

MEADERVILLE

BY: BRYCE BERKOWITZ

(TV Pilot: Crime Drama)

Logline:

A working-class family is hired to kill five mining magnates responsible for an environmental disaster in their hometown-- Meaderville, Montana--but one family member seizes control and he has very different ideas for what payback should look like...

Tonally:

It's Justified meets Fargo set in the Northern Rockies, and it's stylized on the page like Whiplash.



2021 AFF AMC TV Pilot Award Winner

(AFF reader comments at end of script)

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EXT. NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAINS, MONTANA - AERIAL VIEW - DUSK

CAMERA PANS over snow-capped peaks, thick w/ pines & craggy rocks...

Sound of fierce WIND... Sound of TIRES slicing through icy slush... TILT down the grade of the cordillera.

Traffic glides down a mountain highway. Brake lights BEAM in the pink-blue light, as WIND pushes cars out of their lanes.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

It's no secret. In America, you
can't fight capitalism, only adapt.

PUSH in on a flatbed truck.

INT. FLATBED TRUCK - DUSK - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Muffled WIND SCREAMS through the window and door gaps.

The DRIVER wears black-and-white gloves, grips the steering wheel, and WHISTLES Phil Collins' "In the Air Tonight."

The driver's pants, cutoff at the knees, reveal his calves: matching headframe tattoos (iconic to mining life).

OVER HIS SHOULDER: a mining pickaxe gently RATTLES on the rear window gun rack. We don't see his face...

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

But what if street justice extended
up the ladder to pig-dick
capitalist thugs?

ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE: Picketing miners march through streets--

EXT. TRAILHEAD, NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAINS - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

RANDALL HEARST (50s, WASP) loads an EXPENSIVE mountain bike into a brand new GMC truck. Clearly finishing up an evening ride--

Behind Hearst, the flatbed slows to a halt, lifting a dust cloud into the HEADLIGHT BEAMS. PUSH in on Hearst as he turns

...squints into the DUSTY LIGHT, lifts a hand to shield his eyes. The silhouette of a figure approaches from the flatbed.

INT. FLATBED TRUCK - DUSK - MOVING - LATER

Resume WHISTLING, barreling down the mountain pass at high speed...

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

What if 'tough on crime' meant the working class will toe-tag you if you screw them over?

In the rear cab, Hearst is BOUND, GAGGED, & rabid pissed.

ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE: Strikebreakers w/ batons attack picketers--

EXT. MEADERVILLE, MONTANA - AERIAL VIEW - DUSK

The final flecks of twilight slip over the horizon. The city twinkles--hemmed in by the cordillera mountain range and The Berkeley Pit, an open pit mine brimming w/ dark, toxic water.

CHYRON: Meaderville, Montana

Sound of STUMBLING FEET through twigs and leaves...

EXT. WOODS, SALVAGE YARD - NIGHT - LATER**MOONLIT**

Hearst STUMBLES barefoot, disoriented between rows of pines..

Sound of another set of FEET WALKING close behind until...

The CHUGGING SOUND of a generator ERUPTS from the dark, and stringed lights ILLUMINATE the pines and junk cars...

PUSH in on Hearst, lifting a hand to shield his eyes. His shadowed face, swollen and bloodied, twists as we PAN OVER...

Picket signs nailed to trees: United We Stand, We Will Not Kneel, Fair Pay 4 Fair Work, IWW: No Work Tomorrow, Strike!

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

What if instead of falling for lie after lie, we banded together, said *fuck the rich*, and fought for the people? Because face it, nothing is fair to begin with--

SFX: tinny chants from a crowd: FAIR WORK! FAIR PAY! (REPEAT)

Behind Hearst, the driver's silhouette grows taller. He raises a mining pickaxe, cocks it back...

...swings it down. The THWACK of impact overlaps with

EXT. THE BERKELEY PIT - NIGHT - LATER

Hearst's body lay half-in, half-out of the mine water on the open pit's shore, a punched time card PINNED to his bare chest, his name on it, the words: Last Shift.

Fireworks POP and reflect off the dark, toxic water.

The driver CHUCKS the pickaxe deep into the water's center. A moment of quiet, then SPLASH... WHISTLING resumes...

Fireworks BOOM to a crescendo off the rippling water.

SFX: tinny chants from a crowd: FAIR WORK! FAIR PAY! (REPEAT)

TITLE CREDITS

FROM THE BLACK

CHYRON: 1 week earlier...

CREMATORIUM JOHN (V.O.)

(talks with a lisp)

The diff'wence between me and o'ter rich assho'es is I make de planet better at de cost of scratching out another man's life who makes it worse. I should win a pew'litzer.

INT. FUNERAL HOME BASEMENT - DAY - FLASHBACK

CREMATORIUM JOHN (40s, ENORMOUS, hair like a blown apart steel wool brush) embalms a body in a basement. THREE OTHER MEN (who we will meet soon) stand around, watching

KELLEN STRIKER (30s, brooding, lone wolf) stands w/ his arms crossed, against a wall--

KELLEN

Don't take this the wrong way, but you gotta candle down here? It stinks...

M.C. STRIKER (50s, father, wide mustache, chin beard, built like a Grizzly Bear) sits on a short stool, shoots Kellen a look like--*knock it off, would ya? Show some respect...*

CREMATORIUM JOHN

I do dis because I like it.
(works on the body)
Embalmin' people, it's like foldin' laundwee, a task dat sooves de mind.

BRIDGER M. STRIKER (30s, eldest brother), more disheveled than handsome, more bullheaded than collected, constantly repositions himself due to a mining injury, making him appear eternally unsettled. That and, well, he's eternally unfucking-settled...

BRIDGER

(makes a WTF face,
stretches in place)
Yeah, who wouldn't agree with that?

M.C. puts a hand up--*let's play it through, see what's what--*

M.C.

Why us? Why not use Amos?

CREMATORIUM JOHN

Amos'd make a BIG statement.
 (works on the body)
 I wan' it quiet. No big boom.
 Peacef'ool. Jus' an accident. And I
 pay for dat pw'ivilege.

KELLEN

How much?

M.C. flexes his jaws, on the verge of snapping at Kellen--

Crematorium John looks up, senses the tension. He shuffles past Kellen, faces M.C.--indicating who he respects. Kellen, salty...

CREMATORIUM JOHN

\$100K per. And dere are five
 (returns to the body)
 Randall Hearst, Bob Halbrook,
 Chetty Dobbs, Duck Kaladachuck, and
 Conrad Corbin.

Crematorium John feeds a tube into the body's carotid artery.

MARLEEN (O.S.)

Lunch is ready!

Crematorium John's wife, Marleen (50s, pensive w/ a sharp disposition, creepy southern charm, & lecherous undertones) enters w/ a tray of PB&J triangles and mac n' cheese.

BRIDGER

(whispers to M.C.)
 What are we five years old?

Again, M.C. puts a hand up--*let's play it out.*

PAN a steel morgue table w/ PB&J triangles and mac n cheese, a buffet where a corpse should be, next to a corpse--

CREMATORIUM JOHN

(bites into a triangle)
 Ting is, I'm an envia'mentalist-
 I'm for pubwic lands. Anyone wid' a
 pole can fish my stweams. A
 toilet's a toilet, a cweek's a
 cweek. I'm not letting people in my
 home, but I'm not gonna eat all de
 fish either. You smell what I'm
 cooking? The men on de list, dey
 destroy dis state I love. They have
 no moral compass. For that, well--

Crematorium John gingerly takes Marleen's hand, as if to pray-

CREMATORIUM JOHN (CONT'D)

Bust deir heads on a rock, tumble
off a cwiff. Make it hokey, make it
not. I just don't wanna
investigation come back to me,
because, den, well-

(pointing w/ a triangle at
each person)

You go, den you, den you. Dat's
more money, more time, and less
time to do what I want.

