THE ELEVENTH CROSSING

Written by Scott Zimmerman

Revised screenplay - reader copy
Prepared from the screenplay incorporated in Volume II.
Book commentary omitted. Layout reflowed for reading.
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EXT. SAVANNAH RIVER - SHOALS - DAY

December. The river runs a quarter mile wide and fast, breaking white over a field of rock. Bare trees line both banks. Upstream, traffic streams over the I-20 bridge.

On the Georgia bank, a bicycle lies on its side in the brush, its back wheel still spinning.

A MAN in a tan canvas work coat wades quickly into the river, fully dressed. The low sun is behind him. A shape, no face.

The water climbs to his knees, then his thighs. He sucks air through his teeth at the cold and keeps going.

UNDERWATER: a black ankle monitor strapped to bare skin, just above a soaked sock. A small green light blinks.

He plants a foot. The rock rolls. He drops to his chest, and the cold knocks the breath out of him in one gasp.

The monitor BUZZES against the bone. It keeps buzzing.

Across the white water, a notch in the far tree line.

The current takes his legs, and he goes under. The surface closes. Beneath it, the buzzing, muffled. Then only the river.

TITLE CARD: FIVE DAYS

EXT. RIVERVIEW PARK - BIKE PATH - DAY

A sign at the lot entrance: RIVERVIEW PARK, CITY OF NORTH AUGUSTA, S.C. A walking path around an empty grass hill.

NEECY WALLACE (29) walks the path in a puffer jacket, talking to a camera phone as if she has done it a thousand times. Shoulders squared, chin level.

The phone rides a cheap gimbal in the hands of KEON MAYFIELD (30), who walks backward ahead of her in a thin windbreaker zipped to the throat. His eyes leave her every few seconds and come back.

NEECY
Hey, y’all, it’s Neecy. In December, the sun’s gone by five-thirty, and it does not wait while you--

She grabs the gimbal and swings the lens around at him. He turns his face to the field in the same motion. She gets an ear.

NEECY (CONT’D)
Six comments asking if Gimbal Guy has a face or just steady hands.

KEON
Tell them steady hands.

NEECY
A man in Evans thinks you’re a tripod with feelings.

KEON
Evans is close.

She loses it, bent double, waving the lens away.

NEECY
Back to one. Keep ducking, and I’m shooting you

in silhouette. Nobody ever sees your face. You’ll be a shape. A rumor. A man in the credits.

He walks backward to one. While she shakes off the giggles, his eyes travel.

The hill: a LONE MAN in a fleece vest throws disc after disc across the empty field, then walks out to collect them.

At the parking lot, some empty cars, and a gray sedan facing the field. A man sits behind the wheel.

NEECY (CONT’D)
You with me?

KEON
Always.

NEECY
Hey, y’all, it’s Neecy--

In the distance, a SIREN rises.

Keon goes completely still. The gimbal drifts until the lens points at her sneakers. He lets it.

NEECY (CONT’D)
Keon. You’re filming my feet. My feet do not have a channel.

The siren climbs, peaks, and fades into the city. Only then does he move.

Neecy lowers her eyes and waits until he’s ready.

NEECY (CONT’D)
(gently)

That’s an ambulance. It’s going to somebody

else’s bad day.

KEON
I know. I’m all right.

NEECY
Eight weeks out. Still antsy.

KEON
I’m fine. Let’s take it from the top.

EXT. RIVERVIEW PARK - BENCH - MOMENTS LATER

They sit on a bench by the field. She scrubs through takes on the phone. He watches the lot.

NEECY
My interview’s Thursday.

KEON
Five days.

NEECY
They picked me for a slot across post. The big building with no windows. And every time they move you up, they open you up like a can. Every account, every man I ever let hold my phone. Thursday morning, a man in a tie asks about everybody close to me. After lunch, somebody else hooks me to a machine that does what my mama always does, which is know when I’m

lying.

KEON
And you tell them.

NEECY
Whatever I know, I say. I don’t get to keep anything from them.

He waits. She keeps her eyes on the screen.

NEECY (CONT’D)
Last time, I didn’t have to put you down.

KEON
Last time you’d stopped writing.

NEECY
I stopped mailing so I wouldn’t have to tell them.

For a moment, nothing. Then she looks at him.

NEECY (CONT’D)
They’ll ask what you did, how long you did it, and what a staff sergeant is doing with you.

KEON
What are you doing with me?

A long look.

NEECY
I’m putting you down.

KEON
Put me down.

She leans into him. He puts his arm around her, and over the top of

her head his eyes go back to the lot.

NEECY
We had a plan. I finish at Fort Huachuca, I come home, and we have a baby.

KEON
I know. You even had it on a calendar.

A disc comes rolling down the hill on its edge, wobbling across the dead grass. It flops over at Neecy’s feet.

Up the slope, the lone man jogs down with his hands raised in surrender. BRANDON PHIPPS (45): fleece vest, grinning.

BRANDON
That’s mine. Guilty as charged. My rollers go wild sometimes.

NEECY
(handing it over)

Sir, your Frisbee rolled into my shot like it had a plan.

BRANDON
Technically, we call them discs, ma’am.

(nodding at her phone)

Did I wreck your shot?

NEECY
No problem. It was already wrecked by a man who won’t show his face.

BRANDON
What’s your vlog?

NEECY
Neecy Shoots.

She offers the playback, and Brandon leans in. On the little screen, Neecy walks the path with the low sun behind her, haloed.

BRANDON
You backlit yourself on purpose. Most folks point a phone at the sun and pray.

(looking up at her)

And you stand like somebody’s about to inspect you.

NEECY
I stand like my mama raised me.

BRANDON
Your mama a drill sergeant?

NEECY
Worse. Church usher. White gloves and one look that could stop a hymn in the second verse.

He laughs. She smiles and adds nothing. Brandon waits a beat for more. It doesn’t come. Keon watches him wait.

Brandon turns to Keon, takes in the flat stare, and nods as if it were a handshake.

BRANDON
You play?

KEON
No, sir. Never tried.

Brandon pulls a disc from his bag. Around the rim, in black marker: BRANDON PHIPPS and a phone number.

BRANDON
Every player writes his number on the rim. You lose one in the woods, another player finds it and calls you up, so it finds its way home.

(tapping the ink)

I’m Brandon. Card-carrying PDGA member since 2001. Lessons are free.

KEON
Nothing’s free, sir. Not for me.

BRANDON
Lessons are. It’s the discs that bankrupt you. I own three hundred of them and no garage. Here -- you can keep this one.

He sets the disc in Keon’s hands, winks at Neecy, and jogs back up the hill.

Keon’s phone BUZZES. The screen reads PRUITT - PO. He stands and takes three steps away.

KEON
(into phone)

Yes, sir.

PRUITT (V.O.)
(dry, unhurried)

Mr. Mayfield. It is four fifty-eight, and I am standing at your door. Your log says the canal until five.

KEON
Up the trail a ways.

PRUITT (V.O.)
You have ten minutes to get home.

He turns back. Neecy sees his face and stops smiling.

KEON
My officer’s at my door. I’m sorry. I have to go.

NEECY
Then go be seen. Go.

He kisses her, quick, then not quick, then goes.

NEECY (CONT’D)
Tomorrow? Same light?

KEON
(already moving)

Same light.

He jogs, then runs, toward the lot.

On the hill, Brandon stops mid-throw. He lowers the disc and watches Keon run.

INT./EXT. KEON’S CAR (MOVING) - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

A tired Altima with a cracked dash. Keon drives fast and exactly at the limit, eyes on the mirror. Wedged in the dash vent: a business card. GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SUPERVISION. R. PRUITT. A phone number.

On the passenger seat, his phone shows his last text to PRUITT - PO: “Augusta Canal towpath, 3-5 pm.”

The car crosses the bridge. A green sign slides past:

WELCOME TO GEORGIA

Keon breathes out, long and slow.

EXT. RIVERWATCH APARTMENTS - STAIRS - DAY

A two-story complex off Riverwatch Parkway. A neighbor’s railing blinks with Christmas lights. A bicycle is chained at the foot of the stairs. Keon bounds up the stairs.

At the top, he stops. Someone is waiting at his door. R. PRUITT (50s): pressed cuffs, reading glasses on a cord, a clipboard tucked under one arm. A man who has seen everything twice. He checks his watch. 5:10.

PRUITT
The canal is five minutes from your door. You took twelve.

KEON
I was farther up than I thought.

PRUITT
Next time, log where you are, Mr. Mayfield. Not where you’re headed.

KEON
Yes, sir.

PRUITT
Bring me proof of employment by Thursday nine a.m. and I take you off the log. Then you can go wherever you want.

(beat)

In Georgia.

Keon closes his eyes.

KEON
And if I don’t have a pay stub by then?

PRUITT
Then I submit a request for a transitional-center bed, and you start sharing a bathroom with twelve men who also didn’t have a pay stub. Keon, I’d rather not.

KEON
Me neither, sir.

Pruitt tucks the clipboard under his arm and goes down the stairs without another word. Keon rests his forehead against his own door.

INT. KEON’S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

One room. A yoga mat on the floor, a card table and chair, an old laptop. On the table lies an opened envelope from FIRST GRANBY AUTO FINANCE: FINAL NOTICE. REPOSSESSION MAY OCCUR WITHOUT FURTHER NOTICE.

Keon sits at the laptop. An online job application, almost done. He scrolls to the last question:

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CONVICTED OF A FELONY? Yes/No

He clicks Yes. SUBMIT.

His inbox chimes before the page finishes loading.

“Thank you for your interest. We have decided to move forward with other candidates.”

The time stamp on the email matches the time stamp on the application. The same minute.

He sets Brandon’s disc on the table and turns it until the phone number comes around the rim.

INT. BRANDON’S TRUCK - GRAVEL LOT - NIGHT

A pickup with a camper shell, parked alone on a gravel lot. One sodium streetlight.

Brandon sits behind the wheel with a laptop propped against it. On the screen, a YouTube channel: NEECY SHOOTS. Rows of thumbnails: GOLDEN HOUR ON A PHONE. STOP SHAKING YOUR SHOTS. RIVERVIEW: MY SATURDAY SPOT.

He scrolls back to summer, to a post-workout clip. The red progress bar under its thumbnail runs all the way across: Neecy, sweaty and grinning, in a black T-shirt with a battalion crest across the chest. He freezes it on the crest.

He clicks over to a folder on his desktop: RIVERVIEW. Long-lens photos, each date-stamped, going back to early October. Neecy on the ramp, alone. Then, from late October on, Neecy and the same man, week after week. The newest is from this afternoon: Neecy, and that man walking backward with a gimbal.

He takes a phone from his vest pocket, opens an app with a plain black icon, holds down a button, and speaks. The warmth is gone from his voice.

BRANDON
(into phone)

Bit one. Riverview Park. Thirty-one videos. In one, a unit crest, military intelligence. Fort Gordon.

(beat)

Bit two. Boyfriend watches parking lots. Phone rang, he ran.

(beat)

Bit three. Ran the boyfriend’s plate. Keon Mayfield. State offender lookup says paroled in October. And all their dates are in South Carolina.

He lets go of the button. The clip sends. Beside it, a small timer counts down from ten, and the message burns away to nothing.

The phone BUZZES in his hand: a number, no name.

He lets it ring twice more. Then he answers.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
Yes.

On the line, before anyone speaks: the hiss of skate blades on ice, a coach’s whistle, children’s voices echoing off a high roof. A rink.

BUYER (V.O.)
(calm, unaccented)

Thank you for the recording. What did she give you?

BRANDON
Nothing. She’s careful.

BUYER (V.O.)
Good. Please do not ask her for anything. Not one question. Build it a piece at a time, from everywhere but her. When the file is complete, she will look at it and see that the only thing left to protect is the last piece.

BRANDON
That’s how I did Fayetteville.

BUYER (V.O.)
Fayetteville took you eight months, Mr. Phipps. You promised me Christmas on this one.

BRANDON
I’ll make it.

BUYER (V.O.)
I’m sure you will. Payment stops on the twentieth regardless.

The line goes dead. Brandon sets the phone down. Before his hand leaves it, it BUZZES again. A new number. No name.

He clears his throat, and the grin comes back on.

BRANDON
This is Brandon.

INTERCUT - INT. KEON’S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Keon at the card table, the disc under his hand.

KEON
Hi. It’s Keon Mayfield. From the river. You gave me a disc.

BRANDON
The cameraman. Calling about your free lesson?

KEON
I’m calling about a job, actually. If you know of one. I’ll do anything.

Brandon’s eyes go to the laptop, to the folder marked RIVERVIEW.

BRANDON
Funny you should call. Meet me at Lake Olmstead. Nine AM tomorrow. I’ll bring the coffee.

KEON
I’ll be there. Thank you.

He hangs up and sits very straight.

INT. BRANDON’S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

On the console, a second phone lights up, this one in a purple glitter case.

INSERT - TEXT MESSAGE

Under a photo of a gap-toothed eight-year-old: MADDIE

“r u coming home for christmas”

BACK TO SCENE.

He smooths his hair before he types, as if she could see him. “Home for Christmas. Pinky promise.”

Three dots. Then:

“u said that at thanksgiving”

He types, deletes, types again. “This time there’s a pinky involved. That’s binding in 48 states.”

A dozen pinky emojis come back. He holds the smile until the screen goes dark. Then it drops.

He pulls a roll of twenties from his pocket and counts it under the dome light. He counts it a second time.

TITLE CARD: FOUR DAYS

EXT. LAKE OLMSTEAD - LOT - MORNING

Tall pines and bare oaks, fog caught in the branches. Somewhere in the distance, the rattle of a disc hitting chains. Some disc golfers moving to their next hole.

Brandon sits on the open tailgate of his truck with two coffees. He holds one up as Keon steers the Altima into the spot beside him.

BRANDON
Black. You look like a man who quit paying for sugar.

