

Looper

a science fiction film by

Rian Johnson



EXT. EDGE OF CANE FIELDS - DAY

A pocket watch. Open. Ticking. Swinging from a chain.

Held by a young man named JOE in a clearing beside an endless field of thick sugar cane. Sky pregnant with rain.

Waiting. Practicing French with audio lessons on wireless earbuds.

He checks the watch, removes his earbud headphones, stands.

Without much ceremony a BLOODIED MAN in a suit appears from thin air, kneeling before the young man. Hands and feet tied. Burlap sack over his head. Muffled screams, gagged.

With no hesitation Joe raises a squat gun and blows the man apart with a single cough of a shot.

LATER

Cuts open the back of the body's jacket, revealing FOUR bars of silver taped to the dead man's back. Joe takes them.

JOE (V.O.)

Time travel has not yet been invented. But thirty years from now it will have been. It will be instantly outlawed, used only in secret by the largest criminal organizations.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL PLANT - DAY

Massive, in the middle of nowhere. Black smoke.

JOE (V.O.)

It's nearly impossible to dispose of a body in the future. I'm told. Tagging techniques and whatnot. So when these future criminal organizations in the future need someone gone, they use specialized assassins in our present, called loopers.

Joe drives up and parks his truck, removes the wrapped corpse from the flatbed.

INT. INDUSTRIAL PLANT - DAY

Cavernous and empty. Joe carries the body to an iron hatch, opens it, and dumps him in.

JOE (V.O.)

And so. Thirty years from now. My employers in the future nab the target, they zap him back to me, their looper. He appears, hands tied and head sacked, and I do the necessaries. Collect my silver. So the target has vanished from the future, and I've just disposed of a body that technically does not exist. Clean.

The body slides down a long chute. Vanishes in a little flare of angry red fire.

EXT. DINER - DAY

A sidecar roadside diner in the middle of nowhere. Joe's truck in front.

INT. DINER

Nearly empty, Joe at a booth listening to headphones. A waitress sets down coffee.

Her bright red name tag: BEATRIX.

BEATRIX

Bon jour, Joe.

JOE

Bon jour, Beatrix.

BEATRIX

How's the French?

JOE

Slow. How's the coffee?

BEATRIX

Burnt.

Cream in the coffee. White clouds boil deep down.

EXT. FARMLAND ROAD - DAY

Joe's truck zooms from the flat fields towards a mid sized city on the horizon.

EXT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

A dingy pawn shop facade, set in city streets teeming with vagrants. A hover bike (called a "slat bike") zooms by.

INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

Grungy, heavily fortified. Joe enters and puts his gun in a basket labeled "LOOPERS - BLUNDERBUSSES HERE"

Slips down a narrow passage, which ends at a steel wall with a protruding duct taped camera and microphone.

JOE

Two, Jedd.

Joe fishes the two silver bars from his jacket.

A small narrow slot slides open in the wall, and gnarled old hands take the silver bars. It slides shut again.

In the background the front door to the pawn shop dings open.

The slot slides open and Jedd's hands push a wad of cash.

Joe pockets it, and backs around Dale, another Looper.

DALE

Hey Joe. Be at the club tonight?

JOE

Yup.

Dale hands four silver bars through the slot as Joe retrieves his gun and exits.

DALE

Four, Jedd.

INT. JOE'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

High ceilings, big clean windows overlooking a sooty city.

Smokes, eats pineapple out of a can. Studying from a French book. A soul LP plays on a turntable.

LATER

On the bed, shooting at the ceiling with his fingers.

JOE

Bon jour, mademoiselle. Bang!

INT. CAR GARAGE - LATE AFTERNOON

Suit-and-tie Joe pulls a tarp off a cherried-out 1992 Mazda Miata. Lingers over it. His baby.

EXT. CITY STREETS - LATE AFTERNOON

Joe drives through the sooty city streets.

Around a broken down BUS. Dirty vagrant kids in the windows, a FATHER working on the engine. A vagrant THIEF grabs a suitcase off the hood and runs, and the Father shoots him in the back. Wild wild west.

EXT. SETH'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

A young looper named SETH on the side of the road, kneeling beside a motorcycle without wheels called a SLAT BIKE. He kicks it in frustration.

A VAGRANT approaches and SETH pulls a gun, identical to Joe's.

SETH

Walk around! Around, I'm not kidding. Wide around, ya shit.

The vagrant crosses the street. Joe pulls up.

JOE

Seth.

SETH

Hi Joe.

JOE

That's new.

Seth kicks the bike.

SETH

Thanks. Goddamn thing. You going to the Belle?

EXT. DRIVING THROUGH THE CITY STREETS

Seth and Joe.

JOE

So you bought a slat bike.

SETH

Yeeeeup.

JOE

How much did that thing set you back? How much?

Seth holds a quarter idly in his palm.

SETH
I was gonna pull up in it.
Tonight.

The coin lifts, floats several inches in the air, quivering.

JOE
Congratulations. You're pulling up
with me instead. And don't, if
we're going in, don't do that.

SETH
Chicks dig TKs.

JOE
They do not.

SETH
Yes they do

JOE
It's tacky, don't do it.

Seth catches the quarter, sullen.

JOE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
When the TK mutation started
appearing in the general populace
it was on every magazine - "Next
Step in Evolution, what's next."
Everyone got tested. But turns out
this was it, and now it's just a
bunch of assholes think they're
blowing your mind by floating
quarters.

EXT. LA BELLE AURORE - DUSK

A shitty but bright nightclub in the heart of the city.

Flashy people shiver behind a velvet rope, huge black cars,
big rollers in odd suits swept in by the bouncers.

All trying very hard to be big time.

JOE (V.O.)
That's like this whole town. Big
heads. Small potatoes.

Drives past, revving the engine.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Down the street. Joe tosses the keys to an attendant.

EXT. LA BELLE AURORE SIDE ENTRANCE

A dingy stage door in back of the building. Joe and Seth ring a buzzer, smile for a camera, and the door opens.

INT. COAT CHECK

A long dark hallway leads to a tiny antechamber with a coat check room used for guns. BIG CRAIG leans out of it, and stops the two.

BIG CRAIG
Full house tonight Joe.

Seth backs towards the door, Joe stops him.

JOE
We'll stick backstage, just meeting up. In and out.

BIG CRAIG
Packing your blunderbusses?

JOE
Hardly. Right Seth?

SETH
Hardly. I'm with Joe.

Big Craig pats them down, waves them in.

INT. BACKSTAGE PASSAGE

A claustrophobic maze of twisty halls and passages. DANGEROUS MEN and half naked SHOW GIRLS weave through.

Joe expertly navigates the turns, going someplace. Seth struggles to keep up.

INT. BACKSTAGE

Suzie weaves towards her dressing room. Joe catches her.

SUZIE
Hey.

JOE
You working a shift tonight?

SUZIE
Yeah.
(realizes)
Yeah, but one of the gat men bought me out already. For the night.

JOE
Oh.

SUZIE
Sweetie. I gotta work.

She leaves him watching her go.

INT. BACKSTAGE

Joe plods. Dale, the Looper from the pawn shop, passes fast. Curious, Joe follows.

INT. STEEP STAIRS

A starkly lit steep stairwell leads down. Five or six young loopers gather at the top. Joe and Dale join them.

JOE
What?

DALE
Zach. In there right now, with Abe.

Dale makes a quarter float above his palm. Joe rolls his eyes.

JOE
For what?

DALE
He closed his loop.

This lands heavily on Joe.

JOE
No shit?

The door at the bottom of the stairs opens, and ZACH, another looper, steps out. An OLDER MAN'S HAND pats his shoulder then retracts into the door.

The loopers watch him in awe.

JOE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
There's a reason we're called loopers.

EXT. ABANDONED LOT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Zach stands waiting, checking his wristwatch, gun in hand. Obviously performing a similar ritual to Joe's.

JOE (V.O.)
Time travel in the future is so illegal, that when we sign up for this job we agree to a very specific proviso.

Zach raises his gun.

JOE (V.O.)
If our employers in the future want to close our contracts, their first priority is going to be erasing any trace of their relationship with us ever existing.

Out of nowhere a HOG TIED MAN with a sack over his head appears kneeling in front of Zach.

Zach fires, and the man's chest explodes.

JOE (V.O.)
So. If we're still alive 30 years from now, they'll find our older self and zap him back to us, like any other job.

Zach rips open the back of the corpse's jacket, revealing several dozen bloody GOLD bars sealed in plastic his back.

JOE (V.O.)
This is called closing your loop.

Zach freezes. Looks at the shape of the corpse's face through the sack.

JOE (V.O.)
And you get a golden payday, and you get a handshake and get released from your contract. Enjoy the next 30 years.

INT. STEEP STAIRS

Zach reaches the top of the stairs, a grin on his face.

JOE (V.O.)
This job doesn't tend to attract the most forward thinking people.

ZACH
So are we celebrating?

Whoops and cheers. Top of the world.

INT. LA BELLE AURORE BATHROOM - NIGHT

Joe and several other Loopers pass around an EYE DROPPER. Pupils slacken. The drug spins him into a slurred revelry.

INT. LA BELLE AURORE CLUB

Joe staggers out on the dance floor. Miles high.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Joe's Miata screams through the abandoned city streets, racing with several other loopers in trucks and sports cars.

IN THE CAR

Jammed with Seth and Loopers, Joe at the wheel. Still so high. Suddenly one of the Loopers SHOUTS -- Joe slams the brakes

EXT. UNDERPASS - NIGHT

Screaming to a halt just shy of a malnourished BEGGAR KID.

Caught in the headlights.

IN THE CAR

Joe stares at the kid, frozen. A moment. Then spins the wheel, peels out. The Loopers hoot and shout.

JOE'S FACE - serene and focused. Going somewhere.

INT. JOE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

An alarm wakes Joe, red-eyed.

INT. JOE'S APARTMENT ENTRYWAY - MORNING

In his bathrobe, Joe checks his apartment mailbox. A slip of folded paper inside, with "11:30" handwritten on it.

INT. JOE'S APARTMENT

Dressed now, Joe double-checks his french book for a phrase and heads out.

EXT. FARMLAND ROAD - DAY

Joe's truck zooms away from the city, into cane fields.

EXT. CANE FIELD

Joe's pocket watch at 11:29, ticking away.

A hog-tied MAN with a sack on his head appears before Joe. Shoots the man in the chest, without hesitation.

INT. DINER - DAY

Joe sits at a booth, the waitress Beatrix brings his coffee.

BEATRIX
Bon jour Joe.

JOE
Ravi de te voir, Beatrix.

BEATRIX
Ooh la la.

INT. LA BELLE AURORE CLUB - NIGHT

Joe drinks with Dale, watches a group of Loopers celebrating at another table.

DALE
What's that, fourth loop closed
this month?

Dale casually makes a fork float above his palm, lifting his eyebrows at passing ladies.

JOE
Fourth.

On the stage, flinging her legs with a line of can-can dancers, is Suzie. Joe watches.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

- A. Joe in the field, he shoots a hog-tied man.
- B. Joe in his floor safe, setting more silver bars.
- C. Joe in the club, drinking, watching more loopers celebrate around Dale, who has closed his loop.
- D. Joe in the field, BANG.
- E. Joe in the club, watching Suzie with her red hair.
- F. Joe in the field, BANG.
- G. In the plant, a body sliding into the fire.
- H. Joe in the field, BANG. BANG. BANG. His face more determined with each shot.

I. Joe bursts through the club with a vengeance.

INT. JOE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - LATER

Joe staggers in. Not doing so hot.

INT. JOE'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

A harsh POUNDING.

Joe, flopped on the bed, stirs. Then wakes with a jump, shaky on his feet.

Goes to the door. A screen shows nobody in the hall outside.

Still punch-drunk, Joe listens. POUND POUND POUND. The window. Joe slides it open. Seth tumbles in off the fire escape.

JOE
Jesus, Seth.

SETH
They're gonna be here any minute,
are they here?

JOE
No, they're not here. Who?

SETH
Christ. Joe. Christ.

Joe's eyes focus a bit, he tunes in to the situation. Turns the apartment lights off.

SETH (CONT'D)
(re: the lights)
What are you doing? Right. That's
smart.

JOE
Seth, sit down here.

CRASH! Seth knocks something over in the dark. Joe opens the fridge, pale light. Seth sits at the kitchen table.

SETH
You can protect me a little, right?
Just so they don't... jeez. Oh
jeez. This is like a nightmare.
This is a nightmare.

JOE (V.O.)
I knew then what he did so I don't
know why I asked.

JOE
What did you do?

Seth lifts his eyes to Joe.

SETH
He was singing.

EXT. ABANDONED LOT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A hog-tied man with a sack over his head appears.

Singing.

Seth, with his gun raised, hesitates.

SETH (V.O.)
Through the gag and sack, but I
could hear the tune. Deep
memories, my mom in a dark room,
takin care of me, singing. And
once I knew it was him... Joe I
couldn't. I couldn't. I had to
see.

Seth pulls the sack off the man's head.

INT. JOE'S APARTMENT

SETH
He told me. I remember, there's a
new holy terror boss-man in the
future, and he's closing all the
loops. The Rainmaker, they call
him. He told me. Then he wanted a
cigarette and I untied him, and he
gives me this look. And he just
starts running.

EXT. ABANDONED LOT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Seth standing with his gun in his limp arm, receding behind
us as we run away.

SETH (V.O.)
And I had my blunderbuss so I know
he's got about fifteen strides till
he's out of my range. And they
come and go, and I just watch him
till he's gone.

INT. JOE'S APARTMENT

Seth breaks down crying.

JOE (V.O.)
This is called letting your loop
run. It's not a good thing.

SETH
What do I do? You're the only
friend I got Joe you gotta help me

JOE
You fucking idiot coming here.

Seth, sucker punched.

JOE (CONT'D)
You can't be here, I'll give you a
little money but you gotta

SETH
Joe? A little - where am I gonna -

JOE
You hop a freight train, you beat
it the hell out

POUND POUND POUND. On the door this time. Seth makes a sound
like he's going to die, Joe closes the fridge, hisses

JOE (CONT'D)
Shut up. Don't move.

Goes to the door. Two GAT MEN and a ratty gat man in jeans
named KID BLUE stand outside.

KID BLUE
Open up Joe!
(to the gat man)
Watch the window.

Joe spins from the door. Considers briefly.

JOE
I can't do anything for you Seth.

Seth crumples to his knees, grasping Joe's hand.

SETH
No! You gotta hide me! Joe, hide
me, please Christ please Joe please
hide me tell em something to buy
time and I'll leave please-

POUND POUND POUND.

