

V4 TAGGED  
09-11-2025

JIM ROUCHES BIOPIC

Written by

Jeff Dernlan

jeffdernlan@gmail.com  
215.487.1413

1 EXT. CHARLOTTE CO. JAIL - NIGHT

TITLE CARD: 2004 | Charlotte Co. Florida

LIGHT from a guard tower BEACON swings through the yard. It hits a sign that reads, "Charlotte County Jail." RAZOR WIRE flashes on the fence tops.

2 INT. CHARLOTTE CO. JAIL - NIGHT

DIRTY WATER from a mop bucket splashes in a SINK. A prisoner, steps out of a utility closet. This is Jim Rouches (40).

3 INT. CHARLOTTE CO. JAIL - NIGHT

Jim stands in a dim hall and looks out a WINDOW COVERED BY BARS. The guard tower beacon flashes across his face.

4 INT. CHARLOTTE CO. JAIL - NIGHT

Jim's cell. A FLASHLIGHT shines on paperback pages. Jim reads in bed. He turns off the flashlight, closes his eyes, and drops the BOOK to the floor.

5 INT. CHARLOTTE CO. JAIL - LATER

The cell DOOR opens. A PRISONER stands silhouetted above Jim. A WEIGHTED PILLOW CASE hangs from his hand.

The Prisoner lashes Jim with the case. Jim falls out of bed and struggles to his knees.

The Prisoner whips Jim across the jaw and CHOKES him with the pillow case. Jim rallies with a GROIN shot. The Prisoner goes down. Jim jumps on him. The Prisoner bites Jim's EAR.

Jim cracks the Prisoner to the floor, stands, and crushes his HEEL through the Prisoner's nose.

GUARD #1 tackles Jim. GUARD #2 drives his knee into Jim's neck. Guard #1 handcuffs Jim.

GUARD #3 and GUARD #4 drag the Prisoner across the floor. Guard #1 and Guard #2 push Jim out of the cell.

The cell door SLAMS. Light from the guard tower angles across the wall.

CAMERA ON: The BOOK in a PUDDLE OF BLOOD. The cover reads "QED: The Strange Theory of Light and Matter."

6 EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

PALM TREES line the courtyard. Limestone steps rise toward marble PILLARS. Above the entrance an inscription reads, "Equal Justice Under Law."

7 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The gallery AISLE divides a handful of attendees. The JUDGE is flanked by a BAILIFF and STENOGRAPHER.

Jim sits at the DEFENSE TABLE with his lawyer and brother, ATTORNEY MATT ROUCHES (40).

The prosecutor, AMANDA HENSLEY (50), stands at the lectern. She orders her papers, takes off her reading glasses, and addresses the court.

PROSECUTOR HENSLEY

The state charges Jim Rouches with felonious assault.

JUDGE

How do you plead?

Jim stands.

JIM

Not guilty.

PROSECUTOR HENSLEY

Your honor, prior to his most recent arrest, Mr. Rouches was convicted on several charges of trafficking a controlled substance. Because, at the time, the accused was a nonviolent offender, the state generously agreed to suspend sentence on condition of parole. Conviction of felonious assault would nullify the State's agreement and all pending charges would be accelerated.

MATT

Your honor, my client was alone in his cell. He was sleeping for God's sake. There was no crime committed let alone violent assault.

PROSECUTOR HENSLEY

The victim was in the infirmary for over a week.

MATT

Victim?

PROSECUTOR HENSLEY

He's lucky I don't charge him with attempted manslaughter.

The judge bangs the gavel.

JUDGE

That's enough. Closing remarks?

PROSECUTOR HENSLEY

Your Honor, while the State has always hoped that Mr. Rouches could eventually reintegrate as a contributing member of society, it's become abundantly clear that our optimism was misguided. Mr. Rouches is a habitual offender. He's served time in 7 different states. If convicted, he would be incarcerated for the rest of his natural life. Which is what he deserves. He's a career criminal. A violent offender. And a menace to society.

JUDGE

Defense?

MATT

With respect to the State Your Honor, my client is not a criminal. He's an addict. Addiction is a disease. And as with any disease, all our best intentions are defenseless against it. His crimes have not been motivated by greed, or power, or hatred. And certainly not by an appetite for violence. He's a casualty of a system of neglect that surrenders addicts to a pernicious cycle of incarceration and violence, built for punishment not recovery. I'd implore the court to dismiss the charges against Mr. Rouches. He does not deserve to spend the rest of his life in prison. Please don't take away his hope.

JUDGE

Would the defendant rise.

Jim stands.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Mr. Rouches, are you an addict?

JIM

Yes, Your Honor.

JUDGE

Are you a a criminal?

JIM

I am.

JUDGE

And you understand the position of the court in considering these charges?

JIM

I do, Your Honor.

JUDGE

Thank you. You may be seated.

Jim sits.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

I see no reason why this shouldn't proceed to trial. Council, schedule with my clerk.

The GAVEL strikes a mahogany square.

Matt Rouches approaches Prosecutor Hensley.

MATT

We'll plead to simple assault. The hard time goes away.

PROSECUTOR HENSLEY

He almost killed a man with his bare hands.

MATT

Second degree reckless endangerment.

PROSECUTOR HENSLEY

That's not the behavior of a diseased addict.

MATT

Not one incident of violence. In  
twenty years.

PROSECUTOR HENSLEY

I'll see you upstairs.

Hensley leaves.

Jim and Matt convene.

MATT

She's gonna think about it.

JIM

Life.

The Bailiff escorts Jim from the courtroom past a tarnished  
BRONZE RELIEF OF JUSTICE with her sword and scale.

CUT TO:

8

INT. GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH - DAY

TITLE CARD: 1975 | Lansing, Michigan.

Jim is 17. He sits at the front of the sanctuary with his  
family: brother YOUNG MATT (17), SISTER (19), two OLDER  
BROTHERS (20's), FATHER, and GRANDFATHER.

SUNLIGHT shines through STAINED GLASS.

The sanctuary is full of solemn family and friends.

A PRIEST stands at the lectern.

PRIEST

We pray, O Lord for the just repose  
of your servant Jennifer. Forgive  
her every transgression and  
establish her soul in the Kingdom  
of the Heaven.

CONGREGATION

God have mercy upon us.

PRIEST

Now hear the words of our Lord:  
Truly, I say to you, the hour is  
coming, and now is, when the dead  
will hear the voice of the Son of  
God, and those who hear will live.

CONGREGATION

Amen.

The congregation stands. Young Jim's Grandfather puts his hand on Young Jim's shoulder.

9 INT. GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH - DAY

The Rouches Family pays their final respects.

Young Jim kneels at the casket. On the altar is a CRUCIFIX.

10 EXT. GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH - DAY

The Rouches Family stands on the CHURCH STEPS, consoled by parishioners. Through the crowd Young Jim sees a girl his age. This is YOUNG LORI. She offers him a consoling smile.

11 INT. ROUCHES HOUSE - NIGHT

Dinner Table. The Rouches family eats in silence.

12 INT. ROUCHES HOUSE - MATT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Young Jim enters. Young Matt lies on the floor.

YOUNG JIM  
Let's get out of here.

YOUNG MATT  
What do you want to do?

YOUNG JIM  
I don't care. Just don't wanna do  
it here.

Young Jim pulls Young Matt off the floor. They leave.

A FRAMED PICTURE ON DRESSER: Very Young Jim (10), Very Young Matt (10), and their Mother (40) on the LAKE MICHIGAN DUNES.

13 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Midwest suburbia. A STREETLIGHT flickers.

Young Jim and Young Matt walk down the the street. Young Jim hits a joint and offers it to Young Matt. Young Matt declines. They stop at a corner.

YOUNG MATT  
Lori's?

YOUNG JIM  
Yeah.

Their slanted shadows stutter across the asphalt.

14 EXT. YOUNG LORI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A BASEMENT WINDOW surrenders a suggestion of light. Young Jim kneels above the window, knocks, and waits.

YOUNG JIM  
I'm gonna go around back and see if  
she's here.

YOUNG MATT  
Come on, Jim. Let's go.

YOUNG JIM  
I'll see you at home.

Young Matt walks to the street. Young Jim walks to the back of the house. The basement window goes dark.

15 INT. YOUNG LORI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

MUSIC CUE: Similar to "Ann" The Stooges.

The BACK DOOR opens on the BASEMENT STEPS. Young Jim closes it and descends.

16 INT. YOUNG LORI'S HOUSE - CONT.

Young Jim walks through a dark basement. A crack of light slips out from under a DOOR. Young Jim opens it.

FIVE KIDS his age sit in a circle. Among them we recognize YOUNG LORI as the girl from the funeral.

YOUNG LORI  
Jim.

YOUNG JIM  
I couldn't tell if you were home.

YOUNG LORI  
Come here. Sit down.

In the middle of the circle of kids there's a SYRINGE and COCAINE on an MC5 album.

YOUNG JIM  
I can't stay.

YOUNG LORI  
You sure?

YOUNG JIM  
No, I'd better go.

A kid ties off.

17 EXT. YOUNG LORI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Young Jim walks through the YARD. Young Lori catches up.

YOUNG LORI  
I haven't seen you at school lately.

YOUNG JIM  
I haven't been there.

Young Lori touches Young Jim's arm.

YOUNG LORI  
Jim, I want you to stay.

Young Jim stops. Looks at the basement window.

YOUNG LORI (CONT'D)  
I don't wanna do it with them. I wanna do it with you.

Young Lori takes Young Jim's hand.

18 INT. YOUNG LORI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Basement. Young Jim and Young Lori sit on the floor. A LAVA LAMP glows amber and violet.

YOUNG LORI  
Take of your shirt.

Young Jim takes off his shirt. Young Lori lays it neatly between them. She carefully orders the GEAR across it, lights a CANDLE, and takes off her Chuck Taylors.

Young Jim looks at her socks.

YOUNG JIM  
Cookie monster?

YOUNG LORI  
Isn't he cute?

She wiggles her toes. Young Jim laughs.

Young Lori pulls a LACE out of a her shoe.

YOUNG LORI (CONT'D)  
Give me your arm.

Young Jim extends his arm. Young Lori takes his hand, fingers his forearm, and wraps the shoelace around his bicep.

YOUNG LORI (CONT'D)  
Now make a fist.

Young Jim clenches his fist. Young Lori spoons the cocaine, holds it over a candle, and loads the needle.

She puts her hand on Young Jim's cheek.

YOUNG LORI (CONT'D)  
Ready?

INJECTION.

MUSIC CUE: Similar to "Ann" guitar solo crescendo.

MONTAGE:

19 EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN DUNES - DAY

SFX: Waves-Seagulls. Water. Sand. Three sets of footprints. Very Young Jim (10), Very Young Matt (10), and Mother (40) walk on the beach.

20 INT. YOUNG LORI'S BASEMENT- NIGHT

Young Lori ties off.

21 INT. ROUCHES HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

SFX: Laughing. TIGHT ON: Very Young Jim (10) peeks out of a closet. VERY YOUNG JIM'S POV: Through the crack in the closet door - he watches his big brothers and TWO GIRLS get high.

24 INT. YOUNG LORI'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Young Jim and Young Lori party with the other kids.

25 INT. GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH - DAY

Young Jim (17) walks up the steps to the altar to receive the sacraments.

26 INT. YOUNG LORI'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Young Jim and Young Lori descend the dark basement steps.

27 INT. GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH - DAY

Young Jim kneels at the altar. The priest lays his hand on Young Jim's head.

30 INT. YOUNG LORI'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Young Lori touches Young Jim's cheek

31 INT. GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH - DAY

Young Jim receives the host.

31A INT. YOUNG LORI'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

TIGHT ON: Young Lori's face

YOUNG LORI  
Jimmy.

CUT TO:

32 INT. HARVEST HOUSE REHAB - DAY

TITLE CARD: 2005 | Sarasota, Florida.

A meeting room. The 12 Steps are enumerated on a POSTER pinned to the wall. Beside it another poster reads "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

A mixed group of 30 men and women sit on folding chairs. Jim (40) stands in front of them.

JIM

Hello. My name's Jim and I'm an addict.

GROUP

Hello, Jim.

33 INT. HARVEST HOUSE REHAB - DAY

The group gathers in the back of the room. A bladder agnostic, aluminum percolator stands on a folding table amidst a modest offering of cookies and brownies.

Jim considers his options and goes with the coffee. DUANE PORTER, a stout dude about Jim's age, grabs a cookie.

DUANE

Good choice.

Jim takes a sip.

JIM

I've had worse.

DUANE

Sugar for me man. I can't get enough of it. Already put on 20 pounds since I've been here.

Duane crunches an Oreo.

DUANE (CONT'D)

Appreciate you getting up.

JIM

You been here a while?

DUANE

Not long enough.

JIM

Is it working?

DUANE

It is today.

HOYT joins them. It's hard to tell how old he is. Could be anywhere from 30-50. He's friendly and doesn't let a missing tooth or so keep him from smiling.

HOYT

Couple of us fellas is heading over to the bowling alley. Thought you might wanna come with.

JIM

Not much of a bowler.

HOYT

We're just killing time. That's what gets you around here. Ain't that right, Duane?

DUANE

There's plenty of things'll get you around here. Hard to pick just one.

JIM

You coming?

DUANE

Nah, I'll leave it to ya. Think I'd best sit this one out.

Duane pulls a cup of coffee, takes a sip, and watches them leave.

34

INT./EXT. CAR/FLORIDA RURAL ROAD - DAY

A battered, blue Taurus cruises down a rural road. Hoyt drives. NESMOND, an old dude with a beard rides shotgun. ADAM, a quiet young man is behind Hoyt.