KEON
Thank you. I haven’t been buying coffee.

BRANDON
Then this one’s on the company.

Keon takes the coffee. Doesn’t drink it.

Behind Brandon, through the open camper shell: a sleeping pad, a camp stove, milk crates of discs.

KEON
You live back here?

BRANDON
Best free campsite in Richmond County. Gravel lot at Eisenhower Park. One streetlight, no neighbors. I sleep like a baby.

He sips his coffee.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
I run a pro tour channel. I’d like you to follow my practices and tournaments. Film every shot that matters. My camera guy quit on me in Charlotte.

KEON
That’s the job?

BRANDON
You carry the rig, you frame the throws, you keep your mouth shut on the tee. Ten dollars an hour, through my company. W-2. A pay stub with your name spelled right.

KEON
I need a stub by Thursday. Nine a.m.

BRANDON
Payroll runs every other Wednesday. Your first one lands the day before.

Keon’s shoulders, hunched since we met him, come down an inch.

KEON
That’s cutting it close.

BRANDON
That’s on time.

Keon studies him.

KEON
I should tell you, I’m on parole. That’s what the stub is for.

BRANDON
I figured. I did eleven months once. Somebody gave me a job after, no questions asked, and I’ve been paying on that loan ever since.

Keon waits for the rest of it.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
For being twenty-two and stupid in a car that wasn’t mine.

KEON
Why me? You only saw me hold a phone for five minutes.

BRANDON
You held her camera like a man who knows he’s being watched. That’s the whole job. Knowing where the eyes are.

(sipping)

Any other dates I should know, besides your officer?

Keon looks at him for a moment. Then at the trees.

KEON
On Thursday, my girl sits down with a man in a suit about her clearance. I’m on her list. I’d like to be on it with a job.

Brandon keeps his eyes on the lake and drinks his coffee.

BRANDON
Then let’s get you a job.

He lays a single sheet on the tailgate with a pen. NEW HIRE INFORMATION.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
Payroll wants somebody to call in case you get lost.

Keon fills it in slowly. Under EMERGENCY CONTACT, he writes without a pause: DENISE WALLACE, and her cell number, from memory.

Brandon slides the page into the pocket of his disc bag without a glance. From the same pocket, he takes a crisp white envelope and sets it on the tailgate between them. Printed in the corner: LONGLEAF MEDIA GROUP, LLC.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
Advance. Payroll takes a minute to catch up with a new man.

Keon looks at the envelope. His hands stay on his knees.

KEON
I haven’t done anything yet.

BRANDON
You will. Starting now.

He slides off the tailgate and lifts a camera rig from the truck bed: a compact camera on a shoulder mount, a shotgun mic, a padded bag. Keon folds the envelope into his pocket and takes the rig.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
Rule one. Phones stay in the car. Always. Players don’t want them buzzing on the course.

KEON
If my PO calls, I have to pick up. That’s not my rule. It’s the law.

BRANDON
You’re at work. Work is the one place he wants you. Check your phone after the front nine.

Brandon drops his own phone through his truck window onto the seat. Then he waits.

Keon types to PRUITT - PO: “Work. Lake Olmstead Park. 9-1.” SENT.

Above it, the thread is a column of his own green bubbles going back eight weeks. Not one reply.

A gray bubble appears beneath them: “Good.”

Keon reads the word twice.

He opens the Altima, leans in, and pops the glovebox. Behind him, Brandon’s eyes go to the dashboard. To the card wedged in the vent.

R. PRUITT. The phone number. Brandon reads it once and looks away.

Keon sets his phone in the glovebox and closes it.

Brandon shoulders his disc bag. Clipped to the strap rides a tiny action camera, red light on, its lens aimed back over his shoulder.

Keon shoulders the rig and follows him down the first fairway, into the trees.

EXT. LAKE OLMSTEAD - DISC GOLF - AFTERNOON

A concrete tee pad. Two hundred feet down a tunnel of trees, the basket waits by the edge of the road, its chains catching thin winter light.

Brandon fans a stack of drivers in his hand like a poker player choosing a card. On his strap, the little camera watches behind them.

BRANDON
I’ll need you evenings, too. Golden hour sells. If your girl works nights, I can borrow you when she’s busy, so I’m not the other woman.

KEON
I’ll ask.

BRANDON
Every Army post in this country has a disc golf course nearby. Bragg. Campbell. Hood. Benning. Gordon, right down the road. Soldiers love this game.

KEON
So you play near bases?

BRANDON
It’s just where I find tournaments.

He throws. The disc hisses out low, holds, then fades left around a trunk and settles near the target. Keon follows it with the rig.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
Spring, I play the southern swing. Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas. You’d see the country.

KEON
I can’t leave Georgia. For two years.

BRANDON
POs sign travel passes for weddings. Funerals. Tournaments, if you ask nice.

KEON
I know. A pass asks where you’re going. Name, address, phone number. Their name goes in my file.

(beat)

Then I’m in theirs.

Brandon stops walking and looks at him.

BRANDON
Two years. That’s a long time to need friends in one state.

They come into the lot. Keon nods at the strap.

KEON
That little camera’s been pointed backward all day.

BRANDON
Fella in Charlotte came up behind me and walked off with eleven hundred dollars of my gear while I was lining up a putt.

Brandon walks up to the cab, drops his disc bag through the window, and glances at the side mirror.

In the mirror, past other cars, sits the gray sedan.

Brandon studies it in the glass. Then he waves at it with two fingers.

Keon follows his eyes to the sedan and looks at it the way he looked at the lot at Riverview: plate, windshield, the shape of the man.

Brandon walks back and drops onto the tailgate.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
Rule two, Keon. Know who’s behind you.

Keon looks back over his shoulder. Past the other cars, the gray sedan hasn’t moved.

EXT. CANAL - RIVERBANK - DAY

Keon stands where the towpath runs close to the river, the Longleaf envelope zipped inside his windbreaker. His phone shows his newest text to PRUITT - PO: “Canal, 3:30-6.”

Below him, the Savannah spreads wide and shallow over the shoals. White water braids between the stones. On the far bank, a gap in the trees near the water.

Neecy comes up the towpath in her puffer and a knit hat, hands jammed in her pockets. She slides one into his.

They walk and look out at the rocks.

KEON
I saw three guys wade all the way across one time. Upstream, where those rocks are. Laughing the whole way.

NEECY
Why would they walk across a river? We have bridges.

KEON
The I-20 bridge doesn’t have a sidewalk, and the downtown bridge is much farther south.

(beat)

I want us to start coming here. This side.

Footsteps on the towpath. SPECIALIST DORSEY comes toward them in a black long-sleeve shirt with a battalion crest on the chest, the same crest Brandon paused on.

Neecy turns her face into Keon’s shoulder and keeps it there until the footsteps pass.

KEON (CONT’D)
Somebody you know?

NEECY
Specialist Dorsey. Runs this towpath every day like the Army pays him by the mile.

(watching Dorsey go)

My whole section runs out here.

KEON
And they’d see you with me.

NEECY
Thursday, they can read about you. Till then, you’re mine, not the section’s.

KEON
Then we keep doing Riverview.

NEECY
It’s okay for you to go there, right?

Keon hesitates. Half a second. She doesn’t catch it.

KEON
It’s fine.

NEECY
Good. Mama got a new phone and needs my help. Give me an hour with her, then Riverview before the light goes.

Keon touches the envelope zipped inside his windbreaker.

KEON
Okay, go to the pavilion.

EXT. RIVERVIEW PARK - PICNIC TABLE - DAY

The Altima is parked facing out. Down in the lot, the gray sedan sits.

A table in a pavilion near the woods. Keon sets down a greasy paper bag and lays out the spread like a winning hand: brisket in foil, two sides each, a thermos of coffee, banana pudding.

Keon takes the bench with his back to the field.

Neecy walks up and stares at the picnic.

NEECY
Who did you rob?

KEON
I got a job. Camera operator. Paycheck Wednesday.

She grabs his face with both hands.

NEECY
A pay stub. You’re gonna be a man with a pay stub. I’m gonna frame it.

She kisses him hard. Then she pulls back, and her eyes narrow.

NEECY (CONT’D)
From the Frisbee man?

KEON
It’s a disc. He’s particular about that.

NEECY
A job from a stranger who just rolled into my shot yesterday.

KEON
Babe, he’s the only one who called back.

NEECY
What’s his whole name?

KEON
Brandon Phipps.

She types it into the notes on her phone.

Keon unzips the windbreaker far enough to show the corner of the white envelope, fat with bills.

NEECY
Cash? In an envelope. Like a DJ at a sweet sixteen.

KEON
It’s an advance. Payroll hasn’t cleared yet.

NEECY
Get it in writing, Keon.

KEON
There’s a pay stub coming Wednesday. That’s writing.

She doesn’t laugh.

NEECY
If something’s off, you’ll see it before I do. You’ve got the eyes for it. Promise me you’ll tell me.

KEON
First thing.

She holds his eyes. Then she nods, and smiles, and her shoulders come down.

NEECY
Thursday, when they ask me what you do, I get to say you work.

KEON
Say it like it’s nothing.

NEECY
I’m gonna say it like it’s everything.

She reaches under the table and lifts a shopping bag onto the bench.

NEECY (CONT’D)
This was supposed to be for Christmas. But I’m not watching you shiver for twelve more days.

Inside: a tan canvas work coat, blanket-lined. He holds it, very still.

NEECY (CONT’D)
You’ve been wearing that windbreaker like you were daring the weather.

He shrugs off the windbreaker and puts on the coat. It fits. He zips it to the throat and leans back against the table, his shoulders loose.

KEON
Supposed to drop to thirty-four tonight.

NEECY
Thank you, weatherman.

She lifts her phone. His hand comes up to block the lens.

NEECY (CONT'D)
Not for the channel. For me.

He lowers the hand.

She films him. He tries to stay serious and fails, and then he's laughing, really laughing, head back.

NEECY (CONT'D)
(from behind the phone)

There he is. I knew he was in there.

She keeps filming. He steals her pudding. She lets him.

INSERT - NEECY'S PHONE

On the screen, Keon licks pudding off a stolen spoon. Far behind him, small at the edge of the field, Brandon with a disc bag stops walking. He raises his phone toward the table.

BACK TO SCENE.

Neecy watches Keon over the top of the phone, not the screen. Keon's back is to the field. Neither of them sees Brandon.

KEON
Thursday I'm off the log. Then I'm driving you to Savannah. Let's see the lights on River Street.

NEECY
That Altima can barely make it out of this parking lot.

KEON
It'll make it. And it's Georgia the whole way.

NEECY
Why would that matter?

KEON
It's a nice state.

She laughs, puzzled. He doesn't explain.

NEECY
Mama wants us the Sunday after Christmas. She’s making sweet potato pie for the boy who ate a whole one in tenth grade and lied about it.

KEON
I only had one piece.

NEECY
You had nine pieces, Keon. She counted.

He grins into the coffee. Then, lightly:

KEON
You on any nights this week?

NEECY
Mids, Tuesday and Wednesday. Why?

KEON
Brandon wants me evenings. I told him I’d stay out of your time.

NEECY
He can have you Tuesday and Wednesday. I’ll be busy guarding America from a swivel chair.

Under the table, Keon thumbs a text to BRANDON: “Tue + Wed nights.”

His thumb stops over SEND. He reads the line again.

He looks across the table at Neecy. Then down at the coat she just gave him.

He sends it.

Across the lot, in the gray sedan, a long lens rests on the steering wheel, trained on the picnic table. The shutter whispers. Neecy laughing. Keon in his new coat.

EXT. GREENEWAY TRAIL - DAY

A paved trail threads through woods above the river. They walk it, her hand in the pocket of his new coat.

NEECY
You know what I love about over here?

KEON
Nobody calls you Sergeant.

NEECY
Yes, nobody feels sorry for me, and nobody asks how you’re doing like you’re a diagnosis. I built Sergeant Wallace out of nothing. Nobody handed me those stripes. I just don’t have to carry her over here.

They walk a few steps without talking. She looks up at him.

NEECY (CONT’D)
What’d you miss most? In there.

KEON
(thinking about it)

Walking somewhere nobody told me to.

She squeezes his hand inside the pocket.

Where a dirt path drops off the trail toward the river, she stops.

A bicycle is shoved deep in a stand of green cane, its handlebars wound in vine. Not dumped. Hidden.

NEECY
Somebody lost their bike.

KEON
Somebody’s coming back for it.

He steps to the head of the path. It drops through a notch in the bare trees to the water. Below, the river flashes white over rock. The shoals. And across them, the Georgia bank, where the towpath runs close to the water.

KEON (CONT’D)
(pointing)

Over there is where we walked on the canal today.

NEECY
Come on. I’m losing my light.

She tugs him back toward the trail by the pocket of his coat.

INT. KEON’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A single lamp on the floor.

Neecy stands in the doorway, a tote bag on her shoulder, taking in the room: the mat, the card table, Brandon’s disc against the wall. Her first time past the door.

NEECY
Eight weeks I wouldn’t climb your stairs. And this is what you were hiding? A yoga mat, laptop, card table, and a Frisbee.

KEON
And a bike. And a coat now.

She walks past the chair, sits cross-legged on his mat, sets the tote beside her, and opens her laptop to a typed list of questions, PRACTICE across the top. He sits on the floor against the wall, still in the coat, his phone face up on the floor beside his knee.

NEECY
I write down everything they’re gonna ask and practice out loud, so my voice doesn’t shake on the real one. Full name?

KEON
Keon Andre Mayfield.

NEECY
(reading)

“How did you meet him?”

KEON
Lucy Laney High School, tenth-grade chemistry. You let me copy part of the final.

NEECY
That is not going in a federal file.

(typing)

“Classmates.”

KEON
What’d you put on the real one? The form you already sent.

Her fingers stop on the keys.

NEECY
There’s a corrections page. You hand it to the investigator first thing.