JOE

Hold on!

Watching Seth, Joe's face breaks in a moment of decision. He flips the lights on, and briskly pulls back his oriental rug.

A FLOOR SAFE with a touch pad. He enters a code, opens it. Wide and deeper than you'd expect, lined with silver bars. Big enough for a man. Seth scrambles in.

Joe takes one last look at Seth's frightened, grateful face, framed by the silver bars, then closes the safe and smooths the oriental rug.

POUND POUND POUND- Joe opens the door.

Kid Blue storms in, his gun drawn, sweeping through the apartment with over-eager purpose.

One gat man stays outside, the other (TYE) casually sits at Joe's kitchen table and tools on his phone. Kid Blue gets in Joe's face.

KID BLUE

That took awhile.

JOE

You think it's easy looking this good?

KID BLUE

Tye's going to watch your apartment while we go have a talk with Abe.

Joe grabs a jacket.

JOE

There's coffee in the tin.

TYE

Thank you.

EXT. LA BELLE AUREORE - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

INT. STEEP STAIRS

Kid Blue leads Joe down the stairs and into the door at their base.

INT. WAITING ROOM

Dingy with a few benches. In one wall three steep stairs lead to a high door. Kid Blue knocks. Muffled voice from within:

ABE (O.S.)
Two minutes.

LATER

Joe and Kid Blue on benches, facing each other. The Kid stares daggers and spins his gun. Joe tries his best not to engage.

KID BLUE
You know why they call that pea shooter a blunderbuss? Cuz it's impossible to hit anything farther than 15 yards, and impossible to miss anything closer. A gun for fuck up turkeys. Not like a gat. A gat has range. Accuracy.

His gun spinning gets fancier. His gun meaner looking than Joe's blunderbuss, long and slim and chrome.

JOE
Alright, cut it out Kid. You're gonna blow your foot off again.

In a flash, the Kid stands and draws on Joe as if to fire. Joe flinches in fear.

Frozen in that tableau a moment, the Kid savors his victory. Lowers his gun.

ABE (O.S.)
What the hell is going on out there-

The high door swings open fast, SMACKING Kid Blue hard on the side of the head. His gun goes off, firing into the wall.

Out of nowhere three gat men burst into the room, guns drawn. ABE, a sallow man in his 50s, appears in the high doorway.

KID BLUE
S'alright, s'alright.

Humiliated, the Kid tries to stand, but falls over again. After a moment everyone realizes what's happened, and the tension breaks.

ABE
Alright. Joe.

Joe climbs into the doorway. Kid Blue stands shakily.

ABE (CONT'D)
You didn't shoot your other foot
off, didja kid?

The door closes, and the gat men laugh at the Kid.

INT. ABE'S OFFICE

Cluttered, with a big desk. Joe sits.

ABE
My great grandfather always told my
grandfather, men's like spiders.
It's the little ones you gotta be
careful of.

JOE
Dunno I agree with that.

ABE
Oh yeah? Well. What the fuck did
my great grandfather know.

JOE (V.O.)
This man is from the future. He
was sent back here by the mob, a
one way ticket, to run the Loopers.
That's low effort even for Abe, so
to pass the time he recruited some
real muscle, the Gat Men. Now he
runs the city. Any other city,
that'd be impressive.

Abe settles in his chair. Regards Joe.

ABE
How can you kids stand those
chokers? This, the cravats.

JOE
Ties.

ABE
Ridiculous. You're aware we don't
have a dress code.

JOE
(shrugs)
Fashion.

ABE

You know, you don't know, the movies you're dressing like were copying other movies. Goddamn 20th century affectations, do something new. Put a glowing thing around your neck or use... rubberized..

(waves at Joe's suit)

Be new.

JOE

Okay.

A beat of silence.

JOE (CONT'D)

Well it was nice chatting with you Abe.

ABE

I do like you, Joe. But we're sure enough Seth paid you a visit we're gonna hafta do something about this.

JOE

Seth?

ABE

You're expecting we're gonna break your fingers with a hammer or something awful, and I'm going to diffuse that tension right now, that isn't going to happen. What's going to happen is, I'm going to talk for a little, not even that long, then you're gonna give up your friend.

JOE

My friend Seth? I'm confused.

ABE

Well then I'll talk a little. You know you were the youngest looper I ever hired? You looked goddamn ridiculous they said, the blunderbuss up to here on you. But I remember they brought you in, I forget what it was for,

JOE

Watch shop.

ABE

That's yeah, you had rolled one of our fronts, a watch shop. And they had you, your arms pinned, this kid. Like an animal. But you looked at me, your hair stuck to half your face so just this one eye looking at me. And I could see, like seeing it happen on the tv, I saw the bad path in front of you, the bad version of your life. Like a vision I saw it happen, how you'd turn bad. So I changed it. I cleaned you up and put a gun in your hand. I gave you something that was yours.

JOE

You know I'm grateful, Abe.

Genuine. But Abe shakes his hands, not where he's going.

ABE

I gave you something that was yours. And I remember that kid, and I think when you ask yourself you ask who would I sacrifice for what's mine, I think Seth is deep and cozy inside that circle.

(a beat)

Show you how much I know you, I'm not even gonna break you, just set you back a ways. We know you've been stashing half your bars. Which is smart. Gonna get out, go overseas, right? Studying up your Mandarin?

JOE

French.

ABE

French?

(scoffs - why the fuck French?)

You give him up, or you give us half your stash. You willing to dump your silver in the dirt? For Seth?

Joe holds Abe's gaze for a moment, then his eyes drop and it's over.

JOE
Will you kill him?

ABE
Not if we can help it. Would be too cataclysmic a change to the future. What we'll do is dangerous in that regard, but not as dangerous as killing him. On top of which, a man from the future runs free long enough the time travel shit fries his brain like an egg why the fuck French?

JOE
I'm going to France.

ABE
You should go to China.

JOE
I'm going to France.

ABE
(deliberate)
I'm from the future. You should go to China.

JOE
I'm going to

ABE
You're going to.

Silence.

JOE
Floor safe, beneath the rug. 6742.

One of the gat men quietly exits.

ABE
It's the little ones that get you.

INT. WAITING ROOM

Abe leads Joe out, past gat men and Kid Blue, smirking again.

ABE
Why don't you kill an hour, Joe.
On the house.

After Joe exits, Abe and Kid exchange looks.

ABE (CONT'D)
Call the doc.

EXT. TRAIN YARD OUTSKIRTS - NIGHT

A hunched figure sprints through an abandoned lot towards a train yard.

It is a 55 YEAR OLD SETH. He limps up to a razor-wire fence bordering the train yard.

Surveys the sharp wire, rips the lining from his jacket and wraps first his left hand then his right.

But stops.

On the palm of his right hand, a WEATHERED SCAR. Clearly carved in the shape of an arrow, pointing down to his wrist.

Old Seth squints at it, confused. He pulls back his sleeve, revealing his clean bare forearm.

Then his face changes.

Because his arm is no longer bare. Suddenly, out of nowhere, more intricate scarring has appeared down its length.

The scars spell out clearly: "BE AT 75 WIRE ST - 15 MINUTES"

Old Seth's breath returns, jagged. He pulls his sleeve up and hoists himself up the fence, climbing fast.

He reaches the top, gets a good grasp on the wire to hoist himself over... and stops again.

His right hand is missing a finger. The ring finger is just gone, its stump worn with age.

Old Seth stares. And now his middle finger is gone as well.

A freight train whistle moans. The cars, open and inviting, leading out of town. Behind him, the city.

Terror and indecision seizes his chest, so much so that it takes a moment for him to realize the sound of his breathing has changed to a ragged whistle.

He lifts his hand, now with just two fingers, to his face... and the smooth scarred hole where his nose used to be.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A car blazes down the street, Seth at the wheel.

INT. IN THE CAR - NIGHT

Speeding through the streets, face scarred, ear missing, all old wounds. More appearing every second. Hands slipping on the wheel, down to a few fingers.

A street sign whizzes by - "WIRE STREET."

His pant leg crumples. Empty boot tangling with the pedals.

EXT. WIRE STREET

The car hits a pole.

Out climbs what's left of Old Seth, his face mangled, missing a foot, one arm gone to the elbow.

He runs. Howling, missing his tongue.

Then falls as his leg goes to the knees. And he's crawling, an animal form, bellowing wordlessly.

EXT. 75 WIRE STREET DOORWAY

Old Seth makes it to an iron street-side door. 75. And with his one arm, slams it.

Slumps against it, heaving. After a long moment it swings open.

With no hesitation, a BLAST from the darkened doorway, and Old Seth's head mists open. He slumps to the pavement.

Kid Blue steps from the doorway, drags the body inside.

Deep in the dark doorway we glimpse a DOCTOR in a surgical frock smeared with bright red blood. The door SLAMS.

INT. SUZIE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Suzie naked at the mirror. Checks her compact clock - 4:30am. She goes to Joe, lying on the bed, distant. Puts drops in his eyes.

JOE

I can't remember my mother's face.
I remember her touching my hair.
Like this.

He takes Suzie's hand strokes it over his hair. She smiles briefly, tired, then climbs on top of him and starts touching him aggressively. He doesn't respond. She stops.

JOE (CONT'D)

I maybe let my best friend get
killed tonight. For silver.

SUZIE

Shit.

JOE

Yeah. Shit.

SUZIE

I'm sorry.

Suzie's eyes betray impatience - grief therapy isn't her job. She tries to engage him physically again, but he stops her.

JOE

I want to give you money. I've
been stashing silver for years, I
want to give you half of it. To
raise your kid right.

She rises, puts on her robe.

SUZIE

You wanna give me half your silver?
Silver's got strings. I got my
job, you got yours, it's sweet of
your to worry but I'm doing fine.
Let's keep it to services rendered.

Suzie touches Joe's hair, the way he showed her.

SUZIE (CONT'D)

This is what you want?

Joe lies still, her hand running through his hair. But it isn't right, and he feels nothing but alone.

Suzie's eyes, tired. She looks at the clock.

Ticking.

INT. JOE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Joe gets home. Empty, quiet. Everything in place. He goes to the rug, pulls it aside. Opens the safe. Hits a few buttons, changing the code.

Inside - all the silver, and nothing else. One bar juts from the side, knocked out of place.

He pushes it back, and when he lifts his fingers they have a bright smear of fresh red blood.

INT. JOE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Joe wakes with a start.

INT. JOE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Looks at himself in the mirror. Eyes red as candy. He pops open a hidden drawer next to his medicine cabinet, pulls out an eye dropper and puts one in each.

EXT. CANE FIELD - DAY

Joe in the cane field, in his stance, ready to draw.

But nothing happens. Silence. Joe checks his watch, confused.

2:30 and change. Waits. Watching the blank space where the man is supposed to appear.

Hand on his gun. Breathing shallow. Something is wrong.

2:32. An eternity. Then, there he is.

But different. Not kneeling. The man's hands are UNTIED. Holy shit.

Joe raises his gun, scared. Time slows. Finger tightens on the trigger.

Then he sees: the man has NO SACK ON HIS HEAD. And the face that stares back at Joe is his own.

57 YEAR OLD JOE. His eyes fixed on Joe. And for just one split second, Joe's face slackens, and his finger eases on the trigger.

It's all the hesitation Old Joe needs. He throws his body into a spin.

Joe snaps out of it, and PULLS THE TRIGGER.

The shot catches Old Joe square in the back, and the impact blows him forward. But instead of blood beneath his torn jacket's back, six extra-large GOLD BARS spill out. They caught the blast.

In what seems like one fluid motion Old Joe's fingers grab one of the bars, he spins again, throwing handfuls of dirt and the bar back towards Joe.

Joe flinches, again just for a moment, and when his eyes focus again and his arm steadies the gun it's too late.

Old Joe is on top of him, with a heavy blow knocking the gun aside, and with an even heavier one swinging down on Joe's head, a fist and then

THE CANE FIELD, HOURS LATER

Joe wakes. Blood caked on his face. Headphones beside him, still squawking French lessons. Sits up.

JOE

Oh god.

A loose piece of paper on his chest flutters to the ground. No gold bars. No Old Joe. And no truck. Joe staggers to his feet, shaky. Head thick. But realizing.

He picks up the paper, opens it. Scrawled - "HOP A TRAIN. GET OUT OF TOWN. RUN."

EXT. FARMLAND ROAD - LATE AFTERNOON

Joe runs, shaky, towards town.

EXT. CITY ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Joe crouches in an alleyway. He fishes his cell phone from his pocket and SMASHES it on the concrete with a rock.

Looks up at the city, distant sirens blare.

EXT. JOE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Across the street, Joe huddles behind a car, breathing hard. Looks up at his lit window. Debating.

INT. JOE'S APARTMENT

Holding his breath, Joe edges in. It's ravaged, torn to pieces. The floor safe is open, about half the gold bars missing. But the apartment seems empty.

Exhaling, Joe works quickly. Knocks a tile aside, pulls a wad of cash from the wall. A heavy jacket from the closet.

Eyes dart around the room - what else? But too late -- footsteps in the hallway. Joe ducks into the bathroom just as Kid Blue and a TALL GAT MAN enter the apartment.

INT. JOE'S BATHROOM

Joe crouches. Outside, Kid Blue piles the man's arms full of gold bars.

KID BLUE (O.S.)
That's twenty four there. I'm
keeping count.

TALL GAT MAN (O.S.)
Uh huh.

KID BLUE (O.S.)
Two more trips should do it.

Joe gently lifts himself off his haunches.

INT. JOE'S APARTMENT

The Tall Gat Man exits, Kid Blue stays crouched over the floor safe hefting out bars, his back to the bathroom. In the distance, a GUNSHOT. Kid Blue's head perks up.

CREAK! From the bathroom. Quick as lightning, the Kid draws his gat and spins - but Joe is already upon him, full sprint. SLAM! Joe tackles the Kid backwards. But while Joe uses his momentum to leap over the OPEN FLOOR SAFE, the Kid tumbles back into it, vanishing inside with a painful thud.

Joe scrambles to a stop, lifts the heavy safe trap door and SLAMS it down - just as the Kid's hand grasps the open edge. With a sickening CRACK, the trap door closes on the Kid's fingers.