MARLEEN

(breathy, southern accent)

Draining bodies in the basement is
our shared delight. It would be
just awful to empty the three of
you down here--

(makes eyes with
Crematorium John)

Although, what fun too--

Marleen and Crematorium John smooch--it's weird AF...

Bridger chuckles at this. Marleen winks at him. M.C. and
Kellen see it. They stink eye Bridger. He takes a bite of his
PB&J.

CREMATORIUM JOHN

My wittle bubbe bubbe--

Crematorium John and Marleen Eskimo kiss. It's just as weird.
Then, he turns, serious now...

CREMATORIUM JOHN (CONT'D)

So...what do you t'ink?

M.C.

(clears throat, leans
forward)

We got invested interest ourselves.
My wife, their mother, she has
brain cancer-- Ambient metals from
the pit, stirred up by the men on
your list. They served on the
Magnetar Board-- caused a lot of
problems for miners, my union,
including for us. They took our
livelihood, never paid a fair wage.
It'd be our pleasure-- to take care
of this accident for you,
Crematorium John.

M.C. shakes Crematorium John's hand. Crematorium John shakes with just his fingers, then pulls out a travel-sized hand sanitizer, SQUIRTS, & lathers immediately afterwards.

CREMATORIUM JOHN

Bootif'ool.

Crematorium John shakes his wife's hand like a giddy little boy. Marleen eye fucks Bridger. Bridger winks at her.

MARLEEN

Isn't this just dandy? It's just dandy!

Sound of Duct Tape PEELS then TEARS.

I/E. POLICE CRUISER | POLICE LOT - MORNING - BACK TO PRESENT

JENNY DIAMOND (30s, intense yet a charismatic goofball) DUCT TAPES a tennis ball-sized plastic gem to the cruiser's dashboard.

She DUCT TAPES a business card that reads GEM DETECTIVES next to it, leans back, admires it. It looks like shit. She knows it.

OVER JENNY'S SHOULDER: EDDIE GALENA (40s, sharp eyes cut from a sagging face, mixed: white/indigenous) approaches-- Jenny GRINS like a mother fucker. She SQUEALS with excitement.

Eddie stops walking...

OVER EDDIE'S SHOULDER: PUSH in on the cruiser's grill, Jenny has fastened a hand-painted wooden sign (like it's the front of a fucking country home).

The sign reads: GEM DETECTIVES. Both T's are painted gems. It's worse than the gem on the dashboard...

Jenny nods beyond the windshield, like *nailed it, right?*

Eddie marches toward Jenny. He's NOT into this...

EDDIE GALENA

What are we on Better Homes and Gardens?! You gonna bake me a cherry pie?

JENNY DIAMOND

You don't like cherry pie.

EDDIE GALENA

You're missing the point--

JENNY DIAMOND

They got other recipes-- Like lasagna. You love lasagna.

EDDIE GALENA

I *hate* lasagna.

JENNY DIAMOND

Who loves lasagna?
(snaps fingers)
My dad. He *loves* lasagna-

EDDIE GALENA

(breathes heavy)
Take it off, Jenny. It's un-fucking-professional.

JENNY DIAMOND

You gotta learn to relax, Cherry Pie. That stress-shit'll kill you.

Eddie saltily opens the passenger door. This is their normal.

EDDIE GALENA

Feel like I'm auditioning for the real-life version of Antique Roadshow over here-

Eddie sees the large plastic diamond taped to the dash now. He looks at Jenny: fucking incredulous--he can't even speak. Jenny just smiles like a bastard, chewing gum.

INT. KATO'S POTATO HOUSE DINER - MORNING

Kellen Striker, dressed in black-and-white dirt-bike gear now, enters the diner, looks around--

Red sparkly booths, 70s décor, cake tins, milkshake machines-- It's the hippest greasy spoon this side of the Northern Rockies.

Kellen crosses the room-- SLOW DOWN as he nods ever so slightly to a pregnant woman, MAYOR FRANNY LITTLE (30s, mousy, but she will dust you up if you cross her), surrounded by POLITICAL AIDES. Franny just stares, but the look is obvious: hi. We'll meet her more in a minute--

Bridger Striker, wearing a police patrol uniform, WAVES from a corner booth--with how much he repositions, he's giving the vinyl booth the workout of its life...

The men hug, BACK SLAP--then sit.

BRIDGER

The hell happened to you last night? I waited for hours. Barely slept at all-

KELLEN

Took care of it-- It's done.

BRIDGER

What do you mean *it's done*- You went without me?

KELLEN

I sent a message.

BRIDGER

(ghost white)
That wasn't the plan.

Kellen shrugs like--*what are you gonna do?*

KELLEN

Yeah? Well-- Fuck Crematorium John.

BRIDGER

Dad ain't gonna like this-

EXT. THE BERKELEY PIT - MURDER SCENE - DAY

PAN the open pit mine, flooded w/ blackish-copper water. Gasoline rainbows cue us that this is the environmental disaster we've heard about. Bordered by striated orange-yellow rock walls, morning clouds reflect off the water's oily, burnt-amber surface. We're talking 45 billion gallons of toxic water here...

Eddie Galena and Jenny Diamond work the murder scene.

JENNY DIAMOND

Both ID and note list one, RANDALL HEARST. White male. 52. What's this rich prick slumming on our homicide rotation for, Cherry Pie?

EDDIE GALENA

(SCOFFS at nickname)
Dead at the foot of a disaster he caused- Shit's staged. There's another scene somewheres. We just gotta find it-

TILT UP to a 90-foot Virgin Mary Statue atop the mountains, looking down on the murder scene. Eddie crosses himself.

JENNY DIAMOND (O.S.)

Beaten, bruised, lividity marks on the face, throat, wrists. It's payback and--

(WHISTLES)

That's a helluva lot bigger than a knife slice...

Jenny examines the back wound. Eddie bends to get a closer look, flinches--a painful back spasm sends him upright.

JENNY DIAMOND (CONT'D)

You really should get that checked out.

(pivoting back to biz)

There's pine needles stuck to the blood.

(looks around)

No pines here, though. Punch card's old school. Maybe get a hit on handwriting. But who rocked your world, Randy-baby, and why'd they do it?

Jenny's question hangs in the air. Eddie's visibly distracted--could be the case, his back, Jenny's habit of not allowing room for silence, constantly fucking with him...his mind drifts...the sound of a **SWIRLING WHITE NOISE** builds--

Eddie tunnels inward as the NOISE GROWS LOUDER... He drifts out of consciousness--

Jenny's VOICE drowns out entirely-

Eddie shuffle-steps, **HALTS**, wavers, reaches for something, but nothing's there-- He seems on the verge of collapse--

Jenny's VOICE returns, LOUD, REVERBERATING--

JENNY DIAMOND (CONT'D)

HEY! Cherry Pie-- You OK?

Jenny *squeezes* his arms, holding him up. Eddie snaps out of it--"it" being a panic attack, but they don't know this yet.

Jenny gently DRUM-PATS Eddie's cheeks. Then, makes a smoochy face like she's playing with a dumb puppy.

EDDIE GALENA

Will you quit it? I'm just lightheaded.

The response is bullshit: he's minimizing. Jenny squints: *like hell you are...*

PUSH IN on Eddie processing the vic's wound... Slowly, but surely, clarity clicks into gear, something hardens in his eyes...

EDDIE GALENA (CONT'D)

Have the examiner check if the weapon had a curve to it.

(nods to the mine)

Like a pickaxe.

Jenny looks from corpse to Eddie--*how'd you figure that out...*A renewed grit and tenacity in Eddie's eyes. A spark lit.

TILT UP to the Virgin Mary statue--

BRIGHT WHITE SUNLIGHT

INT. KATO'S POTATO HOUSE DINER - DAY

CU: a METAL BELL DINGS against a glass door-

Enter...QUINN STRIKER (30s, younger sister, a hellcat in vintage clothes), wearing a journalist lanyard. She sees her brothers, Bridger and Kellen, WAVE from their booth...