Jim's in the back, passenger side.

HOYT

Seen any ladies catch your eye yet?

JIM

Which step is that?

HOYT

You can't stop true love, Jimbo. Ask Adam back there. He's meeting up with em in the janitor's closet, under the porch, I think he was even spending time with one young lady in the bathroom at Popeye's. Ain't that right, Adam?

Adam denies it. Hoyt makes a quick turn down a short lane and parks.

HOYT (CONT'D)

My point is, the state don't care  
how you do it. Just as long as you  
make it through. Now I'm gonna run  
up in here a second, I'll be right  
back.

Hoyt jumps out of the car. Adam trots off to take a leak. Jim  
and Nesmond consider the scenery.

Out the driver's window is an expanse of flatland, palm trees  
and sawgrass. Out the other side are four shabby single-  
wides.

Concrete blocks function as front steps. Laundry lines sag. A  
pit bull paces a dirt patch it shares with its own excrement.

JIM

How many times have you done this,  
Nesmond?

NESMOND

I don't count.

The sun makes a slow dip into evening.

BANG. Hoyt pounds on Jim's widow.

HOYT

Jimbo. You're driving

The PIT BULL strains against its chain.

35

INT./EXT. CAR/FLORIDA RURAL ROAD - EVENING

Jim's drives.

Hoyt's in back. He uses the FILE on a pair of NAIL CLIPPERS  
to punch a tight circle of HOLES in an empty DIET PEPSI CAN.

He slowly crushes the can till it's flat in the middle.

He pulls a CRACK ROCK out of his shirt pocket and puts it on  
the can. He puts the drinking end of the can to his mouth,  
fires the rock, and pulls a long drag.

When he finally exhales it's accompanied by a maniacal  
scream.

HOYT

There you go old timer.

He passes the yam up to Nesmond. Jim looks at Nesmond.  
Nesmond stares back and takes a vicious hit.

36 EXT. STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

A roadside tonk in the middle of nowhere. Looks like the kind of place you could score about anything. The Taurus is parked in a gravel lot with other cars of similar vintage.

Hoyt, Nesmond, and Adam spill out. They're well lit and ready for more.

Jim watches in the driver's side mirror.

37 EXT. STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

Jim sits on the trunk of the Taurus. He lights a smoke, leans back, and stares at the stars.

DUANE (O.S.)  
Forget your bowling ball?

Duane's in a pickup truck. Jim smiles and flicks his cigarette.

38 INT/EXT. TRUCK/FLORIDA RURAL ROAD - NIGHT

Duane's truck pushes through the darkness.

Inside there's a bench seat and three on the tree. Duane drives, Jim rides shotgun.

DUANE  
You gotta find the truth in here.  
Inside yourself. The program's just  
a road map, get you pointed in the  
right direction.

JIM  
Not sure I'd know it even if I did.

DUANE  
You'll know.

JIM  
Always had more of an aptitude for  
deception. It just feels more  
honest coming out of my mouth.

Up ahead we see the swelling boca and peaked canvas of lights and tents. Looks like it could possibly be a carnival or fair.

But then we see a banner. It reads: Brother Ezekiel Lloyd Douglass Full Gospel Pentecostal Revival featuring the Voices of Hope Sanctified Choir with Sister Miriam Inez.

DUANE

You believe in the Holy Ghost?

Duane makes a hard turn into a field of cars.

39

INT./EXT. TENT/FLORIDA COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Hundreds of people. All shapes, sizes, and ages. Jim and Duane push their way through the crowd. The Reverend lets it rip.

REV. DOUGLASS

Our brother Paul says "the Lord has not given us a spirit of fear but of power, and love, and of a sound mind."

A swell of response from the audience.

REV. DOUGLASS (CONT'D)

You know what else he says? "There hath no temptation overtaken you but such as is common to man: but God who is faithful, will not suffer you to be tempted above that which ye are able. Can you hear me?"

The verbal response of the congregants is accompanied by swaying, swoons, raised hands, and clapping.

REV. DOUGLASS (CONT'D)

You see when the devil attacks he comes creeping in the darkness. You know why the devil likes the dark? Cause in the dark you can't see. You can't see your past, you can't see your future, you can't see the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, and you certainly can't see the riches and glory he has in store for you. Have you been there brothers and sister?

The brothers and sisters have.

REV. DOUGLASS (CONT'D)

But Jesus said, I got an answer to that. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: whosoever followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

An explosive response from the worshippers.

REV. DOUGLASS (CONT'D)

The Light of Life gives us a spirit of power. Power over the darkness of sin. Power over the darkness of depression. Power over the darkness of disease. Power over the darkness of divorce. Power over the darkness disaster. Power over the darkness of drugs and addiction. And one day brothers and sister the Lord Jesus Christ's gonna come down from heaven and give us power over death. Can I get witness?

He does.

The organ swells. It's joined in song by SISTER INEZ who facilitates A CALL AND RESPONSE CELEBRATION with Rev. Douglass, the choir, and the congregants.

A relentless pursuit of the ecstatic. A combination of the Hawkins Singers, Smokie Norful, and Billy Preston.

Rev. Douglass moves through the crowd. He lays on hands of blessing, prophecy, and healing.

Someone catches his eye.

The Reverend pushes through the crowd.

He lays hands on Jim.

REV. DOUGLASS (CONT'D)

Brother, receive your anointing.

Jim goes down like he caught a Tyson uppercut. The Reverend retreats into the exuberant flock.

Duane pulls Jim to his feet. Jim yells to be heard over the commotion.

JIM

Holy shit! What was that?

Duane puts his arm on Jim's neck and shouts in his ear.

DUANE

I think we're fixing to find out.

They both laugh.

The Florida flatlands resound with spectacle and song.

CUT TO:

40

EXT. CHARLOTTE CO. JAIL - DAY

First we see the SWAMP - a quarter mile past the RAZOR WIRE FENCE surrounding the jail's perimeter. Then, the exterior layout of the jail - a DELIVERY GATE, CELL BLOCKS, and a CENTRAL ADMIN HUB. Finally - THE BARRED WINDOW from SCENE #1 - on the opposite side of the jail from the swamp.

It's rec time - prisoners in the yard. Jim and SHELBY walk together. Shelby's about Jim's size and age.

A BOX TRUCK enters the DELIVERY GATE.

JIM

No guards. It's buzzed open from the hub. We get down there during a night delivery we could slip right out.

Shelby looks up at the roof.

SHELBY

That's gotta be at least 20 feet.

JIM

We drop down on the truck while they're checking in.

The delivery truck parks on the loading dock.

SHELBY

No wire up there? No fences?

JIM

It's a clear shot all the way across.

SHELBY

How long's it gonna take to bust those bars?

JIM

I don't know. A few weeks?

SHELBY

And you got someone on the outside?

JIM

I've got someone.

They look out at the swamp. It's enormous.

SHELBY

What's your plan for that?

JIM

Let's worry about those bars first.  
Tonight. 8.30.

Jim and Shelby look through fence links at the BARRED WINDOW.

42 INT. CHARLOTTE CO. JAIL - JIM'S CELL - NIGHT

Jim pulls the SHEET off his bed. He bites the edge and TEARS  
A STRIP.

43 INT. CHARLOTTE CO. JAIL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jim MOPS. A guard walks up the hall, looks at Jim, and  
continues on his watch. Jim looks at his watch. 8:30. No  
Shelby.

44 INT. CHARLOTTE CO. JAIL - CLOSET/HALLWAY - NIGHT

DIRTY WATER from a mop bucket splashes in a SINK. Jim leaves  
the closet, walks the hall, and looks at his watch. 8:32. No  
Shelby.

45 INT. CHARLOTTE CO. JAIL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jim stands in front of the BARRED WINDOW. Up the hall, Shelby  
arrives.

Jim unzips his UNIFORM.

Unwinds the sheet ROPE from his waist.

Huge BOLTS anchor the bars to the wall.

Jim wraps the ROPE around the BARS and secures his grip.

He plants his foot against the wall and PULLS.

THE BARS RIP OFF THE WALL AND CRASH TO THE FLOOR.

Jim falls on his back.

Shelby RUNS to Jim.

Jim scrambles to his feet.

JIM

Looks like we're going tonight.

He wraps the sheet rope around his hand.

Smashes the GLASS.

Crawls through the WINDOW.

Shelby reaches out his HAND.

Jim pulls him through.

46 EXT. CHARLOTTE CO. JAIL - CELL BLOCK ROOF - NIGHT

Jim runs across the ROOF. Shelby follows.

END OF CELL BLOCK ROOF.

Jim jumps and lands on the FENCE in a vertical clutch.

Shelby lands beside him.

47 EXT. CHARLOTTE CO. JAIL - CENTRAL ADMIN. HUB ROOF - NIGHT

Jim climbs onto the HUB ROOF. Shelby follows.

A FENCE, 18 feet high, stretches the width of the roof. RAZOR WIRE weaves between the links and coils across the top.

Jim touches a BLADE. A DROP OF BLOOD falls to the ground.

SHELBY

Clear shot, huh?

Jim CLIMBS the fence.

STEEL slices his face.

BLOOD runs down his forehead.

His HANDS rip open.

Blood drips off his ELBOWS.

Shelby climbs behind him.

His EAR gashes.

The corner of his MOUTH SPLITS.

TOP OF THE FENCE

Jim fights the COILS. Works a leg over. Straddles the top.

Jumps.

Blood drips from the fence.

48 EXT. CHARLOTTE CO. JAIL - ROOF - MOMENTS LATER

The GUARD TOWER LIGHT hits Jim and Shelby. They're covered in blood. Slashed and seeping.

20 FEET DOWN from the ROOF to the GROUND.

JIM

They're gonna be coming soon if  
they aren't already.

Shelby jumps, lands with a roll, and runs toward the gate.

Jim follows. He lands hard and gets up slow.

49 EXT. CHARLOTTE CO. JAIL - GATE - NIGHT

Shelby is halfway up the GATE. Looks like he's figured a way to navigate the razor wire.

Jim hasn't. He struggles to make progress. The razor wire is relentless in its defense.

Shelby drops down on the other side. He's out.

SHELBY

We need to move.

SFX: A SIREN ALARM wails.

Jim wills himself over the top of the fence.

His arms catch in the coils. Razor wire wraps his head.

His body hangs from the fence.

JIM (PRELAP)  
My brother-in-law worked for Buick,  
Oldsmobile, Cadillac in Lansing.

CUT TO:

50 EXT. RIVERSIDE PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

TITLE CARD: 1985 | Multnomah, Oregon

A three-story commercial building in a town without commerce.

51 INT. RIVERSIDE PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

The room has high ceilings from the last century and a room full of addicts from this one. They sit in a circle and listen to Jim.

JIM  
Twenty-three hundred people at the  
plant, they're all making great  
money and they all do coke.

INTERCUT:

52 EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN - DAY

Young Jim (21), Young Lori (21), and their baby, JOY on the dunes. Out on the lake, Young Jim's BROTHER-IN-LAW and his BUDDIES are on a boat. They're hot dogging. Young Jim and Young Lori laugh and wave.

JIM  
I'd sell my brother-in-law a  
quarter ounce a half ounce every  
weekend. Just for him and his  
buddies. They're all jet skiing,  
out on the pontoon, doing a line  
here and there.

Young Jim takes Joy into the water. Makes bubbles. Joy splashes. Young Jim brings her back to Young Lori.

They all lay together on an ORANGE BLANKET with a YELLOW SUN printed in the center. Just for a second it's the PERFECT MOMENT.

Then it's gone. Young Jim gets a hit, runs into the water, and swims toward the boat.

JIM (CONT'D)

All I want is enough to buy for myself and maybe bring a little to the party. But then you start getting calls during the week. Recreational users developing a habit.

53 INT. UNION GUY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A 12-point rack over the fireplace, a recliner in the corner, and a framed Earvin Johnson Spartan jersey on a paneled wall.

JIM

And they blew their check on the weekend so they start paying me in firearms. Everyone in Michigan has a gun. Nice guns too. Hunting guns. Sportsman guns. Expensive guns but they don't care cause they want a hit. So now I'm in the gun business.

UNION GUY hands Young Jim a Remington 870 pump action. Young Jim checks it and hands him the coke.

JIM (CONT'D)

And before long the trunk of my car is filling up with guns. And now I've got as much coke as I want. Anytime I want.

54 EXT. UNION GUY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Young Jim pops the trunk. 12 other similar weapons are inside. Young Jim drops the gun onto the pile. Slams the trunk.

JIM

And in my mind I'm still just selling a little to my friends but I'm blowing through coke and cash as fast as it's coming in and then one night I realize I'm not holding.

55 INT. YOUNG JIM'S LANSING HOUSE - NIGHT

Young Jim and the baby wave goodbye to Young Lori. Young Jim sits on the couch. Watches the Tigers game. Gets up. Looks for his coke.

JIM

But I've got a trunk full of guns  
so I call up a guy, arrange a buy,  
and drive to Chicago.

56 INT/EXT. YOUNG JIM'S LANSING HOUSE - NIGHT

Young Jim puts the baby in the carrier. Grabs a shotgun from the corner. Walks to the car. Puts the gun in the trunk. Puts the baby in the front seat. Slams the door. Drives away.

JIM

And I get busted. Trafficking  
weapons across state lines,  
possession with intent to sell,  
reckless endangerment, DUI. The  
whole thing. But now I'm clean.  
Three weeks. And I've got a job  
lined up with family out here. And  
I'm gonna stay busy. Stay sober.