A bellowing howl, his fingers withdraw, and the safe door clicks shut. The ELECTRIC BOX rigged to the code pad to crack it clatters off, and whirrrr, CLICK. Locked. Joe, panting, goes on hands and knees to the safe door and shouts clear and earnest:

JOE
Kid listen Kid. I'm sorry. Tell
Abe I'm going to fix this. Tell
him keep my bars safe cause I swear
to god I'm going to fix this, I'm
going to find my loop and I'm gonna
kill him. Tell Abe-

CRACK CRACK! The wood paneled floor above the safe door splinters upwards with gunshots, and a chunk of Joe's right ear explodes.

More blood than you'd think spills down his neck, Joe falls back. Three more shots - CRACK CRACK CRACK! And now footsteps running down the hall.

Joe on his feet, slipping in his own blood, sprints across the apartment.

The TALL GAT MAN appears in the doorway, shooting blindly at Joe, chunks of wall and plaster exploding as Joe doesn't stop but JUMPS OUT THE WINDOW.

EXT. JOE'S APARTMENT WINDOW - NIGHT

5 floors up, Joe leaps out, hits the fire escape, bullets shattering the window. Blind with blood, ears ringing, Joe barrels down the fire escape. A confused blur of iron steps, slipping and scrambling down, but now the tall gat man is out the window and shooting down at him.

Somehow Joe slips and rolls, grabs at thin air, falling - three stories at least, falling.

When he hits the ground the world goes away.

EXT. CANE FIELD - DAY

We abruptly CUT ON to a very familiar scene.

Young Joe stands alone in the cane field, in his stance, ready to draw. But nothing happens. Silence. Joe checks his watch, confused. 2:30 and change.

This is exactly the scene where Old Joe appears, being replayed before our eyes. But when Old Joe does APPEAR, it's different: his hands are tied, his head covered with a sack.

And something very different happens:

Joe raises his gun and without hesitation PULLS THE TRIGGER. Old Joe's chest explodes. He falls dead.

Joe approaches the body, and slows. Sensing something. He pulls off the sack. The face of his older self. Old Joe. He flips him over. Gold bars CLINK beneath a bloody jacket.

Joe has closed his loop.

INT. JOE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

TITLE CARD - YEAR 1

His belongings in boxes. Joe unloads the GOLD BARS from the trap door.

EXT. CARGO SHIP DECK - DAY

Out at sea. Joe, bundled against the cold, leans on a railing, eagerly watching the horizon.

INT. SHANGHAI APARTMENT - DAY

Joe smoking in window of an empty apartment, half unpacked.

EXT. SHANGHAI STREETS - DAY

Joe walking the city streets, breathing deep. Alive.

INT. SHANGHAI APARTMENT - DAY

TITLE CARD - YEAR 5

Joe's apartment, unpacked and lived in. Joe smokes.

In a NOOK behind a wall panel - stacks of CASH.

INT. SHANGHAI CLUB - NIGHT

Loud and dark. Joe shotguns eye drops right out in the open, dances like a madman.

EXT. SHANGHAI STREETS - DAY

TITLE CARD - YEAR 12

Cloudy and cold. Joe wanders alone. Buffeted by strangers.

INT. SHANGHAI APARTMENT - DAY

Joe takes money from the stacks in the nook, which have grown drastically low.

LATER - sets a hypo down in the ashtray.

EXT. SHANGHAI STREETS - DAY

Dark and menacing.

TITLE CARD - YEAR 15

EXT. SHANGHAI STREETS - DAY

A shoot-out between rival gangs. Joe is one of them. His guns blaze.

A remorseless killer. Blasting away, cold and skillful. Smashing up shops that won't pay protection. He's muscle.

INT. SHANGHAI GANG HEADQUARTERS

A dingy dark hallway. Distant thumping bass indicates it's maybe behind a club.

The hall is lined with Chinese Gangsters, all similarly dressed. Reminiscent of the Gat Men. It takes us a moment to find Joe among them.

In his EARLY 40s now. His face a hard weathered mask. A soldier. (Note - it is here we transition from the actor playing Young Joe to the one playing Old Joe.)

EXT. SHANGHAI STREETS - DAY

TITLE CARD - YEAR 22

Snow on the ground.

INT. SHANGHAI CLUB - NIGHT

Old Joe high as a kite, in an all out brawl. Punched to the ground. Laughing his ass off.

A bar fight blossoms in slow motion all around.

Old Joe looks up, sees the woman who will be his WIFE for the first time. In a green dress. She flees the fighting, towards the exit.

Transfixed and high, Old Joe follows her. Puts his hand on her shoulder. She turns, looks him over. Flips him off. Leaves. Old Joe watches her go. In love.

INT. SHANGHAI BEDROOM - DAY

Old Joe in bed with his future Wife. They kiss. A ring goes on her finger.

EXT. CHINESE COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

A cottage in the country.

EXT. CHINESE COTTAGE - SUNSET

Old Joe in his mid 50s, his Wife lying on a hammock with him, reading. Hands lazily entwined. A good life.

INT. CHINESE COTTAGE KITCHEN - MORNING

TITEL CARD - YEAR 30

The Wife cuts vegetables. Headlines (in Chinese) scroll across a small floating screen, against images of destruction. "Gangland Terror Spreads, Who is The Rainmaker"

She turns it off.

INT. CHINESE BEDROOM - MORNING

Lazy, dust motes hanging in the sunlight through the windows. Old Joe in bed, in his late 50s.

His Wife walks through, says something inconsequential, puts her hand on his foot. Draws it away, fingers sliding off gently. And is gone. Out the back door. Off on a bicycle.

We stay with Old Joe. His deep breath. The sun warming the sheets. Sleeps. Then wakes.

His eyes focus on his hand. Written in faded ink on the palm is a number we do not recognize: 07153902935.

A long moment.

With all the violence in the world, the cottage's green front door is KICKED OPEN.

Old Joe steps out of the bedroom half dressed. The RAINMAKER'S MEN, Caucasian, enter with guns. But Old Joe raises a calm hand, then goes down on his knees, hands behind his head. Accepting.

EXT. CHINESE COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Dark cars parked out front. We watch the quiet facade for a moment too long.

Then the door BURSTS open and Gangsters drag Joe out, sobbing thrashing, the sack over his head.

A moment later flames lick from inside the cottage windows, and fire spreads to the roof.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Concrete, nondescript. The Gangsters carry Joe in, a sack over his head.

Lead him towards a machine, an iron monstrosity with a hatch.

One of the men taps his watch - hurry. Another man pulls a large lever, and the machine hums, warming up.

Joe's face, covered with the sack. Breathing. Remembering: flashes of his WIFE, screaming.

Then Joe LUNGES and somehow his hands are loose, he PUNCHES one man, tears off the sack, PUNCHES another man, a flurry and then it's over. He stands among a pile of broken men.

Slowly takes stock. Looks at the exit. Looks at the faded number on his blood-smearred hand.

A million things in his mind. But just one choice. The machine hums angrily. Ready.

INT. TIME MACHINE - CONTINUOUS

Like an iron coffin. Old Joe climbs inside. Braces himself. Closes the hatch behind him.

Flash and crack and he is sent.

EXT. CANE FIELD - DAY

And appears in front of his younger self.

The scene now plays out as it did the first time. Joe hesitates, Old Joe gets the upper hand, knocks him out.

Old Joe looks around, gets his bearings. Stares at his younger self a moment. Then goes to the truck.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DUSK

Old Joe drives the truck into the city.

INT. BODEGA - NIGHT

Cramped. Old Joe walks in quickly, gets aspirin, wrapped sandwiches, bandages, big bottles of water. Removes his torn jacket, dumps it.

At the register, the CLERK bags everything up. Old Joe pulls the blunderbuss on the clerk.

OLD JOE
And your jacket.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Wearing the clerk's jacket, Old Joe takes four aspirin. Holds his head a minute, rocking gently. Suddenly a FLASH as he remembers --

EXT. CITY ALLEYWAY - NIGHT (OLD JOE MEMORY)

From young Joe's POV we see the exact same action of smashing his cell phone on the pavement with a rock. Then (still from his POV) he looks up at the city. Distant sirens.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Old Joe reacts to seeing this with a scowl.

OLD JOE
 What are you doin Joe I told you to
 run

He takes off running.

EXT. JOE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

On the street outside the building. Old Joe approaches, watching the window high above. Weighing his options.

He scans the street. Spots an ARMORED VAN in the alleyway. Movement from behind it - Kid Blue and the Tall Gat Man loading their bars in the back.

OLD JOE
 Shit.

Old Joe turns to go, but STOPS when his eye catches movement between parked cars.

It's Joe. Young Joe, hid between the cars, looking up at the apartment building weighing his options.

OLD JOE (CONT'D)
 (sotto)
 Don't do it. Idiot. Don't do it.

After a moment Joe dashes across the street and into the building. Old Joe stays still a moment, watching him go.

Ducks into shadows as Kid Blue and the Tall Gat Man step from the alleyway, wiping their hands.

KID BLUE
 Two more trips.

They enter the building.

Old Joe takes a breath, then casually walks down the sidewalk, past the alleyway, scoping the Armored Van. A GAT MAN DRIVER in the driver's seat.

INT. ARMORED VAN

The Gat Man Driver watches Old Joe disappear from view.

Suspicious, he uncovers a GAT on the seat beside him.

When he looks back up Old Joe stands in his headlights, blunderbuss raised. BANG! The windshield shatters, the Gat Man Driver is torn apart.

Old Joe runs up, flings open the door, digs through the bloody mess frantically, finding the GAT.

EXT. JOE'S APARTMENT

Old Joe dashes out onto the street as gunfire cracks from the high apartment window. Sharp eyes will notice that Old Joe's right ear is now clipped off, an old wound.

He dashes towards the apartment door, gun in hand, but stops when the window five stories above shatters with gunfire.

Old Joe backs up, and sees Joe scrambling down the fire escape as the TALL GAT MAN fires down at him.

Old Joe takes expert aim with the gat, and fires three shots upwards. The Tall Gat Man's gunfire stops.

Joe slips on the fire escape, falls two stories and lands on the hood of a parked car.

Old Joe goes to him, checks his pulse.

Behind them the TALL GAT MAN hits the sidewalk with a SPLAT.

Old Joe goes to the tall gat man's remains, picks another gat out of them, and goes back to Joe's inert body on the car hood.

OLD JOE
Stupid little shit.

He drags him off the car.

INT. LA BELLE AURORE BACKSTAGE

A swarm of activity, Gat Men rushing in and out.

ABE (PRE-LAP)
He ain't dumb like the last, we gotta get lucky now. Cover the roads out of town. Sweep the streets, pull in his social circle, pound the pavement.

INT. ABE'S DEN

Map spread on a table. Gat men gathered around Abe.

ABE
Sweep the train yard. Every second that passes is bad, go.

INT. ABE'S OFFICE

Kid Blue slumps in a chair, holding a rag to a wound on his head. Eyes wet from crying. Abe storms in.

ABE
Stupid little shit.

KID BLUE
I can fix this. I can find him.

ABE
Go home and let the grown ups work.
Kid Blue.

EXT. CITY OUTSKIRTS - NIGHT

Joe wakes slowly, pained. Lying alone in an abandoned lot on the outskirts of town.

Slowly he takes stock of himself. Nothing broken. A tight bandage on his ear.

A mournful train whistle, and he turns. Through a chain link fence, the train yard. He was put here for a reason.

Stands shakily. And walks away from the train yard.

Something like a HELICOPTER sweeps overhead, a spotlight zigzagging the area. Joe ducks into shadows, heading towards the city.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

More helicopters sweep the streets, searchlights blazing. Cars with Gat Men circle slowly, shining spotlights themselves.

Joe leaps from the shadows, ducks behind a dumpster. Barely avoiding the light. He won't last long out here.

JOE
Old bastard. How do I find you.

He sprints into an alleyway, but Gat Men are coming down the other side with flashlights.

Goes back the way he came, turns a corner.

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - NIGHT

A window shatters inward, punched through by a wrapped fist.

A big reading hall, empty and dark. The broken window opens, Old Joe slides in. Weaves his way past the reading tables, finds what he's looking for at a desk.

A suspended sheet of thin plastic turns out to be a computer.

Checking his hand, he inputs the number. Navigates menus and windows, information flashing, searching.

LATER

Old Joe finishes printing several large documents that look like maps. He folds them up, pockets them.

Dashes to the window, starts to heft himself up - And stops. On his hand, a smooth aged scar. Of an arrow. Pointing to his wrist.

Old Joe's breath catches. He pulls down his sleeve, revealing "B" then "E"

Then "A then "T"... He bares his arm, reading the entire message.

EXT. DINER - EARLY MORNING

Old Joe emerges from the cane fields bordering the sidecar roadside diner. Regains his footing. Walks around the diner cautiously.

Parked in back behind a dumpster, SETH'S SLAT BIKE.

INT. DINER

Joe sits at a booth. Old Joe enters, steps up slowly, sits. A moment of silence.

Along with his ear, Joe's hand and arm are now wrapped in bloodied bandages. Joe's eyes go to Old Joe's arm. Old Joe pulls his sleeve back and shows him the scar spelling "BEATRIX."

Beatrice the waitress steps up breezily.

BEATRIX

Coffee?

OLD JOE

Please. Black. And water.

BEATRIX

Anything else?

OLD JOE
(to Joe)
Are we eating?

JOE
I ordered something.

OLD JOE
Steak and eggs, rare and scrambled.

BEATRIX
Two steak & eggs coming up.

OLD JOE
Must hurt.

JOE
Yeah. Didn't know if you'd
remember her

OLD JOE
I put it together. Clever.
(beat)
There's another girl here on
weekends you know.

JOE
(realizes)
Jen.

OLD JOE
Right. Less letters

JOE
That'd be better.

OLD JOE
How's the French coming?

JOE
Good. You gonna tell me I aughta
be learning Mandarin?

OLD JOE
I never regretted learning French.
(fast in French,
subtitled)
Je sais que vous avez une arme
entre vos genoux. No? Well you'll
get there eventually. Obviously.

JOE
Alright listen, we both know how
this has to go down.
(MORE)

JOE (CONT'D)

I can't let you walk away from this diner alive. This is my life now, I earned it, you had yours already. So why don't you do what old men do, and die

OLD JOE

Why don't you take your little gun out from between your legs and do it? Boy.

(beat)

It's hard to look into your eyes. It's too strange.

JOE

Your face looks backwards.

OLD JOE

Yeah.

JOE

Do you know what's going to happen? Have you already done all this, right now, as me?

OLD JOE

I don't want to talk about time travel shit, because we'll start talking about it and then we'll be here all day making diagrams with straws. It doesn't matter.

JOE

When I hurt myself now, it changes your body. Do my actions change your memories?

OLD JOE

It doesn't matter.