Quinn walks toward them. SLOW DOWN, as she, too, makes eyes with the pregnant woman, Mayor Franny Little, still surrounded by political aides (again, we'll meet her more in a minute)...

AT THE BOOTH W/ QUINN AND HER BROTHERS

HUGS all around--

QUINN STRIKER

Don't you just love it when your day blossoms in the morning with purpose?

Bridger and Kellen narrow their eyes--*what in God's name are you talking about...?*

QUINN STRIKER (CONT'D)

(hushed voice)

They found a body at the pit.

(claps, cheesin')

And I'm lead reporter.

Bridger eyes his brother: *this shit keeps getting worse...*

KELLEN

(sincere, fake surprise)
Congrats!

BRIDGER

You don't say congrats about a murder, you idiot. You say good luck--
(to Quinn)
Good luck.

QUINN STRIKER

I didn't say it was a murder.

Awkward beat. Quinn skeptically stares. Poker faces.

QUINN STRIKER (CONT'D)

I'm just gonna get a to-go-- use the ladies...

Muttered GOODBYES. Quinn makes a SMOOCHING sound. As she walks away, quizzical-faced, she makes eyes w/ the mayor, again--

AT THE BOOTH AFTER SHE LEAVES

KELLEN

Nice job, Barney Fife.

Bridger CRACKS his own neck--clearly pissed at himself...

BRIDGER

Everything right now is your fault.
Fucking homelessness is your fault.

INT. KATO'S POTATO HOUSE LADIES' ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Quinn Striker and Mayor Franny Little passionately kiss in the bathroom.

QUINN STRIKER

Shouldn't you be putting together a press conference?

MAYOR FRANNY LITTLE

(taps head)
Prepping right now.

QUINN STRIKER

Is that what *this* is?

Shared LAUGH. They resume kissing.

QUINN STRIKER (CONT'D)
Gimme something. Off the record.

MAYOR FRANNY LITTLE
(arms akimbo, annoyed but
playful, and slow)
It's a high ranking. Member. Of
Magnetar Mining. Stabbed in the
back.

Off Quinn: her brothers knew...

Quinn hurries...out of the bathroom. She makes a face like she can't believe what's fucking happening...

INT. KATO'S POTATO HOUSE DINER - DAY - CONTINUOUS

M.C. Striker now sits w/ Kellen and Bridger. They're miniatures in his presence.

M.C.
Don't forget: Town Hall tonight.
Gotta support your mother. It's
important.

OVER KELLEN'S SHOULDER: Quinn rushes out of the bathroom to the exit. Her hurried pace is unnerving...

The food arrives. All hunch over big breakfast plates.

M.C. (CONT'D)
(beat, chews food)
So, it go well or what?

Moments later, Mayor Franny Little emerges, flustered. Kellen narrows his eyes. Franny averts his gaze as if she didn't see him, though she did. OFF Kellen, uneasy...processing...

BRIDGER
Not that well.
(CLICKS his tongue)
Junior here- flew solo.

M.C.
What are you talking about?

Bridger nods like a drinking bird--

BRIDGER
Just what I'm saying. Sundance Kid
over here left Butch Cassidy at the
train station.

M.C. looks at Kellen for confirmation. Kellen just CHEWS.

BRIDGER (CONT'D)

I'm waiting in the wings like an asshole. He didn't even bother to call.

M.C.

Why'd you do that?

KELLEN

It's done.

BRIDGER

AND--

(beat)

He staged it.

M.C. dances his fork in the air like a toy plane-- taking it all in...

M.C.

That wasn't the plan.

BRIDGER

That's what I said.

KELLEN

(mouthful)

It's done.

M.C.

The fuck does that mean-- *It's done?* Done is following the plan. Done is not playing Choose-Your-Own-Adventure like a saddleback cowboy. Since when are *you* a fucking cowboy?

KELLEN

I knew I could handle it.

M.C.

You couldn't handle a reach around at the Flying J!

M.C. laughs in disbelief at the shit he's hearing. He dances his fork between taking a bite and not taking a bite. Finally... he takes a bite, clearly fuming, stares hard at Kellen-- Long beat.

M.C. (CONT'D)

(patronizing)

He knew he could handle it.

(MORE)

M.C. (CONT'D)

He's a big boy. Look at'em. Cute as a hemorrhoid.

M.C. drops his fork with a CLATTER, grabs Kellen by the chin.

M.C. (CONT'D)

You want Crematorium John standing over the

(imitates Crematorium John's creepy voice and his lisp)

T'ree of us wid' a fucking shovel?!

M.C. FLICKS away Kellen's face. CUSTOMERS look over-

BRIDGER

(fake cheerful to the onlookers)

Good morning. How you doin'?

(to Kellen)

Told you he wasn't gonna like it.

Kellen and Bridger SCUFFLE in the booth like young boys--

M.C.

Knock it off! You'll get syrup all over the place.

(protects the table w/ his hands)

These ladies don't need to be cleaning up after you's two--

(to Bridger)

And while you were waiting on the sidelines Mr. Hip-Problem, why'm I just hearing about it now-- after *it's done*.

BRIDGER

Allegedly done. Who knows what's what--

KELLEN

You wanna go look for yourself? He's the stiff one at the pit with the punch card on his chest. Got his *name* on it.

M.C. raises an eyebrow, leans in. Bridger WHISTLES. Long beat.

M.C.

(cannot believe his ears)

He-- what? Punch card? *His name* on it?

KELLEN

I left a message. You know--what's the point if nobody knows *why* he's dead.

M.C. leans back, leans forward. Bridger repositions. Neither can believe this shit. Nothing but the sound of CREAKING LEATHER--

M.C.

(lifting both hands)
Let me understand this--

Before he gets another word out, M.C. SLAPS Kellen across the face--

BRIDGER

(smiles to customers who glance over)
He got the hiccups.

M.C.

(in a low whisper-growl)
Don't you know they can trace that? Handwriting-- Forensics-- Shut. The. Fuck. Up.

KELLEN

(through grit teeth)
I didn't say nothing.

M.C.

We don't want'em to know. That's just it. Nobody goes to jail. We win.

(beat)
Accident. Make it look like *an accident*. How hard is it to get through your head?

KELLEN

Still seems-- I dunno. What's the point if nobody knows? They just keep doing what they're doing. Nothing changes--

M.C.

How thick is this kid? We don't want'em to know. We want'em to *not know*.

KELLEN

I mean, if it's a message-- screw us, we screw you. And with it the other way, I just-- I don't get it.

M.C.

Let me worry about getting it. You worry about whatever the fuck-- dirt-bikes. I'll get it. I'll tell you what to get. And you get that. Got it?

KELLEN

(shrugs, not really)
Yeah-- I guess. Yeah. OK.

M.C.

Yeah, you get it?

KELLEN

(still lukewarm)
I just-- Yeah. OK. I get it.

M.C.

Everything's tic-tac-toe with this kid.

M.C. picks up his plastic cup of water. He can't seem to figure out where to put all his anger. He just sorta dances the water cup in the air, fuming, then he SHOVES Kellen's plate, so Kellen has to BLOCK it from flying off the table. Customers look over-

DARK-HAIRED WAITRESS

Is everything alright over here?

BRIDGER

(makes a circle with his thumb and index)
De-LISH.

M.C.

(to Kellen)
Eat your potatoes.

The dark-haired waitress stares at Kellen--beat--then walks away.

KELLEN

(stares at his plate full of potatoes)
I don't like'em.

BRIDGER

(SCOFFS)

Here we go--

M.C.

What do you mean you don't like 'em?

KELLEN

I mean, *I don't like 'em*. They got skins on 'em. I don't like the skins on my potatoes.

M.C. rocks back, LAUGHS through his nose, shakes his head--un-fucking-believable... Bridger shrugs: what are you gonna do?

M.C.