KEON
So I’m not on it.

NEECY
You will be Thursday.

(reading)

“What was he convicted of?”

KEON
Aggravated battery. One punch, outside a bar on Broad Street. He hit his head on the curb. Nine days in the hospital. Six years for me. Four served. Two on paper.

(beat)

He still gets headaches. They put me in a squad car behind his ambulance. I heard the siren the whole way down Broad Street.

She stops typing.

NEECY
That’s not on the form.

KEON
Put it down anyway.

She types it the way he said it. Every word.

She scrolls. Reads aloud.

NEECY
“Do you maintain contact with anyone who has

been involved in criminal activity?”

The question sits in the room.

Keon gets up, reaches into the closet, and comes back with a clear plastic property bag stamped GDC. Inside, four envelopes. He sets it in her lap.

She turns it over. Her own handwriting, four times. The corners of the envelopes have gone soft and round.

KEON
Four. That’s how many came, all while I was on trial.

(beat)

After the verdict, I counted weeks instead.

NEECY
You kept them.

KEON
They tossed my cell twice a month. These were the only things they never took.

She holds the bag against her chest.

NEECY
My bunkmate read that question out loud at Fort Huachuca, the week before my first interview. She was working on her prep sheet, and I had a letter to you on my knees. Three pages.

KEON
And you didn’t mail it.

NEECY
If I mailed it, the answer was yes. If I didn’t, you were a boy I went to high school with.

She reaches into the tote and sets a shoebox in his lap, its corners split and taped.

NEECY (CONT’D)
After the verdict, I wrote you almost every month. I kept them in a shoebox so I didn’t have to put you down.

He lifts the lid. Folded letters, packed tight. None of them has a stamp.

KEON
How many?

NEECY
Forty-four. Four years.

He leaves them where they are and just looks at them.

NEECY (CONT’D)
(breaking down)

I’m sorry I broke off.

KEON
Don’t worry, babe. Army on one side. A man doing six years on the other. If you’d mailed me the question, I’d have mailed back three words.

NEECY
Which three?

KEON
Pick the Army.

NEECY
I still can’t stand the woman who picked it.

KEON
Go easy on her. She outranks you.

She laughs through her tears, wipes her face with her sleeve, and turns back to the screen.

INT. BRANDON’S TRUCK - GRAVEL LOT - NIGHT

Brandon types a phone number into his contacts from memory: the number from Keon’s dashboard. He saves it under a single letter. P.

The phone BUZZES: the number with no name. He answers on the first ring.

BRANDON
Yes.

BUYER (V.O.)
I have listened to your file, Mr. Phipps. A unit crest, a parolee, and her reinvestigation is coming up. With respect, that is not worth what I am paying.

BRANDON
I only made contact yesterday.

BUYER (V.O.)
Thursday, she tells them about the boyfriend, or she does not. Either way, by Friday you will have nothing to sell me.

BRANDON
She hasn’t said one word about work. Not to me, not to him.

BUYER (V.O.)
Then I suggest you stop waiting for her. Turn the screws on the boyfriend.

BRANDON
Tonight.

The line is already dead.

The phone BUZZES once more. The black app. No voice this time, only a photo: a school bus stop on a neighborhood street, and a gap- toothed girl in a purple coat under a backpack half her size. Maddie. Shot from across the street.

Beside it, the timer counts down from ten. Brandon watches every second of it until the photo burns away.

He wipes his palm on his jeans. He opens the RIVERVIEW folder.

It’s twice as fat as last night, every shot dated. Keon and Neecy on the ramp. On the Greeneway. The Altima in the Riverview lot, its Georgia plate sharp and legible. And the newest, from this afternoon: The picnic table, shot from behind Keon, the back of a new tan coat, and across the table, Neecy laughing behind her phone. The time stamp burned into the

corner.

He opens his texts to KEON MAYFIELD and attaches the picnic photo. He types “Canal towpath bench. 8 a.m.”

SENT.

INT. KEON’S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

On the floor beside Keon’s knee, his phone lights up. BRANDON. A

photo: the picnic table, from behind his own shoulder. The back of the coat he is wearing right now. Across from him, Neecy, laughing. Time stamp in the corner.

Neecy scrolls her list, eyes on her own screen.

Keon turns the phone face down. The glow dies against the floorboards.

She reads the next question slower.

NEECY
“Is there anything about the people close to you that someone could use to pressure you?”

(looking up at him)

That’s the one they lean on. Is there anything about you a man in a tie could find out that I don’t know?

Keon looks at her. Then past her, at the dark window.

KEON
No.

She types it. NO.

She closes the laptop, crawls over, and kisses him. He kisses her back. Over her shoulder, his eyes stay on the window.

She reaches back and turns off the lamp.

TITLE CARD: THREE DAYS

INT. KEON’S APARTMENT - DAWN

Gray light at the window. Neecy, in uniform, sits on the mat lacing her boots. On the card table, the shoebox sits open, a dozen of its letters unfolded around it.

Keon stands at the window in the coat, looking down at the parking lot.

NEECY
You slept in that coat?

KEON
Most of the night.

NEECY
It goes on you outside, weatherman. Inside, you hang it up like a man who means to keep it.

She comes up behind him, wraps her arms around his middle, and sets her chin on his shoulder. They both look down at the lot: the Altima, frost on its windshield.

NEECY (CONT'D)
What are you looking at?

KEON
My car.

NEECY
What about it?

KEON
Just making sure it's still there.

Her watch beeps. She lets go and grabs her patrol cap off the card

table.

KEON (CONT'D)
Tonight, let's stay on this side. The canal.

NEECY
With Dorsey and half my section running laps out there? Three more days. After Thursday, you can walk me down that towpath in front of the whole battalion.

She kisses him at the door.

NEECY (CONT'D)
Riverview. Golden hour.

Keon looks past her, down at the Altima.

The door closes behind her.

EXT. CANAL TOWPATH - BENCH - MORNING

Frost on the slats of a bench. Brandon is already sitting there as Keon rides up on his bike wearing the new coat.

Keon leans the bike against the bench. Before he sits, he glances down at his phone, taps a red button, and slides it into his coat pocket. His hand stays in there with it.

This time, instead of a coffee, Brandon holds out a manila folder.

Keon opens it with his free hand.

Eight-by-ten prints, each with a date and time burned into the corner. The boat ramp. The Greeneway, her hand in his pocket. The picnic table, yesterday, shot from behind his coat. The Altima in the Riverview lot, its Georgia plate sharp and legible. Neecy laughing.

BRANDON
Georgia parole. You can’t leave the state without a travel permit, and you don’t have one.

(tapping a time stamp)

That’s South Carolina. About ten times in eight weeks.

KEON
(quietly)

Why are you taking these?

Brandon lets the question go by. He looks at the hand in Keon’s pocket. Then he holds out his own, palm up, and waits.

Keon stays as he is.

Brandon keeps waiting.

Keon takes out the phone and lays it in Brandon’s palm. On the screen, a voice memo, its red counter still running: 00:01:14. 00:01:15.

Brandon turns the screen toward Keon’s face, and the phone unlocks. He stops the recording. Deletes it. Opens RECENTLY DELETED and deletes it again.

Then he slides to power off. The screen goes dark and he sets the phone face down at the far end of the bench, out of Keon’s reach.

BRANDON
Forget rule one, Keon. Here’s the real one. One envelope to Officer Pruitt, and you do your last two years back inside.

He slides out the print of Neecy laughing and lays it on top.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
One envelope to her security office, and

Sergeant Wallace becomes a slide in next year’s insider-threat brief.

KEON
She didn’t know. She never knew.

BRANDON
You think the man reading that file cares who picked the park?

KEON
Then I’ll go to Pruitt myself. Today.

BRANDON
And tell him you’ve been lying since you got out? Go ahead. You’d be doing my work for free, and she’d still be the girlfriend who pulled a parolee over a state line every time.

Keon has no answer. Brandon nods at the envelope zipped inside Keon’s coat.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
And that. Longleaf pays for information, Keon. You’ve been on its payroll since you took my coffee. Yesterday you asked her what nights she works, and you texted me the answer.

(beat)

You’re not a witness. You’re staff. Cash, a man can deny. Payroll has your name spelled right.

KEON
I haven’t done anything.

BRANDON
I told you you would.

KEON
You never did eleven months.

BRANDON
I’ve never done a day. I just know what a man sounds like after four years in prison.

(beat)

He sounds grateful.

Keon’s hand closes on the edge of the folder.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
You’re not what I want, Keon.

(leaning in)

Thursday morning an investigator asks her where you two spend your time.

Keon closes the folder.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
She tells the truth, you go back inside. Or else she lies to a federal investigator, and then a machine asks her if she did.

(beat)

There’s no version where she walks out of that room clean. There’s only a version where she walks out mine.

Brandon sets a cheap black phone on the bench between them, the way he set down the envelope of cash yesterday.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
Tonight, get her talking about work. Her day, her desk, anything. It records.

KEON
And my stub?

BRANDON
Payroll clears Wednesday -- if she talks. Until then, the advances stop.

He stands and brushes the frost off his jeans. He picks Keon’s dark phone up off the far end of the bench and drops it on top of the folder.

KEON
You said lessons were free.

BRANDON
This one is.

He walks off with an easy stroll.

Keon sits alone on the bench with a folder of his own life, his own phone gone dark, and a phone that listens. The river rolls behind him.

EXT. CANAL TOWPATH - LATER

Keon sits on the bank, the folder in the dead grass beside him. Brandon’s black phone in one hand, his own phone in the other.

He scrolls to PRUITT - PO. His thumb hovers over CALL.

In the distance, a SIREN rises. Keon goes still, the way he always

does, and waits it out. When it fades, his thumb is still hovering.

He doesn’t press it.

He looks at the photo of Neecy laughing, on top of a folder thick with prints.

He turns the black phone over in his hand. Then he slides it into the breast pocket of the coat she gave him and zips the coat shut.

EXT. RIVERWATCH APARTMENTS - LOT - DAY

Keon rides his bike into the lot and stops.

The Altima’s space is empty. An oil stain, and a sheet of paper zip- tied to the sign post: VEHICLE RECOVERED BY FIRST GRANBY AUTO FINANCE.

He reads it. He looks at the stain.

He pulls a folded receipt from his coat: a money order. PAY TO: FIRST GRANBY AUTO FINANCE. $380.00. 12/14/26, 9:14 AM.

He looks back at the sheet on the post. At the bottom, in ballpoint: RECOVERED 12/14, 9:40 AM.

KEON
Twenty-six minutes.

He folds the receipt into the Longleaf envelope. It’s the only thing in there now.

He types to PRUITT - PO: “Canal, 4-6.” SENT.

He locks the bike to the railing.

EXT. RIVERVIEW PARK - PICNIC TABLE - AFTERNOON

Neecy, in uniform pants and a fleece, has her phone on a mini tripod on a picnic table. She talks to it, stops, resets, talks again.

Brandon walks up with his disc bag and stops a polite distance outside her frame.

BRANDON
No camera man tonight?

NEECY
He’s on his way. He’s never late. He’s early, and then he stands somewhere and counts things.

BRANDON
(nodding at her phone)

Can I give you one note? Your highlights are clipping on the trees. Drop it a stop and let the trees go dark. People lean in when you make them.

She checks her screen. She drops the exposure. The trees go dark and rich behind her.

NEECY
Huh. You’re right. I hate that.

BRANDON
I’m right about light and wrong about nearly everything else. Ask my ex-wife. She has a laminated list.

He shifts the bag on his shoulder, in no hurry to leave.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
(starting back up the hill)

If you ever need somebody to talk to who isn’t in your chain of command, you’ve got my number. It’s on the disc I gave your fella.

Her smile stays where it is. Her eyes don’t.

She watches him walk off. Then she looks at her phone: the dark trees, the correct exposure. She stops recording.

INT. BRANDON’S TRUCK - RIVERVIEW LOT - CONTINUOUS

Brandon drops his disc bag on the passenger seat. Through the windshield, Neecy packs up her tripod.

He takes the phone from his vest, opens the black app, and holds the button. The warmth goes out of his voice.

BRANDON
(into phone)

Bit four. Made contact with the subject. Gave her a note on her exposure, and she took it. Left her my number. She’ll call.

He lets go. Gone.

EXT. RIVERVIEW LOT - DAY

Neecy leans against her car, a thermos in her hands. Keon walks up from the lot entrance.

NEECY
Where’s your car?

KEON
In the shop. I took an Uber over. Thank you for waiting.

NEECY
An Uber. Look at you, Mr. Expense Account.

She hands him the thermos. He drinks.

EXT. RIVERVIEW PARK - DISC GOLF - DAY

They sit on a bench by the woods. In the breast pocket of his coat, the black phone. Its screen shows a red dot and a counter: 00:00:09. 00:00:10.

KEON
How was work?

NEECY
(surprised)

You want to hear about work? You have never once asked about work. You ask about weather.

KEON
I’m just asking about your day.

NEECY
My day was Colonel Pike. Two phone numbers were wrong on our recall roster in the last drill. He called it a readiness failure in front of the whole section and had us rebuild it by hand. He wasn’t wrong. That’s the worst part.

KEON
What’s a recall roster?

NEECY
Everybody in the unit. Names, phone numbers, home addresses. Who calls who when the world ends. And he wants it printed and in a binder, so now there’s a paper copy of every--

She stops in the middle of the sentence and looks at him.

NEECY (CONT’D)
Why are you asking me this?

Inside his coat, Keon’s thumb finds the black phone through the canvas and presses until the red dot dies.

KEON
I asked about your day. That’s all.

NEECY
You never ask about my day. Yesterday you asked about my nights. Today it’s my day. What’s tomorrow, my PIN number?

(beat)

Why are you asking me this?

Keon looks at the parking lot.

KEON
Forget I asked.

She keeps looking at him. He keeps looking at the lot.