(his headache hits)

My memory is cloudy, there's a cloud. Because my memories aren't really memories, they're one possible eventuality now, and they grow clearer or cloudier as they become more or less likely. I can remember what you do after you do it. And it hurts.

JOE

So when we're apart you can remember what I do. After I do it.

OLD JOE

Yeah. But this is a precise description of a fuzzy mechanism. All I know for sure are 2 things: I know what's happening in my head. And I know that you're still going to meet her.

JOE

Who?

Old Joe takes out a POCKET WATCH, identical to Joe's. He opens it, and looks at a photo (which we cannot see) tucked into the lid.

OLD JOE

She's gonna save your life.

(long beat)

For a long time at the beginning she thought we'd have a baby. She would have been a great mother. She wanted that so much.

JOE

She's. How is she, you said she's gonna save my life.

OLD JOE

Your life. Let's look. At your life. You're a killer and a junkie. And a fucking child mentality, "My life," "what's mine." Save your life, you're asking how? The question is why. Why would someone sacrifice a good life to love you?

JOE

Alright cut the sanctimonious bullshit, my life is my own, I don't need it saved

OLD JOE

Shut your fucking child mouth. You're so self absorbed and stupid, she's going to clean you up and you're going to take her love like a sponge and think maybe I'm clear of the past, maybe I'm safe.

(beat)

Yesterday.

JOE

Yesterday what?

OLD JOE

Thirty years from now is yesterday.
And I can remember it, it's going
to happen and I'm gonna tell you
what happens to this beautiful
woman who saves your worthless
fucking life.

INT. CHINESE COTTAGE - MORNING (FLASHBACK)

Old Joe on his knees. The Rainmaker's Men approach him.
He's resigned to being taken.

Then:

Suddenly one of the Rainmaker's Men turns - sees a flash of
movement on the back porch through the glass doors - and his
gun GOES OFF. Bullet through the glass. A moment of shock
all around.

Old Joe turns, and sees his Wife on the back porch, holding
what looks like a gun. She collapses, blood spreading from
her stomach, and we see that she was holding a GARDENING
TOOL.

He RUNS for her but the Men shoot him with a TASER GUN and he
collapses, frothing at the mouth, unable to move but seeing
as the Men drag his Wife in, arguing amongst themselves.

His wife, feet away from him on the carpet, still alive, in
shock. Shot in the stomach. He can't move. Can't do
anything.

A sack comes down over Old Joe's head.

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INT. DINER

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OLD JOE

Have you heard of the Rainmaker?

JOE

Seth said, that night. A new boss
in the future, he said. Used the
words "holy terror."

OLD JOE

Yeah. A reign of holy terror.
Mass executions, vagrant purges,
and everywhere at once. Legend is
the Rainmaker came out of nowhere
and in the span of six months took
total control of the five major
syndicates.

JOE
That would take an army.

OLD JOE
But he didn't have an army. That's the mystery. Story goes he did it alone. Alone alone.

JOE
How did he do it?

OLD JOE
Right. No one knows. Not only that, there's no pictures of him. If it even is a him. It's insane. There's stories he has a synthetic jaw. Saw his mom shot. Things like that. But word spread quick about him through the ex-looper grapevine, because the first thing he did was start closing loops. All of them. Shut down the whole program. Sound familiar? Do you know what this is? This number.

Old Joe pulls the folded papers he printed at the library out of his jacket, puts them on the table. On the back of his papers he scrawls the number: 07153902935. As he writes it, a phone starts ringing, bringing us into:

INT. OFFICE - DAY - FLASHBACK

An 8th story office, under siege. Gangsters down in the street fire up at the windows with guns. Helicopters pass by. The office door is blocked shut with a filing cabinet.

On the phone - the looper DALE, but in his mid 50s. Battered and terrified. Holding a piece of paper, reading off it, on the phone with Old Joe.

OLD DALE
It was in the hospital records Joe - it could lead us right to the rainmaker! Write this down - zero seven one five three nine zero two nine three five

The wall with the door in it EXPLODES inward.

INT. CHINESE LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS - FLASHBACK

The line goes dead. Old Joe hangs up. Looks at his hand, with the number.

Standing in his cottage, before he was sent back. Through the window, his wife working in the garden. Old Joe closes his hand.

INT. DINER

Old Joe showing the number to Joe.

OLD JOE

This is a piece of identifying information on the Rainmaker. He's alive right now, living here, somewhere in this county. And I can find him with this. I'm gonna find him, I'm gonna kill him, and I'm gonna stop him from killing my wife. I need you to lay low, stay out of my way and not get caught.

JOE

Fuck you and your wife. None of this concerns me. We're done here

OLD JOE

This is going to happen to you, you stupid little shit

JOE

It happened to you, it doesn't have to happen to me.

(points: the pocket watch)

You got her picture in there? Show it to me. Show me her picture. And when I see her I'll walk away, I'll fuckin marry someone else. I promise. So the instant I look at her picture that fog in your brain'll swallow up the memories of her and she'll be gone. If you give her up, she'll be safe.

OLD JOE

Give her up.

JOE

Yeah give her up. You're the one who got her killed. If she never meets you she'll be safe.

OLD JOE

We don't have to give her up. I'm not gonna give her up. I'm gonna save her.

A quick beat in which both men realize their conversation is over.

Joe goes for his gun.

But Old Joe is fast, he jams his foot into Joe's crotch, crushing the hidden gun into him. Joe cries out, Old Joe grabs his hair and plants his face into the table.

When Joe's hands go to his face Old Joe grabs them and pulls. Foot in his crotch, pulling his arms tight over the table.

And in that brief moment of stillness, they both realize that the diner is entirely, eerily empty.

Beatrice and the staff have all quietly left. Fled.

Old Joe swings out of the booth, still holding Joe by the hair, dragging him like a doll.

OLD JOE (CONT'D)
Get to the fields - you can lose
them in the fields

A GAT MAN barrels in, his gat blazing. With an expert shot Old Joe shoots him down.

OLD JOE (CONT'D)
Hope a train, get out of town!

He tosses Joe behind the cover of a booth.

Joe grabs at the papers, but Old Joe holds tight and they tear, and Joe hits the ground holding a torn-off top sheet.

Joe scrambles away, down the length of the diner behind the booths, back to their table, as the Gat Men and Old Joe have their fire fight.

Joe rises, holding one of the fallen Gat Men's gats.

OLD JOE (CONT'D)
Shit.

Joe shoots, and Old Joe takes cover. Old Joe shoots out a window, makes his break, sprints for the broken window, jumps...

EXT. BACK OF DINER - MORNING

...and hits the dusty parking lot running. Towards the cane.

EXT. FRONT OF DINER

Kid Blue squats on his haunches with four more Gat Men, their guns trained on the diner door. Three Gat Men burst out, followed by Joe.

DINER GAT MAN
The back, he's running!

JOE
Around back!

They all run around back, where Old Joe is halfway to the cane but not there yet.

The seven Gat Men and Kid Blue and Joe fire their guns after him while running but they're too far away (and they're running) so nothing hits. Joe blasts at the old man blindly, sprinting with all his might, eyes streaming tears in the dust.

When Old Joe hits the wall of cane he seems to vanish. Four of the Gat Men follow him in, while the remaining pursuers slow to a stop, doubled over, panting. Defeated.

It takes a few seconds for Kid Blue to realize that Joe is there with them. It takes another second for Joe to realize that the dynamic has changed. He turns and runs back towards the diner, Kid Blue and the Gat men in pursuit. One of the Gat Men raises his gun.

KID BLUE
NO, alive!

Joe makes it to the Slat Bike, jumps on, hits the ignition. CLICK.

JOE
No fuck no fucking piece of shit

CLICK CLICK. The Kid and the Gats closing in, and just the moment that Kid Blue lays his hands on the back of the bike the engine turns over with a ROAR.

The back of the bike kicks up, heat and air blasts from the open slats beneath, blowing Kid Blue back on his ass. The bike HOVERS a few feet off the ground.

Joe roars off into the cane. The Kid is on his feet running back to the Gat Men.

KID BLUE
The tracker! Get the tracker!

EXT. CANE FIELD

Joe riding at full speed through the thick cane. He BAILS, snapping through cane and rolling to a painful stop. The bike ZOOMS onward through the stalks, quickly out of sight.

Pained, Joe lies still, breathing hard. Pulls Old Joe's torn paper from his pocket. On one side, the number Old Joe scribbled: 1027363259 He flips it over. It's a map.

Mostly of empty farm land, bisected by a bold highway and scattered farm houses.

One of them is CIRCLED IN BLACK.

EXT. FIELD - DAWN

A bare field of churned chocolatey earth. Near its edge juts the dead stump of an old tree.

A YOUNG WOMAN in work clothes named SARA chops away at the trunk with a large axe. Over and over, splintering it apart.

Endless plains of cane surround the field. In the near distance, a two story farm house with an adjacent barn.

Sara focused on her work as the sun rises.

EXT. CANE FIELD - EARLY MORNING

Sara fiddles with a garbage can sized DEVICE, and with a crackle of mechanic thrusters it floats up and over the cane fields, spraying something chemical.

INT. FARM HOUSE KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

Sara makes coffee.

EXT. FARM HOUSE PORCH - EARLY MORNING

She sits on a rocking chair, and mimes smoking an invisible cigarette.

Our first good look at her face. Clear and beautiful, but it has been here for awhile.

The morning light changes from steel blue to pale white.

Rocking gently, fake smoking and drinking coffee. Not going anywhere.

INT. FARM HOUSE BEDROOM - MORNING

Blinds drawn, dark. A FIGURE lies in bed. Sara steps in, puts her hand on the sleeping figure's foot.

SARA

C'mon baby. Time to get up.

INT. FARM HOUSE KITCHEN - MORNING

Cooking eggs. The front door bangs. She looks up.

INT. FARM HOUSE FOYER

The screen door bangs in the wind. Sara inspects it. The latch is broken. She sighs.

Then freezes.

Through the screen door, some fifty yards across the front lawn, the dark figure of a MAN stands at the edge of the cane fields. Watching her.

She watches right back for a long moment.

Then grabs a shotgun mounted above the door and with no hesitation at all plows outside.

The dark figure vanishes into the cane fields.

EXT. FARMHOUSE FRONT LAWN

Sara storms down the porch and stalks across the lawn, shotgun extended. Not fucking around.

Does not slow her pace until she is ten yards from the cane fields, where she plants herself and shouts:

SARA

Listen up fucker. I have shot and buried three vagrants in the past year. If you want to know the Christ's honest truth I'm starting to get a taste for it. So I don't care what hobo sob story you've got, I get a dozen a week and it cuts no cash with me. But if you show your face again I will cut you the fuck in half.

Silence. Just the wind in the cane. A long beat. Then Sara turns, walks briskly back.

Moments later Joe's face pokes through the cane. He takes in the farm. The barn behind it. The fallow field.

LATER

Joe sits in the same spot, a few feet in the cane but with a clear sight line at the house.

His gun on his knee.

JOE'S FACE - Pale, sweating. Something's wrong. He winces. Pinches his eyes. Headache.

The sun pounds down.

EXT. CITY - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Helicopters sweep by.

INT. ABE'S OFFICE

Abe stands fuming, flanked by two Gat Men. Kid Blue sits like a kid in detention.

ABE

Well. You found him. And you russeled up a posse and went to git 'em. Like a good little cowboy from one of your movie movies. Without telling me.

KID BLUE

I can do it again.

ABE

You can fuck up again? Really. You know what happens to me if I don't get that old bastard? I got too much riding, Kid, I can't afford a fuck-up playing cowboy. Put your gat on the table.

Fighting tears now, Kid puts his gun on the desk. But he doesn't take his hand off it.

KID BLUE

I wanted you to say I did good, that's all I wanted. This is all I have.

Abe puts his hand on the gat. Kids' finger still on the trigger. A tense moment. Abe pulls the gun away, across the table.

KID BLUE (CONT'D)
 Please just give me one more
 chance, I'll bring him here alive
 and hold him and you can put a
 bullet in his brain yourself-

Abe grabs the hammer. SLAMS it on Kid's bad hand, crushing it. Kid howls, the Gat Men grab him. Drag him out.

Abe's head droops, weight of the world.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FARM HOUSE - NIGHT

Silent and still. Sara comes out onto the front porch. She gathers up a few things, turns out the porch light.

Notices a floodlight still lit on the BARN across the yard. She turns the porch light back on.

The dark cane fields, silent and vaguely threatening. She steps back in the house, emerging again with the shotgun.

EXT. FRONT LAWN - NIGHT

Sara stalks towards the barn, shotgun in hand. Shadows loom across the yard. All is silent.

EXT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

She reaches the barn. A hard pool of light from a mounted floodlight falls off to inky darkness.

Hits a metal switch near the barn door and the light snaps off. In its absence the darkness swarms.

She briskly walks back towards the house, but slows. Stops. Turns. In the darkness by the barn, crunch crunch. Crunch. And maybe a shape. Deep in the swarming dark.

SARA
 Hey. Who's there.

Sara levels the shotgun at the darkness, and steps back.

Quiet but definite - crunch crunch. And now, definitely a shape. A man. coming towards her.

SARA (CONT'D)
 Stop right there. Stop!

EXT. CANE FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Joe slumped over unconscious where we left him, in the cane.

Sara's shout wakes him with a start. Sweating, pasty. Disoriented. Something is wrong with him.

In a flash of panic he parts the cane, sees Sarah backing away from the barn. The dark hulking figure of a man pursues her slowly but steadily.

JOE

Shit

His hand goes to his holster but his gun has fallen out, he scrambles in the dirt for it.

EXT. FRONT LAWN

Sara backing up still, shotgun leveled. The man, still in darkness, comes towards her.

SARA

You stop right there, you stop!

She fires her gun in the air. The man pauses, but then continues towards her. She trips on a root, FALLS.

INT. 2ND STORY BEDROOM - NIGHT

From a CHILD'S POV - We run across a darkened bedroom to the WINDOW. A child's hand smacks the glass, and framed through the pane, through the unseen child's eyes, this is what we see:

Sara on the ground, fumbling the gun. In trouble. The DARK MAN, advancing towards her menacingly.

At the last moment, from the sugar cane fields, JOE runs into the light and steps directly between them, shouts, his gun raised at the Dark Man.

And the Dark Man STOPS.

EXT. FRONT LAWN - CONTINUOUS

Joe's gun leveled, face set. But the porch light on the man's face: it is not Old Joe.