Keto over here-- With his infinite attempts at slimming his waistline. Tell me Richard Simmons, what's wrong with the skins?

BRIDGER

Yeah, skins make 'em crispy.

M.C.

You don't like crispy?

KELLEN

It's not that I don't like 'em crispy. I like crispy.

M.C.

Then what do you *not like*?

KELLEN

The extra fiber...
(beat, other confused)
It gives you gas.

Beat. Bridger and M.C. exchange looks, BUST UP LAUGHING.

M.C.

Toots ma-goots over here.

Bridger BLOWS AIR out of his mouth like it's a WINDY DAY--

KELLEN

Doctor said I got I.B.S.

BRIDGER

I.B. what?

KELLEN

Irritable bowel syndrome.

M.C.

You got a syndrome now? I thought you could *handle yourself*.

KELLEN

Hey- I said it's done. *It's done*.

BRIDGER

Allegedly done.

Kellen SCOTS to get up from the booth-- he's had enough.

M.C.

Whoa. Whoa. Whoa. Take it easy.
(puts a hand out)
Sit down. Sit.

Kellen settles back into the booth.

M.C. makes a face like *it's been fun fucking with him, but we gotta stop now--and figure this out...*

M.C. (CONT'D)

OK. OK. We'll call Crematorium John. Tell'em we'll finish it right. EXACTLY how he asked. Hopefully, he hasn't heard yet. And you're gonna apologize.

Kellen debates this. M.C. cocks his head. Beat. Kellen nods like a punished child: *yeah, alright, fine. A white flag moment*.

M.C. (CONT'D)

Can't be going off the reservation with this creative shit. We do it right, we get paid. There's no other way we afford the hospital bills for your mother.

(this gets'em all nodding:
locked in)

Now, quit acting like a cleft asshole, and eat your fucking potatoes.

Bridger LAUGHS. Boys SCUFFLE. M.C. looks nervous...

EXT. TRAILHEAD, NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAINS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Jenny Diamond and Eddie Galena investigate the area around Randall Hearst's abandoned GMC truck.

JENNY DIAMOND

Wife called'em in missing last night. Ranger radioed in the vehicle shortly after dusk.

EDDIE GALENA

Is he a hiker, photographer?

JENNY DIAMOND

Mountain bike.

Eddie looks around. Jenny too. No bike anywhere in sight...

JENNY DIAMOND (CONT'D)

Robbery gone wrong?

EDDIE GALENA

Steal a bike, stab the owner, transpo him to what just so happens to be the monumental disaster created by the very same cyclist? That'd be some fucking coincidence--

JENNY DIAMOND

So, the bike gets lifted after our suspect leaves. Does Randy-baby go willingly or does he resist?

EDDIE GALENA

Coulda took the bike as consolation-

JENNY DIAMOND

(beat, about his panic attack earlier)
How you feelin' anyway?

Eddie ignores the question. Jenny *rolls* her eyes.

Jenny and Eddie comb the area. Eddie observes tire tracks that pull up behind the truck then reverse out. Eddie follows the pattern. Jenny watches, comes over.

Jenny lifts her hands as if to shield her eyes from headlights.

EDDIE GALENA

Bingo.
(short beat)
We need tread casts.

INT. KATO'S POTATO HOUSE DINER - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

M.C. hands Kellen his credit card.

M. C.

I'm gonna hit the head. Pay the bill. Meet you both outside.

BRIDGER

I'mma stretch out front.

Kellen shakes his head--suddenly the errand boy--and walks to

THE REGISTER

Along the counter/bar, BEAU RYDER (18, Indigenous, idealistic outsider) wears a backpack w/ a skateboard, eats toast w/ butter on it. Kellen watches the kid-- the way he eats, the kid seems starved. He loads on the free jelly and butter. There's a mountain of empty packets.

Beau Ryder turns. Kellen sees he has a black eye.

COUNTER CLERK

That'll be \$31.45

Kellen hands over his dad's card.

KELLEN

Can you add a large flapjack, bacon, and a chocolate milkshake for the kid here.

The counter clerk smiles. Beau tries to hide his gratitude. Kellen signs the bill.

KELLEN (CONT'D)

(to Beau)

One day, you decide who you wanna be, then you just be it. People'll mess with you, but that don't mean you gotta listen to'em.

(steals Crematorium John's line)

Smell what I'm cooking?

Beau nods. Kellen pats Beau on the shoulder, and walks away--

Sound of a SOLDERING IRON BUZZING...

EXT. QUAIN T CRAFTSMAN HOUSE - MEADERVILLE, MT. - DAY

ESTABLISHING--quaint home surrounded by pines.

INT. QUAIN T CRAFTSMAN HOUSE - MEADERVILLE, MT. - CONTINUOUS

BUZZING grows LOUDER--

PAN the primitive, minimally adorned home: kitschy décor, pastels, rustic. AMOS URBANSKI (50s, long hair, unkempt) hunches over a table building a BOMB in a small TIDE detergent box.

PULL AWAY: on the table's surface, there are one, two, three more bombs built in similar boxes and half-sleeved in envelopes.

CU on Urbanski, concentrating w/ the calm determination of a man who makes no mistakes--

BEV BATHHOUSE (O.S.)

Amos-honey, I gotta head to campus.
You almost done?

BEV BATHHOUSE (50s, tan safari gear w/ a bucket hat) leans in and kisses Urbanski on the cheek.

AMOS URBANSKI

Oh-- You head in without me. I'm
just gonna finish up here.

Beat. Bev waits patiently for Urbanski to look up from his bomb making... Finally, he does. They peck each other on the lips, like this is 100% normal.

Sound of a KNOCK at the door...

Bev and Amos exchange a look--they don't get many visitors...

I/E. QUAIN T CRAFTSMAN HOUSE - MEADERVILLE, MT. - CONTINUOUS

Door opens slowly... Bev and Amos cautiously peek out--

Crematorium John stands on the porch.

CREMATORIUM JOHN

(creepy, wiggling his
fingers)
'ello, Amos. 'ello, Bev. How aw' we
today?

Long beat.

PRE-LAP: cell phone RINGING...

EXT. KATO'S POTATO HOUSE DINER - SAME TIME

CU on a cell phone positioned on the corner of a truck bed's railing. The screen reads "Crematorium John." Nobody is picking up...

M.C., Bridger, and Kellen stand around, antsy, waiting...

RING. Beat. RING. Beat.

A LANDLINE VOICEMAIL comes on. GROANS all around.

M.C.

Ey, Crematorium John-- M.C. Striker here. Just wanted to touch base--
(awkward beat, M.C. looks at the boys)

We had something come up. Wanted to bring it to your attention right away, so there's no misunderstanding about-- well, our intentions. We'll plan on sticking with the program going forward, but call me back, as soon as--

MARLEEN

(southern accent, out of breath)
Hello?

INTERCUT

M.C.

Marleen? Hi! Thanks for answering.

BRIDGER

Hey, Marleen!

KELLEN

Hi, Marleen--

MARLEEN

Hi, boys. John went to town. Sorry. I was in the basement, laboring over a new arrival-- Total cutie too. Barely reached the phone in time.

M.C.

Listen, Marleen-- I don't wanna get specific over the phone, but we made a little mistake.

BRIDGER

Small mistake, sweetheart. It's Bridger.

(MORE)

BRIDGER (CONT'D)

You see, it was my brother--not me.
I wouldn't do that to you, ya'
know.

Kellen HITS his brother--*WTF* was that?

M.C.

It was a communication error, but
we wanna fix it. Marleen, you still
there?

Beat.

MARLEEN

Oh, honeycomb. John doesn't like
mistakes.

BRIDGER

Marleen, Bridger again. Is there
any chance you can get in touch
with him for us? For me? It'd be a
huge favor.

Beat.

MARLEEN

Bridger, I'll tell you what. You
come over here and we'll talk about
that. Sometimes talking sense to
John requires finesse from more
than one party's *involvement*.