NEECY
Did Brandon tell you to ask me?

KEON
No.

She stands and brushes off her pants.

NEECY
It’s cold. Get in the car.

She walks to her car without looking back to see whether he follows.

INT. NEECY’S CAR - RIVERVIEW LOT - DAY

The heater roars. Neecy has her laptop open against the steering wheel. Keon in the passenger seat, coat zipped.

NEECY
Your boss came over while I was waiting for you. Gave me a note on my highlights. Then he offered to be my friend outside my chain of command. That’s like a verbatim sentence in our security briefing, Keon. In red. With a little picture of a fishhook.

She opens her editing software and pulls up yesterday’s clip.

INSERT - LAPTOP SCREEN

Keon, head back, laughing. She drags the playhead forward. At the edge of the field, a man with a disc bag raises his phone. She freezes it. Zooms. Brandon.

BACK TO SCENE.

NEECY (CONT’D)
That one was for me.

Then she goes deeper. A folder labeled PENDLETON KING, SOLO, dated October. Deep in the pines behind her, a figure with a disc bag. She zooms. Brandon.

Another: LAKE OLMSTEAD, November. In the background, a man with a bag, watching. Brandon.

NEECY (CONT’D)
I shot these alone. Weeks before he spoke to me.

(beat)

He threw his roller at me.

She scrubs faster now, frame after frame. She stops. Then again.

In both frames, the gray sedan sits parked, a man behind the wheel. Different days.

NEECY (CONT’D)
And who is that?

Keon leans in. His jaw tightens.

KEON
That car was at Lake Olmstead yesterday. Brandon waved at it.

NEECY
So there are two of them.

KEON
Or it could be somebody else.

She picks up her phone and scrolls to a contact: OKAFOR, SEC MGR.

KEON (CONT’D)
Neecy. Give me one day.

NEECY
It’s my job to call. They put it on a slide, Keon. Report first. Think later.

(beat)

What happens in one day that can’t happen with my security manager listening?

Keon looks out at the lot.

She gives him one breath to answer. Then she dials.

NEECY (CONT’D)
(into phone)

Ma’am, it’s Staff Sergeant Wallace. I’m sorry to call your cell.

OKAFOR (V.O.)
Go ahead, Sergeant.

NEECY
I need to report a suspicious contact. Brandon Phipps.

OKAFOR (V.O.)
Did he approach you?

NEECY
Yes, at a park on Saturday. He rolled a Frisbee into my shot. But he’s in my footage going back two months, ma’am. Three different parks. There may be a second man. Gray sedan.

OKAFOR (V.O.)
Any other connection to you?

She looks straight at Keon.

NEECY
He employs my boyfriend.

OKAFOR (V.O.)
Name?

NEECY
(holding his eyes)

Keon Mayfield.

Keon closes his eyes.

OKAFOR (V.O.)
Until we talk, you don’t engage Phipps.

NEECY
Yes, ma’am.

OKAFOR (V.O.)
My office. Oh-seven-thirty. Bring everything.

Neecy hangs up and turns to Keon.

NEECY
What aren’t you telling me?

Keon opens the door and steps out into the cold.

NEECY (CONT’D)
Keon. I asked you a question.

The door shuts.

EXT. RIVERVIEW PARK - BIKE PATH - CONTINUOUS

Keon walks down the path. He takes out his own phone and opens his thread with BRANDON. The last thing in it is Sunday night’s photo: the back of his coat at the picnic table, Neecy laughing across from him.

He looks back at her car, where the call has already been made. Then across the lot, at Brandon’s truck. Then down at the photo again.

He types.

“She’s made you. Walk away.”

SENT.

Three dots appear under the message. They pulse. They vanish. No message comes.

Behind him, through the windshield of her car, Neecy watches his back. Then her eyes go past him, to the gray sedan parked at the edge of the lot.

She gets out of the car.

INT. BRANDON’S TRUCK - RIVERVIEW LOT - DAY

Brandon reads the message: “She’s made you. Walk away.”

Before he can set the phone down, it BUZZES. The number with no name.

BRANDON
Yes.

BUYER (V.O.)
You spoke to her.

Brandon doesn’t answer.

BUYER (V.O.) (CONT’D)
I said not one question, Mr. Phipps.

BRANDON
It wasn’t a question. It was an offer.

BUYER (V.O.)
The twentieth, Mr. Phipps. Give my regards to your daughter.

The line goes dead.

Brandon holds the phone to his ear in the silence. His eyes go to the purple glitter phone on the dashboard.

He doesn’t start the truck. He opens his contacts to P and reads the number. From the glovebox he takes a cheap prepaid phone, the store sticker still on the back, and dials it.

When it answers, his voice is warm and neighborly.

BRANDON
Officer Pruitt? You don’t know me, and I don’t want to get anybody in trouble. I live by the river over in North Augusta, and one of your guys keeps turning up in my park. Keon something.

(beat)

He’s at Riverview right now, matter of fact.
By the disc golf course.

A small voice in the phone starts to ask a question. Brandon hangs up on it. He pops the back off the prepaid phone, slides out the SIM, and snaps it in half.

He takes the other phone from his vest, opens the black app, and holds the button.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
(into phone)

Bit five. Anonymous tip to the boyfriend’s PO.

EXT. RIVERVIEW LOT - CONTINUOUS

Neecy walks up the lot alone, her phone in her hand. The gray sedan is parked.

She walks straight to the driver’s window and raises the phone, recording.

The window comes down. Behind the wheel, the DRIVER (57), rumpled and unhurried, cracks a sunflower seed between his teeth. A cooler rides shotgun. He looks at her, then at her phone.

DRIVER
Afternoon.

NEECY
Your vehicle appears in two of my videos.
Two different days, occupied both times.
Identify yourself.

He looks at her for a long moment.

He cracks another seed and gives her nothing. She keeps recording.

DRIVER
Go home, Sergeant.

The window goes up.

She hasn’t told him her rank. It shows on her face.

EXT. RIVERVIEW PARK - BIKE PATH - CONTINUOUS

Keon’s phone buzzes in his hand: PRUITT - PO.

KEON
(into phone)

Yes, sir.

PRUITT (V.O.)
(road noise; driving)

I’ve received information concerning your whereabouts. Meet me at your residence in twenty minutes, Mr. Mayfield.

KEON
Sir, who called--

Pruitt is already gone.

Keon turns and looks at the lot. No Altima. No bike.

He opens the rideshare app. NEAREST DRIVER: 14 MIN.

He looks across the lot. Neecy stands at the sedan’s window with her phone raised.

EXT. RIVERVIEW LOT - CONTINUOUS

Neecy steps back from the sedan. She walks around to the rear of the car and photographs the plate, slowly, so the driver can watch her do it.

She starts across the lot, typing to OKAFOR, SEC MGR. She attaches the photo of the plate and hits SEND.

KEON (O.S.)
Neecy!

She looks at Keon, waving both arms over his head.

KEON
I need a ride! Please!

She looks back once at the sedan. Then runs for her car.

In his side mirror, the driver watches the two of them reach her car and pile in.

INT. NEECY’S CAR (MOVING) - BRIDGE - DAY

Neecy drives fast. Keon rides with his phone in his lap and his eyes on the side mirror.

NEECY
The man in that sedan called me Sergeant. I never told him that.

KEON
What else did he say?

NEECY
“Go home.” Who was on your phone?

KEON
My officer. He’s at my place. He wants me there in twenty minutes.

A green sign slides past: WELCOME TO GEORGIA.

This time, Keon doesn’t breathe out.

INT. NEECY’S CAR (MOVING) - RIVERWATCH PARKWAY - DAY

Up ahead, the Riverwatch Apartments.

KEON
Pull over here.

NEECY
Your place is right there.

KEON
Pull over, babe. If he sees your car, your plate goes in his file.

He opens the door and puts a foot out.

NEECY
Why would your officer care about my--

She brakes onto the shoulder. He’s out before the car stops rolling.

His phone slides off his lap and drops into the passenger footwell. He doesn’t look back. The door slams.

He runs up the shoulder toward the complex.

In the footwell, the phone’s screen lights for a moment, then goes dark.

Neecy watches him run until he rounds the corner. She never looks

down.

EXT. RIVERWATCH APARTMENTS - LOT - DAY

The Christmas lights blink on the neighbor’s railing. The bike is still chained at the foot of the stairs.

Keon runs into the lot, chest heaving, and pulls up beside the oil stain where the Altima used to be.

Headlights swing in behind him. A plain white state car stops, engine running, driver’s window down. Pruitt sits behind the wheel, one forearm on the sill.

PRUITT
Nineteen minutes.

Keon comes to the window.

PRUITT (CONT’D)
I received a tip that you’ve been visiting South Carolina.

KEON
I was at the canal, sir. Like the log says.

PRUITT
Why are you out of breath?

KEON
I ran.

Pruitt drums his fingers once on the door.

PRUITT
I can’t prove you were out of state. And you know I can’t prove it, but I don’t like it.

KEON
Yes, sir.

PRUITT
I’ll be back at seven tomorrow morning with a monitor, pending resolution. I’ll confirm tonight. Go inside, Keon.

Pruitt rolls up his window. The car backs out and leaves.

Keon stands alone in the lot, breathing hard.

INT. KEON’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The lamp on the floor. Keon unzips the coat, takes it off, and hangs it on the back of the door.

He reaches into his jeans for his phone. The pocket is empty. So is the other one. He goes through the coat: the Longleaf envelope, Brandon’s black phone. Nothing else.

He stands in the middle of the room.

Then he sits down on the mat with the black phone in his hand, the only phone he has left. He doesn’t turn it on.

INT. NEECY’S CAR - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Engine off. A fast-food bag sits on the dash, unopened. Neecy’s laptop rests against the steering wheel, a frame of the gray sedan frozen on the screen.

A phone buzzes. Not hers. Hers is in her hand.

She leans across and feels along the passenger footwell. She comes up with Keon’s phone.

The lock screen glows. PRUITT - PO:

“Confirming 7 a.m.”

She reads it twice. She looks at the sedan on her laptop, then back at the phone.

She sets the phone on the passenger seat and starts the engine.

EXT. RIVERWATCH APARTMENTS - WALKWAY - NIGHT

The Christmas lights blink on the neighbor’s railing. At the foot of the stairs, the bike is chained to the rail.

Neecy climbs the stairs in her puffer, her laptop under one arm and Keon’s phone in her hand. Light shows at his window. She knocks.

INT. KEON’S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Keon on the mat. He looks at the door. He stays where he is.

NEECY (O.S.)
Keon. You left your phone in my car.

He gets up, crosses to the door, and stops with his hand an inch from the knob.

NEECY (O.S.) (CONT’D)
Your officer texted you “Confirming seven a.m.”

(beat)

Confirming what?

He doesn’t turn the knob. He sits down on the floor with his back against the door.

INTERCUT - EXT. RIVERWATCH APARTMENTS - WALKWAY - CONTINUOUS

Neecy sits down on the cold concrete with her back against the same door. She sets his phone beside her and opens the laptop on her knees. The screen lights her face.

NEECY
Okay. Then I’ll talk.

She types: brandon phipps disc golf.

Results. A player page with a rating and a photo of him mid-throw. A tour channel, PHIPPS ON TOUR. A tournament history, a long list of cities and dates.

NEECY (CONT’D)
Brandon Phipps. Tournament history.

(reading)

Fayetteville, North Carolina.

A beat. Through the door:

KEON (O.S.)
Fort Bragg.

She looks at the door. Then back at the screen.

NEECY
Clarksville, Tennessee.

KEON (O.S.)
Campbell.

NEECY
Killeen, Texas.

KEON (O.S.)
Hood.

NEECY
Columbus, Georgia.

KEON (O.S.)
Benning.

She doesn’t read the last one. She doesn’t have to.

NEECY AND KEON
Gordon.

Silence on both sides of the door.

NEECY
How do you know that?

KEON
He told me. Every post’s got a course nearby. He said soldiers love the game.

She types another search: LONGLEAF MEDIA GROUP LLC. A single result, a business registry in Delaware. A registered agent at a mailbox address.

NEECY
Longleaf Media Group. A mailbox in Delaware. No website. No phone number. No employees.

She closes her eyes.

NEECY (CONT’D)
Your boss is not a disc golfer.

KEON
I know. He’s very good at it. It’s not his job.

Neecy takes that in.

NEECY
You know?

KEON
Since this morning.

NEECY
In my car you said my plate would go in his file. Your officer’s file. Now he’s confirming seven a.m. Why would your officer care about my car?

On his side, Keon lets his head fall back against the wood.

NEECY (CONT’D)
Open the door and tell me the rest.

His palm goes flat against the door. It stays there.

NEECY (CONT’D)
I’m in my security manager’s office at seven- thirty. Come with me. Whatever it is, we walk in there together, and you say it before he does.

KEON
If I walk in there with you, I don’t walk out.

NEECY
What does that mean?

He doesn’t answer.

NEECY (CONT’D)
Keon. What does that mean?

KEON
Anything I tell you tonight, you carry into that room Thursday. A man in a tie asks, and you have to say it.

(beat)

If you don’t know, nobody can ask you.

She stares at the wood.

NEECY
I sat on a bunk at Huachuca once and decided not to put you down. I don’t want to do that again.

(beat)

Open the door.

On her side, she lays her palm flat on the door. On his side, his hand is already there, at the same height. An inch of wood between them.

KEON
I want what you said at the picnic. A pay stub. Savannah. A chair at your mama’s table. I want to be on your list as a man who works. Please trust me. If I open this door, we lose all of it.

She presses her forehead to the wood.

KEON (CONT’D)
Go home, Neecy. It’s cold.

She stays until the cold comes up through the concrete. Then she closes the laptop and stands. She sets his phone face up on the mat outside his door. Her footsteps go down the stairs.

Keon stays against the door until her engine fades out of the lot.

Then he opens it.