It is a man in his 30s, filthy, with Down's syndrome. A greasy sign around his neck: "PLEASE HELP MUWTE FOOD \$ GOD BLESS YOU"

Joe lowers his gun, face melting.

SARA

Jee sus.

(to the MUTE VAGRANT)

Hey, hey. I'm going to get you
some food-

But the man scampers off, leaving his sign.

SARA (CONT'D)

...great.

EXT. SECOND STORY BEDROOM WINDOW

The child, in darkness, watching. He recedes into the
bedroom, his hand slipping off the glass.

EXT. FRONT LAWN

Joe turns away from her quickly, but doubles over, crumpling
to a heap on the grass. Sara checks his face.

SARA

Hey. Look at - hey. The fuck-
ehh.

Joe PUKES.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

She drags Joe up onto the porch, under the light.

SARA

Hey. Up here, at the light. Hey.

Sara SLAPS HIM. Hard. His eyes snap open. He sees her face.
She feels his head. Checks his eyes. Cherry red and veined,
swollen under the lids.

JOE

(totally gone)

My head... splitting apart... time
eventualities, he said-

SARA

How long since you dropped?

JOE

Dropped

Sara mimes an eye dropper.

SARA

Dropped.

JOE

A day.

SARA

One day. Wow.

She leans back on her haunches, looks at him, deep in thought. Deciding what to do. Joe lies prone, shaking, sweating.

JOE

Thirsty. I can't feel my legs

SARA

Cause you're going through withdrawals, ya fucking junkie.

JOE

I'm gonna die. Don't let me die.
Please.

Her eyes linger on his gun. They turn cold.

She stands quickly without a word, vanishing into the house. Joe lies still, breath shallow. Turns his head, hazy.

JOE (CONT'D)

Thirsty. Thirsty.

Soft footsteps approach. Small bare feet padding towards him through the front door. A young boy steps out onto the porch, 5 years old, named CID.

Cid looks Joe over. His eyes linger on Joe's gun. Then he kneels, his small hands feeling Joe's sweaty face. Pushes a straw to Joe's lips. Joe's hands clasp around a plastic cup with a cartoon tiger, and he drinks.

SARA (O.S.)

(sharp)

Cid. C'mere monkey.

Cid goes back into the house, leaving his cup with Joe.

INT. FARMHOUSE FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Sara tries to pick Cid up but he dodges, walks up the stairs.

CID

Who's that man?

SARA

Just a vagrant babe.

INT. FARMHOUSE UPPER HALL

Sara leads him down the hall and into his bedroom.

CID
No he's not.

SARA
Oh yeah?

CID
His shoes are too shiny.

SARA
Well aren't you a smart monkey.

INT. CID'S BEDROOM

He gets in bed.

CID
Is he sick?

SARA
Yup.

CID
Will he get better?

SARA
Yup.

CID
Promise?

SARA
Go to sleep. Okay. Night baby
boy.

Kisses him.

CID
Night Sara.

Lingers over him in the pale light. Then goes.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Exhausted Gat Men dutifully patrol the streets with flashlights, stopping every passerby.

On the outskirts of the city. Vagrant fires burn distant orange. A large drainage pipe drips into a brackish creek.

INT. DRAINAGE TUNNEL

Underground. We move through it.

INT. RUNOFF ROOM

Cavernous space beneath a high street grating, damp and cold.

Old Joe sits on the ground, methodically cleaning and loading his gun. He finishes. Places the gun on top of his folded, torn maps. Closes his eyes. Sees:

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT (OLD JOE MEMORY)

A bank of fog clears, revealing Sara's face looking down at us. She slaps us hard.

SARA

Hey.

INT. RUNOFF ROOM

Old Joe touches his temple. Head aching. Remembering.

OLD JOE

The first time I saw her face.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT (OLD JOE MEMORY)

Sara's face. SLAP!

SARA

Hey.

INT. RUNOFF ROOM

OLD JOE

No. No no.

His POCKET WATCH sits open in front of him. He picks it up.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT (OLD JOE MEMORY)

Sara's face. SLAP!

INT. RUNOFF ROOM

Old Joe holds his pocket watch tight like a talisman. Fingers dug deep in his head.

OLD JOE

No. The first time I saw her face.

INT. SHANGHAI CLUB - NIGHT

A fist comes straight at us. SMACK!

We reel back, revealing: the Shanghai club, crowded and rowdy. A piece of Old Joe's life that we've seen before.

Joe (mid 40s) lies on the ground, lip bloodied, laughing hysterically at a YOUNG PUNK who has just hit him. A bar fight blossoms in slow motion all around.

Joe looks up, sees the woman who will be his Wife for the first time. In her green dress.

INT. RUNOFF ROOM

Inside Old Joe's pocket watch, a picture. Of his WIFE.

The sun breaks in through the grate above. Old Joe closes the pocket watch, holds in tight. Then he stands and picks up the gun and goes.

CUT TO:

A child stands in a massive doorway with blinding white light beaming through.

JOE'S FACE - wrecked, but his eyes flutter. Blink.

INT. BARN - MORNING

Joe lies on the cot. Blinks. The barn doors, the morning sun rising through. If the child was there, he's gone now.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - MORNING

Cid draws at the kitchen table. Sara enters.

SARA
Morning monkey.

CID
The man's up.

Sara stiffens, looks out the window.

CID (CONT'D)
Is he staying here now?

SARA
No.

EXT. BARN - MORNING

Sara approaches the barn, her shotgun in hand.

Joe sits on the ground just outside the open barn door, the metal cot behind him still handcuffed to his wrist.

Methodically cleaning and loading his gun.

SARA

Toss it.

Joe freezes. Then, half annoyed

JOE

I just finished cleaning - alright.

Tosses it into the dirt. Sara lowers the shotgun slightly.

SARA

How do you feel?

JOE

I'm at thirty percent.

SARA

Take it slow and by the end of the week you'll be at fifty.

She tosses him a key, he unlocks his handcuff.

SARA (CONT'D)

I took you in so you wouldn't die,
and now you're not going to die.
So take the morning to rest, then
you need to get off my farm.

JOE

I can't do that.

SARA

I'm sorry?

JOE

I need to stay here for a little
while longer.

SARA

I am not cool with that.

JOE

Well I'm sorry.

SARA

Well I'm sorry too, you just lost your take the morning to rest privileges, get off my farm.

JOE

No.

Sara raises the shotgun.

SARA

Get off my farm.

JOE

You couldn't scare a retarded hobo with that thing. Literally.

SARA

This is a Remington 870, one blast could cut you the fuck in half.

JOE

And that's, that's telling. You're holding a gun. I say I'm not afraid, so you describe the gun to me. But it's not the gun I'm not afraid of.

(beat)

What are you gonna shoot in the air? Blow a hole in your barn? To scare me? Go ahead. But you couldn't let me die, you won't kill me.

SARA

So now I saved your life that makes me weak?

JOE

Look I'm not a threat to you or your boy. I need to be on your property but I'd prefer to not have any contact with you at all, I'll stay in the fields. There's just one thing you need to do for me, and you won't have to deal with me again.

He takes the map from his pocket, unfolds it. Tosses it over to her.

JOE (CONT'D)
 Just, verify for me that's your house on the map. So I know I'm in the right place.

SARA
 What is this?

JOE
 A map.

SARA
 That's my house. Why is it marked?

JOE
 Doesn't matter. Ok. I'll be out of the barn in an hour, if you can spare it I'll take the water jug with me. Does that well have water? I'll fill it from there.

Sara turns the map over. Sees the NUMBER that Old Joe wrote on the back. 07153902935.

And everything changes.

SARA
 What is this.

She shows him the number. She is not asking what the number is - she knows. Joe is suddenly not so relaxed.

SARA (CONT'D)
 What is this.

JOE
 Does that mean something to you?

For the first time in their conversation, Joe looks in her eyes. Sara stares daggers, searching. Very different than she was ten seconds ago.

Joe scoots back

JOE (CONT'D)
 Hey-

And without hesitating Sara hefts the shotgun and SHOTS HIM. BLAST! Rips his shirt open bloody, blows him back screaming.

EXT. PARK

Old Joe STOPS in his tracks, children running around him.

His hand goes to his temple.

EXT. BARN - DAY (OLD JOE MEMORY)

Fog clears from Sara blasting us with her shotgun.

EXT. PARK

Old Joe's hand runs from his temple to his neck. Feels a new but old scar, just a little divot behind his ear.

INT. BARN

Sara drags Joe in by the foot. She heaves the barn door closed. In the lamp lit dark Joe rolls and groans in the dirt.

SARA

Who are you?

She shoves the shotgun barrel in his face, a rush of fury

SARA (CONT'D)

You're right I'm not a killer but I am fine with how a blast of rock salt to your face won't kill you. Who are you and what are you here for? Who are you?

Joe breathes hard, bleeding in the dirt with a shotgun in his nose. But he forces calm. A beat. Then he starts talking.

JOE

Time travel hasn't been invented yet. But in thirty years it will be-

SARA

You're a looper?

A WALL OF LEAVES

Fingers part the green, and Old Joe peers through the dense foliage.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - MORNING

Old Joe hides in the trees across the street from a suburban track home.

A young boy in a bright jacket runs out the front door and off down the street.

Old Joe checks the folded map in his trembling hands. On it, this house is circled in black, exactly like Sara's farm.

INT. BARN

Sara sits. Joe weakly talks, the end of a long explanation.

JOE

I can't go back to the city and find him cause Abe, the boss, all his men are going to search the streets 24/7 till they turn up me or... him. All I have is this map. And that he's coming here.

Sara stands. Paces away. Deep in thought.

JOE (CONT'D)

So you know about Loopers, what we do

SARA

So he's coming here to murder me and my son because he thinks we might be this Rainmaker. And once he kills the Rainmaker, what happens?

JOE

I think... he thinks, the instant the rainmaker dies, he'll never have been sent back, so he'll just vanish, and be back with his wife.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET

The track home, Old Joe's POV through the trees. A 5 year old boy named DANIEL trots towards it, coming home.

INT. BARN

SARA

Who is he? The guy you let run? Just some random guy from the future?

JOE

Yeah. Someone. You know what these numbers mean.

Sara takes a pen from a workbench. Shows Joe the numbers:

07153902935

She draws lines with the pen, thus:

07/15/39[02935]

SARA

This is Cid's birthday. And this
is the hospital he was born in.

Joe's face, taking this in.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME BACK YARD - DAY

Well tended by someone who loves growing things. Laurels,
ivy on trellises, flowers and trees.

Daniel comes through the side gate. Lifts the back door
matt, revealing a dusty key.

INT. BARN

JOE

How many kids? Born that day, in
that hospital? With your son?
Two?

SARA

Sounds right.

JOE

Three kids, three houses on his
map. He knows one of them is the
Rainmaker but he doesn't know
which.

SARA

What is he going to do?

JOE

Oh god.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME BACK YARD

Old Joe. Sitting in a corner of the yard. Face set hard.

Daniel stands, key in hand. Drops the matt. Slow motion.
Turns. Sees Old Joe, standing now.

Stillness between them. OLD JOE'S FACE. Struggling to be
stone, and then it is.

He raises his gun. Hesitates. Then FIRES.

EXT. PARK - MOMENTS LATER

Old Joe emerges from a backyard fence, walks across a park. Map in his hand. Children play in the distance. Children's voices all around.

Old Joe spins, his breath up into his head.

The map falls to the ground. The park around him, green and full of children.

He keels over onto his knees and cries. Grabs the grass, holds it in his fingers, thick and green.

INT. SHANGHAI APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

On the bed. Old Joe and the Wife. Faces close. Drifting into sleep. From a neighboring apartment, a BABY CRIES. Loud and insistent.

His wife's face, her smiling eyes, listening to the neighbor's baby cry. Like she's listening to music. She touches his hand.

EXT. PARK

Old Joe. Staring at the grass. On the map beside him: three circled houses around the city. And the torn corner.

INT. BARN

Sara holds the torn piece of map in her hands. Their house circled.

SARA

Would he do this?

JOE

Think about what doing this would fix. What he thinks it would fix.

Sara caught that, and she did not like it.

JOE (CONT'D)

He'll kill the other two or however many and then come here last. Put off facing me.

She turns the paper over in her hands.

SARA

If he comes here will you stop him?
If I believed all this - I'm asking
can I trust you

JOE

I don't care if you trust me, I don't care about your son. I've lost my life. I kill this man, I get it back.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - LATER

They sit on the steps, Joe stripped to the waist. Sara picks salt chunks from his chest with tweezers and antiseptic.

Joe surveys the surrounding land, cleaning his gun.

JOE

We're surrounded by cane, that leaves us blind. He can get within fifty yards of the house without a hawk spotting him.

(beat)

What makes sense is, we burn the fields, level them.

Sara realizes he's seriously asking.

SARA

No you cannot burn down my cane fields.

JOE

Stuff's half dead anyway-

SARA

Yeah it's seed for next year. It's not gonna happen. Fuckin nut.

Joe finishes assembling his gun. Sara's eyes flick to it.

SARA (CONT'D)

You use what you need, set up anywhere. But one thing, I don't want you talking to Cid. I watch my son, you watch the cane. That's the deal.

JOE

Good by me.

He hisses as she applies antiseptic to a gash in his arm.

SARA

Hold still. Easy for things to get infected on a farm, start falling off.

(MORE)

SARA (CONT'D)
(sotto)
Pussy.

Caught off guard, Joe almost smiles. Then grimaces.

JOE
If I'm out here and you're in the house we're gonna need some way to communicate.

SARA
There's a dinner bell down by the barn, ring that if someone's coming, I'll hear it.

JOE
Dinner bell. We need walkies, or buzzers.

SARA
Dunno what we've got but I'll look.

She spots Cid at the screen door, watching them.

SARA (CONT'D)
Cid.

She goes to take him inside.

INT. FARMHOUSE FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Sara leads Cid back into the house.

SARA
How's the maths coming?

CID
I wanna help the man.

SARA
Help him what?

CID
I could help him with my toys.

SARA
Baby. Listen. I need you to stay away from that man. Okay? Let him-hey

Cid squirms out of her grasp, bats her away with a light but angry slap. She grabs his arm harder.

SARA (CONT'D)

Let him do his thing, but you stay with me.

CID

Is he not good?

SARA

Well we're gonna see what he is. But you stick with me. Yeah?

Cid pads off to the kitchen. She watches him go, then turns troubled eyes to Joe.

INT. DRAINAGE TUNNEL - EVENING

Old Joe's little hide-out. He violently washes his hands in a trench of water.

Slumps back, eyes blood red. Streaks of tears down his face. Reddish light fading to blue through the grating high above.