The circle applauds.

Across the circle, DICK, a 40 year old Vietnam vet looks on.

57 EXT. PORTLAND BOTTLING COMPANY - DAY

From a 50 ft. rooftop a 7UP SIGN announces itself as the  
Uncola.

58 INT. PORTLAND BOTTLING COMPANY - DAY

A flurry of BOTTLES AND COLORS. Line operators, packers, and  
equipment handlers attend to their stations.

Jim walks through the factory with his Grandfather.

GRANDFATHER

How did things go in Multnomah?

JIM

Good. Real good.

GRANDFATHER

All that behind you now?

JIM

Yes sir, it is.

They climb STEEL STAIRS rising up off the factory floor.

GRANDFATHER

It's a family operation, son. Our reputation's built on that. Now, how long you think that would last if word got out the old man's staffing the place with drug addicts?

JIM

It wouldn't.

They stop at a landing on top of the stairs.

GRANDFATHER

No. It wouldn't. But I'm not hiring addicts am I? I'll start you out on the line. Third shift. 11-7. Just like everybody else. You do good on your evaluation, I'll move you forward. There's a place here for you if you want it.

Jim stands beside his Grandfather. They look onto the factory floor. Jim's Grandfather puts his hand on Jim's shoulder.

60 INT./EXT. JIM'S TRUCK/PORTLAND BOTTLING COMPANY - DAY

Jim walks through the parking lot. Gets in his pickup. Vials himself a generous hit and noses in.

61 INT./EXT. JIM'S TRUCK/PORTLAND AIRPORT - DAY

A PLANE departs. Jim waits in his pickup outside ARRIVALS. In the lobby, a SUITCASE rolls across a polished floor.

The truck door opens. Dick throws the suitcase on the seat.

62 INT./EXT. JIM'S TRUCK/HILL COUNTRY - DAY

Jim and Dick on a remote 2 lane.

63 EXT. CABIN - DAY

They arrive and enter.

64 INT. CABIN - DAY

There's a potbelly stove, sink, cot, and a TABLE. Dick puts the SUITCASE on the table.

DICK

What do you know about this stuff?

JIM

Nothin. It's for junkies.

DICK

Never used? Never sold?

JIM

Coke. Weed. Little bit speed  
sometimes.

Dick opens the suitcase and pulls a very small, unimpressive  
BAG OF HEROIN from a tangle of clothes.

DICK

Burma. Thailand. Laos. The golden  
triangle. This ain't like that tar  
they're bringing up from Mexico.  
This is China White. The real deal.

Dick holds the heroin up to the light and admires it.

DICK (CONT'D)

Everybody wants it and no one can  
get it. But we can. You know why?

JIM

Cause you've got a source.

DICK

You're goddamn right I've got a  
source. And I've got a house and  
I've got a wife and I've got a  
mother-in-law who's mean, and ugly,  
and surprisingly savvy when it  
comes to emerging markets and  
global economic opportunities. All  
over there in Thailand. Right now  
I'm coming back with an ounce or  
two every couple months. We cut it  
10 to one, bust that up into 8-  
balls at a final yield of 100 per  
ounce. That hits the streets at 20  
bucks a piece. What kind a head you  
got for figures?

JIM

20 grand?

DICK

That's right. 20 grand per ounce.  
You know what I paid for it?

Dick laughs.

JIM

What's my cut?

DICK

Hold on now. First things first.  
Number one. You don't short me.  
You're gonna be making plenty of  
money. No reason to get greedy.  
Number two. Don't short the  
customer. You short the gack they  
don't come back. And number three.  
Don't ever use the product. You're  
right. It's for junkies. There  
ain't no one ever chased the dragon  
don't end up with a monkey on his  
back and the cops up his ass. You  
hear me?

JIM

I'll stick with the coke.

DICK

And one other thing. Once you get  
your feet under you, you're gonna  
start thinking about the potential  
for operational growth. Maybe get a  
couple ambitious young  
entrepreneurs to work for you and  
expand your customer base. Don't do  
it. Right now I have a distribution  
team of one. You have a team of  
none. Any more than that's gonna  
get us noticed. And I don't like to  
be noticed. I tend to disappear  
when that happens. Now, what kind  
of papers they got on you back  
home?

JIM

Two for trafficking. Three for  
distribution.

DICK

You bounce on em?

JIM

No. They know I'm out here.

DICK

What's on the other side you break  
probation?

JIM  
Six years state max.

DICK  
Joliet. That's hard time.

JIM  
What other kind is there?

DICK  
Anyone else selling at the plant?

JIM  
Nope.

DICK  
Teamsters?

JIM  
Nope, its clean.

DICK  
You buy in at fifty percent.

Dick pulls the suitcase off the table and replaces it with a scale.

Jim pulls a wad of cash out of his pocket.

CUT TO:

64A INT. PORTLAND BOTTLING COMPANY - NIGHT

Title Card: 6 months later

Production floor. Jim's at his station. He thumbs a bead of sweat off his forehead. walks across the floor, and enters the men's locker room.

64B INT. PORTLAND BOTTLING COMPANY - CONT.

Locker Room. Jim does a thorough check to make sure he's alone, goes to his locker, spins the combination lock, and removes a BLACK METAL LUNCH BOX.

He takes the lunch box into a bathroom stall.

64C INT. PORTLAND BOTTLING COMPANY - CONT.

Bathroom stall. Jim sits on a toilet with the lunch box on his knees. He opens the lunchbox. It's full of heroin.

He pulls a vial of cocaine from his pocket, hits it, and exits the stall.

64D EXT. PORTLAND BOTTLING COMPANY - NIGHT

Parking lot. Jim crosses the lot with the lunchbox, gets in his truck, and snorts another line.

A woman walks across the lot. She gets in Jim's truck, makes an exchange, and exits with Jim's BLACK LUNCHBOX.

64E EXT. PORTLAND BOTTLING COMPANY - NIGHT

Jim walks back through the parking lot and approaches the factory.

His grandfather stands in the entrance.

Jim stops, looks at him, and returns to his truck.

His grandfather watches him drive off.

PAN UP: From the parking lot to the 7-up sign.

64F INT/EXT. JIM'S TRUCK/AIRPORT - NIGHT

A plane departs. Jim waits at arrivals. He does another bump and hammers on the steering wheel.

Dick doesn't show.

Jim leaves.

91 INT. JIM'S OREGON APARTMENT - NIGHT

Living Room. Jim paces and sweats. There's a pile of 8balls on the coffee table.

He keeps at the coke.

We observe the INTENSITY OF ESCALATING ANXIETY, agitation, and sleep deprivation push him to the BREAKING POINT.

92 INT. JIM'S OREGON APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bathroom. Jim sits on the toilet. Spins the entire roll of toilet paper onto the floor. Removes the cardboard core tube from the holder.

93 INT. JIM'S OREGON APARTMENT - NIGHT

Living Room. Jim walks to the couch. Opens an 8ball. Gets a lighter. Fires the foil.

He inhales the smoke and holds a lungful.

MUSIC CUE: Ambient texture. Includes tone at 432 HZ

MONTAGE:

94 EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN DUNES - DAY

SFX: Waves-Seagulls. Young Jim swims back from the pontoon boat. He walks up the beach to the ORANGE BLANKET. Lori and the baby are gone.

95 INT. JIM'S OREGON LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jim eyes widen. His pupils dilate.

96 INT. ROUCHES HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

SFX: Muddled conversation. TIGHT ON: Very Young Jim (10) peeks out of closet. VERY YOUNG JIM'S POV: Through the crack in the closet door he sees his grandfather talking to a detective. His grandfather points to the closet door.

97 INT. JIM'S OREGON LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jim falls back on the couch and exhales a cloud of smoke.

100 INT. GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH - DAY

A priest swings a CANTERN. Jim stands at the back of the church in a haze of incense. He looks at the priest - it's Dick.

DICK

Joliet. That's hard time.

103 INT. JIM'S OREGON LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jim's bladder voids, his arm flops off the couch, and the lighter falls to the floor.

111 EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

TITLE CARD: 2012 | Sarasota, Florida

TRAVIS (30) is a junkie. He sits on the sidewalk against the privacy fence of a CONSTRUCTION SITE. He's on a jones and looks less than human.

Jim (40's) approaches and sits beside him.

TRAVIS  
Next block, sunshine.

Jim flips Travis a bag of SKITTLES.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)  
Sorry, cowboy. Not today.

Travis rips open the bag, stuffs his mouth, and realizes he's talking to Jim.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)  
Ah Shit. Hey, Jim.

JIM  
Looks like you're having a good morning.

TRAVIS  
Hurting bro.

JIM  
Why don't you come over to the House?

TRAVIS  
I can't.

JIM  
Somewhere you gotta be?

TRAVIS  
You know I ain't got no money.

JIM  
When's that ever stopped you?

TRAVIS  
And my benefits, they're gone. They said I lost eligibility. But I was there every month. Every month like clockwork. You know I ain't playin when it comes to my money.

JIM

We'll sort it out.

TRAVIS

Couple a tweakers come around here yesterday trying to push me out. I had to lay hands on em. I ain't looking for trouble but I ain't getting pushed out of here. These guys on the site, they know me. They're working guys, you know?

JIM

Looks like you found a good spot.

TRAVIS

No offense against you. You're a good dude for real.

Jim stands.

JIM

What kind of a dude are you?

Travis stands.

TRAVIS

I can't do it.

JIM

I'm not asking you to.

TRAVIS

Yes you are.

JIM

Just a meal and a shower.

Travis escalates to anger.

TRAVIS

I said I can't.

Travis throws the Skittles at Jim.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

I don't want to.

JIM

I know.

TRAVIS

What do you care anyhow?

The human stain of Travis' sidewalk pile.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)  
I ain't hurting nobody.

Travis' emotions shift from rage to remorse.

Jim hugs him.

They hold for a moment, then Jim moves things forward.

JIM  
Damn, you stink.

Travis chokes out a quick, self-loathing laugh.

TRAVIS  
I swear to god Jim. I'm not  
hustling.

JIM  
I know.

TRAVIS  
I wouldn't do that.

JIM  
Doesn't matter.

Jim and Travis turn to leave. Travis walks back to his pile and retrieves a DWIGHT HOWARD BOBBLE HEAD.

112 EXT. HARVEST HOUSE REHAB - DAY

A Multi-unit, residential treatment facility. All the units are single story. There are a dozen cars in the lot, a flag on a pole, and a few clients in the yard.

113 INT. HARVEST HOUSE REHAB - MEN'S WING - DAY

Outside Travis' room. Jim opens the door. Travis is sleeping. The Dwight Howard bobble head is on the dresser.

115 INT. HARVEST HOUSE REHAB - DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

EVAN SHROUDER (40's), Harvest House Director is at his desk. Jim sits across from him.

EVAN  
You've gotta stop bringing 'em in  
here without papers.  
(MORE)

EVAN (CONT'D)

You're gonna get us shut down. Put everyone in here back on the street. Including you, and Travis, and his Penny Hardaway bobble head.

JIM

Guess that's why they call it a high risk population.

EVAN

You can't run a business like this.

JIM

I thought we were running a mission.

EVAN

No money. No mission.

JIM

If you wanted to make money you should have gone down to Fisher Island and opened a detox.

Evan pulls a PROGRAM BINDER from a drawer in his desk.

JIM (CONT'D)

One day he'll be ready. We just gotta keep him alive till then.

Evan pushes the program binder across his desk towards Jim.

EVAN

This new stuff isn't gonna work.

JIM

All I'm asking is that we consider incorporating some other options. Everything in there is clinically trialed and integrates with what we're already doing.

EVAN

We're an Evangelical organization - in Florida in case you hadn't noticed. Over half our operating budget comes from the churches around here. They want salvation not science.

JIM

I'm not saying we stop working the program. But it's a hundred years old.

EVAN

The board's made its decision.

JIM

I've gotta go to the courthouse.

Jim stands.

JIM (CONT'D)

Oh, and it's Bryce Howard.

EVAN

What that?

JIM

Travis' bobble head. It's Bryce Howard. Not Penny Hardaway.

Jim leaves. The program binder lays on Evan's desk.

116 EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Palm trees and pillars. Matt stands on the front steps. Jim approaches.

JIM

What's she want?

MATT

No idea. I just ran into her yesterday.

They ascend the steps.

JIM

Ran into her?

MATT

Yeah. It was all very casual.

Matt opens the door.

117 INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Jim and Matt walk and talk.

JIM

Maybe a client?

MATT

I don't know.

JIM

Parole?

They turn down a hall.

MATT

You tell me.

JIM

No. It's not parole.

MATT

Guess we're gonna find out.

Matt knocks on Prosecutor Hensley's door.

118 INT. PROSECUTOR HENSLEY'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Jim and Matt sit across from Hensley.

JIM

...the church doesn't wanna  
surrender their turf and the  
academics don't wanna jeopardize  
their funding. So we're at a  
standoff. At the end of the day we  
all want the same thing, we're just  
coming at it from different  
directions. I'm trying to build a  
program that brings us together.  
Something that leverages both.  
Scientific study and sacred  
practice.

PROSECUTOR HENSLEY

Lot of people think you're a Bible  
thumper.

JIM

A lot of Bible thumpers think I'm a  
pagan.

MATT

You know you're doing something  
right when everyone's mad at you.

PROSECUTOR HENSLEY

You're currently serving on the,  
Substance Abuse Planning Council.

JIM

You're starting to make me a little  
nervous here.