His phone lies on the mat. The screen wakes when he picks it up: “Confirming 7 a.m.”

TITLE CARD: TWO DAYS

INT. KEON’S APARTMENT - MORNING

The coat hangs on the back of the door. Keon sits on the mat in jeans and a T-shirt.

Pruitt, wearing a pressed shirt, fastens a black rubber strap around his ankle and snaps a plastic box shut over the buckle. A small green light starts to blink.

PRUITT
It reports your location every sixty seconds. I don’t know how many times you may have gone to South Carolina. Set foot over that river once more, my phone will buzz and you’re finished. Tamper with it, and I know that too.

KEON
I understand, sir.

PRUITT
Do you? A man called me yesterday afternoon to tell me where you were. He didn’t know your last name, but he had my cell number. I only give that number to my guys. Nobody else.

Keon keeps his eyes on the green light.

Pruitt pats the box once, the way a man pats a car door shut, and stands. His eyes go to the coat on the back of the door.

PRUITT (CONT'D)
New coat?

KEON
A Christmas present, sir.

PRUITT
Early.

KEON
Yes, sir.

PRUITT
Somebody likes you.

He picks up Brandon's disc from where it leans against the wall, turns it until the phone number comes around the rim, and reads it. Then he sets it back exactly where it was.

PRUITT (CONT'D)
Please give me a pay stub by Thursday. Nine a.m.

Then he's gone, and the door closes.

EXT. RIVERWATCH APARTMENTS - LOT - CONTINUOUS

Pruitt's car backs out of the lot and leaves.

Across the lot, nosed in behind a dumpster, Brandon's truck.

On the second-floor walkway, Keon steps out in his socks, tugging his jeans cuff down over a black plastic box. He looks down at the oil

stain where the Altima used to be.

In the truck, Brandon lowers his phone. On its screen, zoomed all the way in: the box on Keon's ankle.

The truck rolls out from behind the dumpster, crosses the lot, and stops directly below the walkway. The driver's window comes down.

Brandon looks up at him, one elbow on the sill, easy as a neighbor.

BRANDON
That was one phone call.

Keon's hand goes to his cuff and tugs it lower.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
Lake Olmstead. Ten a.m.

The window goes up. The truck pulls out of the lot.

Keon looks down at the phone in his hand, at his messages from Neecy. The newest, sent at 11:52 PM:

“Seven-thirty. You can still come with me.”

The clock on his phone reads 7:06.

He looks at the green light on his ankle.

INT. NEECY’S CAR - PARKING LOT - MORNING

Neecy, in uniform, flips through a folder of printed frames on the

passenger seat: Brandon at Pendleton King, at Olmstead, at Riverview. The gray sedan and its plate. Five cities and five posts, highlighted.

Her phone buzzes. A text from a blocked number: a photo, zoomed tight and grainy. A man’s ankle on a second-floor walkway, a jeans cuff tugged down over a black plastic box. The time stamp reads 7:05 this morning.

Her hand lands flat on the folder.

It buzzes again. A second photo: Neecy and Keon at Riverview, a date and time burned into the corner. Beneath it: “Ask him what states he’s been in. Then decide what you’re reporting.”

She turns the folder back to its first page: the contact report she typed last night. Under ASSOCIATED PERSONS, one line. MAYFIELD, KEON. EMPLOYED BY SUBJECT.

She dials KEON. It rings out to a flat automated greeting. The beep.

NEECY
(into phone)

Brandon Phipps just sent me a picture of your ankle. I’m about to meet people who write down every name I say. I’m not putting you down blind.

(beat)

Canal. Four o’clock. You tell me first.

She hangs up. She dials again.

NEECY (CONT’D)
(into phone)

Ma’am, it’s Wallace. I need to cancel this morning.

OKAFOR (V.O.)
The meeting, or the report?

NEECY
Both, ma’am. I overreacted. He’s a man who plays disc golf in the same parks I shoot in. I’m sorry I took your evening.

OKAFOR (V.O.)
You said you had two months of footage, a second man, and a license plate.

The line goes quiet. She waits it out.

OKAFOR (V.O.) (CONT’D)
Your report went to counterintelligence last night, Sergeant. I can’t call it back. I can only note that you called.

(beat)

Come in this morning, it’s a report. But after this, it’s a report you tried to take back. Are you sure?

Her eyes go to the folder on the seat. MAYFIELD, KEON. EMPLOYED BY SUBJECT. She lays her palm over the line.

NEECY
Yes, ma’am. Note that I called.

Neecy hangs up. She closes the folder and pushes it under the seat.

EXT. LAKE OLMSTEAD - LOT - DAY

Keon rides in on the bike, the coat zipped, his jeans cuff pulled down over the monitor. He keeps touching his ankle through the denim.

Brandon sits on his open tailgate peeling a satsuma, the camera rig beside him. He doesn’t say hello. He holds out his free hand, palm up.

Keon looks at the hand. Then he takes out his phone and lays it there.

Brandon slides to power off. The screen goes dark. He reaches through the open truck window, and drops the phone on the seat.

He hands Keon the rig.

EXT. LAKE OLMSTEAD - DISC GOLF - CONTINUOUS

The first tee. Down the fairway, a pair of PLAYERS putts out and moves on.

Keon shoulders the rig and finds Brandon in the viewfinder. The red tally light on the camera is dark.

Before he steps up, Brandon takes the phone from his vest, taps it, and holds it up. Tinny, from the speaker: Neecy’s voice.

NEECY (V.O.)
(on the recording)

...so now there’s a paper copy of every--

(beat)

Why are you asking me this?

Brandon stops it.

BRANDON
You stopped it. Good instinct. Two seconds late.

That phone sends while it records. Everything you got came to me.

He pockets the phone, pulls a driver from his bag, and steps onto the tee pad.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
Roll.

Keon thumbs the button. The tally light glows red. Brandon throws. The disc hisses down the fairway, fades, and skips to a stop short of the basket.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
Cut.

The red light goes out. Brandon picks up his bag and walks. Keon follows with the rig.

Three steps behind him, Keon thumbs the button. The tally light glows red. He lays his thumb across it, and the light is gone.

KEON
Take me instead. Send Pruitt the envelope. I’ll go back to prison quiet. I’ll sign whatever you want that says it was all me and she never knew. Just leave her out of it.

Brandon takes his time.

They reach the disc. Brandon pulls a putter and squares up to the basket. Keon raises the rig and frames him, his thumb resting across the top of the camera. Brandon glances at the tally light. Dark. He talks straight into the lens.

BRANDON
Keon, you think the worst thing that can happen to you is Georgia. Longleaf gets paid out of a

bank in Cyprus. Yesterday you put a soldier with a clearance on tape talking about her

unit roster, and you sent it to the man who pays you.

(beat)

That’s not a parole violation. That’s acting as an agent of a foreign government. A federal judge can put you in for a decade.

KEON
Then you go down with me.

BRANDON
On what? My voice isn’t on that tape. Yours is.

His eyes flick to Keon’s thumb on the camera. Then back to the basket.

Brandon putts. Chains. He fishes the disc out of the basket.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
And nobody’s buying you, Keon. You don’t have a clearance. You don’t have a binder. You have an ankle bracelet and a bicycle.

KEON
And she has a binder.

BRANDON
She has a binder with every name in her unit. You go away, state or federal, and Thursday she still sits down at that table. Your noble little sacrifice just leaves her there alone with me.

Keon’s hand closes on the grip of the rig until his knuckles go pale. He keeps Brandon in frame.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
You want to help her? When I come to her, tell

her to bring me what I ask for. Then she walks into Thursday with a clean story, you walk into Thursday with a pay stub, and nobody ever has to say South Carolina out loud.

KEON
And after that, you own her.

BRANDON
After that, I employ her. Same as I employ you.

Brandon reaches over and lifts Keon’s thumb off the top of the camera. Underneath it, the tally light is burning red.

He thumbs open the little door on the side of the camera, pops out the memory card, and pockets it.

He walks on to the next tee.

Keon stands beside the basket with the empty camera on his shoulder.

EXT. CANAL - TOWPATH - AFTERNOON

Keon waits on the towpath in the coat, one foot down, straddling his bike. Neecy walks up in civilian clothes and sunglasses. She scans the towpath behind him, the tree line.

She stops two steps away from him.

NEECY
Show me your ankle.

He tugs up the leg of his jeans. The monitor. The green light blinks.

NEECY (CONT'D)
When did that go on?

KEON
Seven this morning.

NEECY
(quietly)

"Confirming seven a.m."

She turns and starts up the towpath. He lets the cuff drop, climbs off the bike, and wheels it beside her.

NEECY (CONT'D)
Did someone call your officer?

KEON
Brandon.

NEECY
He sent me a picture of your ankle at seven-twelve. He knew before I did. Tell me how.

He gives it to her straight.

KEON
Georgia parole. Can't leave the state. Riverview's in South Carolina. Ten times since I got out, counting yesterday. Logged every one as the canal. Yesterday he told Pruitt where I was standing, and I had twenty minutes to get home. That's why I got out of your car early. If he'd seen your plate, you'd be connected.

She takes off the sunglasses.

NEECY
And I picked it. Every time. Every week I walked you into a violation. And you looked me in the face and said “It’s fine.”

KEON
It was fine.

NEECY
(emotional)

It means prison, Keon!

KEON
You needed one place where nobody calls you Sergeant.

Her eyes fill, and she wipes them with the heel of her hand, furious at them.

NEECY
My safe place was the one place you couldn’t be. Last night you said if I didn’t know, nobody could ask me.

(beat)

Well, now I know.

Keon has nothing to say to that.

NEECY (CONT’D)
And Brandon?

KEON
The job isn’t a job. Longleaf pays for information. He’s got a folder of us at Riverview with the dates in the corners. Every question I asked you, he asked me first. Your nights. Your

day.

NEECY
That’s why you questioned me?

KEON
His phone was in my coat. Recording.

Her eyes go to the breast pocket of the coat he’s wearing.

NEECY
My coat.

(beat)

You carried him around in my coat?

She stops walking and puts a hand flat on the trunk of a bare tree to stay steady.

KEON
The money comes through a bank in Cyprus. Brandon says that makes me his, not Georgia’s.

She takes her hand off the tree and turns to him. Shoulders squared, chin level. Sergeant Wallace.

NEECY
Foreign money. A phone that records me talking about my unit. That’s not Pruitt, Keon. That’s federal. And you’re the one who carried the phone.

He doesn’t argue.

NEECY (CONT’D)
The day you got the job, I made you promise. First thing, you said.

KEON
I’m telling you now.

NEECY
Now is late, Keon.

She walks on. He wheels the bike after her.

Ahead, the towpath bends blind around a stand of cane. Fast footsteps, coming. DORSEY, in the black long-sleeve with the battalion crest, is running right toward them. He stops in front of Neecy, chest heaving.

DORSEY
Sergeant Wallace.

NEECY
Dorsey.

His eyes go to the man beside her. Then down. Keon’s cuff has ridden up again over the black box. Its green light blinks above his sneaker.

Dorsey looks at it a beat too long. Then back at her.

He steps around them and runs on without a glance back.

Neecy watches him go. Then she puts the sunglasses back on.

NEECY (CONT’D)
In two days they’re gonna ask me where we spend our time, and a machine will be checking my blood pressure and heartbeat.

She turns and walks back the way they came, toward the trailhead, her phone in her hand.

KEON
Neecy. Don’t go near him.

She doesn’t turn around.

INSERT - NEECY’S PHONE

KEON MAYFIELD. Her thumb finds BLOCK THIS CALLER and presses it.

BACK TO SCENE.

Keon takes out his phone and types: “I’m sorry.”

The message sends. The word “Delivered” never appears beneath it.

He types: “Please.”

Nothing beneath that one either.

EXT. CANAL - TRAILHEAD LOT - CONTINUOUS

A gravel lot by the towpath. Neecy comes up fast, keys in hand, sunglasses on.

Tucked under her wiper blade, against the windshield, sits a disc.

She pulls it free. Around the rim, in black marker: BRANDON PHIPPS and a phone number.

Two cars over, Brandon stands at the open door of his truck. His eyes go past her to the far end of the lot, then come back.

BRANDON
Sergeant. Before you say anyth--

Neecy walks past any polite distance, straight into his space, close enough that he backs into the door frame. She holds up her phone, holds the button until the screen goes black, and turns it so he can see.

NEECY
It’s off. You’ve got till I turn it back on.

He looks at the dark screen. For once, the grin doesn’t come.

BRANDON
Tomorrow. Five o’clock. Riverview, the bench where my roller found you. Bring the binder.

NEECY
How do you know about the binder?

BRANDON
You told me.

She takes that without blinking.

NEECY
My interview’s Thursday. Wait two days, and I walk out with a bigger clearance and a bigger binder. Why tomorrow?

BRANDON
It isn’t even classified. Names and phone numbers.

NEECY
And home addresses. Every intelligence soldier in my unit, and you’ll know where their kids go to school. You don’t need a secret to lean on one of us, Mr. Phipps. You only need addresses.

His eyes drop, for half a beat, to the purple glitter phone on his console.

NEECY (CONT’D)
And that’s not what I asked you.

His eyes go past her again, to the far end of the lot. She turns and follows them. Nosed in under the trees: the gray sedan, a man behind the wheel.

She turns back.

NEECY (CONT’D)
You’re in a hurry.

BRANDON
Leave your phone in your car. Bring the binder, and Keon gets his stub, and I lose a folder of photographs. Don’t, and Thursday at nine that folder’s on Officer Pruitt’s desk.

NEECY
Your friend in the gray car. Does he work for you, or on you?

BRANDON
Five o’clock.

He gets in and drives off. Gravel spits from under his tires.

Neecy stands in the lot with his disc in her hand. Under the trees, the gray sedan stays where it is.

INT. NEECY’S CAR - CANAL TRAILHEAD LOT - CONTINUOUS

She locks the doors. The disc lies on the passenger seat.