Runs fingers across his forehead, spreading cooling water. His eyes close. His breathing shallows.

In one hand he holds his pocket watch. He places the other on the gat. The map beneath it.

Two circled locations on the map ~~CROSSED OUT~~. One other remaining. And the missing corner, edge torn.

CLOSE ON Old Joe's face. Slipping to sleep.

Then from nowhere a CHILD'S HAND enters frame and rests on his forehead. Old Joe's eyes gasp open with terror

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

but it's Joe who wakes up with a start. Slumped against the steps, gun in hand.

Cid's hand on his forehead. Cid steps back quickly, puts his finger to his lips. Shhh.

INT. FARMHOUSE FOYER - NIGHT

Cid leads Joe inside, beckoning him to follow.

INT. FARM HOUSE KITCHEN

Dark. Cid leads Joe to the kitchen table. Laid out on it: an arrangement of toys.

With the deliberateness of a man at work Cid clicks on a flashlight and sets it on the table.

Works on several toys, cracking open cases, pulling out wires. Hands moving fast. Joe sits, watching Cid.

CID
Hand me that Phillips.

Joe hands him the screwdriver. Cid keeps working.

CID (CONT'D)
Tell me if you hear her coming.

JOE
What are we doing here?

CID
Commundication.

He pushes a button on a small plastic box in his hands, and an identical one next to Joe lights up.

The way Joe looks at Cid changes slightly.

CID (CONT'D)
But I need to make it stronger.

JOE
How do you do that?

CID
Bigger battery.

Joe idly fingers a toy.

JOE
Smart.

CID
Do you kill people?

Joe half laughs. Cid keeps working, his face in shadows.

After awhile:

JOE
Let's say I kill people.

CID
With your gun?

JOE
Uh huh. You want a gun like mine?

CID

Yeah.

JOE

What are you going to do with it,
pole vaulting? It's bigger than
you.

CID

Stop bad things from happening.

A beat, Joe studying Cid's face.

Broken by a PIERCING NOISE.

They both jump - the toy truck Joe has idly played with is
shrieking, sirens blaring.

Joe fumbles with it, Cid reaches over and switches it off,
they both freeze.

And look up at the ceiling.

Silence in the house.

With a look of reproach beyond his years, Cid takes the truck
from Joe and finishes up his work.

JOE

How long have you and your mom been
on the farm?

CID

She's not.

JOE

She's not what?

Cid sets the two finished BUZZERS on the table.

CID

Sara doesn't think I remember cause
I was a baby. But I remember my
real mom. I couldn't stop it.

JOE

Couldn't stop what?

CID

I couldn't stop her getting killed.
It tried to, but I couldn't. I
wasn't strong enough.

Joe has never been more at a loss.

JOE
 You should talk to your mom about
 this.

CID
 She's not my mom. She's a liar.

Locking eyes with Joe. Joe doesn't know what to think.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. CITY OUTSKIRTS STREET - NIGHT

Old Joe. Running hard. Sirens, flashlights behind him.
 Being chased.

Zig zags through an alleyway, a pursuing car smashing up
 behind him.

Bursts out onto the street, nearly hit by another car.
 Shouts all around, a few shots. Surrounding. He runs.

INT. ABE'S OFFICE

A Gat Man briefing Abe, who hasn't gotten much sleep lately.

GAT MAN 1
 -spotted him coming out of a sewer
 tunnel on the west end, he's on the
 run

EXT. CITY STREETS - SEEN FROM HIGH IN THE AIR

Cars, motorcycles, cop prowlers, all roar to life and blaze
 through the city streets in one direction.

INT/EXT. HALF BUILT HIGHRISE

Kid Blue, squatting in the 10th story of a half finished
 highrise, looks down on the activity in the streets.

Spread on the floor are maps with notes. He's been searching
 for Old Joe.

And now his eyes are alight. In his hand, a small RECEIVER.
 Pressing his hand to his ear he hears-

GAT MAN 1 (ON RECEIVER)
 ...Talbot street, between Spellman
 & Elm, we think he's going west, do
 we have a visual?

He dashes for the stairs.

EXT. FIELD - EARLY MORNING

Sara chops the dead tree trunk in the field, greatly diminished but still formidable. Joe approaches.

JOE
Can't you pull that out with a
plow?

SARA
Uh huh.

She keeps chopping.

JOE
I found a, in the barn I found some
parts, and I made a, thing.

Joe pushes one of Cid's BUZZERS into her hands, which we now see is a colorful plastic frog toy with a light bulb nose.

JOE (CONT'D)
If you see anything, just push
that, and,

Joe pushes the button on his buzzer, and Sara's lights up and vibrates. She regards the toy, then stares hard and cold at Joe.

JOE (CONT'D)
It's important.

SARA
When?

JOE
Last night. He woke me up. Don't
tell him I told you though, he...

Sara rolls her eyes, turns away. Starts chopping again. Joe doesn't leave.

SARA
What?

JOE
You said you were his mom.

SARA
Uh huh.

JOE
He told me you're not.

This hits Sara hard. She resumes chopping to cover it.

SARA
He said that?

JOE
If he's not your son who is he?

SARA
(sharp)
He's my son.
(beat)
I had Cid when I was twenty two.
But I didn't want to give up my
life. In the city.

The word "city" has weight for her. Implies volumes.

SARA (CONT'D)
So I dropped Cid with my sister on
the farm. And she saw how I was
living and she took him. My sister
raised him here, she loved him. He
called her mom.

JOE
How'd she get killed?

When Sara's eyes hit him they're daggers.

SARA
Jesus Christ

JOE
He remembers it. You have to talk
to him about it.

Icy silence from Sara, and an odd stare.

SARA
I told you one thing, I told you to
stay away from my son.

JOE
He asked about my gun

SARA
Stay out of it. Stay the fuck away
from my son.

She goes back to chopping. Joe lingers, then leaves. She
hacks away.

INT. CID'S BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Sara sits on the floor with Cid, putting numbered tiles on a plastic multiplication table.

SARA
Where does 56 go? Good. 21.

CID
How long can you not sleep?

SARA
I don't know, awhile. That's a good question. Where's it go. Good, there. 32.

CID
We should help Joe watch.

SARA
Joe?

CID
Cause he can't stay awake all the time.

SARA
He isn't our business.

CID
He's keeping us safe

SARA
Baby. Let's do this now. You have 32 there, I know you know this one.

CID
I want to help him.

Sara is distracted by a distant bell-like DINGING.

SARA
Cid. 32.

She goes to the window, looks out, nervous.

But it's just a loose LAUNDRY LINE down in the yard, whipping in the wind against its metal pole. In the distance, Joe paces the yard.

Relieved, Sara returns to Cid. He sets the tile, petulant.

SARA (CONT'D)
No. Eight times three is what?

CID
Thirty two.

SARA
Eight times three is what?

CID
Thirty two.

SARA
I want you to count three eights.

CID
Eight. Sixteen. Thirty two.

SARA
Are you telling me you want alone
time?

CID
No.

SARA
Okay. Why don't you put that where
it belongs?

Deliberately, Cid lifts the tile and sets it straight back
down on the same spot.

SARA (CONT'D)
Alone time.

Then like a knife in a fist fight:

CID
He's protecting us cause you can't
do it.

SARA
Ok. I told you to stay away from
him

CID
I never did anything

SARA
Do you think I'm stupid?

CID
So?

SARA
I told you already

Cid is building into a temper tantrum fast.

CID
So?

SARA
You do what I tell you

CID
You can't tell me what to do you're
not my mom.
(a deadly beat)
You're not my mom! You're a liar
and you're gonna get killed and you
won't stop lying!

Cid lunges at her, Sara slaps him back.

Not hard, but Cid scoots back, eyes furious.

SARA
Cid baby

CID
You're a liar! Liar! I hate you
because you're lying! I hate you!
Liar! You're lying to me!

Sara scoots back.

SARA
Cid

CID
You're lying!

Cid stands, balls his fists, SCREAMING at her. Sara pushes
back away from him.

Maybe a cloud passed over the sun. The room darkens.

And we see it now, in her eyes: Sara is afraid. She bolts
out of the room.

EXT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Sara walks fast down the hall

INT. SARA'S BEDROOM

Not slowing, through her bedroom

INT. SARA'S CLOSET

Into her walk-in closet, to a huge steel safe tucked in back. She opens the safe with trembling hands. And climbs inside.

INT. SAFE

Closes the heavy door. Turns on a small LED light. And waits. Cid's screams distant but not lessening.

EXT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Cid's screams from the house, clear as day.

Joe paces in front of the barn. Turns his head back towards the house, not sure what to think.

The screams stop. Joe turns uneasily back to the swaying cane.

INT. CID'S BEDROOM

The math game scattered, numbered tiles everywhere. Cid lies face down on the bed, cried out.

Sara enters quietly. Sits on the bed beside him. Strokes his hair. He folds into her, and they're holding each other tight.

CID

I'm sorry.

EXT. CHEAP APARTMENT BUILDING - EARLY MORNING

A motel style building. Gat Men in cars pass occasionally with spotlights and radios, but the activity has calmed.

Old Joe slips around a corner. Staying hid. Checks the address on the map. 12 Talbott Dr, #205.

Makes a break for stairs leading to the 2nd level. But just at that moment a car pulls into the building's lot.

Old Joe ducks under the stairs. Holding his breath.

The car parks. Door slams. Footsteps. A WOMAN. Slumping exhausted, up the stairs.

And through the slatted steps Old Joe sees her face flash by.

It is Suzie, the girl from Abe's brothel. Old Joe's face, pure disbelief. He recognizes her instantly. It can't be.

He gingerly steps half a foot out. Looking up he can see the apartment doors above. Suzie walks down the landing. Towards apartment 205.

Jesus it can't be.

Then she passes it. Keeps walking. Old Joe's eyes, relieved.

She stops at the next door over, knocks. It opens, vaguely indistinct conversation between her and the girl that answers.

SUZIE

Sorry, I know I promised five, you know how it gets.

GIRL NEIGHBOR

Don't worry sugar. She was no problem. Gat men searched through here, lookin for god knows...

Suzie disappears into the apartment. Re-emerges, holding a sleeping 6 year old girl. She whispers goodbye to the neighbor and walks back to APARTMENT 205. She enters.

Old Joe, frozen. Gun in his hand. Face numbly: "You have to be shitting me."

He climbs the stairs. On the 2nd story landing. To 205. Breath held, back against the wall. Peeks in the window.

On the couch, Suzie holding her daughter. Head in her lap. Stroking her hair. Suzie's back is to us, and with her long red hair down, she is eerily reminiscent of Old Joe's wife.

Old Joe watches them for a long time.

INT. CID'S BEDROOM

Sara lies with Cid, both asleep.

Distant but sharp, a knocking at the door. Sara's eyelids flutter. She hears. Stiffens.

She stands, careful not to wake Cid.

INT. FARMHOUSE FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Sara rushes quietly down the stairs.

The Frog Buzzer unseen on the living room coffee table, lit up and buzzing.

She goes to the front door, throws it open. And is face to face with a tall Gat Man named JESSE. She freezes.

JESSE
Evenin ma'am.

SARA
Evenin. How can I help you?

Joe is nowhere in sight.

JESSE
You can start by accepting my apologies re the hour, I hope I didn't catch you in supper.

SARA
No, that's fine.

JESSE
Yours was the last house on my list today, been walking between empty farms all day in the hot sun. Thought I'd tick this off my list, not have to come back tomorrow.

SARA
What's this about?

Back in the house somewhere, a screen door bangs.

JESSE
You alone here, ma'am?

SARA
My husband should be back from the city, any time now.

JESSE
Happy to hear. Could I trouble you for some water?

SARA
Course. I'll get some, you can take the glass with you.

JESSE
Actually ma'am, my business tonight, this ticking off the list business, it's gonna require me coming in. If that's alright.

Jesse shifts his weight, and Sara notices his heavy boot is now a few inches over the door jam.

SARA

Will you tell me what this is about?

JESSE

I will, yes. Can I come in?

Hanging above the door, just over Sara's head: the shotgun. Possibilities whirling through her mind.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Ma'am?

Silent decision, and she steps aside to let him enter.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Joe slips in through the screen door, gun in hand. Freezes in the kitchen, listening.

JESSE (O.S.)

I'm a deputized police officer, we're looking for an escaped criminal, just doing a sweep. Seen anyone through here the past two days, vagrants?

SARA (O.S.)

No, vagrants are always passing but nobody near the house.

Footsteps, as they walk deeper in the house. Joe can't tell if they're coming through the living room or hall. He hesitates.

JESSE (O.S.)

This man, here.

SARA (O.S.)

He's young. No.

Then at the last moment Joe slips out the hallway door, as they enter from the living room.

Sara leads Jesse in, holding a photograph of Joe. She pours him some water. Jesse hands her a second photograph.

JESSE

We're looking for his father too, similar look and build but late 50s. May or may not be travelling together.

This one is a print-out from a security camera in the Bodega, of Old Joe holding a gun on the checkout clerk.

Sara's eyes linger on Old Joe's photo, side by side with Joe's. Mind spinning. Maybe making the connection, we're not sure.

SARA

No.

She tries to hand the photos back but Jesse doesn't take them. He notices the toys on the table.

JESSE

Keep em. Kids with your husband?

SARA

Yeah. Just one.

JESSE

How old?

SARA

Eight.

Jesse pokes his head into the hallway, just missing Joe slipping through the hall and into the living room.

He lifts his glass, drinks.

JESSE

Thank you.

SARA

I'll show you the barn, then the house, then you can be on your way.

Sara holds the screen door open for him.

JESSE

I took the liberty with your barn. Apologies. So, the house.

Jesse strolls into the living room, and we follow him.

INT. FARMHOUSE LIVING ROOM

He sits on a couch, taps on a small folding phone. Sara follows him.

JESSE

Eight, you said? Your boy? And your husband.

(MORE)

JESSE (CONT'D)

Just gotta, check in. With the home office. This goddamn thing.

Behind the couch, Joe crouches unseen. He looks up and sees Cid in the foyer, standing halfway down the stairs.

If Jesse turned his head he would see Cid clear as day.

Joe motions for Cid to get out. Cid points to Jesse, makes a GUN with his hand. Asking Joe.

Joe shakes his head, sharply motions: get out! Cid silently creeps down the stairs.

He is in full sight of the living room. Sara stands and crosses the room, drawing Jesse's gaze up from his phone and away from Cid.

SARA

This man dangerous?