PROSECUTOR HENSLEY

There's a seat opening up on the Criminal Justice Commission. I'd like to have you fill it. Problem is parolees aren't eligible. And you've still got quite a few years left if I remember correctly.

MATT

Thirteen.

PROSECUTOR HENSLEY

I'm going to execute an early termination and present a full pardon of all charges against you. Now this doesn't mean you have the seat. It still has to go to a vote. But, if offered, I hope you'd accept.

Jim and Matt look at each other.

PROSECUTOR HENSLEY (CONT'D)

There's a crisis in this country. An epidemic. We can't afford to have people like you sitting on the sidelines.

119 INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY

Jim and Matt sit at a BOOTH. The restaurant is shabby. No other customers.

JIM

First time in 20 years I haven't been on probation, parole, or in prison.

MATT

They're waiting for you brother. You don't have to lead em to the Promised Land. But maybe you could shine a light, give em some hope.

JIM

Never thought I'd get the chance.

MATT

Well you just did.

Matt pinches a dumpling.

MATT (CONT'D)  
Whatcha gonna do now?

Jim doesn't have to think about. But he does.

JIM  
We're gonna start a treatment center. For the ones that got nowhere else to go.

MATT  
You mean like no family, no benefits, no money.

JIM  
Yeah.

MATT  
A get broke quick scheme.

JIM  
Afraid so.

MATT  
Where you gonna do it?

JIM  
Right here. We're gonna call it The Crossings.

Their SERVER brings the bill.

MATT  
Better let me get that.

Jim opens a fortune cookie.

121 INT. HARVEST HOUSE REHAB - MEN'S WING - NIGHT

Jim walks the halls, checks some rooms, and arrives at Travis' door.

122 INT. HARVEST HOUSE REHAB - TRAVIS' ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door is open. The bed is empty. The bobble head is gone.

CUT TO:

123 EXT. CHARLOTTE CO. JAIL - PRISON GATE - NIGHT

Jim's tangled in the razor wire coils.

Shelby's on the ground.

Guards assemble in the yard.

SHELBY

We've gotta move, Jim.

Jim pulls and kicks. Razors rip his flesh.

He falls from the fence and lands hard.

A mangle of flesh and prison blues hang from the coils.

124

EXT. CHARLOTTE CO. JAIL - TREE LINE - NIGHT

Shelby helps Jim over a quarter mile of open ground to the tree line. They push into the cover and collapse.

SHELBY

No way we're gonna make it out of here. Not the shape you're in.

JIM

Just get me to the swamp.

SHELBY

Come on man, we did it.

JIM

I'm not going back.

SHELBY

You're bleeding out brother.

JIM

You a doctor?

SHELBY

You wanna die out here?

JIM

I've been doing my best to make that happen for a while now. Never takes.

Shelby hesitates.

JIM (CONT'D)

Stay if you want. I'm going.

SHELBY

Gators gonna smell you a mile away.

JIM

Gators won't touch me. I'm too toxic.

SHELBY

You got someone out there for real?

JIM

She just came to town. They'll have no reason to watch her. All we gotta do is get through that swamp.

The gate swings open. Guards rush out.

125 EXT. SWAMP - NIGHT

It's tangled and gnarly. Jim and Shelby push through the brush and muck. Jim falls behind.

Shelby drops back to help him. They stumble, splash, and fight their way forward.

SFX. BARKING DOG

The guard tower light stabs in shallow bursts on the horizon's corner.

FLASHLIGHTS and VOICES approach the swamp's edge.

Jim falls into the water. Lifts his head and sees a MUD BANK.

JIM

Right there.

126 EXT. SWAMP - NIGHT

Shelby buries Jim in the mud.

127 EXT. SWAMP - NIGHT

Four guards. One with a dog, one in a canoe. They close in.

128 EXT. SWAMP - NIGHT

Shelby packs mud over Jim.

JIM

She's at the Shady Vale. You know that place?

SHELBY  
Yeah. Gillespie Park.

JIM  
Her name's Maya.

SFX: Dogs barking. Approaching voices.

SHELBY  
Tide's gonna be up over you in a  
couple hours.

JIM  
Hey, look at that. You can see the  
Gemini.

Shelby covers Jim's face with mud, looks at the stars, then  
takes off.

The EYES of a gator survey the swamplands.

129

EXT. SWAMP - NIGHT

Three guards follow the trail of Jim and Shelby.

LEAD SEARCH GUARD (ON RADIO)  
How far out's our backup?

PRISON COMMS (O.S.)  
They're coming. OPD's got a chopper  
up. County. Feds. They all want in  
on this.

CANOE GUARD paddles toward the mud bank.

LEAD SEARCH GUARD (O.S.)  
Got em boys. They came out over  
here.

The Search Guards splash their way out of the swamp.

The Canoe Guard stops next to Jim, stabs his paddle in the  
mud bank, and surveys the swamp.

LEAD SEARCH GUARD (O.S./RADIO) (CONT'D)  
Hang back. Keep an eye on things.

CANOE GUARD (ON RADIO)  
Roger that.

Canoe Guard paddles slowly past the mud bank.

SFX: WATER DRIPS.

CUT TO:

130 INT/EXT. JOLIET PRISON - DAY

TITLE CARD: 1985 | Joliet, Illinois

The DRIP grows louder and continues to hit in correspondence with images of the EMPTY PRISON.

Guard tower. Razor wire. Yard. Chow hall. Cells. Paint easel. Heroin gear. Cross in chapel. Plastic spoon. Utility sink.

SFX: AIR BREAKS ON A DIESEL BUS

130A EXT. JOLIET PRISON - DAY

Transport BUS outside the exterior gate.

A low winter sun pushes shadows across the STONE WALLS of the fortress. They're forty feet high and streaked black from decades of weather. RIFLES rest in tower splits sighted by watchful guards.

131 INT./EXT. BUS/TRANSPORT GATE - DAY

12 SHACKLED prisoners sit silent.

Jim looks out the window.

In the seat behind him is CASPER, a scrappy white kid with a bad haircut. He's about Jim's age. His practiced bravado sentries a vestige of innocence.

CASPER

You ain't got no one in here. I can tell by looking at you.

The bus lurches forward.

CASPER (CONT'D)

I can make a meet. But you gotta be cool. GD runs this place. From the street. But I've got people.

The bus stops. The BUS GUARD stands.

BUS GUARD

Listen up fish. You will now proceed to processing.

(MORE)

BUS GUARD (CONT'D)

You will be issued two sets of blues, two pairs of socks, and two pair of underwear. You will be searched, deloused, assigned a number, and escorted to your cage. You will be given 3 squares a day and 30 minutes of yard time. After that you're on your own. Welcome to Joliet State Super Max. You're not in county any more.

The prisoners shuffle down the aisle.

CASPER

And they got ice cream. It comes out of a machine. Soft. Just like Dairy Queen.

Jim steps off the bus. The gate closes.

134 INT. JOLIET PRISON - INTAKE ROOM - DAY

A fluorescent TUBE LIGHT casts a green glow over slick ceramic tile. The 12 prisoners from the bus undress in silence.

LT. MARKOWSKY and SGT. COYLE run the intake.

LT. MARKOWSKY

Balls to the walls ladies.

The prisoners face the wall.

LT. MARKOWSKY (CONT'D)

You know the drill let's go.

The prisoners bend over.

LT. MARKOWSKY (CONT'D)

Spread em out. Nice and wide. Yeah you're gonna get used to that.

Sgt. Coyle inspects the newly arrived prisoners.

LT. MARKOWSKY (CONT'D)

Make sure you check 'em real good. Don't want these fellas to feel like they didn't get a nice warm welcome.

A grimace of pain and annoyance on Jim's face. A similar expression on the face of a SMUGGLING PRISONER.

SGT. COYLE

Boss.

He holds up a balloon stuffed with heroin.

LT. MARKOWSKY

Well what have we here?

Lt. Markowsky lifts his baton and smashes the Smuggling Prisoner in the face. The Smuggling Prisoner goes down. Lt. Markowsky beats him with a violent flurry. Then stops.

Lt. Markowsky pulls a handkerchief out of his pocket and wipes the blood from his stick and face.

LT. MARKOWSKY (CONT'D)

If it comes in, it kicks up. Spray  
em down.

Sgt. Coyle pumps the handle on the lice sprayer.

He gives Jim a good dousing from the back side, turns him around, and blasts his face.

The Smuggling Prisoner lies bleeding on the floor.

135

INT. JOLIET PRISON - CELL BLOCK - DAY

A wide corridor with cells on either side. Jim is dressed in prison blues and carries a change of clothes. He's escorted to his cell by Sgt. Coyle.

WATER from a FLOODED CELL puddles on the floor.

THE ADMIRAL (40), in the flooded cell is skinny, frail, and holds a capricious connection to reality.

THE ADMIRAL

You can't run a ship like this  
sailor. You can't run a ship like  
this!

The Admiral strips off his shirt, stuffs it the toilet, and hammers down on the handle.

OFFICER BLATZ enters The Admiral's cell with a mop. He jabs The Admiral in the gut with the handle.

The Admiral goes down.

Blatz smashes The Admiral's face in the water and cuffs him.

Sgt. Coyle approaches.

SGT. COYLE  
Cut his chow.

An issue of All Hands Magazine soaks on the floor.

136 INT. JOLIET PRISON - JIM'S CELL - DAY

Jim's cell is directly across the from The Admiral's.

In the neighboring cell a PAINTING PRISONER works an easel.

Jim's cellmate RAMON (50's) sits on the bottom bunk. Two plastic milk crates are stacked at the foot of his bed.

Ramon points at them.

RAMON  
Don't touch.

Jim puts his clothes on the top bunk.

Ramon points at Jim.

RAMON (CONT'D)  
Don't talk.

Jim climbs up onto his top bunk.

He turns on his side and faces the wall. Carved in the paint -  
"Dante was here."

137 EXT. JOLIET PRISON - YARD - DAY

The Blacks, Mexicans, and Whites occupy their own sections of the yard. Gangster Disciples is the black gang. Latin Kings rep the Mexicans. The Simon City Royals are the whites.

Casper stands behind a BENCH PRESS and spots SIMON CITY BOSS. The boss maxes out at 320. A crew of Royals cheer.

Jim watches from the bleachers.

Casper walks across the yard and sits on the bleachers with his back to Jim.

CASPER  
I told you, I have people.

Jim doesn't respond.

CASPER (CONT'D)  
I can get you an intro.

Casper waits.

JIM  
Anything else?

Casper laughs.

CASPER  
My man.

Casper return to The Royals.

139 INT. JOLIET PRISON - CHOW HALL - DAY

The chow line is crowded but well ordered. Jim is served. He scans the hall for an open seat. Finds one. Plops down. Forks in.

Two bites later, CHOW HALL PRISONER (30) drops his tray on the table across from Jim. He's a regular white dude. The only distinguishing thing about him is his square, plastic glasses.

POV: JIM'S PLATE. It's actually not that bad looking. A salisbury steak, green beans, and mashed potatoes.

Jim forks the potatoes.

POV: JIM'S PLATE. BLOOD SPEWS ACROSS THE POTATOES.

Jim looks up.

SHANK PRISONER shivs Chow Hall Prisoner in the neck.

Jim reels back and falls on the floor.

Shank Prisoner spikes Chow Hall Prisoner in the temple and eye.

TIGHT ON: JIM'S BEWILDERED FACE.

CHOW HALL GUARD #1 and CHOW HALL GUARD #2 subdue Shank Prisoner.

WIDE ON: CHOW HALL

The incident is barely noticed. Everyone continues eating. No hooting or hollering. Just business as usual.

Jim leaves the chow hall.

CAMERA ON: JIM'S PLATE. Square plastic glasses in the mashed potatoes and blood.

140 INT. JOLIET PRISON - VISITING ROOM - DAY

Prisoners and visitors are supervised by a VISITATION GUARD.

Jim sits alone at a table.

Lori enters.

MOMENTS LATER: They sit across from each other.

LORI

They're still gonna be little when you get out. They won't even remember. We'll go down to Florida and forget all about this.

JIM

You do what you've gotta do to take care of them. Ok? Yourself too.

LORI

I will.

JIM

I mean. If you need to find somebody. Someone else for a while.

LORI

I'd never do that.

JIM

I know.

LORI

I wouldn't.

JIM

You can't get upset in here.

LORI

I thought we were just having fun.

JIM

We were. We did. We had a lot of fun.

Lori regains her composure.

JIM (CONT'D)

I need you to talk to your dad. I need money for the canteen.

LORI

How much?

JIM

As much as you can.

LORI

What do you mean?

JIM

I mean as much as you can. People are dying in here. They just drag em out and make room for the next one. There's no Florida if that happens. You understand? I'm trying to figure out how to survive in this place and I need you to make sure I've got money in my credit. Now can you do that for me?

Lori nods.

JIM (CONT'D)

Can you?

LORI

Yes.

Lori shakes her head.

JIM

I want you to go down to Florida and make a life for yourself. Don't come back up here. When I get out it will be just like you said. We'll make a fresh start. No one will know the difference.

LORI

Can I write?

JIM

Of course.

LORI

Are you gonna write back?

JIM

Every week.

Lori laughs.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Seriously. Poetry. Like  
Shakespeare.

LORI  
Shakespeare?

JIM  
Or Air Supply.

LORI  
Ohh. I like them.

They look at each other like they did on the basement floor.

LORI (CONT'D)  
You're gonna buy drugs with that  
money, aren't you?

JIM  
What? No. You can't buy drugs in  
prison.