Bridger looks over. M.C. and Kellen nod: yes, yes, yes!!

BRIDGER

Oh, okay?

MARLEEN

See you soon, darling.

Call ends.

M.C.

Don't fuck her. Just flirt. Got it?

BRIDGER

Psh, please. I can't even thrust
like I used to with this bum hip.
I'm basically half a man. Used to
be half horse--

(thrusts the air; he's met
with blank faces)

Don't worry.

(MORE)

BRIDGER (CONT'D)

At the academy, I gotta 84% in
hostage negotiations. Top half of
the class--

Bridger stretches. M.C. and Kellen: still not impressed.

KELLEN

Is the top half of the class the
man or the horse in this scenario?

WIDE on the trio: they're all fucked...

PRE-LAP: sound of a camera SNAPPING a picture. PULL BACK and
we see a car parked in the distance

**INT. RED DODGE NEON W/ SILVER RACING STRIPES - DAY - SAME
TIME**

Quinn is staking out her brothers, and she's taking photos...

INT. SUBARU OUTBACK | MONTANA TECH | PARKING LOT - DAY

Bev Bathhouse, still in her safari gear and bucket hat, sits
in her parked Subaru at the school lot. She eats zebra cakes.

Sound of an ENGINE WHIRRING and SKATEBOARD WHEELS ROLLING...

EXT. PARK STREET - MEADERVILLE, MT. - DAY - CONTINUOUS

CU on Beau Ryder FLYING fast AF on his skateboard. PULL AWAY:
he's holding onto the tail of a dirt-bike--a dirt-bike that
Kellen drives.

Both have smiles exploding across their faces.

INT. SUBARU OUTBACK | MONTANA TECH | PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Bev checks over her shoulder, paranoid about her consumption.
Between cakes, she sucks a big gulp. The way she's binge
eating and drinking is unnerving...

EXT. PARK STREET - MEADERVILLE, MT. - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Back to Beau and Kellen...

KELLEN

(shouts)
Ready!?!

BEAU RYDER

Ready!!

Beau lets go, ducks into the WIND, tries to keep speed.

Kellen waves, disappears down the street..

Beau SLOWS quickly due to a hill. He POPS the tail of his skateboard, holds the deck.

Sound of ROWDY LAUGHTER in a

PARKING LOT

OVER BEAU'S SHOULDER: in the lot, BEEFY WHITE BOYS (20s) SHOOT THE SHIT around parked trucks. Beyond them is

MONTANA TECH CAMPUS

Beau summons all his energy--wanting to avoid confrontation w/ them, but it's impossible. There is no other route. He SIGHS.

...walks, head down, hands in his pockets, in their direction

FROM BEAU'S POV: his skate shoes lift, land, lift, land as he hikes up the hill...

In the distant periphery: the white boys, a blurry huddle now, stop TALKING, as Beau nears them: silence swells.

Beau's footsteps DROWN OUT--

CU on Beau, visibly TENSE--*fucking terrified*...

A shadowed object SWOOPS toward Beau--

Beau BRACES, a tense body shudder--

...an open can of MONSTER energy drink CLATTERS at his feet, SPITS liquid on his kicks and jeans.

The beefy white boys' LAUGH--the sound is DEAFENING...

FROM BEAU'S POV: his gear splattered w/ wet spots. He EXHALES a slight shudder. Fuck'em-- he will not give'em the satisfaction. Trembling, he starts walking again--

BEEFY WHITE BOY (O.S.)

(approaching from behind)

What-- no hello?

Beau picks up pace--

The beefy white boys pick up pace--

BEEFY WHITE BOY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
No good morning?

Sound of CLOTHES, change JANGLING, and boots CLOPPING the pavement at a clip now--towards Beau.

BEEFY WHITE BOY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
HEY! I'm TALKING to you!

His voice BOOMS, louder and more guttural than one would've thought.

BEEFY WHITE BOY (CONT'D)
LOOK AT ME!!!

Beau, terrified, hauls ass up the hill--

EXT. QUAINC CRAFTSMAN HOUSE - MEADERVILLE, MT. - DAY

Crematorium John and Amos rock in chairs on the back porch. They stare out at a homespun-decorated backyard--flamingos, plants, pottery...

CREMATORIUM JOHN
To screw me w'ike dat, Amos, is
jus' abomit'able. I need you
(anger building, high-
pitched like Mike Tyson)
to crush'em, Amos. Would you
crush'em fer me? Blow de sons of
bitches to smiv'ereens.

PUSH IN on Amos--this back-to-the-lander could easily be straight outta the Weather Underground's violent faction of SDS... Like he could go postal or quote Fred Hampton at a moment's notice. He's visibly squirrely, but most of all: he looks like a total loose cannon extremist. Yet he's calm too. Amos smiles like he just arrived at a Zen moment of peace.

AMOS URBANSKI
(soft voiced psycho)
Boom. Boom.

He's in.

I/E. SUBARU OUTBACK | MONTANA TECH | PARKING LOT - SAME TIME

Sound of CELLOPHANE WRAPPERS CRINKLING. Bev is still scarfing zebra cakes like there's no tomorrow.

A NASALLY-VOICED NPR reporter DRONES on the radio--
 OVER BEV'S SHOULDER: BEAU RYDER HAULS ASS up the sidewalk...

BEV BATHHOUSE

(mouth full)
 Ever heard of an alarm clock?

The BEEFY WHITE BOYS chase Beau Ryder.

FROM BEV'S POV: Beau Ryder, shockingly, turns, and with the full weight of his hip, CRACKS one bully right in the nose-- BLOOD BURSTS out. Then, one at a time, he CRACKS the other two boys. Beau's skinny little arms start snapping like rubber bands, punching the bullies, rapid fire.

BEV BATHHOUSE (CONT'D)

(rushing out of the car,
 mouthful)
 For Pete's sake! STOP! You!!

Beau Ryder looks over, busted. As he pauses...

The bullies, furious and bloodied, TACKLE Beau and begin pummeling him: mob-action style...

BEV BATHHOUSE (CONT'D)

(voice fierce and fiery)
 Get your candy asses back! BACK!!

Bev peels the boys off, shoulder by shoulder, but not without GREAT EFFORT--

INT. FUNERAL HOME BASEMENT - DAY

Bridger BONES Marleen's brains out against a mortuary table-- super exhibitionist style. The guy is a fucking animal-- literally. Hair pulling. Legs up. The dude's going full-blown PORNHUB.COM tryouts on Marleen doggy-style--corpse on the table--and she's equally, if not more of a wild animal, the two of them going all-out hump-mode until the wheels fall off the cold steel table, and the corpse drops off the other side and PLOPS onto the floor. PAUSE. And resume fucking... Ain't no stoppin'em-- Ride or die bitches--

Sound of a WOMAN'S VOICE elegantly HARMONIZING...

INT. FRONT STREET MINERALS - DAY - LATER

Eddie Galena and Jenny Diamond enter a mineral store.

DOVE HANNIGAN (20s, eyebrow-length blonde bangs) SINGS John Prine lyrics ACAPELLA...

DOVE HANNIGAN

When I get to heaven, I'm gonna
shake God's hand, thank him for
more blessings than one man can
stand, then I'm gonna get a guitar
and start a rock n roll band, check
into a sweet hotel. Ain't life
grand?

(guitar kicks on next
line)

And then I'm gonna get a cocktail,
vodka and ginger ale-

SONG continues...

Dove sits on a stool surrounded by gem cases full of beautiful stones. She wears a billowy ranch blouse, big black hat, & leather boots--more rough than rugged.

Her father, 'FRONT STREET' MIKE (40s, a gin-blossomed Irish, hard-lifer) STOMPS and HOLLERS on a stool, playing guitar.

Once they wrap up, Jenny and Eddie APPLAUD. Dove hugs Jenny. Eddie and 'Front Street' Mike exchange BACKSLAPS & handshakes.

