

FADE IN:

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

MIKE RALSTON, 30, is snoring on a couch in the afternoon. A glob of drool hangs on the corner of his mouth. Empty beer and alcohol bottles litter the coffee table in front of him. Suddenly, the door slams and Mike is startled awake. He looks over to see his wife ANGELA RALSTON holding an envelope.

ANGELA
It's the last one.

Mike looks hung over, and doesn't respond immediately.

ANGELA (CONT'D)
Mike, it's the last check. This is all we've got. After this, there's nothing left.

MIKE
I can't believe it's been six months already.

ANGELA
Well we're here Mike. Severance wasn't gonna last forever. You knew that Mike.

MIKE
There just isn't any work.

ANGELA
You haven't even tried to look! When's the last time you applied somewhere?

MIKE
I don't wanna talk about this now.

Mike gets up off the couch to go, but Angela grabs his arm. She looks at her husband, and her voice quivers a little.

ANGELA
You've gotta do something. Who's gonna pay for Becca's medicine?

Mike and Angela lock eyes for a moment. Angela's eyes are watering. Mike lets out a sigh, and then walks away, leaving his wife standing there alone.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE, BECCA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Mike enters his daughter's bedroom. BECCA RALSTON, 7, is sleeping in her bed. Becca is pale and has no hair; she's a leukemia patient. As Mike sits on her bed, Becca wakes up.

BECCA

Hi Daddy.

MIKE

Hey sweetie. How are you feeling?

BECCA

Okay. I'm really sleepy.

Becca yawns, closes her eyes, and snuggles close to her Dad. Mike looks over his daughter for a moment. He gently places a kiss on her forehead, and then leaves the room.

EXT. DOWNTOWN FLUSHING - DAY

Mike, driving a beat up clunker of a car through downtown Flushing, MI, pulls up to a stop sign. To the left is the temp agency. It's crowded inside, filled with slow-moving, sad looking people. Mike lets out a grunt of disgust, and hits the accelerator. He turns right, heading toward Darron's, the local bar.

INT. DARRON'S BAR - DAY

Mike walks up to the bar orders a beer from the BARTENDER, a rough looking man in his mid-30's, and then sits down. As he's waiting, someone comes up and places a hand on his shoulder. Mike turns to see LESTER FRANKS, 45, unshaven, wearing a worn out Carhartt jacket similar to his own.

MIKE

Lester, it's been a while.

LESTER

Yeah, figured I'd find you here though.

The bartender comes up and sets down Mike's pint.

BARTENDER

Here you go.

MIKE

Got time for a pint and a round of nine ball?

LESTER
Sure, why not.

MIKE
We're gonna need another.

BARTENDER
You got it.

MIKE
I'll go set up the table.

INT. DARRON'S BAR - DAY

Mike, sleeves rolled up, leans over the beat-up pool table and hits a hard break to start the game. Lester and Mike continue to talk as they take turns shooting.

LESTER
So you working anywhere?

MIKE
Nah, hasn't been any work around here since the plant shut down.

LESTER
Tell me about it. I've got a stack of bills a mile high, and no way to pay any of them. It's rough.

MIKE
Yeah, and things are gonna get worse. Word is they're gonna shut down the truck assembly plant.

LESTER
No kidding. That's the last thing this town needs. Almost makes you wanna just pack up and leave.

MIKE
Wish I could. I've thought about it before.

LESTER
What's stopping you?

MIKE
Eh, Becca's still too sick to make a move.

LESTER

Oh, I forgot about that. That's gotta be tough. How's Angela holding up?

MIKE

Hanging in there I guess. Things would be a lot better if I had work. She gets on me about it, but there's not much I can do.

LESTER

Well Mike, that's where you're wrong.

MIKE

What do you mean?

LESTER

Let me put it this way. Say you had a chance to make some money, enough money to take care of your family for a long time. Would you take it?

MIKE

I mean, I don't know. Depends on what I had to do.

LESTER

Does it really matter what you do? Think about it. You're out of work. You have a sick daughter, and a wife that can't understand why there's no money. If I were you, I'd do just about anything.

MIKE

What are you saying Lester?

LESTER

Alright, I'll come clean. I've got an opportunity for you Mike. Something that carries a certain amount of risk.

MIKE

What kind of risk?

LESTER

Let's just say the boys in blue wouldn't look too kindly on this kind of deal.

MIKE

Lester, I'm not really into-

LESTER

Now just hear me out. I know you used to race cars. Heard you were a pretty good driver in fact. And that's what I need. A driver. Someone to go from point A to point B. Fast. And that's all.

MIKE

But I'm not looking to get caught up in any trouble.

LESTER

Odds are, there won't be any. It's just a reward always comes with some risk. That's just the way things are. And sometimes, you gotta do what you gotta do. I gotta pay my rent, you gotta take care of your daughter. And we both gotta find a way to do it.

MIKE

Yeah, but it doesn't mean I need to go pissing off the cops to do it.

LESTER

All's I'm saying is that sometimes, the ends justify the means. And remember, sometimes to win...

Lester takes his final shot and sinks the nine ball in the corner pocket.

LESTER (CONT'D)

...you gotta take a chance. Wanna shoot another round?

MIKE

No man, I gotta get going. It was good talking with you though.