JESSE

He shoots men down for a living. Stone cold killer. My boss has half the city's looking for him. Half the city and me. So. And if you find him, there's a helluva price. Chunk of money like that. Think on it.

SARA

I will.

Cid vanishes down the hall. Jesse looks up, stands.

JESSE

Alright, show me upstairs.

The screen door in the kitchen creaks and bangs. Jesse looks sharply at Sara.

SARA

Drafts, in the house.

Jesse is already moving fast to the kitchen. The instant Jesse exits, Cid appears again in the hallway.

Opens a small door under the stairway and beckons Joe.

Joe hesitates, then silently dashes over and in.

EXT. BARN - LATE AFTERNOON

Just outside the barn, a trap door covered with earth opens two inches. Joe and Cid prop it open, and peer out at the house.

INT. CRAWL SPACE - CONTINUOUS

A deep large hole capped with a wooden trap door. Joe squats, Cid stands.

CID

My granddad built it, when the
vagrant raids got bad. Nanna said
he was nuts.

JOE

Thank you granddad.

CID

That wasn't the man.

JOE

No. I know him, that's what's
funny. His name's Jesse. I like
him. He'll go away when he doesn't
find me, he won't hurt your mom.
Sarah.

They watch in silence for awhile. In the distance, Jesse leaves the house alone and scopes the grounds before walking back towards the highway.

CID

Where's your mom?

JOE

My mom. Gave me up. I was younger
than you. We were vagrants, and
she was alone, for a long time I
thought she was stupid for getting
on the drug she was on, it was bad
stuff, it probably ended up killing
her. But now I see, she was so
alone. And it was what she had.
She sold me. To a panhandle gang.
But I got away. And I ran and I
ended on a train, sitting in the
dark in an empty freight, going to
the city, and I saw myself over and
over killing those men who bought
me and who got my mom on what she
was on. Finding them and tearing
them apart. Saving my mom.

CID
But you didn't.

JOE
A man in the city found me, put a gun in my hand, and gave me some things. I didn't have my mom anymore. I had my work, my money. My plans. For my life. That's what I'd kill for. Not something I don't have, and can't ever get back.

(beat)
There's just men figuring out what they'd do to keep what's theirs, what they got. That's the only kind of man there is.

CID
I'm not gonna let Sara get killed.

Joe looks at him. Wants to put his hand on his shoulder but doesn't.

JOE
I think we're clear.

He opens the trap door, climbs out.

EXT. BARN

Joe reaches down to help Cid out. Looking down at Cid in a hole with a trap door. Like Seth.

He grabs Cid's hand and lifts him out.

Sara comes out, sees Cid and her face breaks with relief. Cid runs to her, and in the distance they embrace.

Sara and Joe share a look. Joe quickly turns his eyes back to the cane fields.

INT. SECURITY MONITOR ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

A tiny, dark concrete room. Kid Blue watches a screen, his hand on a toggle wheel. A security cam view of Suzie's apartment building upper landing. Playback of last night. It scans quickly forward.

The APARTMENT SUPER leans against the wall behind him, counting money.

KID BLUE
All working girls, yeah?

SUPER

Uh huh. This whole block. You wanna check those too, I can arrange.

KID BLUE

I do.

On the screen, Suzie comes home. Picks up her daughter from next door. Goes into 205. Kid Blue keeps scanning. And an instant later, Old Joe climbs the stairs. Kid Blue slows the playback.

KID BLUE (CONT'D)

'Lo Joe.

Old Joe goes up to the window, his back to the wall. Watches Suzie through the window for a long while. Kid watches him intently.

Then very suddenly, without going inside, Old Joe leaves. Down the stairs, shoving his gun in his jacket.

SUPER

I'm an arranger, stranger. Huhuha.
But you don't see what you wanna see, no refunds.

Old Joe vanishes down the street in a swarm of pixels.

INT. SARA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sara lies in bed. Eyes wide open. Still and quiet in the dark. Her hand moves over her bare leg. Slides across the sheets. Finds the Frog Buzzer lying next to her.

A moment of hesitation. Then she pushes it.

Silence. Her eyes go to the window. A long beat. Then sound: a door opening in the house below.

Quick footsteps approaching. Her eyes follow them. The door flies open. Joe, gun in hand, buzzer in the other. His eyes adjust to the dark.

JOE

What?

Closes the door, kisses him. The adrenaline in his head doesn't know where to go.

She pulls him to the bed, lifting his shirt off. The rain starts to fall against the windows.

LATER

Lying beside each other. Joe still stunned.

Sara smokes a real cigarette, taking a deep joyful drag. She sets the lighter on her palm. It floats about a foot in the air, spinning, then drops.

JOE

That's pretty good.

SARA

In the city, young guys would hit on me by floating fucking quarters, I wouldn't tell 'em I was TK but I'd keep their quarters down. One guy busted a blood vessel in his eye trying to get it up.

A long beat.

SARA (CONT'D)

He's you. Your loop. You lied to me. But I know you're not lying that you're gonna kill this guy, your own self. And you protected Cid. From the gat man.

JOE

Well. Yeah.

SARA

He saved your ass didn't he?

JOE

He saved my ass.
(they laugh)
He's a good kid.

SARA

Yeah he is. When I came back, after my sister died. Cid was sitting on the porch, I remember seeing him for the first time, in two years. Saw him on the porch. I drove up crying and I had been at a party in the city when I got the call, I was wearing this ridiculous party dress. All my ridiculous shit. I don't know if he remembered me, but he looked at me. I abandoned him. I abandoned my baby.

(beat)

(MORE)

SARA (CONT'D)

I seen so many men in the city, who I look in their eyes and they're lost. Whether he loves me back or not I'm gonna love my son I said. And as long as I'm there with him, there to raise him, he's gonna be safe, he's gonna be taken care of, and he never gonna get lost.

Joe sitting very still, watcher her.

INT. SARA'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Joe sleeping alone in the bed.

He wakes. Sara is gone.

INT. FARMHOUSE FOYER

Joe comes down the stairs half dressed.

Jesse holds Sara at gunpoint in the living room. Staring at Joe with a cool lack of malice.

JESSE

Lo' Joe.

JOE

Jesse.

Joe steps into the living room, stands facing them.

JOE (CONT'D)

I'm unarmed Jesse, you can let her go. Sara, Jesse here's the best shot with a gat I've ever seen, when he lets you go you sit on the couch and don't do anything stupid.

Jesse lets Sara go and trains the gat on Joe.

JOE (CONT'D)

He's coming here Jess. My Looper, is gonna come here.

JESSE

I gotta take you in man.

JOE

I got near a ton in pure silver, I take my looper back in and get right with Abe, whatever he gives me back I'll split it with you.

JESSE
Was that your plan?

JOE
Ok. It's yours, all of it

JESSE
Are you delusional? You aint gettin
right with no one. As long as
Abe's got one Gat Man standing,
he'll be hunting you till his dying
day.

Joe's face falling.

INT. APARTMENT 205

Old Joe, gun ready, down the darkened hallway towards the door at the end with a rainbow on it. He puts his hand on the knob.

INT. FARMHOUSE LIVING ROOM

JESSE
We're going now. We're gonna go to
my truck, you're gonna

CREAK. Cid on the stairs, sleepy eyed. Jesse, purely on instinct, spins and draws on Cid.

Cid's POV - Jesse's gun, snapping like a snake, barrel leveled at him. Cid makes a strange shouting noise, falls back.

Everything slows down.

INT. APARTMENT 205 - EARLY MORNING

A DOOR FRAME - kicked open with all the violence in the world. Old Joe sweeps into the small apartment, gun drawn. Suzie cooking in a robe, opens her mouth to scream.

INT. FARMHOUSE FOYER / LIVING ROOM

The room darkens. As if the sun passed behind a cloud.

Jesse realizes it's a kid. Lowers his gun. But Cid is mid-scream, falling back, his foot misses the step and he tumbles down the stairs.

Confused, terrified, falling. Joe runs into the foyer, to catch Cid. Sara runs behind him.

The room is very dark now. Knick-knacks around the room rattle, then LIFT INTO THE AIR. All of them. Floating. Spinning. Sara's LIGHTER, on the coffee table: it RISES into the air.

INT. APARTMENT 205

Old Joe shoves Suzie out of the way, charges down the hallway.

INT. FARMHOUSE FOYER / LIVING ROOM

Joe is almost to Cid, who is still tumbling, nearly at the bottom of the stairs.

INT. APARTMENT 205

Old Joe swiftly moves down the hall to a door decorated with unicorn stickers. Pushes the door open. Gun in hand. Blackness within.

INT. FARMHOUSE FOYER / LIVING ROOM

But just before he reaches him, Sara shoves Joe from behind. Shoving him TOWARDS THE FRONT DOOR. He's confused but her face is set.

Cid hits the hardwood floor of the foyer, face contorted with rage now, hand raised to Jesse, palm outstretched. Screaming. His scream louder than it should be.

Bigger things in the living room RISE OFF THE GROUND. Chairs. The couch. And Jesse. He rises five feet in the air, terrified.

INT. APARTMENT 205

Old Joe readies his gun, staring into the blackness. But his eyes lower. He touches his temple. Remembering.

INT. FARMHOUSE FOYER / LIVING ROOM (OLD JOE'S MEMORIES)

Sara pulls Joe through the front door, and he looks back and sees Jesse suspended in the air and Cid on the ground screaming like an animal

INT. APARTMENT 205

Old Joe's face. Remembering.

INT. FARMHOUSE FOYER (OLD JOE MEMORY)

Sara pulls Joe across the threshold, and looking back he sees this:

Jesse explodes in a bright red fan of blood.

Frozen in a tableau - Cid screaming, raw power. Jesse EXPLODING. A bright red fan.

INT. APARTMENT 205

Old Joe's eyes lift. Realizing.

OLD JOE
The Rainmaker.

A bare bulb hanging from the ceiling turns on.

A six year old girl's room. But the only person in it is Kid Blue. He shoots Old Joe with a blue tazer.

EXT. FRONT PORCH

Joe and Sara fall out and down the stairs.

The front door and windows EXPLODE in a burst of splinters and glass.

INT. APARTMENT 205

Old Joe hits the ground, mouth foaming, paralyzed. Knowing the answer now, knowing the who and the how but helpless and defeated.

Kid Blue kicks him in the face.

EXT. FARMHOUSE FRONT LAWN - MOMENTS LATER

Moments after the blast. Joe and Sara lie in the dirt. Jesse's TRUCK parked nearby.

Joe stirs first. Stands shakily. The front door jam is splintered. Windows broken. He goes inside. Sara gets up, staggers in after him.

SARA
Cid! Cid!

JOE (O.S.)
Cid!

EXT. BACK OF FARMHOUSE

Joe bursts out of the screen door, holding his Blunderbuss and wiping off Jesse's gat.

Bloody Cid-sized footprints lead out the screen door and streak across the lawn, into the cane.

Sara comes out after Joe, sees him heading for the cane.

SARA

What are you doing with those guns?
What are you going to do?

She lunges for him, wild. Wrenches his arm and he spins, throwing her to the ground.

JOE

How did your sister die?

Sara holds his gaze. Then everything breaks inside her and she collapses in sobs. Heaving. Joe rages

JOE (CONT'D)

How did your sister die? Is that
what happened to her, did he kill
her like that?

This breaks Sara out of her sobs

SARA

No! No he was climbing a
bookshelf, it fell back on him. He
has no control, he gets scared, it
explodes.

JOE

Jesus what is he some TK freak

SARA

Joe someday he'll learn to control
it

JOE

Yeah I know he will and imagine
what he's gonna do

SARA

If he did good with it! If he grew
up with me raising him, if he grew
up good-

JOE

He doesn't.

Joe heads to the cane, Sara scampers after him but slips on the wet grass, and Joe hits the cane with a head start.

SARA

You stay away from him! Cid! Cid!

She runs into the cane.

EXT. CANE FIELD - WITH SARA

WITH SARA as she stumbles blindly through the tall stalks.

SARA
Cid! Make a noise baby, call to
me! Cid!

WITH JOE through the cane, following traces of blood on the stalks.

SARA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You stay away from Joe, you come to
me! Cid!

Tries cocking the GAT but it's broken. Tosses it, wields the Blunderbuss.

INT. SMALL CROP CLEARING

Joe emerges from the cane.

Cid crouches at one end of the small clearing. He looks at Joe. Terrified. Half covered in blood. Hair matted over one eye.

Joe looks back at him. Approaches him, gun not raised, but in hand. Cid, like a frightened animal. A long moment.

And just like that, Joe puts his hand on Cid's head. Cid leans against his legs, crying.

Sara bursts into the clearing, sees this. Runs to Cid and embraces him, wiping the blood from his face. Joe steps back.

JOE
Right now two things have happened.
My loop knows Cid's the kid he's
looking for, and my gang knows I'm
here. So in fifteen minutes one or
both is coming down that highway.
You pack up the Gat Man's truck,
whatever you can fit, and you drive
North away from the city.

One last look between them as Sara realizes what he's doing

SARA
Thank you.

and he vanishes into the stalks, towards the highway.

EXT. CITY STREETS - MORNING

From a high vantage point. Cars, bikes, Gat Men on foot, all heading towards the club. An army, all meeting at the Belle Aurore. Massing to attack.

INT. ABE'S OFFICE

Crowded with Gat Men, all preparing.

GAT MAN 1

We got everyone here. All our men.

ABE

Arm 'em up, let's go.

BUZZZZ. Abe turns, annoyed, and sees the security monitor. On the screen - Kid Blue rips the sack off and holds Old Joe's bloodied face up to the camera.

KID BLUE (ON SPEAKER)

I got him Abe. I got him.

ABE

Well shhhhheeyit.

INT. COAT CHECK

The door buzzes open. Kid pushes Old Joe through the long entrance hallway, past a dozen Gat Men, who watch him with shocked amazement.

KID BLUE

That's right motherfuckers.

Old Joe's hands bound back. Kid Blue glows. He comes to the tiny coat check room, and Big Craig stops him, then sees Old Joe.

BIG CRAIG

Hoh.

KID BLUE

I got him. Knew he was sweet on this one particular whore, so I checked her building.

BIG CRAIG

They found Joe too though, in a farm on the east side. That's why all the Gats are here, the whole crew's arming up to make a sweep.

KID BLUE

Joe fuck Joe, save your bullets I
got the Loop. Not such a fuck up
huh? I'm taking him up to see Abe

This happens very fast:

Old Joe uses his legs to kick himself off the wall and back into Kid Blue, SLAMMING him against the opposite wall.