LORI  
It's ok.

JIM  
You see what it's like. They search  
everybody.

LORI  
I understand. I'll make sure you  
have money.

JIM  
It's just for the canteen. I've  
gotta have something to barter.

LORI  
But when you come back, you'll be  
clean, right.

Lori puts her hand on Jim's.

VISITATION GUARD  
No contact with the prisoners.

Lori leaves. The door closes behind her. She looks over her  
shoulder. Jim sees her face through the window.

143 EXT. JOLIET PRISON - YARD - DAY

Casper walks across the yard and meets Jim on BLEACHERS. Jim hands him a pack of SMOKES. Casper slides Jim a FOLD.

CASPER  
They got your back now.

Jim looks out at the courts.

CASPER (CONT'D)  
You wanna shoot some hoop?

YOUNG JIM  
Court's full.

Casper agrees.

CASPER  
Bulls won last night.

YOUNG JIM  
I'm a Pistons fan.

Casper looks at The Royals crew.

CASPER  
Winston will get you tomorrow.

Jim pockets the heroin. Casper returns to The Royals.

144 INT. JOLIET PRISON - JIM'S CELL - NIGHT

Darkness.

Jim lays in bed surrounded by the sounds of incarceration.

THE ADMIRAL (O.S.)  
We're sinking.

150 INT. JOLIET PRISON - CHAPEL - DAY

20 chairs. 12 prisoners.

WINSTON, a big Royal, stands against a wall.

Jim enters. The CHAPLAIN greets him.

CHAPLAIN  
Welcome.

Jim looks around the chapel. Unsure what to do.

CHAPLAIN (CONT'D)

Are you here to do business with Winston?

Winston watches their conversation.

CHAPLAIN (CONT'D)

That's why most of us are here. But you have to sit through the service. That's the deal.

The Chaplain walks to the front of the chapel. Jim finds a seat in the back.

151 INT. JOLIET PRISON - CHAPEL - DAY

The Chaplain stands in front of the prisoners. He reads from a worn Bible.

CHAPLAIN

Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one household divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; And when the south wind blows, ye say, There will be heat; And when the clouds rise out of the west, straightway ye say, Thence cometh the rain.

152 INT. JOLIET PRISON - CHAPEL - DAY

The prisoners exit. Jim finds himself next to the Chaplain.

JIM

I thought you were supposed to make me believe.

CHAPLAIN

I'm afraid, that's above my station.

WINSTON sticks his head in the door.

WINSTON

Reverend?

CHAPLAIN  
He'll be right out.

Jim turns to leave. The Chaplain stops him.

CHAPLAIN (CONT'D)  
There's nothing I can say that will  
bring comfort to your life here. I  
know that.

Jim listens.

CHAPLAIN (CONT'D)  
But I can pray. That you'll find  
hope beyond this place. Because it  
does exist. Just know that you're a  
child of God. You were made for a  
purpose. And no matter how hopeless  
it seems, you're never beyond the  
reach of God's redemption.

Winston sticks his head in the door

ROYAL  
Sermons over preacher.

Jim looks at the Chaplain.

JIM  
Thence cometh the rain.

The Chaplain closes the door behind them. Looks at the cross  
on wall.

CUT TO:

176 EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

TITLE CARD: 2023 | Oneca Neighborhood, Sarasota, Florida.

Jim walks up a street. A BIKE lays in a gravel driveway. An  
UNMOWED YARD grows hip high.

177 EXT. FUTURE SITE OF THE CROSSING - DAY

Jim enters the site of an abandoned, multi-unit, assisted  
living center.

It's polluted by trash and debris. Walls are covered in  
graffiti. A clearly travelled path runs from one corner of  
the property to another.

A homeless guy shuffles past on his way to somewhere.

178 INT. FUTURE SITE OF THE CROSSINGS - DAY

Jim walks into a building occupied by the inhabitants of society's margins. Each with their own variation of boxes, tents, shopping carts, sleeping bags, and peculiar personal affects.

The floor is covered with the abundant discard of addiction. Empty bottles of booze, needles, pipes, lighters, foil, pharmacy bottles, nasal spray.

Jim looks around at the faces of the homeless. An addict bends in a fentanyl slouch. Down a cluttered hall Jim sees a BRYCE HOWARD BOBBLE HEAD.

180 EXT. FUTURE SITE OF THE CROSSINGS - DAY

Jim and Travis walk the property.

TRAVIS

There's a big homeless camp about a mile through that way. And the Salvation Army's over on the other side of 24. Folks coming in an out of here all day long.

JIM

Any problem with the neighbors?

TRAVIS

I try to tell these fools not to go wandering down there causing trouble. But they're addicts you know.

JIM

Pretty safe?

TRAVIS

Safe as it gets. Things happen though.

JIM

We're thinking about moving in. Starting a treatment facility.

TRAVIS

Good place for it.

JIM

Probably need some help fixing things up.

Jim steps over a used syringe.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CROSSINGS - DAY

The site has been cleaned up but there's still plenty of work to be done. There are construction trucks in the lot and a ladder against a wall. A roofer bangs shingles with a staple gun.

INT. THE CROSSINGS - DAY

Meeting room. Drywall needs to be painted, furniture is stacked against the walls, and ceiling panels are stained from water damage.

In the corner of the room a fluorescent tube light flickers.

Six clients sit on folding chairs in a half circle. Among them is Travis. Jim sits facing the group.

JIM

How am I gonna do this? That's the question you're asking yourself. 23 years sober and I'm still asking myself the same question. Everyday. I've been there. Right there where you are now. When you can't even remember what life was like before you started using. Before you started lying, and cheating, and stealing. Before you betrayed everyone in your life. Before you lost hope. And you've just got one question. How? How am I gonna do this? H-O-W. Alright? H. Honesty. And I mean 100%, transparent, brutal honesty. Not to me. Not to this group. But to yourself. Are you honest enough to admit that all your best thinking is not gonna get it done. That's what got you here. Your choices. Your decisions. Nobody else's. For once in your life can you be honest with yourself and answer this one question. Who am I? O.

(MORE)

JIM (CONT'D)

Open Mindedness. Do you have an open mind or do you think you've got it all figured out. You know what the Bible says about this? It says, consider the ant who with no one to guide her is wise in all her ways. That's an insect man. We step on em. Everyday. And don't even give it a second thought. You think you have an open mind? Have you considered the ant? W. Willingness. Are you willing to do whatever it takes? Are you as willing as you were to get your fix? You were willing then. Weren't you? You'd do anything. Are you willing now? Cause if you're not willing to do whatever it takes, it's not gonna work. Are you willing?

The group sits in silence.

JIM (CONT'D)

That's it. That's all I've got. I'm glad you're here. I love you. God loves you. Now let's see what happens when we figure out how to love ourselves.

CUT TO:

182 EXT. THE CROSSINGS - DAY

The buildings and property are much improved but trees are down, fences are destroyed, and roofs are ruined.

183 INT. THE CROSSINGS - LOBBY - DAY

A group of clients leave the meeting room and exit through the lobby.

A TV set on the wall reports on the aftermath of Milton.

185 EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD/ONECA - DAY

The Crossings clients work to clean the neighborhood with a variety of rakes, shovels, and bags.

Guys who look like they've done it before handle the chainsaws. Those who look like they haven't move debris. Someone from the community shows up with a chipper.

Travis stands out as a LEADER of the group.

186 EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD/ONECA - DAY

Neighbors offer refreshments. A group of clients sit on the logs in a neighbor's yard. They're exhausted. Smoking. And shooting the bull.

A LITTLE GIRL looks at them from behind a screen door. A client waves to her.

187 EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD/ONECA - DAY

Jim and Duane walk the worksite.

DUANE

This is gonna set us back on our heels a bit.

JIM

Nothing we can do about the weather.

DUANE

We ain't gonna be able to take in anybody else for at least a month.

JIM

We'll get it cleaned up.

DUANE

A few more clients ain't gonna help.

JIM

How bad is it?

DUANE

Six months we're gonna be broke.

A client hollers at Jim, catches up to him, and hands him \$50. This is TANNER (50).

JIM

What's this?

TANNER

For last week. I was short.

JIM

Where did you get it?

TANNER

Knocked on doors. Asked if they  
wanted their yard cleaned.

Tanner leaves. Jim holds up the cash.

JIM

Well, that's a start.

Duane and Jim laugh.

DUANE

Hey brother. We're doing it.

JIM

Yeah. We're doing it.

Duane continues on. Jim stands at the top of the street and  
looks out over the days work.

An ONECA NEIGHBOR WOMAN stands on her porch. She stares Jim  
down, flicks a cigarette, goes into her house, and slams the  
door.

CUT TO:

154 INT. JOLIET PRISON - CELL BLOCK - DAY

Office Blatz stands outside the PAINTING PRISONER's cell with  
a BOTTLE OF BLEACH.

OFFICER BLATZ

Give me that red one.

Painting Prisoner hands a mason jar of RED PAINT through the  
bars. Blatz dumps bleach into it.

OFFICER BLATZ (CONT'D)

Pour some of that turpentine in  
there too.

Blatz takes the jar, unzips his fly, and fills it. Red drops  
splash on the floor.

155 INT. JOLIET PRISON - THE ADMIRAL'S CELL - DAY

Officer Blatz enters.

OFFICER BLATZ  
All hands on deck. Up and at em  
Admiral.

The Admiral struggles to sit. He's weak, emaciated, and  
speaks in a horse whisper.

OFFICER BLATZ (CONT'D)  
You ready to eat?

THE ADMIRAL  
Yes.

OFFICER BLATZ  
What's that?

THE ADMIRAL  
Yes.

OFFICER BLATZ  
No more stormy seas?

THE ADMIRAL  
Smooth sailing.

Officer Blatz shades his eyes.

OFFICER BLATZ  
Nothin but blue skies all the way  
to the horizon.

The Admiral catches on.

THE ADMIRAL  
And a trailing wind.

OFFICER BLATZ  
Oh now that's a salty dog right  
there.

Officer Blatz arms The Admiral's shoulder.

OFFICER BLATZ (CONT'D)  
I think it's about time we march  
you down to chow hall and get you  
some grub.

THE ADMIRAL  
At the officers table.

OFFICER BLATZ  
That's right. Get you a seat up  
there with the top brass. I just  
need you to do one thing first, ok?

THE ADMIRAL  
Weigh anchors.

OFFICER BLATZ  
Something like that. This is for  
you. It's a little concoction I  
brought back from shore leave.

He hands The Admiral the mason jar.

OFFICER BLATZ (CONT'D)  
Drink it.

The Admiral takes it.

OFFICER BLATZ (CONT'D)  
I said drink it.

The Admiral sniffs it.

Jim watches from his cell.

THE ADMIRAL  
Then it's chow time?

OFFICER BLATZ  
Chow time.

The Admiral takes a small sip.

His expression changes.

He's lucid. Fully aware of the exact situation he's in, every  
event in his life that proceeded it, and what awaits him in  
the remains of his days.

He looks Officer Blatz dead in the eye.

THE ADMIRAL  
Damn the torpedos.

The Admiral drinks it slowly and with conviction.

It spills over his chin, across his chest, runs down his leg,  
and onto the floor.

He finishes.

His face is stained red

He smiles.

His teeth are stained red.

He looks across the corridor at Jim

THE ADMIRAL (CONT'D)  
Full speed ahead.

The Admiral seizes. Falls to the floor. Convulses in a hideous snarl. He thrashes, wretches, and spews.

Blatz and the prisoners are entertained.

Jim recedes into the darkness of his cell.

SGT. COYLE (O.S.)  
Goddamn it, Blatz.

156 EXT. JOLIET PRISON - YARD - DAY

Jim sits on the bleachers. He spots Casper walking the fence. His gate is labored. He's not himself.

157 EXT. JOLIET PRISON - YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Jim sets a box of Marlboros on the bleachers. Casper makes the trade. Casper does not look at Jim or talk to him. He disappears into the yard.

158 INT. JOLIET PRISON - JIM'S CELL - NIGHT

Jim stands at the door and looks across the corridor at the Admiral's empty cell. Ramon joins him.

RAMON  
You ain't said one word since you got here.

JIM  
You asked me not to.

Ramon looks at Jim, then back at The Admiral's cell.

RAMON  
I'm glad he's gone. I liked him.

A red stain on the Admiral's cell floor.

Sgt. Coyle appears at Jim's cell door.

SGT. COYLE  
Greek. You ready?

159 INT. JOLIET PRISON - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Jim is escorted through the corridor by Sgt. Coyle.

They arrive at the chapel.

Winston stands with his back against the closed door.

The Chaplain stands several feet away with his head bowed.

Coyle appraises the situation and leaves.

160 INT. JOLIET PRISON - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Outside the Chapel.

SFX: The muffled sounds of assault.

The Chaplain looks up at Jim.

SFX. A guttural release of perversion against the pain of diminished humanity.

Winston opens the door. Three Royals walk out. The Royals Boss exits last.

The Chaplain enters the chapel.

Winston sticks a fold of heroin in Jim's pocket and pats him on the cheek.

Jim watches the Royals leave.

Casper exits the chapel, looks at Jim, and follows the Royals.

161 EXT. JOLIET PRISON - YARD - DAY

TITLE CARD: A year later.

Jim sits on the bleachers.

A DIFFERENT YOUNG KID spots the Royals Boss on the bench. A DIFFERENT MULE makes the exchange with Jim.

163 INT. JOLIET PRISON - CHOW HALL - DAY

Jim sits alone at a table. Forks his grub.