She powers her phone back on. It buzzes before the screen finishes waking: two missed calls, OKAFOR, SEC MGR.

Then it rings. OKAFOR, SEC MGR.

She looks at the disc on the seat beside her. She answers.

NEECY
Wallace.

OKAFOR (V.O.)
I’ve called you twice, Sergeant.

NEECY
It was off, ma’am. I’m sorry.

OKAFOR (V.O.)
A member of your section saw you on the towpath this afternoon with a man in an ankle monitor.

NEECY
Yes, ma’am. That was my boyfriend. He’s on state parole, and he’s on my list Thursday.

OKAFOR (V.O.)
Colonel Pike has made some changes, effective

now. Your roster access is suspended. You’re off the mid rotation. Nothing comes out of the vault until after your interview. Take anything with the unit crest off your channel.

NEECY
Roger, ma’am.

OKAFOR (V.O.)
Thursday at ten. Polygraph after lunch. Bring your personal phone.

NEECY
Ten. Poly. Phone.

Silence on the line.

OKAFOR (V.O.)
Sergeant, I’ve known you four years. I have never once seen you cancel anything. Is somebody pressuring you?

Neecy looks at the disc. BRANDON PHIPPS, in black marker, and a phone number.

NEECY
No, ma’am.

OKAFOR (V.O.)
They’ll ask you that again Thursday. On the poly.

The call ends.

She opens her laptop on the steering wheel. NEECY SHOOTS. She scrolls back to summer, to the post-workout clip: her in the black T- shirt, the battalion crest across her chest.

She clicks DELETE. The thumbnail disappears.

Behind it, another tab is still open: the practice list from Sunday night. The line: “Is there anything about the people close to you that someone could use to pressure you?”

The cursor blinks beside her answer. NO.

She backspaces it, one letter at a time. She types YES.

She looks at it.

EXT. RIVERVIEW PARK - BOAT RAMP - DUSK

Flat gray light on the water. Beyond it, the Georgia bank.

Neecy sits on the lip of the ramp, a notebook on her knees.

She opens the camera roll on her phone and plays a clip: Keon at the picnic table in his new coat, head back, laughing, the field behind him. Her own voice, from behind the phone: “There he is. I knew he was in there.”

She stops it before the man at the edge of the field can raise his phone.

She uncaps a pen and writes on her knee. We see the first lines over her shoulder:

Dear Keon. It’s thirty-nine degrees, and I’m on our ramp, looking at Georgia.

NEECY (V.O.)
I blocked your number this afternoon. That was the angry part of me. This letter is the rest. Ten times you crossed that river because I asked, and you never once let me see what it cost. Nobody ever loved me that quietly.

(beat)

I’m still mad. I plan to stay mad at you for about

fifty years, in the same house. Thursday I’ll tell them everything. That’s Army business. This is mine.

(beat)

I kept forty-four of these in a shoebox. This one gets a stamp. Love, Neecy.

She tears out the page, folds it into an envelope, and writes his name across the front. Then she digs a stamp out of her wallet and presses it into the corner, hard, with her thumb.

EXT. CANAL - RIVERBANK - DUSK

Keon sits on the bank above the shoals in the coat.

He empties his pockets onto the dead grass, one item at a time, and lays them out in a row.

The Longleaf envelope. Empty except for a money-order receipt.

The repo notice.

Brandon’s black phone, its battery dead.

His own phone, open to two messages to Neecy. Neither one says Delivered.

He looks at the row.

No car. No job. No money. No number that reaches her.

He leans down the bank and puts his hand in the river to the wrist. The cold bites. Then he pulls it out and shoves it inside the coat, flat against his chest, and waits for the feeling to come back.

His phone buzzes in the grass: PRUITT - PO. He leaves it there and watches it ring out.

Footsteps on the bank above him. Keon palms the dead black phone into his coat. The rest stays in the grass.

Pruitt picks his way down through the dead grass in a pressed shirt and good shoes, his own phone still in his hand.

PRUITT
You don’t answer, I come find you. Your ankle makes that easy.

KEON
Yes, sir.

Pruitt looks at the row on the grass. He picks up the empty Longleaf envelope, reads the corner, and sets it back exactly where it was.

PRUITT
Effective tomorrow, you’re on a curfew. Inside your residence by five p.m., nightly, until further notice.

KEON
What did I do?

PRUITT
It didn’t come from me. It came from above me. Eleven years I’ve done this job, and nobody above me has ever called about one of my guys. So hear me, Keon. If you’re not home at five-oh-

one, I’ll know. One foot in South Carolina, it buzzes in my pocket. Give me both, and the Parole Board won’t need long to decide where you’re spending the next two years.

KEON
Yes, sir.

Pruitt looks at the repo notice a beat longer than he needs to.

PRUITT
And bring me the stub.

He starts up the bank, then stops halfway and turns.

PRUITT (CONT’D)
Eight weeks, you’ve texted me every place you’ve been. Not once have you called.

(beat)

The day you’ve got something to tell me, feel free to call.

He climbs the rest of the way.

The light on Keon’s ankle blinks green.

He stands, turns his back on the river, and walks up the bank toward the road.

EXT. GRAVEL LOT - NIGHT

One sodium streetlight over a gravel shoulder. Keon rides up, sweat- dark under the coat, breath steaming, and lets the bike drop in the gravel.

Brandon’s truck sits under the light, dark, the camper shell closed.

Keon circles it. He tries the shell’s rear hatch. Locked. He cups his hands against the glass.

Inside: a sleeping pad, a camp stove, milk crates of discs, a box of discs with a signature stamped on them. And on top of the crates, a manila folder.

Keon looks around. At the crossroad, a traffic camera rides the signal arm, aimed down the shoulder. At the truck. At him.

He picks up a chunk of broken concrete and weighs it in his hand.

BRANDON (O.S.)
It’s not in there, Keon.

Brandon sits up in the dark cab. He rolls the window down a few inches.

BRANDON
Copies are never in the place you can see them. Put the rock down. That traffic camera has better resolution than mine.

Keon looks at the camera. He drops the concrete.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
I need you tomorrow at five.

KEON
I can’t. He put me on a curfew. Five o’clock, starting tomorrow. Whatever you’re doing, you’re doing it without me.

Brandon looks past Keon, slowly, up and down the road.

A quarter mile back, under a dead streetlight, sits the gray sedan.

BRANDON
I don’t think a PO hands out curfews very lightly.

KEON
He said it came from above him.

Brandon takes that in. For a moment the grin is gone, and he just looks tired.

BRANDON
Somebody’s been behind me since Fayetteville. That’s just the car they let me see.

KEON
What are they waiting for?

BRANDON
For me to hurry.

He looks down at his hands on the wheel.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
I’ve got a girl in Tulsa. She’s eight. She thinks I play disc golf for a living.

(beat)

I let her.

KEON
Then go home to her.

BRANDON
That’s what I’m trying to do.

(beat)

But not empty-handed. If anybody ends up

holding me, I’ll be holding something they want.

Then the warmth comes back into his voice, all of it, at once.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
Keon, be inside your door by five tomorrow and stay there. Whatever shows up, you stay there.

KEON
What’s going to show up?

BRANDON
Payroll.

He rolls the window up.

Keon stands under the sodium light a moment longer. Then he picks up the bike and rides away down the empty road.

TITLE CARD: ONE DAY

EXT. RIVERVIEW PARK - BENCH - DAY

Neecy, no makeup, in her puffer over a gray sweatshirt. She wears a scarf. She walks confidently.

The parking lot behind her. The spot where the gray sedan always sits: empty. The bike path disappearing into bare trees.

She sits on the bench and sets her shoulder bag at her hip, angled toward the empty end of the seat. She flips open the screen of a small

vlogging camera and seats it in the bag’s side pocket, the lens peeking through a gap in the canvas. On the flip screen: the empty end of the bench, framed. She doesn’t press record. Not yet.

She nudges the bag an inch. Checks again. Better.

Then she props her phone against the bag, facing her, and records.

NEECY
(to the phone)

Wednesday, fourteen-thirty. Staff Sergeant Denise Wallace. This is a statement of intent, recorded before the meeting, so nobody has to take my word for it later. At seventeen hundred today I meet a man named Brandon Phipps on this bench. He’s asked me for my unit’s recall roster.

She opens a manila folder and holds it up to the phone. Inside, one sheet of copy paper. Blank. She turns it over for the lens. Blank on the back.

NEECY (CONT’D)
For the record, that’s what I’m bringing him. Brandon Phipps paid my boyfriend, Keon Mayfield, to ask me questions. Keon is not his agent. He’s how Brandon got to me, and I intend to get Brandon to say so, on camera. If I call this in first, they’ll get Brandon, and Keon will just be the man on his payroll with my voice on his phone.

(beat)

This goes to my security manager at seventeen- ten, whatever happens on this bench.

She stops recording, taps SCHEDULE SEND, picks OKAFOR, SEC MGR, and sets it for 5:10 PM.

Then she starts recording again, quieter. Rehearsing.

NEECY (CONT’D)
People who know me well. Keon Mayfield. I’ve known him since I was fifteen.

(beat)

He came to South Carolina every week because I asked him to, and he never once told me what it cost him.

Her voice holds.

The phone buzzes in her hand. A text from an unknown number:

“Five o’clock. Yes or no?”

She lets it sit on the screen. Then she types: “Yes.”

SENT.

INT. BRANDON’S TRUCK - GRAVEL LOT - DAY

Brandon takes his phone from his vest and reads the screen: “Yes.”

He sets the phone down. He peels a yellow sticky note off a pad and writes on it in careful block capitals, like a man who doesn’t want his handwriting remembered. He presses it onto a typed page lying face down on the seat. He leaves it unsigned.

He opens a business checkbook. LONGLEAF MEDIA GROUP, LLC. He writes a check to KEON MAYFIELD, fills in the stub beside it, and tears the two out together.

He folds the check, the page, and a stack of prints into a white envelope.

INT. KEON’S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Keon sits at the card table in jeans and a T-shirt. The coat hangs on the back of the door. The green light blinks at his ankle.

On the counter, Brandon’s black phone lies on Keon’s charger. Its screen wakes: 40%. In the recording app, a single file, under a minute.

He presses play. Tinny, from the speaker:

NEECY (V.O.)
(on the recording)

...Why are you asking me this?

He stops it. His thumb rests on DELETE.

The thumb lifts away. He lays the phone face down on the charger.

Beside him sits the shoebox, lid off, its letters soft at the folds. Next to it, the GDC property bag with its four envelopes.

He pulls a letter from the middle of the box and unfolds it. The date at the top is three summers old.

NEECY (V.O.) (CONT’D)
(the letter; younger, lighter)

Dear Keon. It’s ninety-three degrees in Augusta, and the humidity is tough. I got my badge today. I stood in a room with no windows and thought about you, which you’re not supposed to do in a

room with no windows. A senior officer asked me who I was close to, and I said my mama and my sister, and he wrote it down, and that was all it took. It rained at four. Love, Neecy.

He folds it back along its creases and sets it on the pile.

Then he takes a sheet of lined paper and a ballpoint pen. He writes slowly, forming each letter. We see the first lines:

“Neecy. Forty-eight letters, and this is the first one I ever wrote back.”

He keeps going.

KEON (V.O.)
I read the four from my trial every Sunday for four years. I know them better than my own name. The other forty-four I’ve read three times since Sunday. Now I know more about the weather in Augusta than any man alive. March of the second year, it rained nine days straight, and you took every one of them personally. I never wrote back because a letter from inside goes in a file, and I didn’t want to be in yours. That’s the only reason. It was never because I stopped.

(beat)

It’s thirty-eight degrees today. Clear.

(beat)

Thursday, put me down.

He signs his name at the bottom. Then he reads it over from the top, slowly, the way he reads hers.

INT. NEECY’S CAR - RIVERWATCH APARTMENTS LOT - CONTINUOUS

The engine idles at the edge of the lot. The shoulder bag sits on the passenger seat, the folder on top of it.

Through the window, she can see Keon at the card table, bent over a sheet of paper.

On her phone, a search result: GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SUPERVISION, AUGUSTA OFFICE. HOURS: 8:00 AM TO 4:30 PM.

Her hand finds the door handle. Holds it.

She lets go of the handle and puts the car in gear.

INT. KEON’S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Keon folds the letter into an envelope and writes NEECY across the front. He stands to prop it against the lamp, and his eyes go to the window, to the lot below.

Below, at the edge of the lot, a car is pulling out. Hers.

He steps to the glass. Her taillights pull away.

He stays at the window with the envelope in his hand. Then he props it against the lamp.

INT. COMMUNITY SUPERVISION OFFICE - DAY

A cluttered desk under fluorescent light. The wall clock reads 4:18.

Neecy stands in Pruitt’s doorway in her puffer, the bag on her shoulder, the folder under her arm.

NEECY
Sir, my name is Staff Sergeant Denise Wallace. I’m here about Keon Mayfield.

Pruitt takes off his reading glasses and folds them.

PRUITT
Ah. You’d be the coat.

She stops.

PRUITT (CONT’D)
Yesterday a man tells me the coat on his door is a Christmas present. Today a sergeant walks into my office about him.

(beat)

Sergeant, I am not permitted to confirm or discuss the supervision status of any individual with a third party.

He nods at the chair. She stays standing.

NEECY
Then don’t discuss. Just listen. Somebody called you Monday afternoon and said Keon’s been going to South Carolina. He has. Ten times. Every one of them was to see me, at a park I picked. He never told me it was a violation. He just came.

PRUITT
Why are you telling me this?

NEECY
Because tomorrow at nine, a folder of photographs lands on your desk, and I want you to already know who sent it. Brandon Phipps.

PRUITT
Phipps. Writes his phone number on his Frisbees.

NEECY
He hired Keon to get to me. At five today I'll meet him at Riverview, and I need Keon home while I am. On his own side of the river, where that box on his ankle can say so.