Old Joe grabs (behind his back) Kid Blue's gun, and blasts one shot through the chains binding his wrists and into the Kid's midsection.

He whips the gun from behind his back and shoots Big Craig in the face. Then blasts the Gat Men in the entrance hallway while he reaches into the coat check and pulls an automatic rifle.

He blasts like hell into the hallway. A few shots return but mostly the men are trapped. Then it's over. All is smoky still for a moment.

Old Joe stares at the exit door ajar, down the long hallway jammed with bodies. Then at the passage that leads deeper into the club.

A Gat Man runs in, and Old Joe shoots him down.

He steps into the coat check and loads his pockets with guns and grenades. Then launches himself into passageway towards the club.

INT. BACKSTAGE

Old Joe weaves his way through the backstage area, chucking grenades in front of him, then unloading his automatic rifle into the smoky aftermath.

And with a mixture of dumb luck and skill from years of being gangland muscle takes out Gat Man after Gat Man.

The corridors are tight, twisty. Old Joe uses that. Throwing grenades. Blasting away. Purging. Killing everyone he lays eyes on. Wiping them out. All the bad guys.

It's horrible. Men maimed, bleeding and crying, dying the way people actually die from gunshots. Old Joe forges on, deeper.

INT. ABE'S DEN

Abe and two Gat Men, guns out, crouched behind the table. Watching the door. A display screen shows Abe's office.

ON THE MONITOR - Old Joe kicks the office door open. Takes it in, the office. Hammer on the desk. He reloads a gun. Eyes find the door to Abe's inner den.

Abe watches this, eyes dull. Shouts at the door

ABE

Joe. Guess I put the gun in that kid's hand, huh Joe. Guess everything comes back around. Like your goddamn ties.

ON THE MONITOR - Old Joe. Breathing hard. Reloaded. Closes the gun.

Abe lowers his eyes to his door, and what's about to come through it. Just as it bursts open we

CUT TO:

INT. COAT CHECK - LATER

Kid Blue's eyes flutter open. He lifts himself painfully. Checks his chest. Most of the shot caught his shoulder, his chest is grazed.

The Gat Men in the hall. Big Craig. All dead.

INT. BACKSTAGE

Kid Blue wanders the smoky halls. Dead and dying men.

INT. ABE'S DEN

Abe, shot once in the head, twice in the chest. Kid Blue stands over them. Stunned. Tears well in his eyes.

Then on the wall, he sees the map. The farm circled in red.

EXT. HIGHWAY

Joe breaks out of the cane, panting. He steps out into the middle of the highway.

Storm clouds on the horizon. He cleans and readies his Blunderbuss.

Joe waits. Then, a CLOUD OF DUST on the distant highway. He tenses. The cloud gets closer. It is a truck. An armored truck.

Joe squints. It's the ARMORED TRUCK that Kid Blue loaded his gold bricks into. The front windshield blown in.

The truck stops fifty feet away, and Old Joe steps out. He throws a gold bar, which lands in the dusty highway between them.

OLD JOE

You take this truck, you take your money, and you go live your life. No one's coming after you. I fixed it.

JOE

And you go kill the boy. That's how you fix it.

OLD JOE

You're goddamn right I'm gonna kill that boy. You got your life back.

JOE

My life? Your life. Becoming you.

Joe raises his Blunderbuss and FIRES. Too far away, the shot scatters. The old man flinches, backs away.

Joe walks forward towards Old Joe, stepping over the gold.

OLD JOE

Stupid little shit! You let him live, he's gonna take away everything you got! Everything I got! You seen what the boy's gonna become.

JOE

I haven't seen that yet.

Joe fires again, close enough now to draw blood off Old Joe's chest and knock him back.

Out of nowhere a SLAT BIKE careens around the van, which has until now blocked our line of sight down the highway.

Kid Blue.

The bike clips Joe's leg, sending him spinning violently to the dusty pavement.

The bike shoots off down the highway, a cloud of dust in its wake. It takes a hundred yards for the Kid to pull it to a stop and spin it around.

Joe is hurt bad. He grapples for his blunderbuss.

Kid Blue guns the engine, gat in hand. Levels it, steady as a rock.

Joe shoots at the Kid, but he's out of range, the gun fires scattershot.

Kid Blue fires, a bullet hits dangerously close to Joe.

Panicked, Joe begins firing at the pavement around him, round after fiery round.

Kicking up dust. Lots of dust. Raising a cloud.

KID BLUE'S POV - zooming towards Joe, now obscured in a cloud of dust and smoke. He fires his gat into the cloud, tries to slow the bike but can't in time.

In the dust cloud Joe hears the bike roaring down upon him. He covers up and when he feels the bike roaring past blindly FIRES his buss.

A moment later the bike emerges from the dust cloud. Without a driver. It skids, crashes.

When the dust clears away Joe lies still, arms over his head.

Besides him, the broken remains of Kid Blue.

Painfully, Joe raises himself. Then realizes:

Old Joe is gone.

EXT. FARMHOUSE FRONT LAWN - MORNING

Clothes and boxes piled in the back of Jesse's truck. Sara loads one last bundle. Calls to Cid, in the front seat.

SARA

Ok baby, we're going. Put your seatbelt on baby.

They pull out and chug down the dirt road.

EXT. DIRT ROAD

They roll down the dirt road that leads to the highway.

At the far end of it, at a distance but walking towards them, is the dark figure of Old Joe. Gun in hand.

Sara hesitates a minute, then guns it. Straight for him.

CID

Stop

SARA
Duck down baby

CID
Stop please he can shoot us

SARA
Just stay down

Half the distance closed, but he's still far off. A shot cracks the front grill, another cracks the windshield.

CID
Stop!

The truck lurches horribly, and flips straight back in a graceful arc, landing upsidedown.

Sara and Cid, dazed, hanging by their seatbelts.

SARA
Are you ok?

CID
I'm sorry

In the rear view mirror, Sara sees Old Joe getting closer.

SARA
You're ok. C'mon baby we have to run now.

She unfastens them and they both climb out, and Old Joe stops suddenly, taking aim.

Sara pulls Cid behind the flatbed for cover as two bullets glance off the overturned truck.

SARA (CONT'D)
We're going into the fields. I want you to run, I'll be right behind you, don't look back. Okay?

Old Joe lowers his gun and runs towards them.

SARA (CONT'D)
Go!

They both sprint off the road.

EXT. FIELD - WITH CID & SARA

The wide bare field. Cid runs ahead towards the cane, Sara not far behind. The earth soft, their feet sink in, like a nightmare.

EXT. FIELD - WITH OLD JOE

Old Joe crosses the road and chases them onto the field, firing at them on the run.

EXT. FIELD - WITH CID & SARA

Bullets thunk in the earth. Sara stumbles, exhausted. Cid turns, about thirty feet ahead of her.

EXT. FIELD - WITH OLD JOE

Old Joe stops running and steadies his gun.

EXT. FIELD - WITH CID & SARA

A distant gunshot CRACK. A fan of crimson blood sprays from Cid's head. His neck twists and he crumples to the ground.

SARA

NO!

Sara is stopped in her tracks by an invisible force.

SARA (CONT'D)

No Cid no!

The topsoil of the earth around them RISES in a fine dust.

EXT. FIELD - WITH OLD JOE

Old Joe reacts as the topsoil rises, an eerie moment.

EXT. FIELD - WITH CID & SARA

Sara struggles to reach Cid but is still about twenty feet behind him.

Cid raises his head. The bullet grazed his jawline. Not severe but lots of blood.

Cid's eyes locked hateful on Old Joe. Blood soaks his shirt. Far behind him, the barn splinters apart as if in a tornado.

SARA

No!

With a sudden jolt the field ripples out from Cid, like a stone thrown in a pond.

Sara lifts into the air.

EXT. FIELD - WITH OLD JOE

Old Joe is hefted off the ground. His gun falls.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Joe speeds onto the dirt road in the ARMORED TRUCK. He spots the field but at that moment a seismic wave of wind and dirt hits. The Armored Truck skids and topples over, bursting like a cheaply wrapped gift.

EXT. FIELD - WITH CID & SARA

Cid stands. Intense, eyes dark, in another place.

EXT. FIELD - WITH OLD JOE

Old Joe, suspended mid-air, realizes what's about to happen. He lifts his hand defensively and SCREAMS

EXT. FIELD - WITH CID & SARA

Cid's face straining, about to scream.

Then words filter through the din. Faint gentle words.

SARA

It's ok baby

Cid's focus adjusts from Old Joe to Sara. She floats, reaching out to him. Eyes calming, repeating

SARA (CONT'D)

It's ok, mommy loves you. It's
alright. You're alright. Mommy
loves you baby. It's ok.

Cid's eyes hold hers, something big changes, and then his face breaks. He barely mouths the word

CID

Mom

And everything FALLS. Sara, Old Joe, the earth. All comes crashing down.

EXT. DIRT ROAD

The sugar cane shivers then is still.

Joe crawls from the truck. Gasping for breath. Gets his bearings. In the far distance across the field, Old Joe, Sara and Cid.

Too far.

EXT. FIELD - WITH CID & SARA

Cid runs to Sara, who sits up slowly. They embrace.

SARA
You did good, baby. You did so
good. I love you.

Behind them, Old Joe struggles to his feet. Sara kisses Cid.

SARA (CONT'D)
Into the fields. Run now baby.
Go.

CID
No

SARA
Go now

CID
No no mom no

SARA
You go!

She pushes him away and Cid runs. Then she turns. Standing her ground. Directly between Old Joe and Cid.

Old Joe TRIPS in the mud, fumbles his gun. Sees Cid approaching the safety of the SUGAR CANE. Blocked by Sara.

OLD JOE
Move!

EXT. FIELD - WITH JOE

Still too far away, struggling as fast as he can, helpless as Old Joe closes in on Sara. He fires his buss at Old Joe, but is way out of range.

EXT. FIELD - WITH OLD JOE & SARA

Old Joe gets his gun, rises with it. Cid about to hit the stalks. Sara between them.

OLD JOE
Move goddammit!

EXT. FIELD - WITH CID

Cid nears the cane fields, running. Seconds from safety.

EXT. FIELD - WITH OLD JOE & SARA

Old Joe. Gun raised. Pocket watch wrapped around it.

No time to move around Sara. Now or never.

EXT. FIELD - WITH JOE

Joe running, useless gun in hand.

JOE

No!

EXT. FIELD - WITH OLD JOE & SARA

Sara, not going anywhere. Old Joe almost pleading

OLD JOE

Move

His finger squeezes the trigger

EXT. FIELD - WITH JOE

Joe running. Time slows.

JOE (V.O.)

Then I saw it.

Watching:

EXT. FIELD - OLD JOE & SARA

Everything is a little surreal. Dream-like. Slow.

JOE (V.O.)

I saw a mom who would die for her son.

Old Joe shoots Sara.

We hear no gunshot. Just the wind in the cane, and young Joe's breathing. She falls, giving him a clear shot at Cid.

EXT. FIELD - WITH JOE

Joe watching:

EXT. FIELD - WITH CID

Just as Old Joe gets him in his sights, Cid breaches the cane fields and is gone, vanishing in the stalks.

JOE (V.O.)

A man who would kill for his wife.

Old Joe lowers his gun, stunned but still frantic. He stumbles towards the cane, still far off, his face breaking.

Trips, falls in the mud. Cane field vast in front of him. Cid is gone. He lost him. He holds his pocket watch. Sobs. Lost.

EXT. FIELD - WITH JOE

Joe watching:

EXT. CANE FIELDS

On the horizon, a train.

EXT. FIELD - WITH JOE

Joe watching:

INT./EXT. FREIGHT TRAIN CAR

Cid sits in a darkened car, holding a bloody rag to his jaw.

JOE (V.O.)

A boy, angry and alone.

EXT. FIELD - WITH JOE

Joe watching, seeing:

INT./EXT. FREIGHT TRAIN CAR

Cid's face. Bloody. Dirty. His eyes full of hate. The train rumbles towards the dark city.

JOE (V.O.)

Laid out in front of him, the bad path. I saw it. And the path was a circle.

EXT. FIELD - WITH JOE

Joe watches. Sees, in his mind's eye, all of this.

JOE (V.O.)

Round and round.

All we saw was in Joe's head, and we are still in the moment where Old Joe is about to shoot Sara. They're there, on the horizon, Cid running towards the cane, Old Joe with his gun raised about to shoot, Sara between them.

Time hanging, slowed nearly to a stop. A moment of decision.

Across the field, Sara and Joe lock eyes.

Joe turns his blunderbuss back on himself.

JOE (V.O.)
So I changed it.

He FIRES into his own chest.

EXT. FIELD - WITH OLD JOE & SARA

A distant shot is heard.

Old Joe's face flinches. He just starts to realize something and Old Joe DISAPPEARS.

Sara stands shell shocked just for a moment. Then she doesn't process any of it, she just turns and yells

SARA
CID!

EXT. FIELD - WITH CID

Cid stops just shy of the cane. Turns back to the field. There's his mom, Sara, unharmed and smiling. The bad man is gone. The field is empty.

EXT. FIELD - SEEN FROM JOE'S POV

We don't see Joe, but far across the field Cid runs to his mom, into her arms. Sara lifts him, holds him.

EXT. FIELD - WITH CID & SARA

She carries him. Walking fast back towards a far distant figure lying still on the edge of the field. Joe.

She slows. Stops. Looking at him, far away.

CID
Where's Joe?

SARA
He had to go away, baby.

She kisses him. And heads back towards the house to take care of her son.

INT. CID'S BATHROOM

Sara bathes Cid, dresses the wound on his jaw.

INT. CID'S BEDROOM

She tucks Cid in, holds him close. Kisses his forehead.

EXT. FARM HOUSE PORCH - LATE AFTERNOON

Sara emerges from the ruined front door, crosses the porch.

EXT. FARMHOUSE FRONT LAWN

Sara crosses the lawn, and walks across the field.

EXT. ROAD

Sara walks down the road, past the overturned armored car. A huge pile of silver spilled into the dirt. Gleaming in the sun.

She sees it, takes a moment. Then cuts into the field and walks towards Joe.

EXT. EDGE OF CANE FIELDS

Joe's body. Sara goes to him, slowly. She kneels beside him. His pocket watch in the dirt. Open. Ticking away. Around and around.

She closes it.

Touches his hair. Her eyes: thank you. The wind through the cane.

The sun breaks through the clouds.

INT. CID'S BEDROOM

While Cid sleeps peacefully, a bandage on his jaw, his wound healing. Safe.

FADE TO WHITE

CUT TO BLACK