Someone sits across from him.

Jim looks up.

It's Casper.

Sgt. Coyle walks by their table and pauses briefly.

COYLE

I heard they got chocolate ice  
cream over at South Chow.

Casper looks at Jim.

164 INT. JOLIET PRISON - CELL BLOCK - DAY

Jim and Casper walk the corridor and arrive at South Chow.

JIM

Go ahead. I'll meet you in there.

Casper enters South Chow. Jim watches him.

JIM (CONT'D)

Hey Casper.

Casper turns.

JIM (CONT'D)

Save some for me.

Casper smiles.

CASPER

My man.

Casper walks alone into South Chow.

166 INT. JOLIET PRISON - SUPPLY CLOSET - DAY

Jim enters the supply closet. Pulls the door closed. Slides  
his back down the door.

Pulls out the heroin and gear.

Ties off.

SHOOTS.

MUSIC CUE: Similar to "Matta" Brian Eno

MONTAGE:

- 167 EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN DUNES - DAY
- SFX: Waves-Seagulls. The beach is EMPTY, a vast deserted landscape.
- 167A INT. JOLIET PRISON - INTAKE ROOM - DAY
- Sgt. Doyle watches a new load of prisoners arrive. Lt. Markowsky works them over.
- 169 INT. ROUCHES HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT
- The shambles of an abandoned home. The basement is dusty, empty, and quiet. Pictures on a mantle: Jim playing basketball, his brother in uniform, Father in jacket and tie. A wedding ring. A burnt roach.
- 169A INT. JOLIET PRISON - JIM'S CELL - DAY
- Ramon smokes a cigarette and looks across the corridor at The Admiral's cell.
- 173 INT. GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH - DAY
- Empty. The walls are covered with graffiti. The floor is littered with trash.
- 173A INT. SOUTH CHOW - DAY
- Casper sits at a table. He spoons a bowl of CHOCOLATE ICE CREAM but doesn't eat it.
- The Royals Boss stands behind him. Casper gets up.
- On the table he leaves the ice cream and PLASTIC SPOON
- 174 INT. JOLIET PRISON - SUPPLY CLOSET - DAY
- Jim loses consciousness and falls in a hideous twist of humanity against the wall.
- SFX: DRIP.
- UTILITY SINK.

CUT TO:

189 EXT. SWAMP - NIGHT

Water rises on the mudbank. 30 feet beyond is the Canoe Guard.

Shelby's head emerges near the bank. His eyes rise just above the waterline. He moves slowly toward Jim.

The Canoe Guard turns around. The water where Shelby was is flat and still.

The Canoe Guard turns away. Shelby reemerges.

He maneuvers to the mud bank, pulls Jim from the mud, and through the water.

Jim's body stays submerged and motionless.

His face breaks the surface and he takes a breath.

190 EXT. SWAMP - LATER

Jim and Shelby hide in the foliage.

The Canoe Guard swings a flashlight along the banks.

SFX: Radio voices. A helicopter in the distance.

191 EXT. WOODED PATCH BEYOND THE SWAMP - NIGHT

Shelby leads the way through thick vegetation. Jim struggles to follow.

Shelby stops. Jim catches up.

They squat down. Thirty feet beyond them a road cuts through the trees.

They wait.

A car goes by.

Light from a helicopter shines down, circles, then moves on.

A car pulls off the side of the road.

SHELBY

That's her.

Jim and Shelby run to the car.

192 INT./EXT. MAYA'S CAR/RURAL ROAD - NIGHT

Jim lies across the back seat. Bleeding bad. Shelby sits up front. Not a whole lot better. A young woman, MAYA (20) drives.

JIM

Maya. This is my friend, Shelby.  
He's gonna tell you where to go.

MAYA

You need a hospital.

JIM

I sure do.

Sirens and lights speed toward them.

SHELBY

You're doing fine. Just like this.

MAYA

I'm scared, Jim.

The cops fly by.

JIM

It's gonna be ok.

MAYA

I don't want to get in trouble.

JIM

How much money do you have?

MAYA

I don't know.

Shelby pulls a wallet out of her purse.

SHELBY

A couple hundred.

JIM

Maya. I need you to us a room. Then  
I want you to drive straight home.  
All the way there. Ok? Don't stop  
till you get there. Tell your dad  
what happened. He'll know what to  
do.

Maya cries. Jim reaches his hand up toward her.

JIM (CONT'D)

Thank you, Maya.

Maya grabs his hand.

MAYA

La familia primero.

JIM

La familia primero.

Another cop flies by.

Jim lets go of her hand and blacks out.

COMMISSIONER BELKINS (PRELAP)

We're here to determine whether The Crossings is operating under the definition of a residential treatment facility or a that of a recovery center.

CUT TO:

175 INT. MANATEE COUNTY GOVERNMENT BLDG. - DAY

TITLE CARD: 2025 | Zoning Commission Hearing

SEVEN COMMISSIONERS sit on an elevated podium.

The attendees on the right wear matching green t-shirts that say, "SAVE HISTORIC ONECA." The attendees on the left are from The Crossings. They are not color coordinated.

Matt, Travis, and Duane sit with The Crossings crew.

In the center of the room, Jim stands at a PODIUM.

He's being questioned by COMMISSIONER BELKINS, a dark haired woman with a blonde streak.

JIM

That's right. We provide residential treatment for addiction. We're not a recovery center.

COMMISSIONER BELKINS

A recovery center is for criminals.

JIM

That's correct.

COMMISSIONER BELKINS

It wouldn't make sense to have a recovery center for criminals in a family neighborhood would it Mr. Rouches?

JIM

No. I don't think it would.

COMMISSIONER BELKINS

When did you actually start receiving clients?

JIM

January.

COMMISSIONER BELKINS

And at that time, did you notify the residents of 24th St. East or the surrounding neighborhoods?

JIM

No.

COMMISSIONER BELKINS

Why not?

JIM

We were busy trying to get ready. It's just not something I prioritized.

COMMISSIONER BELKINS

Mr. Rouches, how many of your clients are felons?

JIM

Well, in Florida any possession besides marijuana is a felony.

COMMISSIONER BELKINS

Your background check disqualifies applicants on the sex offense and serial violent crimes registry?

JIM

That's correct.

COMMISSIONER BELKINS

I see. So, you accept violent felons, just not serial violent felons.

(MORE)

COMMISSIONER BELKINS (CONT'D)

And if a client is expelled from your facility you also lose the \$250 a week in room and board they're paying. Is that right?

JIM

Commissioner, Headwaters in South Beach charges \$95,000 for 28 days. We don't do this for money.

COMMISSIONER BELKINS

The federal government is about to settle a 50 Billion dollar lawsuit on behalf of organizations like yours. How much of that money do you expect to receive.

JIM

There's no way to know.

COMMISSIONER BELKINS

You could reasonably expect somewhere between half a million and a million dollars. Is that right?

JIM

That would seem fair. Yes. But I really have no idea.

COMMISSIONER BELKINS

What do you mean, you have no idea?

JIM

What I mean, Commissioner, as I'm sure you'd understand as a servant of the people, is that when the government is involved in paying out this kind of money, there's opportunity for misallocation.

COMMISSIONER BELKINS

You are aware, Mr. Rouches, that we have a board in this county. Specifically set up to oversee the distribution of these funds.

JIM

I am commissioner. I'm also aware that just last month, members of this board created a nonprofit and applied to receive 3 million dollars of settlement money.

COMMISSIONER BELKINS  
What assurances can you give...

JIM  
They're asking themselves for 3  
million dollars...

COMMISSIONER BELKINS  
What assurances can you give...

JIM  
Money to line their own pockets...

COMMISSIONER BELKINS  
What assurances...

JIM  
...while people are literally dying  
in our streets.

COMMISSIONER BELKINS  
Mr. Rouches. What assurances can  
you give the residents of this  
community that these criminals  
you're assisting are not just out  
roaming the neighborhoods looking  
for their next victim?

JIM  
They're addicts. They're not  
predators.

Commissioner Belkins lifts a sheet of paper and reads.

COMMISSIONER BELKINS  
"This facility has destroyed my  
peace of mind, diminished the value  
of my home and introduced an  
element of menace and danger to our  
community." This is from one of you  
neighbors.

She puts the paper down and lifts another.

COMMISSIONER BELKINS (CONT'D)  
"Vagrants from The Crossings wander  
thorough our neighborhood going  
door to door looking for work."

Last page of testimony.

COMMISSIONER BELKINS (CONT'D)

"On more than one occasion I've seen men from The Crossings leering inappropriately at my neighbor's young daughter. This facility is a powder keg waiting to explode." Mr. Rouches I'm outraged at the utter lack of discretion you've shown in bringing criminals to a neighborhood of families. I will most assuredly be voting against the proposal before us today and move to have your facility shut down immediately. I strongly urge my fellow commissioners to do the same.

The Foreperson, COMMISSIONER HUGHES is a middle aged guy in a blue sports coat.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES

We'll recess for lunch and hear testimony from The Crossings when we get back.

Matt, Duane, and Travis look like they just took a pummeling. Jim sits down with them. He's unperturbed.

JIM

You guys feel like Chinese?

Travis is agitated.

CUT TO:

200 EXT. JOLIET PRISON - DAY

TITLE CARD: 1992 | Joliet Prison

Matt waits outside the prison. Jim steps out of the exterior gate. He's gaunt and tired. The young man that entered Joliet died a long time ago.

MATT

Well, you survived.

JIM

Yeah.

MATT

Let's get you checked in somewhere.

Ramon pulls up in a '69 Chevelle.

JIM

I've gotta piss test. Every week  
for the next year. I fail and  
they're gonna throw me back in.

Matt looks at the car then back at Jim.

MATT

Who's your friend?

JIM

I lined something up. Out west.

Jim throws his bag in the car.

JIM (CONT'D)

How's Lori.

MATT

Still waiting.

JIM

The kids?

MATT

Come on Jim, let's go.

JIM

I can't.

Matt puts a hand on Jim's chest.

MATT

What are you doin?

Jim pushes Matt's hand off his chest.

JIM

What do you think I'm doing? I'm  
gonna get high. And I'm gonna keep  
getting high and I'm not gonna  
stop. Ever. You understand? Three  
weeks in detox isn't gonna change  
that. This is who I am. This is  
what I do.

Matt wrestles Jim away from the car.

MATT

Come on, man. I'll get you into  
Hazledon, Lincoln, wherever you  
wanna go. Please.

Jim relaxes against Matt's urgency. There's no fight left in him. Just the indifferent recognition of reality. Matt relents.

JIM  
It's alright, Matty.

Jim kisses Matt, steps away, and gets in the car with Ramon. Matt watches them leave.

INT./EXT. RAMON'S CHEVELLE/VARIOUS

Jim and Ramon drive across country.

CUT TO:

201 EXT. ELADIO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

TITLE CARD: 1994 | Juarez, Mexico | Two years later.

A house in the country. Ramon stands guard on the porch with a Bushmaster. ELADIO and Jim arrive in a Range Rover with CALIFORNIA PLATES.

201A EXT. ELADIO'S HOUSE - CONT.

Eladio in his 50's and presents a dignified demeanor. When he steps onto the porch Ramon greets him with respect. Ramon greets Jim as an old friend.

201B INT. ELADIO'S HOUSE - CONT.

Jim sits at the DINNER TABLE with Eladio and his family: mother, ABUELA, daughter, MAYA (17), wife, PALAOMA, and son, LUIS (10).

MAYA  
Bendícenos, Señor, y estos dones  
que estamos a punto de recibir de  
tu generosidad por Cristo nuestro  
Señor. Amén.

They dig in.

204 INT. ELADIO'S HOUSE - LATER

Abuela brings Jim a plate of tamales and gives him a kiss on the head. Jim smiles at Eladio.

ELADIO  
¿Dónde está el mío?

ABUELA  
Comes mucho.

She taps Eladio on the belly.

PALOMA  
Déjalo comer. Está muy flaco.

ELADIO  
Todo el mundo quiere a Jaime. Los niños blancos lo ven y saben que todo va a estar bien.

LUIS  
Tío Jamie, ¿podemos jugar béisbol mañana?

ELADIO  
El tío Jamie y papá tienen que trabajar. Luis va a ser jugador de béisbol.

JIM  
¿Para quién vas a jugar?

LUIS  
Los Dodgers!

JIM  
¿Los Dodgers? No, los Tigres.

LUIS  
¿Es ese tu equipo?

JIM  
Sí. Ese es mi equipo.

ELADIO  
Y Maya, ella será una princesa.

JIM  
¿Dónde se consigue un trabajo así?

MAYA  
Disneyland. En Florida.

Abuela pours a glass of wine for everyone.

ELADIO  
Disneyland. Es su sueño. ¿Qué puedo hacer?

JIM  
Serás una gran princesa.

MAYA  
Solo por un verano. Luego volveré a casa.

JIM  
Estar con tu familia.

Eladio raises his glass.

ELADIO  
La familia primero.

ALL  
La familia primero.

Toast and smiles.

205 EXT. ELADIO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ramon finishes loading an orange '76 Ford Bronco with heroin.  
Jim and Eladio approach.

RAMON  
Good to go.

Jim looks inside the back door. Heroin is hidden in the floor. Jim pulls the carpet to cover it. He and Ramon each throw a bale of hay on top of it.

RAMON (CONT'D)  
See you back home.

Ramon shuts the door and heads towards the house.

ELADIO  
4:00 at the border. This is for them.

Eladio hands Jim a wad of cash.

ELADIO (CONT'D)  
And this is for you.

