings. Pike reaches for it with his free hand and throws it at the wall. It continues to ring.

PIKE

Fine. Fuck. I'm coming...

Pike lets go of the bottle and sits up, approaching the phone. He answers it.

VELMA (V.O.)
Pike?! Pike, are you there?!

PIKE
Yeah. It's me.

VELMA (V.O.)
You were supposed to call us at
9am, what have you been doing?

PIKE
Brainstorming.

VELMA (V.O.)
Brain--? Nevermind, are you ready
to brief us now?

PIKE
Sure. Gimme a sec.

Pike's moves the phone from his face as it changes from bravado to puke, throwing up in the nearby trashcan. He pulls his head back up, wipes the puke from his lips and resumes talking on the phone.

PIKE (CONT'D)
Ready.

VELMA (V.O.)
Go ahead.

PIKE
Alright. I met with our client,
and, the job went south.

VELMA (V.O.)
Define south?

PIKE
Principal was murdered. I made
contact, and he received info that
his business was burning down. We
went to check the damage, got
turned away by local PD.

OLD MAN(V.O.)
Cops wouldn't let you tour the
scene? Was the fire out?

PIKE
No sir.

OLD MAN (V.O.)
Where'd you go from there?

PIKE
We walked around to the other side
of the building, and then we got
jumped.

OLD MAN (V.O.)
You kick their ass?

PIKE
No sir. There were more of them
than me, and they knocked me out.
As I was passin' out, I heard a
couple pops, and then I was out.

OLD MAN (V.O.)
What a damn pussy... Sorry, Velma.

VELMA (V.O.)
It's okay sir. So, what's the
situation now?

OLD MAN (V.O.)
Yeah, what's your status now?

PIKE
I gave my testimony to the cops,
and then the principal's father
arrived. We had a chat, and he is
hiring me to find who killed his
son, and, remove some bad apples in
the bunch.

OLD MAN (V.O.)
Bad apples?

PIKE
The whole damn town's corrupted,
and the principal's father started
it. Principal was writing an expose
on the corruption, and, after he
died, everything that comprised
that story is now gone.

OLD MAN (V.O.)
How's that?

PIKE
The passwords to get access to his
cloud drive, and anything he used
is probably secured in evidence at
the police station.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

What's the pay from the Principal's father?

PIKE

Three mil at the start, another seven after the jobs done...

OLD MAN (V.O.)

Okay Pike. Stay on this. Request whatever you need through Velma. Remember, keep us informed on what's going on. Last thing we need is for a continental operative to show up on television, dead or in police custody.

PIKE

Understood sir.

OLD MAN

Well then, get on it.

Pike hangs up the phone, and sits down on the bed.

EXT. LEW YARD'S OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

Lew and Quint sit in Lew's office, drinking. Yard is musing over his past works, drinking Jim Beam, smoking cigarettes, and watching Yard do the same thing.

QUINT

Lew. We gotta get the fuck outta here.

LEW

Why's that Bill?

QUINT

I gotta bad feeling about all this.

LEW

Do you now? Look, they may have closed down Yard-Works, an "exceptional" video production company.

Yard paces past a box labeled "Barn-Yard Productions: It's exactly what it says it is." Quint is sitting on another Yard-Works box of videos, tilting the bottle back.

LEW (CONT'D)

And they may have shut down the Barn-Yard, but, for fucks sake, but that won't stop us. I'm gonna take what we got left, and take this operation somewhere else.

Quint sips some more Beam and shakes his head.

QUINT

You're a god damn idiot if you think you can get this shit out to the masses again. No one wants to watch shit like Bessie does the hired hands, or some other weird ass shit.

LEW

I know Bill, I got different tastes. But, the market's out there, and if they can't get it anywhere else, they can get it from us. We just---

QUINT

Lew, I'm out. You can call anyone else up, and get them out here, but, not me. I'm getting the fuck outta here, and short of my own death, I'm ---.

Quint is dropped quickly and quietly. A single round to the center of his forehead.

Lew watches Quint fall back in slow-motion, the look on Quint's face changing from anger to outright surprise.

Lew drops the bottle and dashes over to Quint's body to grab his handgun. He draws it and looks around, waiting for the shooter to enter the room.

LEW

(shouting)

YOU MOTHERFUCKERS, I'M LEW YARD! NO ONE FUCKS WITH LEW--.

Lew Yard, is the first casualty of the Personville war. He is hit multiple times from three different shooters. Lew lands on his back, the holes smoking from impact.

Four men enter from the darkness. They wear Special Operations battle rattle, and brandish masks. One of them, starts pouring out gasoline they brought in, and makes a genuine effort to douse everything he can.

Another pair of operators wrap Lew and Quint in sheets. They take them away from the scene.

The last operator observes his crew finishing up, and he sparks a road flare, tossing it into a puddle of gas.

A fire builds, and quickly overtakes Yard's production studio.

EXT. LEW YARD'S OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

The operators drive off into the night, lights off. The last one, removes his mask and battle-rattle, and pulls out a radio.

He keys it.

OPERATOR

Dispatch, this is Easy Three-Oh-One. Yeah, I'm reporting a fire at the Yard office in the industrial area. Shit's on fire, yo and burning fast.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)

Copy that Easy 301. Fire department is enroute, as well as the Chief.

OPERATOR

Copy.

A black pursuit Challenger parked in the dark, lights up and pulls up. Chief Noonan exits the pursuit car and approaches the Operator.

CHIEF NOONAN

Oy. How'd it go?

OPERATOR

Just fine sir. Two bodies, Yard and one of his guys. They're both on their way to the lake.

CHIEF NOONAN

Good. Call the Finn, let him know the land here is available for purchase, once the investigations and all that are finished up.

Noonan removes his personal phone and shows something on the screen.

CHIEF NOONAN (CONT'D)

I need you and your boys to be ready in a couple days. Found out this guy in town, mayor wants him gone.

OPERATOR

Roger. What's the take?

CHIEF NOONAN

A mill. Distro'd across four people... You want it?

OPERATOR

I'll take it.

CHIEF NOONAN

Talk to the boys, he's at the red dog. Go and welcome him the best way possible.

Noonan walks away from the Operator and climbs into the pursuit car. He looks down at the phone, and it's a picture of Pike, walking the streets from earlier today.

FADE OUT