LESTER

Likewise. And Mike, think over what I said. If you change your mind, give me a call.

Mike gives Lester an uncertain nod, and then heads for the door.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mike enters a dark living room. He fumbles for the light, and then turns it on. Sitting on the couch is Angela, which startles Mike.

MIKE

Oh my God. You scared me.

ANGELA

Mike we need to talk.

MIKE

Not now, I'm beat.

Mike throws his jacket onto a chair. Angela is getting visibly upset.

ANGELA

No, sit down. I want to talk with you about something.

MIKE

Hey look, I just wanna-

ANGELA

Mike. Sit!

Mike looks surprised. Shaken a bit, he sits down, next to Angela.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Did you apply for a job today?

MIKE

Oh come on, you know there's nothing out there.

ANGELA

I didn't ask you that. Did you apply anywhere?

MIKE

No.

ANGELA

Then what did you do all day?

Mike doesn't respond. The sounds of night fill the room.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Answer me Mike.

Mike, staring at the ground, still doesn't say a word.
Angela, fighting back the tears, manages to compose herself.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Fine. You don't have to tell me.
But you have one week to find some
work. I don't care what it is,
just find it. Look at me. If you
don't have work in one week, I'm
kicking you out.

Mike looks at Angela. There's a fire in her eyes.

MIKE

But it's not my fault. Nobody's
hiring.

ANGELA

You've had six months. I'm sick
and tired of your excuses.

MIKE

You can't just kick me out!

ANGELA

This is my house. And if you can't
provide for me and Becca, then you
don't belong here. One week Mike,
one week.

Angela gets up and exits the room, leaving Mike stunned on
the couch, his brow furrowed, head resting in his hands.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

It's a quiet morning downtown for the Flushing Police
Department. DAN RALSTON, 45, clean cut, is sitting at a desk
that's a little too small for him. He's filling out some
paperwork when he hears a knock at his door.

DAN

Come in.

The door opens, and Dan looks up to see Mike, his little
brother, shuffle a bit sheepishly into the room.

MIKE

Hey Dan.

DAN

Mike, have a seat. Let me just
finish this up.

MIKE

Thanks.

Dan motions to a chair in front of his desk, and Mike sits down. There's a palpable tension in the air between the two men as Dan finishes writing.

DAN

So, what brings you around here?

MIKE

Thought I'd drop in, say hello.
Haven't seen you since Dad's
birthday.

DAN

Well, I've been keeping busy.
How's the job hunt?

MIKE

Not good... I actually need some
help Dan.

DAN

What do you mean?

MIKE

I'm in a tough spot. Real tough.
Angela's gonna kick me out unless I
find some work.

DAN

Wow, I didn't realize it was that
bad.

MIKE

Me either. Thing is though, I have
no idea how I'm gonna find
something steady. And I don't
wanna lose Angela. I can't deal
with that.

DAN

So what do you need from me?

MIKE

I need some cash, plain and simple.
Just enough to tide Angela over
until I find something to do.

DAN

Mike, you know I hate giving
handouts.

MIKE

I know, but I'm in deep, and I don't know what else to do.

DAN

I just can't do it. I'm sorry.

MIKE

What am I supposed to do?

Mike appears increasingly desperate as he pleads with his brother. The two men sit, face to face, as Dan wrinkles his forehead in thought. Finally, Dan breaks the silence.

DAN

You know Mike, there's this saying that I like. It goes like this. Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime. And that's what I'm gonna do, teach you to fish.

Dan grabs a scrap of paper, scribbles something down on it, and then hands it to Mike.

DAN (CONT'D)

Take this to the temp agency. I'm friends with the guy that runs it. He'll help you out.

Mike takes the paper, and looks it over.

MIKE

Thanks Dan.

DAN

You're welcome. I hope it works out for you.

Dan glances at his watch, and then gets up from his chair.

DAN (CONT'D)

Shoot, the DA's coming in 15, and I've gotta get ready. It was good talking to you Mike.

MIKE

You too, see you around.

Mike gets up from his chair, paper in hand, and leaves the office.

INT. TEMP AGENCY - DAY

Mike peers through the glass door at the temp agency in downtown Flushing. It's crowded inside, filled with a slew of down-trodden, slow-moving people. He goes through the door and up to the main desk. Sitting there is a middle-aged, RECEPTIONIST, who seems more interested in her crossword than helping anyone. Mike clears his throat, and the receptionist looks up.

RECEPTIONIST

Can I help you?

MIKE

Yeah, I'm here to apply.

RECEPTIONIST

Alright, you're gonna need to fill these out.

The receptionist collects a stack of sheets, and sets them in front of Mike.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

And just so you know, we don't have much right now. If we can't find something, your name will go onto a waiting list.

MIKE

Okay.... oh wait just a second!

Mike takes the piece of paper Dan gave to him, and hands to the receptionist. She puts on her reading glasses, looks it over, and then sets it down.

RECEPTIONIST

Just a second, I'm gonna have to go get my manager.

Mike stands at the desk waiting. After a few moments, the receptionist returns with MARK TOPP, 43, the manager of the temp agency. Mark, dressed business casual, does his best to hide the slightly despondent look in his eyes as they shake hands.

MARK

Mike, Mark Topp, pleasure to meet you. So you're Dan's brother eh?

MIKE

Guilty as charged.