Eladio puts a wrap of heroin in Jim's shirt pocket.

ELADIO (CONT'D)  
Five at the drop. Stay off the southern route. Come home on 40. Take your time. Don't speed.

JIM

Alright.

ELADIO

I'm serious. You get busted they're gonna drag your ass back to Florida. I'll have to find a new white boy to sell to the gringos.

Jim gets in the truck.

ELADIO (CONT'D)

And when you get back we're gonna kick the shit. No junkies in this family.

Jim sticks his hand out the window. Eladio palms it.

The Bronco disappears into the Mexican desert.

206 EXT. BRIDGE NEAR GUARD SHACK - NIGHT

Jim parks a quarter mile away from the bridge. He watches the guard shack.

A GUARD enters. Another leaves.

Jim walks around the back of the Bronco. Opens the back door. Wedges the wad of cash between the hay bales.

207 INT./EXT. BRONCO - NIGHT

Jim drives across the border bridge and stops at the guard shack. The guard comes out. Circles the Bronco. Opens the back door.

208 INT. GUARD SHACK - NIGHT

The guard waves Jim through. Jim drives away. The guard watches his tail lights disappear then MAKES A PHONE CALL.

209 INT./EXT. BRONCO - NIGHT

Jim drives through west Texas. Listens to Rangers vs. Tigers on the radio.

210 EXT. DROP HOUSE - NIGHT

Jim drives over a cattle guard and up a dusty lane.

He approaches an old ranch house in the open prairie. He stops a hundred yards away. A full moon shines on the Bronco's windshield.

211 INT./EXT. BRONCO - LATER

Jim waits in silence. He gets out. It's quiet and still.  
He walks toward the house.

213 EXT. DROP HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Halfway between the Bronco and the house. Jim stops.  
Listens.

SFX: The roar of a truck engine.

The house lights come on.

MUSIC CUE: Similar to "Devil's Tatoo" BRMC

An F-150 barrels up the lane.

A logo on a truck says, "Texas Rangers."

Two more trucks close in on either side.

Jim runs back to the Bronco.

He gets to the driver's side door.

Reaches for the handle.

A Ranger's F-150 blasts the rear corner of the Bronco and flips it.

Jim runs.

The bronco is on its side. Wheels spinning. Clouds of heroin catch the moonlight.

The Ranger Trucks follow Jim at perfect points of an equilateral triangle. The trailing ranger is 30 ft behind. The other two are 15 ft off to his left and right.

This is the exact distance from each other that all parties maintain during the chase. The Rangers never at any point make a move to apprehend Jim or slow him down as he runs through the prairie.

Eventually Jim slows, stumbles, and falls. He rolls to his back and looks at the stars.

ADAM (PRELAP)  
Is this ok? If I have her?

218 INT. MANATEE COUNTY GOVERNMENT BUILDING - DAY

Jim, Matt, and Duane sit together. Travis is not with them.

A young father stands at the podium with his baby. This is ADAM CASE.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES  
Yeah. It's only 5 minutes total.  
Not each.

Audience laughs.

ADAM  
You mean I don't get ten minutes?  
This is Hannah. The newest, uh,  
member to the family. Uh yeah my  
name's Adam Case.

Adam clears his throat and looks at Hannah.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
So. Uh. I'm a recovering addict.  
I'm a volunteer I guess you could  
say and mentor and a former client  
of The Crossing. I've got five  
kids. And I have the pleasure to  
bring them to The Crossings.

He turns around with Hannah and looks at the attendees.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Without fear at all. And I can give  
you guys some hope. Because  
there's no reason to be scared. The  
only reason you're scared is  
because you're scared of something  
you don't know and don't  
understand.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES  
You have to. Adam you have to talk  
this way just because the  
microphone's picking you up.

ADAM  
Oh. Sorry.

Adam turns to the microphone.

ADAM (CONT'D)

You know, ya say stuff like well just not in our backyard. Ya know. Whose? Whose backyard? Thank God that I was able to be in somebody's backyard recovering. Thank God somebody didn't push us out and I didn't get the opportunity to learn stuff and tuh-tuh to get help guiding me through life ya know guiding me through stuff I didn't know cause I was left behind. I was. You know. I was an addict. Nobody cared.

MONTAGE:

A middle aged woman, KIM VAUGHT (50's) at the podium.

KIM

I was a homeless, disabled veteran. Every housing option that I tried kicked me back because of my past. My prior past. But then I met with the people at The Crossings. And I got into The Crossings. When I didn't care if I lived or died.

KEITH's a buzzcut guy in his 30's.

KEITH

Everybody knows that you can buy drugs in that neighborhood. That's what I did. My entire life. I grew up there. I lived in that homeless camps out there. I slept in the woods behind the post office. I was in and out of jail for years. But then God gave me another chance and put me in The Crossings when no one else would take me.

A latin man in his 50's. JESUS.

JESUS

My mother abandoned me on the streets. In Puerto Rico when I was 7 years old. All my life the gang's been my family. But I'm not like that anymore. I don't use drugs. I don't hurt people. Because God blessed me.

(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)

He put me in The Crossings with  
Jim. Jim Rouches. Now I've got a  
new family.

A young woman in her 20's. CARRIE.

CARRIE

The Crossings gave me reason to  
hope. When I thought I was nothing.  
Nothing but a piece of trash on the  
side of Bradenton's roads. They  
gave me dignity. They helped me  
understand that I'm worthy. That  
I'm a child of God. We all are. I'm  
asking you. Please let us stay.  
We've got nowhere else to go. We're  
not hurting anyone. The only thing  
I ever really did was hurt myself.

ADAM

I love my life today. I love the  
freedom I have from my addiction. I  
love second chances. I love giving  
people second chances and  
opportunity. That's what I do. Now.  
I employ people in this program. My  
business. They work for me. And now  
instead of taking, we're giving  
back. To this community.

Adam returns to his seat.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES

Mr. Rouches. We had one more  
testimony scheduled.

Jim leans over to Duane and Matt.

JIM

No Travis?

DUANE

Haven't seen him.

Jim takes the podium.

JIM

That's all.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES

I'm sure everyone here recognizes  
we have a problem. I'm just not  
sure what we do about it.

(MORE)

COMMISSIONER HUGHES (CONT'D)

Anything you'd like to say before  
we adjourn?

JIM

Um. So, this is what I tell myself  
and this is what I tell the staff.  
No one cares how much you know  
until they know how much you care.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES

Thank you. We'll convene and return  
with our decision.

SFX: Helicopter. Siren.

CUT TO:

193 INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Jim lies on the bathroom floor in his underwear.

Sheets from the bed have been torn into tourniquets. They're  
wrapped around his head, shoulders, arms, torso, and legs.  
They're all soaked through.

Shelby brings Jim a glass of water. He's tied off in field  
dressings too.

SHELBY

How you feeling?

JIM

Still here.

SHELBY

It's not looking good.

Shelby props Jim up against the toilet.

Pulls the TV toward the bathroom so Jim can see it.

Images correspond with the news anchor's report.

NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.)

A statewide manhunt is focusing on  
Manatee and surrounding counties.  
These two men, Jim Rouches and  
Shelby Barnett, escaped from  
Sarasota County Jail last night.  
Authorities are asking anyone who  
may have seen them or suspects they  
may know of their whereabouts to  
call the number on the screen.

JIM

Maya?

SHELBY

She's gonna be ok. She left you  
this.

Shelby hands Jim a crucifix on a thin gold chain.

194 EXT. MOTEL - DAY

A CLEANING LADY comes out of a room. She walks to the next  
door. Sees BLOOD on the HANDLE.

Looks down. Blood on the cement.

195 INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - DAY

Jim and Shelby lean against opposite walls. The TV is  
outside the bathroom door.

JIM

I always meant to ask you  
something.

SHELBY

Guess it's now or never.

JIM

How did you get that name. Shelby.

SHELBY

My great grandmother. She married a  
Norwegian. It's a family name.

JIM

Always thought you looked like you  
had some Viking in you.

Shelby laughs. Jim laughs.

Shelby looks at the TV.

SHELBY

Ah shit.

We see the news anchor on screen.

NEWS ANCHOR

Authorities believe they have located the two prisoners that escaped from Charlotte County Jail last night.

On screen we see helicopter coverage. A mass of law enforcement surrounds the motel.

SHELBY

Think they got enough fire power?

JIM

They're gonna blast us to hell.

Jim looks at the TV.

JIM (CONT'D)

Next time they go live we get out that door and hit the deck. Just hope they don't wanna kill us on live television.

196 INT. MOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jim and Shelby stand by the door. The TV set is pointing back at them. They watch the coverage.

JIM

Lie flat on your face. As soon as you get out. Don't give em a reason.

Shelby nods.

197 EXT. MOTEL - DAY

Police, Sheriff, SWAT, and FBI surround the motel. A sniper on a truck roof. Riot gear. Visors. Shields. Guns loaded. Aimed at the door. Ready to fire.

198 INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Jim and Shelby lean against the door and watch the news coverage.

NEWS ANCHOR

Reporting from a dramatic scene outside the Shady Vale Motel in Charlotte County we now go live...

SHELBY  
See you inside.

199 EXT. MOTEL - DAY

Shelby opens the door and dives to the ground.

Jim steps over him and charges into the parking lot.

Rifles raise. Guns are sighted. Fingers cover triggers.

Jim continues forward.

A SWAT officer tackles him to the ground. Several other law enforcement rush in. They beat him.

Jim lies on the asphalt.

CUT TO:

227 EXT. JIM AND LORI'S FLORIDA HOUSE - DAY

TITLE CARD: 2002 | Homassa Springs, Florida

Residential neighborhood in Florida. Christmas lights on a palm tree in the front yard.

228 INT. JIM AND LORI'S FLORIDA HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jim sits on the couch cuddled up with his kids - daughter, JOY, (9) and son, CHRISTOPHER, (7). The FURNITURE is an eye catching TEAL color and modern design.

Lori sits on an easy chair and listens to him read.

JIM  
Rikki-tikki had a right to be proud  
of himself. But he did not grow too  
proud, and he kept that garden as a  
mongoose should keep it, with tooth  
and jump and spring and bite, till  
never a cobra dared show its head  
inside the walls. The End.

Jim and Lori smile at each other. The kids sleep, snuggled up against Jim.

229 INT. JIM AND LORI'S FLORIDA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Morning. Jim is dressed in a sports coat and tie. The kids are at the breakfast table with Lori. Jim pours himself a coffee, grabs his briefcase, and walks to the table.

JIM

Last day of school before Christmas vacation.

CHRISTOPHER

Then Santa's coming.

JIM

I don't know if he's coming this year.

JOY

Daddy!

JIM

Have you been good?

JOY

Yes.

JIM

Have you been good?

CHRISTOPHER

Yes.

LORI

Jim stop torturing them.

JIM

Yeah. You've been pretty good this year. I think you're safe.

Jim gives them both a hug and kiss.

JIM (CONT'D)

See you tonight.

Jim walks to the front door with Lori.

JIM (CONT'D)

Should get our bonus this afternoon.

LORI

Good. We need it.

Jim kisses her goodbye.

230 EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Sunshine State Afterlife Services. A stand alone building on the edge of town. Jim pulls into the parking lot in a new Buick.

231 INT. OFFICE BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Jim enters. First one there. He walks up a hall and passes a Salesman of the Year Plaque with his picture on it.

232 INT. OFFICE BUILDING - JIM'S OFFICE - LATER

Jim sits at his desk. An ELDERLY COUPLE sits across from him.

JIM  
You're making a great decision. I  
think you'll be real happy with  
this.

Jim hands over a folder with the contracts, shakes hands with the couple, and watches them leave.

234 INT. OFFICE BUILDING - JIM'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Jim files the papers from the elderly couple's close.

He copies the DRIVERS LICENSE info and CREDIT CARD number onto a yellow legal pad, tears the paper from the pad, and sticks it in his jacket pocket.

SFX: Knock on door.

Jim looks up. A young woman, the OFFICE ASSISTANT, sticks her head in.

OFFICE ASSISTANT  
A Mr. Barnett here to see you.

JIM  
I'll be right out.

235 INT. OFFICE BUILDING - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jim and Shelby walk the office hall. Jim knocks on the door of the AFTER LIFE SERVICE BOSS and sticks his head in.

JIM  
I'm stepping out with Mr. Barnett  
to look at some plots.

AFTER LIFE SERVICE BOSS  
Take this. Congratulations. Great  
year.

The boss hands Jim a bonus check.

236 INT./EXT. JIM'S BUICK/ROAD/VARIOUS - DAY

Jim and Shelby drive out of town, past a cemetery, through the flatlands, and down a gravel lane that ends in front of a rusted Cavco Pre-Hud home. An old ECONOLINE VAN is parked beside it.

237 EXT. MANUFACTURED HOME - MOMENTS LATER

It sits alone on an empty lot it shares with cogongrass and fire ants. There's a large padlock on the exterior door. Jim keys it.

238 INT. MANUFACTURED HOME - DAY

Jim and Shelby enter.

SHELBY  
Christmas in the neighborhood.

JIM  
Ho. Ho. Ho.

The house is full STOLEN ELECTRONICS. Televisions. Radios. Stereos. Games. Media Players.

Shelby picks up an iPod.

SHELBY  
What's this?

JIM  
That's on me. For your girl.

Shelby pockets it.

239 EXT. MANUFACTURED HOME - LATER

The van is backed up to the front door. Shelby loads the last of the hot goods and hands Jim a wad of cash.

SHELBY  
Always a pleasure my friend.