PRUITT
Every sixty seconds.

NEECY
The ten times before tonight are mine. I picked the park. I'll say so tomorrow with wires on my fingers. Let the Parole Board hear all of it instead of Brandon's story. And I'm going to get Brandon to say why he hired Keon. On camera.

(beat)

All Keon has to do is sit still for one night.

PRUITT
Why bring this to me and not your own people?

NEECY
My people want Brandon. You're the only one with a badge who's paid to care what happens to Keon.

PRUITT
Then let your people have him.

NEECY
Once they have him, he'll never say why he hired Keon. A man like that only talks to somebody he thinks he's already beaten.

PRUITT
Your Army know you're doing this?

NEECY
At ten after five, they'll know all of it.

(beat)

It'll cost me my slot.

PRUITT
For a man on parole.

NEECY
Four years ago I picked the Army. This time I'm picking him.

PRUITT
He know you’re doing this?

NEECY
No. And please, sir, don’t tell him. If he knows where I am at five, he’ll come.

PRUITT
(dry)

He’ll be home at five, Sergeant.

NEECY
You don’t know him.

Pruitt studies her. Then he unfolds his reading glasses, puts them on, and draws the clipboard toward him.

PRUITT
(writing)

I’m writing all this in his file. Anybody who opens his file from today on reads your name right next to his.

NEECY
He spent eight weeks keeping me out of it.

(beat)

Put me down.

She goes.

Pruitt looks at the name on his clipboard. Then he writes on a sticky note in neat block capitals, WALLACE - 1700 - WATCH THE DOT, and presses it onto the page.

He picks up the desk phone and dials four digits.

PRUITT
Director? It’s Pruitt. That curfew you sent me on Mayfield yesterday. Whoever asked you for it is going to want to hear this.

He listens. His eyebrows go up a fraction.

PRUITT (CONT’D)
Federal?

(listening)

You may want to tell them a staff sergeant named Wallace will be at Riverview Park at five o’clock. She came to me herself.

INT. NEECY’S CAR - RIVERVIEW LOT - DAY

Neecy parks facing out.

She opens the glovebox, sets her phone inside, and closes it.

CLICK.

She zips her puffer, reaches into the bag’s side pocket, and presses record. A red light glows. She shoulders the bag, tucks the folder under her arm, and walks toward the bench.

INT. KEON’S APARTMENT - DAY

The stove clock: 4:35.

A KNOCK.

Keon opens the door. Nobody on the walkway. An envelope lies on the landing: LONGLEAF MEDIA GROUP, LLC.

Down in the lot, Brandon’s truck pulls out onto Riverwatch Parkway.

Keon tears the envelope open at the counter.

A paycheck with its stub attached. KEON MAYFIELD. NET PAY $102.40. PAY DATE: December 16, 2026.

Beneath it, printed photos of every Riverview date.

And a single typed page with his name at the bottom, above an empty signature line.

INSERT - THE STATEMENT

I, Keon Mayfield, state that Staff Sergeant Denise Wallace knew I was on Georgia parole and could not leave the state, and that she urged me to meet her in South Carolina about 10 times. On Monday, at Riverview Park in South Carolina, knowing I was paid by Longleaf Media Group, she described her unit’s recall roster to me.

BACK TO SCENE.

Keon’s finger goes to the paper and stops on the first line: could not leave the state.

It stays there.

INSERT - YELLOW STICKY NOTE ON THE PAGE

She said yes. Riverview, five o’clock. Your name makes it stick, and stuck things stay in my drawer. Sign it, text me a picture by 4:55, and nobody ever reads it. Stub’s yours either way. Stay inside. You can’t get there from here.

BACK TO SCENE.

Keon looks out the window. At the lot where her car was.

Keon lays the statement on the counter beside his letter. He picks up his pen and uncaps it.

The paycheck lies next to his hand, the stub on top: KEON MAYFIELD, spelled right.

The pen hovers over the signature line.

He looks at the envelope propped against the lamp. NEECY.

He caps the pen and sets it down.

He dials her. One ring, then voicemail, her channel voice, bright:

NEECY (V.O.)
Hey, y’all, it’s Neecy--

INT. NEECY’S CAR - RIVERVIEW LOT - CONTINUOUS

The glovebox, closed. No light leaks from it.

INT. GRAY SEDAN - BEHIND THE ACTIVITIES CENTER - DAY

The sedan sits tucked tight behind a cinderblock building at the edge of the park, far from its usual spot. Through the long lens, through a gap in the bare trees: Neecy on the bench, a folder on her knees.

The DRIVER cracks a sunflower seed. On the dash, his credential case lies open. He is FBI SPECIAL AGENT RAY CORBIN.

He’s on the phone with his SUPERVISOR.

CORBIN
She’s on the bench. Twenty minutes early. One folder.

SUPERVISOR (V.O.)
What came back on the boyfriend?

CORBIN
Monday, four minutes after she reported Phipps, the boyfriend’s phone texted him.

SUPERVISOR (V.O.)
So she reports him, then has the boyfriend warn him. If anything changes hands, take them both.

Georgia can have the boyfriend.

CORBIN
Georgia’s already got him on a leash. That text is why I asked them for the curfew. Phipps does his business at dusk, so tonight her messenger sits it out, and whatever she brings Phipps, she brings alone.

(beat)

Aiken County has two units staged. Nobody moves till I say.

He sets the phone on the cooler. On the seat, a walkie-talkie.

From the glovebox he takes a second pair of handcuffs and hooks it on his belt beside the first.

Through the lens, Neecy squares her shoulders like a soldier at a board.

He rests the lens on the steering wheel and waits.

INT. KEON’S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

He looks at the prints on the counter. Riverview. Riverview. Riverview.

He dials PRUITT - PO. It rings through to voicemail. He hangs up before the beep.

He opens a rideshare app and taps REQUEST. A red banner: CARD DECLINED.

He thumbs a map. RIVERVIEW PARK. BY BIKE, VIA DOWNTOWN BRIDGE: 44 MIN. ARRIVE 5:25 PM.

He holds the screen beside the sticky note on the counter. Riverview, five o’clock.

Twenty-five minutes late, by the only bridge he can ride.

He sits down at the table with his hands flat on his knees.

His phone rings. PRUITT - PO.

INTERCUT - INT. PRUITT’S CAR (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Pruitt drives with the phone on speaker in its dash mount, the clipboard on the passenger seat, the sticky note on top.

KEON
Yes, sir.

PRUITT
What did you call about?

Keon takes a breath.

KEON
South Carolina, sir. Riverview Park. Ten times since I got out. I wanted you to hear it from me before you hear it from him.

Pruitt’s eyes leave the road for a second, to the sticky note.

PRUITT
You’re the second person to tell me that today. But since you weren’t on the monitor, I can pretend those didn’t happen. Just don’t do it again.

Keon goes still.

KEON
Sir, she’s meeting a man at five--

PRUITT
The people who put you on that curfew are federal, Keon. They know where she’ll be. They don’t need help from a man with a box on his ankle. I see you at your apartment. Stay there.

KEON
If she hands him anything--

PRUITT
They don’t need your help. Tomorrow, nine a.m. I need a stub.

Pruitt ends the call.

In the apartment, the green light on his ankle flashes. Sixty seconds. It flashes again.

His eyes go to the sticky note. “She said yes.”

He leaves it all on the counter: the paycheck with its stub, the statement unsigned, the capped pen, the letter with her name on it.

He takes Brandon’s black phone off the charger and pushes it deep into the front pocket of his jeans.

He takes the coat off the door, puts it on, and zips it to the throat. On the walkway, he locks the door and slides the key ring under the mat.

He runs.

EXT. RIVERWATCH APARTMENTS - STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Keon takes the stairs three at a time, spins the combination lock off the bike, and is riding before his second foot finds the pedal.

EXT. GRAVEL PATH BY TRAIN TRACKS - CONTINUOUS

He rides under a concrete bridge, toward a train bridge, standing on the pedals, coat flapping.

EXT. CANAL - FOOTBRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

He jumps off and runs the bike across the narrow footbridge, the green water sliding below, and is back in the saddle before the far end.

EXT. RIVERVIEW PARK - BENCH - DAY

Neecy sits on the bench, the bag beside her, the folder on her knees. The red light glows in the side pocket.

Brandon’s truck pulls into the lot and parks. He checks the phone from his vest. Nothing from Keon.

He gets out with the bag on his shoulder, and stops to look at the other lot, where the gray sedan has sat before. It’s not there.

He looks at the tree line. The bike path. He takes one step back toward the truck.

On his shoulder, the zipped pocket of the disc bag buzzes.

He unzips it and takes out the glitter phone. A photo from MADDIE: a Christmas tree in a small living room, and taped to the wall beside it,

a crayon sign. DADDY’S SPOT.

He touches the screen where the crayon sign is. Then he zips the phone back into the pocket, puts the grin back on like a jacket.

He lifts two fingers toward the empty space where the sedan should be, the way he waved at it at Lake Olmstead. Then he walks toward Neecy.

EXT. CANAL - TOWPATH - CONTINUOUS

Keon flies along the canal path.

INT. PRUITT’S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Pruitt drives with one eye on the phone in his dash mount. On its map, a blue dot labeled MAYFIELD, K. on the canal path.

Pruitt pulls hard onto the shoulder, takes the phone out of the mount, and dials.

EXT. CANAL - RIVERBANK - CONTINUOUS

Keon’s phone buzzes in his pocket. He stops the bike and pulls it out: PRUITT - PO.

He looks at it through three buzzes. Four. The clock shows 4:55.

He declines the call and pushes the phone deep into his jeans pocket, beside Brandon’s black one. He looks at the far bank.

Keon skids down the bank and dumps the bike in the brush. It lands on its side, back wheel still spinning.

He doesn’t take off his shoes. He steps in.

The cold hits his shins, and he flinches. He keeps walking. The first

stretch is rock under a skin of fast water. Then the rocks drop away. The water climbs to his knees, then his thighs, and the current leans on him.

EXT. RIVERVIEW PARK - BENCH - DAY

Brandon comes down the path. He sits at the other end of her bench. He unclips the little camera from his strap and clips it back on facing forward, its lens on her. For once, nothing is watching his back.

BRANDON
I picked a beautiful spot for this.

NEECY
You picked the one place nobody calls me Sergeant.

BRANDON
(pleasantly)

Sergeant, you’re on a mid tonight. The binder’s back on its shelf by midnight, and nobody ever knows it left.

NEECY
I’m not on mids anymore. My colonel pulled my roster access yesterday. Your information is a day old, Mr. Phipps.

BRANDON
(unbothered)

Then you need Thursday to go well a lot more than I do.

He leans back and looks at the park.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
There’s a major at Bragg who sends me a Christmas card every year he doesn’t want to send. When I met him, he was a captain--

NEECY
Why’d you hire Keon?

BRANDON
I needed a camera man.

NEECY
You hired him to get to me. Say it.

BRANDON
(smiling at the trees)

I hired him because nobody else would. Ask his officer.

NEECY
You told him to ask me about my nights. Then my day. You put a phone in his pocket that records.

BRANDON
I gave a man a job. What he asks his girlfriend is between the two of them.

(beat)

Keon got some paperwork this afternoon. Says you knew all about his parole and walked him over that river anyway. Ten times.

NEECY
I didn’t know. He’ll tell anybody who asks.

BRANDON
Not anymore. He signed it.

NEECY
It won’t hold up. It’s a lie with his name on it.

Brandon lets it go. He just stops talking.

Neecy checks her watch: 5:04.

He crosses his ankles, leans back, and lets the silence run. A jogger goes by on the path and is gone.

EXT. SAVANNAH RIVER - SHOALS - CONTINUOUS

Keon hauls himself onto a flat rock in the middle of the river and crouches there, chest heaving, the coat streaming water.

He looks back at the Georgia bank.

He looks ahead. The notch in the far bank, and between him and it, the fastest water in the river.

He slides off the rock into it.

The water is at his waist. The coat has soaked through and drags at him. Ahead, a dark channel runs between the rocks, too deep to see the bottom. He works upstream along a ledge, feeling for each step before he trusts it.

He plants a foot. The rock rolls.

He drops to his chest. The cold knocks the air out of him in one gasp.

His shoe is gone. His socked foot comes down on the edge of a rock and cuts, and a thread of blood unspools downstream.

The monitor BUZZES against the bone. Again. It keeps buzzing.

The current takes his legs, and he goes under.

INT. PRUITT’S CAR - SHOULDER - CONTINUOUS

Still pulled over, engine running. Pruitt holds the phone in both hands. On the passenger seat, the clipboard and its sticky note:

WALLACE - 1700 - WATCH THE DOT.

INSERT - PRUITT’S PHONE

The map. A blue dot labeled MAYFIELD, K. inches off the Georgia bank and into the river. It creeps toward the dashed state line running down the middle of the water.

It crosses.

A red banner drops across the screen: EXCLUSION ZONE ALERT. The phone BUZZES in his hands, a flat, steady pulse.

The dot stops.

The banner changes: NO GPS SIGNAL. LAST KNOWN LOCATION.

The dot sits in the middle of the Savannah River. It doesn’t move.

BACK TO SCENE.

Pruitt takes off his reading glasses. Puts them back on. The dot hasn’t moved.

He drops the phone into the dash mount and pulls off the shoulder,

fast.

EXT. RIVERVIEW PARK - BENCH - CONTINUOUS

The silence has gone on long enough. Neecy breaks it first.

NEECY
I brought what you asked for.

Brandon glances at her bag and smiles.

BRANDON
Leave it running.

She goes still.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
Yours. Leave it running.

(tapping the little camera on his strap, its lens on her, its red light on)

Mine is. The roster’s a souvenir. I came for the picture. Whatever yours shows, mine shows the same thing.

(beat)

It doesn’t have to hold up, Sergeant. It just has to exist.