'FRONT STREET' MIKE

Why do I feel like you didn't come
to hear a kick ass John Prine
cover?

EDDIE GALENA

We caught the case at the pit.
Wondering if you heard or saw
anything last night?

'FRONT STREET' MIKE

I had a few fingers to hush the
fireworks. Dove, you heard
something though, right?

DOVE HANNIGAN

Thought it was fireworks... But
more like a car hitting a curb.
(short beat)
Looked out the window... Saw a
flatbed heading south on Front
Street.

EDDIE GALENA

Any decals on it?

Dove shakes her head no.

JENNY DIAMOND

What about the driver?

DOVE HANNIGAN

A guy. Maybe a passenger too. Truck was white, bed was black.

JENNY DIAMOND

(to Eddie)

Lotta scrapers and regular folk with flatbeds: bands, vendors transpo'ing gear for the festival this weekend. If we find who it was, maybe hit something. Check cameras, see what pops up.

EDDIE GALENA

Check tread casts against tires common to flatbeds too. Passenger could be the vic or...

(shrugs, careful not to reveal too much)

You two playing the festival tonight?

'FRONT STREET' MIKE

Silver Dollar Saloon at eight.

JENNY DIAMOND

We'll come by for a drink.

Off Jenny, totally game, and Eddie, well... He GROANS.

INT. DOUBLE DOWN DOTTY'S CASINO - DAY - LATER

Kellen, still in his black-and-white dirt-bike gear, enters a shabby electronic casino. NOLAN MILES (30s, thick) bartends.

NOLAN MILES

Boss.

KELLEN

How's the till?

NOLAN MILES

(shakes his head: not good-then calls out)

Dotty, your boy's here.

I/E. DATSUN PICKUP | DOUBLE DOWN DOTTY'S PARKING LOT - SAME TIME

CU on a TIDE BOX in an old man's hands as he exits a truck...

The man WHISTLES and WALKS with the box through a parking lot...

INT. RED DODGE NEON W/ SILVER RACING STRIPES - DAY - SAME TIME

Quinn is staking out Kellen...

But she sees Amos Urbanski crossing the parking lot with the TIDE BOX. He heads toward Kellen's flatbed, the dirt-bike is strapped upright in the bed.

INT. DOUBLE DOWN DOTTY'S CASINO - DAY - SAME TIME

Kellen taps the counter, walks along the bar, pretends his hand is a dirt-bike jumping off each chair back.

As he does this, he WHISTLES merrily until he reaches

his MOM, DOUBLE DOWN DOTTY (50s, what a lifetime of cigs, booze, & gambling gets you) plays electronic Keno. A wine glass is in her hand.

Kellen kisses her cheek. She smiles, but something's off.

KELLEN

How you feeling today, Ma?

DOTTY

Gut is killing me. It hurts to breathe.

Kellen checks the cigarette pack next to her wine: empty.

KELLEN

The doctor said you gotta cut back, Ma.

DOTTY

That band-aid smokes more than I do.

KELLEN

He doesn't have cancer, though.

DOTTY

Not that we know of. He's
untrustworthy. Brain and lungs are
different. You heard about the pit?

EXT. DOUBLE DOWN DOTTY'S CASINO - DAY - SAME TIME

Amos Urbanski positions the TIDE BOX under the flatbed's
chassis, just behind the driver's side front tire.

Amos pulls out an electronic remote, and a red light FLASHES
at regular intervals...

THE BOMB IS READY.

INT. RED DODGE NEON W/ SILVER RACING STRIPES - DAY - SAME TIME

Quinn watches Amos return to his truck.

QUINN STRIKER

What the hell...

INT. DOUBLE DOWN DOTTY'S CASINO - DAY - SAME TIME**NOLAN MILES**

(slides bank bag to
Kellen)

Last night's deposit.

Kellen shows only a hint of concern w/ how thin it is.

DOTTY

(pointing to the bar's TV)
They've been playing it all day.

KELLEN

Watching that stuff isn't good for
you.

DOTTY

(resumes her game)
Cruel world. At least I can die
with Keno and a full glass of red.
(squeezes Kellen's knee,
turns to him)
You have to live, Kellen. Live
full, without fear, humdrum, and
boredom. That's not life.

KELLEN

I do.

DOTTY

(solemn now)

Yet here you are, alone.

KELLEN

(buttering)

I got you.

DOTTY

(darkly)

Not for long.

(then jokingly)

I got my Keno to get back to.

INT. FUNERAL HOME BASEMENT - DAY

Bridger and Marleen get dressed.

BRIDGER

You're like an Olympic gold medalist, but this has gotta be the creepiest place I've ever got my jollies off.

MARLEEN

(sarcastic)

Sweetheart, I don't wanna love you. I just wanted what I wanted. Don't get all sentimental just because you came in me.

Marleen PATS Bridger's chest and walks up the steps. He nods, visibly his ego is hurt yet he's also turned on by her toughness. He follows. They walk and TALK up the

STAIRWELL

BRIDGER

So... you gonna talk to your husband?

Sound of a distant DOOR SLAMS...

MARLEEN

Oh, dear lord--

Bridger and Marleen RUSH UPSTAIRS to the

FRONT LIVING ROOM

Out the window, Crematorium John exits a 70s pink Hearse...
He looks at Bridger's cruiser--no way to hide now...

INT. DOUBLE DOWN DOTTY'S CASINO - DAY

DOTTY

Deposit our money before the meth
 heads outside Three Amigos rob you.

Kellen kisses his mother and exits. She watches him go.

Nolan comes over, swaps her wine for a martini. It appears
 routine: hiding the heavier drink until Kellen leaves. Nolan
 sets a fresh pack next to the glass. She begins to pack it.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

MARLEEN

Go outside. Talk to'em. Lemme think-

BRIDGER

What are you nuts? We gotta tell'em

MARLEEN

Distract him. I'll think of
 something.

EXT. DOUBLE DOWN DOTTY'S CASINO - DAY

Kellen exits the casino to the parking lot...

Sound of LAUGHTER across the lot. Kellen glances over at

THREE AMIGOS PARKING LOT

DELINQUENT TYPES (the meth heads Dotty mentioned) are behind
 THREE AMIGOS. Nearby, but not with them, sits BEAU RYDER on
 the curb, with his feet on his board, his t-shirt bloodied...

Kellen UNZIPS the money deposit bag, removes two twenties,
 shoves the bag into his back pocket, then walks over-

INT. DATSUN PICKUP - DAY - SAME TIME

CU on the red BLINKING light on the remote. Amos watches
 Kellen beeline from the truck to Three Amigos...

EXT. THREE AMIGOS PARKING LOT - DAY

Kellen walks, holds forty dollars in the air.

KELLEN

If you set-up camp anywhere but
near my casino, today is payday, my
dudes. We gotta deal?

The delinquents nod. FROHMONT (20s, leader w/ a stiff-legged gait) reaches for the money.

Kellen pulls the cash back, cocks his fist back, and ROCKS Frohmont in the mouth so hard the dude lifts off the ground and lands back-first on the pavement.

METH HEADS

(simultaneous)

Oh, shit!

Frohmont spits a tooth. Kellen leans over him.

KELLEN

(picks up the nasty meth-
riddled tooth)

I see you don't care about
keepin'em clean, but you need'em to
chew. I see any of you here again,
I'll knock out the rest. You'll be
tonguing Kraft cheese slices 'til
they dissolve and sucking apple
sauce through a straw.

(regarding Beau)

And don't touch that fucking kid.

(steals Crematorium John's
line once again)

Smell what I'm cooking?

Beat. They nod.

KELLEN (CONT'D)

Go.

The meth heads hustle off.

Kellen looks over at Beau who is stunned, dazed by the sheer force and power he just witnessed. Kellen is now his idol...

BEAU RYDER

They weren't the ones who beat me
up.

Off Kellen: oops...he misread the situation.