JIM  
Merry Christmas, Shelby.

SHELBY  
Merry Christmas Jim.

Shelby drives away. Jim looks at his BONUS CHECK. \$5,000.

CUT TO:

241 INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

Jim sips a cup of coffee. He walks toward the register. Stops at a turnstile rack of VHS tapes.

CAMERA ON: RICKI TICKI TAVI VIDEO

He grabs it. Puts the coffee and VHS on the counter. Notices "Fresh Tamales" in the warmer.

242 INT./EXT. JIM'S BUICK/CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

Jim sits behind the wheel. Thumbs a large wad of cash - thousands of dollars. Sips his coffee. Peels the TIN FOIL from his tamale and looks across the parking lot.

A JUNKIE sits on a parking block in the back of the lot. A 7UP beverage delivery truck pulls into the lot. The addict disappears behind it.

The DRIVER loads out the soda, takes it into the store, gets back in the truck.

BANG. A fist on the window.

A DEALER.

Jim rolls down the window.

DEALER  
Whatcha need bro?

The 7UP truck pulls away. The junkie is gone. Jim looks down at the passenger seat.

CAMERA ON: Tin Foil. VHS. Cookie Monster puppet.

Jim mouths the final bite of his tamale. Takes a sip of coffee. Looks at the dealer.

JIM  
You got a place I could relax for a  
while?

CUT TO:

243 EXT. DRUG HOUSE - DAY

The Dealer stands outside. Jim parks on the street.

244 INT./EXT. JIM'S BUICK - DAY

Jim sits inside his car. He peels a fifty dollar bill from the wad, puts it in his shirt pocket, and sticks the wad in his sock.

245 INT. DRUG HOUSE - STAIRS - DAY

It's quiet. Jim follows the dealer up a flight of stairs. The dealer points to a room.

246 INT. DRUG HOUSE - SHOOTER'S ROOM - DAY

Except for a mattress and folding chair, it's empty. The dealer hands Jim the smack and gear.

Jim pays.

DEALER  
That it?

JIM  
Just one and I'm out of here.

The dealer leaves. The door closes. Jim takes off his jacket. Lays it on the chair.

MUSIC CUE: Greek Byzantine Choir

MONTAGE:

247 EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN DUNES - DAY

Jim is alone on the deserted landscape. He's dressed exactly as he is in the Shooter's Room. A white button down, tie, and khakis. He walks alone across the sand, arrives at the Orange blanket. On the blanket is his jacket, bungee tie, a needle, and heroin.

248 INT. DRUG HOUSE - SHOOTER'S ROOM - DAY

Jim walks across the floor. He stands at the window, takes off his tie, throws it on the floor. Takes off his shirt. Pulls the blinds.

251 INT. ROUCHES HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Jim stands in the basement. The modern teal furniture from Jim and Lori's living room is stacked amongst a pile of stolen electronics. Computers, stereos, TV sets. The electronics broadcast a cacophony of sounds and images including Iran Contra, Challenger explosion, and the war in Vietnam. - Jim squats down, looks in the closet, and sees Very Young Jim (10) staring out the cracked door.

252 INT. DRUG HOUSE - SHOOTER'S ROOM - DAY

Jim sits on the mattress. Takes off his shoes and socks. Takes off his under shirt and pants. Preps the gear

255 INT. GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH - DAY

The garbage strewn and graffiti covered church is empty. Jim walks slowly up the aisle and stands in front of the altar. The light from the stained glass window fades and he's left in darkness.

END MONTAGE:

256 INT. DRUG HOUSE - SHOOTER'S ROOM - DAY

The room is littered with the remains of the binge. Tin foil discards everywhere. Clothes are strewn across the floor.

Jim lies in bed. Rolls to his side. Reaches for a sock. Puts his hand inside. No cash.

Searches Pants. Shirt. Jacket. Shoes. All Empty.

He sits on the edge of the mattress with his head in his hand and stares at the gear on the floor.

258 INT/EXT. JIM'S BUICK/JIM AND LORI'S FLORIDA HOUSE - DAY

Jim is parked in the driveway. He sits behind the wheel and stares at the house. Finally he pulls the handle, shoulders the door, and walks to the porch.

259 EXT. JIM AND LORI'S FLORIDA HOUSE - DAY CONT.

Jim stands on the porch. He looks in the window. Lori and the kids are sitting on the floor in an empty room. The furniture is gone.

The kids see him. They run out the door.

CHRISTOPHER  
Daddy you're home.

JOY  
Daddy we missed you.

Jim kneels, hugs, and kisses.

JIM  
I missed you.

CHRISTOPHER  
Daddy I'm sorry.

JOY  
We're sorry we were bad.

JIM  
No. You weren't bad.

Lori at the door.

LORI  
Kids come inside.

CHRISTOPHER  
Are you gonna stay?

JOY  
Daddy please stay.

LORI  
Kids come inside.

JOY  
I love you daddy. I don't want you  
to leave.

CHRISTOPHER  
Yeah, Daddy. Please don't leave. I  
promise I'll never be bad again.

LORI  
Kids. Come on inside now.

The kids go inside. Jim watches them.

He approaches Lori.

Lori turns away from Jim and goes inside.

She closes the door.

Jim stands alone on the porch.

260 INT./EXT. JIM'S BUICK/JIM AND LORI'S FLORIDA HOUSE - DAY

Jim gets in his car. He looks at the passenger seat.

Tinfoil. Video. Cookie Monster puppet.

262 INT./EXT. JIM'S BUICK/COMMERCIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Jim drives out of town.

Traffic Lights. Chain Restaurants. Car Lot.

263 INT./EXT. JIM'S BUICK/CAR LOT - DAY

Giant letters across the pane glass windows, "END OF YEAR SPECIAL."

Jim pulls into the lot.

264 EXT. CAR LOT - DAY

Jim and CAR SALESMAN stand by a Mustang.

JIM

I was hoping to give it to her for Christmas but some things came up.

CAR SALESMAN

Well, she's gonna love this. 2004 SVT Cobra. 4.6 Liter super charged V8. 390 Horsepower. 0-60 in four and a half seconds.

JIM

Quite a ride.

CAR SALESMAN

They call it the Terminator.

JIM

Think I could take it out?

CAR SALESMAN  
Let me get the keys.

266 INT./EXT. MUSTANG/CAR LOT - DAY

Jim stops at the end of the lot. From behind the car we see the right turn indicator.

AUDIO CUE: SILENCE EXCEPT FOR THE BLINKER.

Jim stares straight ahead.

He looks RIGHT, back towards his neighborhood.

AUDIO CUE: THE SOUND OF THE INTERSTATE.

Jim looks LEFT, out towards the interstate. The blinker switches from right to left.

267 INT./EXT. MUSTANG - MOMENTS LATER

Jim burns down the highway at 110 mph past a road sign for:  
MIAMI 233 MI - KEY WEST 375 MI

He flies by a trooper parked on the shoulder. The trooper hits the lights and gives chase. Jim looks at the trooper in the rear view mirror, snorts some coke, and accelerates.

Another trooper comes down an offramp and joins the pursuit. The chase continues down the highway.

The sun sinks toward the Gulf.

CUT TO:

219 EXT. MOTEL - DAY

Aftermath of the capture. A flurry of activity in the parking lot. Law enforcement vehicles, officers from county, city, and state. Crime scene tape. Media coverage. Clerk at the front desk. Room service cart.

220 INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Jim and Shelby's room. Blood on the walls, in the bathroom, on the door.

220A EXT. MOTEL - DAY

The stain of blood where Jim surrendered.

The cross Maya left him.

A sheriff's boot steps on Maya's cross.

221 INT./EXT. SHERIFF'S CAR/MOTEL - DAY

Jim is in the back of a Sheriff's car.

He looks out the window.

Shelby is led away in cuffs past Jim.

Jim looks into the crowd and sees Very Young Jim and Very Young Matt.

SFX: PRISON DOOR SLAMS.

CUT TO:

221A INT. CHARLOTTE COUNTY PRISON - SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

Jim is on his knees.

He wears prison blues and is bandaged from the wounds of his escape.

His face transforms into a visage of hopelessness.

CUT TO:

268 INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

The gallery AISLE divides a handful of attendees on either side. The JUDGE is flanked by a BAILIFF and STENOGRAPHER. Jim and Matt sit at the defense table. Hensley stands.

PROSECUTOR HENSLEY

Your honor, we'd would like to  
submit a revision to previous  
charges presented to this court.

JUDGE

Miss Hensley?

PROSECUTOR HENSLEY

Upon further review the state recognizes that it has never afforded the accused the opportunity to pursue a viable course of rehabilitation. And I don't know why I'm doing it, and I don't have any expectation that he will succeed. But the state would like to suspend charges against Mr. Rouches on conditions of a one-year residential addiction treatment program and parole.

Jim and Matt are shocked. The Judge is surprised too.

JUDGE

Counselor?

MATT

How long on parole?

PROSECUTOR HENSLEY

I can't do less than 20 years.

Matt looks at Jim.

MATT

The defense accepts these terms your honor.

JUDGE

Ms. Hensley. This is highly unusual.

PROSECUTOR HENSLEY

Yes it is your honor.

JUDGE

Will the defendant rise.

Jim stands.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Mr. Rouches. You will be provided a the terms of this agreement and a representative of the court will contact you regarding details. Do you understand?

JIM

I do, your honor.

JUDGE

In all my years on the bench I've never witnessed anything like this. Were it not for Ms. Hensley's reputation of uncompromising integrity I'd have reason to deny this motion. You've been given a rare opportunity, Mr. Rouches. I hope you make the most of it. Court is adjourned.

The gavel bangs.

PROSECUTOR HENSLEY

Good luck, Mr. Rouches.

Hensley exits past the bronze statue of Justice with her sword and scale.

Jim and Matt embrace.

JIM (PRELAP)

I called upon thy name O Lord, out of the low dungeon. Thou hast heard my voice:

CUT TO.

270 INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT CHURCH - DAY

The restaurant where Jim and Matt ate lunch has been converted into a church. 70 people pack into the space that could comfortably hold 50.

Jim stands at the center of the gathered. There's a four piece band behind him.

JIM

Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee: thou saidst, Fear not.

MUSIC CUE: THE CHURCH BAND

MONTAGE:

277 EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN DUNES - DAY

Majestic and beautiful. The orange blanket. 3 sets of footprints.

JIM

Thou hast heard my voice: hide not  
thine ear at my breathing, hide not  
thine ear at my cry.

279 INT. ROUCHES HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

Jim looks in the closet. His kids, MARGO 9, and MICHAEL 7,  
are hiding. They jump out and chase him.

JIM

O Lord, thou hast pleaded the  
causes of my soul; thou hast seen  
my wrong, thou hast redeemed my  
life, judge thou my cause.

283 INT. GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH - DAY

Wedding. Jim stands at the front of the congregation and  
watches wife RHONDA walk down the the aisle.

CUT TO:

283A INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT CHURCH - DAY

The band begins to crescendo.

JIM

Now may the God of hope fill you  
with all joy and peace as you trust  
in him, so that you may overflow  
with hope By the power of the Holy  
Spirit.

The band explodes into an anthemic chorus. The congregation  
joins.

CUT TO:

287 EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN DUNES - DAY

Jim kneels on the orange blanket. He wears prison blues and  
bandaged. Very Young Jim runs on the beach.

Very Young Jim smiles at Jim - then runs up the beach and  
joins Very Young Matt and his mother.

CUT TO:

291 INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT CHURCH - DAY

In the congregation we see faces from the Crossings. Keith. Kim. Adam. Matt, and Duane.

Jim joins his family - wife Rhonda and their children (MARGO, 17 and MICHAEL, 13.)

The congregation sings a song of redemption and hope.

291A INT. CHARLOTTE CO. JAIL - SOLITARY - DAY

Jim kneels. Light from the window grows. It covers Jim and continues to expand until everything else disappears and the screen is covered in LIGHT.

CUT TO:

294 EXT. CHINESE RESTAURANT CHURCH - NIGHT

Jim exits.

Travis slouches against the wall. He's in rough shape, clearly amidst a serious relapse.

Jim kneels.

JIM  
Hey brother.

Travis struggles to look at Jim.

JIM (CONT'D)  
How you doin?

TRAVIS  
Hurting bro.

JIM  
You ready to try it again?

Travis nods weakly. Jim props the door open with the rough hewn cross. He puts his arm around Travis and helps him to his feet. They walk into the church together.

MUSIC CUE: "Written in Chalk" - Buddy Miller

EPILOGUE:

TITLE CARD: The Manatee County Commissioners voted in favor of The Crossings by a vote of 6-1.

TITLE CARD: Today The Crossing is the largest provider of residential treatment for addiction in Sarasota and Manatee County.

TITLE CARD: The Federal Opioid Class Action Lawsuit settled for over 50 billion dollars in 2025.

TITLE CARD: No money from the settlement was awarded to The Crossings.

VIDEO/SOCIAL MEDIA CLIPS OF JIM & CLIENTS:

ADAM

...there's no reason to be scared.  
The only reason you're scared is  
because you're scared of something  
you don't know and don't  
understand.

KEITH

God gave me another chance and put  
me in The Crossings. And they have  
completely turned my life around.

KIM

I met with the people at The  
Crossings. Got into The Crossings.  
When I didn't care if I lived for  
died.

JIM

You see the Sprit says there is no  
condemnation. There is no  
accusations. There's only the tree  
of life in the midst of God's love.

MUSIC CUE: The Call "You Run" over credits.

END.