He sets a thick envelope on the bench between them.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
For Thursday.

She doesn’t touch it.

Behind the activities center, through a gap in the trees, the long lens takes it in. The shutter whispers. The bench. The envelope. The two of them.

EXT. SAVANNAH RIVER - SHOALS - CONTINUOUS

The river surface. One second. Two. Three.

Downstream, a tan canvas coat surfaces, sleeves spread, and slides away over the rocks.

Behind it, Keon comes up in his soaked T-shirt, choking, and catches a fistful of root at the base of the far bank. He hangs there, shaking. He watches the coat go.

Her Christmas present rides the white water out of sight.

Then he hauls himself up through the notch and is gone into the trees.

INT. NEECY’S CAR - RIVERVIEW LOT - CONTINUOUS

The car sits empty, facing out.

A thin line of light glows around the seam of the closed glovebox. Her scheduled send, going out on time.

Then the seam goes dark.

EXT. GREENEWAY TRAIL - CONTINUOUS

The cane at the top of the path. The stranger’s bike, right where it’s been since Sunday, vine wound through the spokes. Nobody ever

came back for it.

Keon tears the vine loose and drags the bike out. Back tire soft, chain dry, seat split. He gets on.

One shoe, bleeding, arms bare and shaking, Keon stands on the pedals of a stranger’s bike. The soft tire slaps the pavement. The bare pedal is slick under his foot. He doesn’t sit down.

EXT. RIVERVIEW PARK - BENCH - CONTINUOUS

Brandon turns his head.

BRANDON
Show me.

Neecy reaches into her bag. The edge of the folder clears the zipper.

INT. GRAY SEDAN - BEHIND THE ACTIVITIES CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Through the long lens: a manila edge rising out of the canvas.

Corbin’s jaw sets. His free hand finds the door handle. The latch clicks. The door opens an inch.

He holds up the walkie-talkie and speaks into it.

CORBIN
Aiken County, stand by.

Corbin’s phone lights up on the cooler: 5:14, a forward from Okafor. He doesn’t look down.

EXT. RIVERVIEW PARK - BENCH - CONTINUOUS

NEECY
It’s all--

KEON (O.S.)
(breathing hard)
Neecy, don’t!

Keon comes off the Greeneway fast, drops the bike in the grass, and stands there. Soaked. Bleeding. One shoe, no coat, his lips gray with cold. The monitor blinks green on his wet ankle.

Neecy’s hand stops. The folder slides back into the bag.

Behind the activities center, the sedan door swings open. Corbin slips into the bare trees and works his way toward the bench, tree to tree, one hand resting on the second pair of cuffs at his belt. One hand holding the walkie-talkie.

For a beat, Brandon is genuinely surprised. Then the grin widens.

BRANDON
Well, look at this.

(to the camera on his strap)

Both of them. One frame.

(to Keon)

You’re on curfew, Keon. And you’re standing in South Carolina.

KEON
(still catching his breath)

I know where I’m standing.

Neecy looks at Keon. At the ankle. At the blood. At his bare, shaking arms. Then at Brandon.

NEECY
His officer heard about the first ten from me this afternoon. He’s watching the eleventh right now.

(beat)

You don’t have leverage on us anymore.

Brandon’s grin flickers.

Keon watches her say it. She keeps her eyes on Brandon.

She lifts her shoulder bag onto her knees and turns it, so the lens in the side pocket looks up at her own face. The red light glows through the gap in the canvas.

NEECY (CONT’D)
Staff Sergeant Denise Wallace, military intelligence, Fort Gordon. This man is Brandon Phipps. He asked me for my unit’s recall roster. That envelope on the bench is his. I haven’t touched it.

(beat)

I am reporting him. Again. And this time I’m not canceling.

Brandon’s grin goes out.

Keon crouches beside her, into her frame, still wet.

Before he speaks, his eyes do what they always do. They travel -- past Brandon’s shoulder -- into the bare trees.

Half behind a trunk: a rumpled jacket. The driver of the gray sedan.

Their eyes meet. Corbin doesn’t move.

Brandon, watching Neecy, doesn’t turn. His camera faces forward.

Keon looks back to the lens. For the first time, he looks straight into it.

KEON
(loud, for the trees)

Keon Mayfield. Georgia parole. Eleven times in South Carolina since I got out. He paid me cash. He gave me a phone that records--

Over the top of the bag, Neecy’s eyes go to Keon. She shakes her head, once.

Keon doesn’t see her. He keeps his eyes on the lens.

KEON (CONT’D)
--and I used it to ask her about her work.

(beat)

Monday, right after she reported him, I texted him to walk away. I wanted him gone before anybody found his pictures of us. That was me. Not her.

In the trees, Corbin’s hand comes off the second pair of cuffs.

KEON (CONT’D)
Brandon Phipps hired me to get to her.

Neecy closes her eyes.

Brandon lunges for the bag.

Keon comes up between them and takes the shove. Then he dodges a punch but stumbles. He goes to one knee and gets back up. His right hand clenches into a fist, but stays at his side.

Corbin, in his rumpled jacket, breaks from the trees at a run.

CORBIN
(into walkie-talkie)

Aiken, go! Seal the park.

Brandon tears the shoulder bag out of Neecy’s arms. The camera, the folder, all of it.

He turns for his truck and runs straight into CORBIN, badge out, breathing hard.

CORBIN (CONT’D)
Brandon Phipps, you’re under arrest. Acting as an unregistered agent of a foreign government.

BRANDON
(the grin)

I’m registered. I’ve got a PDGA number.

CORBIN
Aiken County will add the assault.

The cuffs go on. Brandon doesn’t fight.

Corbin takes the shoulder bag from his hand, then unclips the little camera from the strap of Brandon’s disc bag. Its red light is still on.

EXT. RIVERVIEW PARK - BENCH - DUSK

The sun is setting.

Brandon sits cuffed on the grass. Corbin stands over the bench. At his feet: Neecy’s shoulder bag, Brandon’s disc bag, and a row of clear evidence bags holding the little camera, Brandon’s phone, and the

thick envelope.

Keon sits on the bench, shaking so hard the slats rattle. Neecy strips off her puffer, wraps it around him, and zips it to his chin.

NEECY
Where’s your coat?

KEON
Went on ahead to Savannah. I’m sorry.

She unwinds her scarf and binds his bare foot tight with quick, practiced turns.

Corbin lifts the folder out of Neecy’s bag and opens it.

One sheet of copy paper. Blank. He turns it over. Blank.

Keon stares at it.

Corbin takes out his phone. Waiting on it, unopened, is a forward from OKAFOR, SEC MGR. He plays it. On the little screen, Neecy holds the same blank sheet up to her own lens and turns it over.

CORBIN
I thought that was the roster.

NEECY
(eyes on Keon)

So did he.

He slides the sheet back into the folder and turns to Keon.

CORBIN
Monday, four minutes after she reported him, your phone texted his. That’s why you’re on a curfew. Until you said who sent it, that text was my case against her.

Neecy looks at Keon. Keon looks down at the green light on his ankle.

Brandon looks up from the grass at Keon.

BRANDON
You know what you just bought, Keon? Two years in a Georgia prison, if you’re lucky.

KEON
It’s a nice state.

In its evidence bag, Brandon’s phone BUZZES. A number, no name.

Corbin picks it up and answers through the plastic.

CORBIN
Go ahead.

Silence on the line. Then a click.

On the grass, Brandon’s face goes gray. His eyes go to his disc bag, its pocket still zipped.

BRANDON
I have a daughter in Tulsa. She’s eight.

(beat)

He knows her street.

CORBIN
He listened four seconds before he hung up. He knows we have you. Talk to me tonight, and

there’s a car on her street by morning.

Brandon looks at the zipped pocket for a moment. Then nods.

CORBIN (CONT’D)
(turning to Keon)

I’ll need a statement from you too, Mr. Mayfield.

Keon digs into his wet jeans and holds out Brandon’s black phone, wet, its screen dark.

KEON
He gave me this Monday. It records.

(beat)

It sent everything to him.

Neecy watches it pass from his hand to Corbin’s. Keon looks at her. She holds his eyes, then nods once.

Corbin takes it by the edges. He looks at the bound, bleeding foot.

CORBIN
You’ll be a government witness. My report will say you came here on your own and turned this over.

KEON
Am I still going back?

CORBIN
That’s up to Georgia.

Keon pulls his own phone from his jeans. The screen is black. He holds the button. Nothing.

KEON
Can I borrow your phone, sir?

Corbin hands it over. Keon dials a number from memory.

INTERCUT - EXT. CANAL - RIVERBANK - DUSK

Pruitt stands in the brush in his good shoes, his trouser cuffs dark with river water. At his feet lies Keon’s bike, its back wheel still. Across the shoals, the notch in the far bank is going black.

His phone rings. A number he doesn’t know. He answers.

PRUITT
Pruitt.

KEON
It’s Keon. I’m at Riverview Park.

Pruitt closes his eyes for one second.

KEON (CONT’D)
In South Carolina, sir. I’m not running.

Pruitt looks across the water.

PRUITT
I’m aware of your location, Mr. Mayfield. Your ankle has been filing reports every minute. Stay put, Keon.

KEON
Yes, sir.

PRUITT
There’ll be a warrant within the hour. Aiken County will hold you for me.

(beat)

And Keon. You called. The Parole Board will hear that from me.

EXT. RIVERVIEW PARK - BENCH - DUSK

Keon hands the phone back. Corbin hauls Brandon to his feet and walks him toward the lot.

Blue flashing lights wash the trees in the background.

Keon and Neecy sit on the bench in plain sight.

NEECY
(beginning to cry)

You were supposed to be inside your door.

KEON
I called Pruitt first. Told him about all ten. He said he could pretend they didn’t happen.

NEECY
He told you that before you got in the river?

KEON
Yes.

She presses her hand over her mouth.

NEECY
You swam that river to say one sentence.

KEON
You trapped a spy with a blank piece of paper.

She laughs through the tears, helpless with it.

She takes his hand and turns it over. The knuckles are clean. She holds it inside the coat with hers.

NEECY
You’re going back.

KEON
I know. But you’re not.

She looks out at the park, going dark.

In the distance, a SIREN rises.

Keon goes still, the way he always does. Then, deliberately, he turns away from the sound and looks at her. He keeps his eyes on her until it fades into the city.

Up in the lot, car doors close.

Footsteps on the grass behind them. A DEPUTY’S HAND settles on Keon’s shoulder. A tan uniform sleeve, nothing more.

Keon stands. He reaches for the zipper of her puffer.

NEECY
Keep it.

KEON
They’ll take it at intake.

NEECY
Then they’ll have to give it back. And you’ll have to bring it to me.

He zips it back up to his chin.

The hand guides him up the slope toward the lot. Neecy stays on the bench in her sweatshirt in the cold and watches until the headlights swing away.

TITLE CARD: THURSDAY

INT. KEON’S APARTMENT - MORNING

The stove clock turns over to 9:00.

On the counter, everything where he left it: the paycheck with its

stub, the statement with its empty signature line, the capped pen.

Pruitt’s hand sets down the key ring from under the mat, then his clipboard.

He holds the paystub while he reads it.

Under the clip, his sticky note: WALLACE - 1700 - WATCH THE DOT. He tucks two envelopes beneath it, side by side. One reads NEECY. The other reads KEON MAYFIELD in a careful hand, its stamp pressed on hard and a little crooked.

Two letters, each written to the other. Neither one opened.

INT. NEECY’S CAR - OFFICE BUILDING LOT - DAY

Neecy in uniform, parked outside a low brick building. No camera. On her lap, a printout of the form she filed weeks ago, a corrections page clipped to the front for the investigator, and a pen. On the dash lies a memo on unit letterhead. One word on it is stamped in red: WITHDRAWN.

Her phone rings. She answers, and a recording speaks.

RECORDED VOICE (V.O.)
This is a call from an inmate at the Aiken County Detention Center. This call is subject to recording and monitoring. To accept, press one.

She almost smiles at that. She presses one.

NEECY
How’s South Carolina?

KEON (V.O.)
Finally got my travel permit.

A laugh gets out of her before she can stop it.

KEON (V.O.) (CONT’D)
Are you inside yet?

NEECY
I’m in the parking lot with a pen in my hand. That’s as far as I’ve gotten. There’s a section called People Who Know You Well. It’s about an inch wide, and I’ve got fourteen years to fit in it.

KEON (V.O.)
Just write my name. They’ll ask you for the rest.

NEECY
The man in the suit is going to ask me what you do.

KEON (V.O.)
Tell him I was working on it.

She laughs, and it breaks in the middle.

NEECY
I’m going to tell him the truth. And I’m going to say it like it’s everything. First thing I tell him is I lied to my security manager. Twice.

(beat)

Pike pulled my slot across post. He signed it at six this morning.

KEON (V.O.)
Neecy.

NEECY
Today’s not about moving up. It’s about whether I keep what I’ve got.

(beat)

It was just a building with no windows.

KEON (V.O.)
They took your coat at intake. I’ve got a receipt for it.

RECORDED VOICE (V.O.)
You have one minute remaining.

NEECY
Don’t you lose that receipt. That’s my good coat. Mama’s freezing you a sweet potato pie. She says she’s counting the pieces this time.

KEON (V.O.)
Tell her I’ll only have one piece.

(beat)

There’s a letter on my counter with your name on it. I asked Pruitt to mail it.

NEECY
There’s one in your mailbox with yours. I wrote it Tuesday on the ramp.

KEON (V.O.)
You mailed one?

NEECY
Forty-five since the verdict. First one with a stamp.

The line hums between them.

They listen to each other breathe until they hear the click.

She uncaps the pen. On the corrections page, under PEOPLE WHO KNOW YOU WELL, she writes his name, then circles it twice so nobody can miss it:

KEON MAYFIELD

She puts him down.

Then she gets out of the car and walks toward the building.

FADE TO BLACK.