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Bridger ambles down the porch steps, toward Crematorium John.

BRIDGER

Just the man I wanna see!

Crematorium John LEVELS A SHOTGUN at Bridger--

Bridger stops dead in his tracks...

CREMATORIUM JOHN

You come 'ere to kill me? I paid a
t'ird of my money up f'ont in good
faith, and dis'th how you repay me?
(COCKS shotgun, SCREAMS)
You don't know who you fuckin'
wit!! YOU SMELL WHAT I'M COOKING!?!

Bridger goes...GHOST WHITE...

INT. UNION WORKERS OUTPOST BUILDING - DAY - SAME TIME

Eddie Galena and Jenny Diamond enter a sparsely decorated
Union Hall with posters about fair wages and mining...

M.C. Striker sits behind a desk, looks up and: *Oh, shit...*

JENNY DIAMOND (O.S.)

Mr. Striker?

Eddie and M.C. nod at each other. They seem to be familiar,
but not friends.

M.C.

How can I help you, Eddie and...?

JENNY DIAMOND

Detective Jenny Diamond.

Jenny lifts the PUNCH CARD from the murder scene (it's in a
plastic bag).

EDDIE GALENA

You ever use punch cards like this
in the local mines?

M.C.

(shaking, furious)
Sure. All the time.

JENNY DIAMOND

You recognize the handwriting?

EXT. THREE AMIGOS PARKING LOT - DAY

Kellen, arm around Beau, walks from Three Amigos across the street toward

DOUBLE DOWN DOTTY'S PARKING LOT

And toward his

FLATBED TRUCK

...with the bomb still under the chassis.

KELLEN

(to Beau)

Just cause bullies kick your ass
doesn't mean you should skip school--
But it's good you hit back.

BEAU RYDER

Can you teach me how to fight?

Beat. The two look at each other. Kellen nods yes. Beau smiles.

INT. DATSUN PICKUP | DOUBLE DOWN DOTTY'S PARKING LOT - DAY

CU on Amos's thumb over the remote's button...

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Crematorium John slow-steps toward Bridger, shotgun still leveled...

CREMATORIUM JOHN

You don't p'lay me, I p'lay you!

MARLEEN (O.S.)

Darling, I'm so happy you're here!
Oh, what in the hell, John--
(sees shotgun)
Put that away.

Marleen approaches him, walks straight across where he has the barrel aimed at Bridger, like *stop this nonsense right now.*

MARLEEN (CONT'D)

Mr. Striker came by to speak with you and told me *why* they did what they did.

Off Bridger: no idea where this is going...

MARLEEN (CONT'D)

(spinning yarn /w
masterful grace)

Crossing people off passively as if
it's all an accident is just--

(feigns disappointment)

Pansy. It's soft.

(rubs his chest and belly)

You're not soft.

(short beat)

Mr. Striker came by because he's
brave and wanted to tell you
honestly what happened. He even
called first while you were out. I
invited him over here to speak with
you in person, cause I knew you'd
respect his gentleman nature.

Crematorium John: processing...

MARLEEN (CONT'D)

(soft voiced, as if just
to him now)

What they've done is *innovative*.
Imagine what fear those mongrels
close to Randall Hearst are feeling
right now. You did that. *YOU*.

(short beat)

They are petrified, because of you,
bubbe bubbe.

Marleen TUGS Crematorium John down to her. They Eskimo kiss.
Still processing, Crematorium John side-eyes Bridger, who
glances away--waiting on pins and needles for a response...

MARLEEN (CONT'D)

(pulls back, cups his face
in her hands)

I love that you're the most
dangerous. **THIS. MAKES YOU. MOST**
DANGEROUS.

Crematorium John cocks his jaw side to side, smiling...

Beat.

CREMATORIUM JOHN

(super creepy)

Well, let's get devi'wish, sha'w
we?

He's in.

EXT. DOUBLE DOWN DOTTY'S CASINO - DAY

Kellen Striker OPENS the flatbed's driver's side door. Beau OPENS THE PASSENGER SIDE DOOR...

CU on the TIDE BOX under the truck, mere feet from Kellen and Beau...

Sound of CAR TIRES SQUEAL

I/E. RED DODGE NEON W/ SILVER RACING STRIPES - DAY - SAME TIME

Quinn leans out the window.

QUINN STRIKER

Get in!

Kellen and Beau look confused.

KELLEN

Ey, Quinn-- What's up?

I/E. DATSUN PICKUP | DOUBLE DOWN DOTTY'S PARKING LOT - SAME TIME

Quinn's Red and Silver Striped Dodge Neon BLOCKS Amos's view of the truck. He can't see Kellen or Beau. He pivots, left to right, trying to catch a glimpse.

I/E. RED DODGE NEON W/ SILVER RACING STRIPES - DAY - SAME TIME

QUINN STRIKER

(SCREAMS)

GET THE FUCK IN THE CAR NOW!

(to Beau)

YOU TOO!

They hop in. TIRES SQUEAL as they take off--

INT. DATSUN PICKUP- SAME TIME

Off Amos. He GROANS-- looking like a old man whose grandson just lost a ballgame...

**INT. RED DODGE NEON W/ SILVER RACING STRIPES - DAY -
CONTINUOUS**

QUINN STRIKER

Why the hell was some old guy
putting a Tide box under your
flatbed then waiting for you to
come back?

(beat)

I assume he wanted to kill you. Who
the hell was he--

Kellen looks out the window: he knows who it was...but
doesn't say shit.

INT. UNION WORKERS OUTPOST BUILDING - DAY

Eddie, Jenny, and M.C. still at the Union spot...

JENNY DIAMOND

So, you don't recognize the
handwriting?

M.C.

(through grit teeth)

No.

EDDIE GALENA

We'd like to get a look at all your
work records, saved time cards,
etcetera. Do some comparisons.

M.C.

(fury rising)

You got a warrant?

(beat)

See, the thing about a union hall
is we're used to getting pushed
around by tough guys, the company,
corporate schmucks. But we're also
real tired of kneeling too. So,
unless you got a fucking warrant,
piss off, huh, bud?

Eddie and Jenny exchange a look. That was a turn...

JENNY DIAMOND

It would be in your best interest
to cooperate, Mr. Striker. We just
wanna catch the killer here, not
jam up the union.

M.C.

It would be in your best interest not to blow smoke up my ass, sweetheart. This ain't my first fucking rodeo. Get your warrant, and come back when you got it. Until then, you're not getting shit. Ya copy?

Eddie and Jenny share a look. Eddie leans in, formidable as hell.

EDDIE GALENA

We copy. And we'll be back tomorrow. With a warrant. And maybe we'll poke into your personal life, your friends, your shitbird family. Because that tough guy stuff, it makes you look guilty, and I don't like people who act tough and look guilty. It don't sit right with me. It's a bad move, friendo. And I'm not someone you want fucking with you.

M.C. cocks his head: cheers to you too motherfucker.

INT. UNION WORKERS OUTPOST BUILDING - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

As Eddie and Jenny walk off, M.C.'s PHONE BUZZES w/ an incoming call. The screen reads: Bridger.

M.C.

You better have something good.

INTERCUT

MARLEEN

Not good. We got something dandy!!

CREMATORIUM JOHN

Ind'weed, we do.

BRIDGER

(callback to earlier)
Looks like the top half is half-horse after all, Dad...
(beat...his
overcompensating falls
short of anyone giving a
shit)
All good. We talked. Everything's
gravy.

M.C. smiles--overcome w/ relief.

M.C.

Oh, that's great. Just great.

(exhales, then...)

We gotta problem over here though.

The Gem Detectives, Eddie Galena and Jenny Diamond, are getting a warrant for all the union work records, including punch cards, and they're coming back tomorrow. They're gonna check against handwriting samples.

Off everyone: we're all fucked...

Beat.

CREMATORIUM JOHN

I got a w'ittle idea that might jus' so've dat prob'wem.

INT. CASAGRANDA'S STEAKHOUSE - DAY

SENATOR CONRAD CORBIN (50s, gruff, uber conservative) dines w/ OLD BOYS' CLUB TYPES--the five mining magnates from Crematorium John's list all in attendance. (We'll meet them in just a minute).

SENATOR CONRAD CORBIN

By now, hopefully, you've all read the report for tonight's Town Hall, but Bob'll hit the highlights.

BOB HALBROOK (60s, pudgy w/ a walrus mustache)

BOB HALBROOK

(clears throat)

Dr. Bev Bathhouse's report indicates ambient metals in the air are causing 75-85% higher cancer rates than control groups in other states...

CHETTY DOBBS (50s, ball cap in a button up, billionaire type)

CHETTY DOBBS

Any dagnab truth to it?

SENATOR CONRAD CORBIN

Truth doesn't matter. She's going to present it as evidence at the Town Hall. We gotta stop her.

CHETTY DOBBS

That business about pregnant mothers and babies having high concentrations of metals is...whew. Alarming to say the least. People are going to go ape shit over that-

SENATOR CONRAD CORBIN

I don't care if the Virgin Mary is dying from a steak I cooked. We all were on the board when that mine ran fine and long after it shut down. Randall too, God rest his soul-

(beat)

We are responsible. But that don't mean I'm gonna admit it. We need to shut down the Town Hall, defunct the study, claim it's flawed. Anything and everything to STOP THAT MEETING!

DUCK KALADACHUCK (60s, bone-thin, louder than a bomb).

DUCK KALADACHUCK

How do you expect we do that? Town Hall's in an hour. Mayor Franny Little wouldn't put a barstool under us if we were hanging from a rope. She won't postpone for us...

SENATOR CONRAD CORBIN

You're not listening. I mean, what-Are you saying you can't lie on the fly? What've ya'll gone democrat on me?

All CHUCKLE.

SENATOR CONRAD CORBIN (CONT'D)

If Franny Little thinks she's got a shot in hell at coming for my seat with this air quality report horseshit, well- I'll show her how Montana politics really work.

Off the Old Boys' Club Types: locked in. They CLINK glasses. The WAITRESS brings steaks. The men lean in, and PRAY.

INT. TOWN HALL MEETING - NIGHT - LATER

On stage, we see Mayor Franny Little, Bev Bathhouse, and OTHERS.

In the crowded audience, we see Crematorium John, Marleen, Bridger, Amos Urbanski, M.C., Dotty, and one hundred or so OTHER PEOPLE...

The meeting is about to begin when EVERYONE'S ATTENTION TURNS toward a

CORNER TV

W/ Senator Conrad Corbin BEING INTERVIEWED on it.

RANDOM VOICE FROM THE CROWD

Turn it up!!

EVERYONE gathers around a large flat-screen.

ON TV

QUINN STRIKER

Senator, why aren't you at the Town Hall meeting right now?

SENATOR CONRAD CORBIN

Well, the mayor and a team of researchers are releasing a falsified report and I can't support that. I wanted to go on record, let the public know, I have a team of lawyers drafting a request for a new study out of my office that's not full of false information. Because-- you know, it's a tremendous tragedy to strike fear into the good folks of Montana with lies and corruption--

A CROWD behind him CLAPS.

QUINN STRIKER

Senator, what part of the report are you suggesting is false?

SENATOR CONRAD CORBIN

All of it. It's all false, fiction, and fabricated. Lies. Lies. Lies. We'll get a vetted team of researchers backed by my office, not some professor operating on a campus budget. We'll do it the Montana way. Not the "all hat" and no cattle way.

The crowd HOOTS and HOLLERS.

BACK TO THE GYMNASIUM

The crowd feathers--tense, annoyed--

Bev Bathhouse hops on stage, grabs the mic.

BEV BATHHOUSE

(loud booming voice)

I am the researcher in charge and I can assure you, the Senator is wrong. My methods are exact.

(the crowd turns)

You want facts? If you live in Meaderville, your chance of dying of heart failure and brain cancer are between 75-85% higher than if you don't.

GASPS from the crowd.

BEV BATHHOUSE (CONT'D)

That's *not* the worst part. Take a breath.

(beat)

Go oh, inhale...

Bev takes a DEEP BREATH into the mic. There's a collective INHALATION in the gymnasium.

BEV BATHHOUSE (CONT'D)

I found metal concentrations in pregnant women to be 200% higher than men and 500% higher in newborn babies. Unless the Senator funds a federal air and water cleanup, we will all die just from breathing.

(beat)

Those are the facts. I don't care about the politics. I just want our government to clean up the air and water, so we don't die, so our children and grandchildren don't die. And I hope you join me in demanding the Senator do just that.

Long beat.

Mayor Franny Little SLOW CLAPS over her pregnant belly.

Other MOTHERS CLAP--then KIDS, FATHERS, etc. until the whole CROWD APPLAUDS. Bev smiles. Amos nods to her. They air kiss.

Mayor Franny Little walks up to the mic...

INT. DOUBLE DOWN DOTTY'S CASINO - NIGHT

PATRONS drink and play electronic gambling. Kellen Striker polishes a glass behind the bar. Beau does homework at the bar.

KELLEN

You hungry?

Beau looks up through mangy hair--it's obvious: yes.

INT. DOUBLE DOWN DOTTY'S CASINO - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Beau Ryder eats a monster mound of popcorn from a red basket.

EXT. PARK AND MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Phones BUZZ and DING with notifications. A crowd checks their phones. They watch a recorded video of Bev Bathhouse at the Town Hall meeting.

The Senator is glad-handing when Quinn Striker approaches.

QUINN STRIKER

Senator, have you seen the video?

SENATOR CONRAD CORBIN

What video?

Quinn Striker plays it on her cell phone.

PAN the surrounding bars--all playing the video of Bev Bathhouse SNAPPING at the Town Hall meeting. The AUDIO from the interview bleeds into the streets.

QUINN STRIKER

(smiling)

Do you have any comment, Senator?

A tense crowd tightens around them. SOMEONE tosses a plastic cup w/ a drink. A minor SPECTACLE ERUPTS--some defend, some don't. The Senator's AIDES escort him away. Quinn Striker chases him--

QUINN STRIKER (CONT'D)

Senator! Do you have any comment?

INT. TOWN HALL MEETING - NIGHT

ON TV

Quinn chases the Senator. The crowd in the gym LAUGHS.

MAYOR FRANNY LITTLE

(taps the mic, all
attention pivots)

I'm going to say something
incredibly unpopular about the
murder at the pit today. While I
would *never* wish death upon any
person or their family, I am not
devastated by the murder of Randall
Hearst. Do I believe what happened
is a crime? Yes. Do I believe that
the person or person(s) who
committed this crime should be
punished? Yes. But am I sorry for
what happened? Absolutely not. This
is a person, who after death, I
cannot gracefully eulogize simply
because that's what people do,
that's what people expect, that's
what's acceptable of someone in my
position. That person was a
monster. He created an
environmental disaster
unprecedented to any other in this
state--45 billion gallons of toxic
water in the pit from shutting off
the pumps--and he did it for money.
He didn't care about what would
happen later to me, to you, to our
families, to the children who
haven't been born yet. Hundreds, if
not thousands of miners died
because of him and his unsafe,
unregulated work practices. He
skimmed wages, and appropriate
health initiatives. And now, the
air quality left behind in his wake
is a grim cloud killing every last
one of us--breath by breath. He was
selfish and *greedy*, and I have no
sympathy for what happened to him.
I wish his family nothing but
sleepless nights, and may God damn
his soul with eternal unrest.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. UNION WORKERS OUTPOST BUILDING - NIGHT

The small cinderblock building where M.C. Striker worked
earlier EXPLODES!!! The records are gone.

INT. TOWN HALL MEETING - NIGHT

The crowd is stunned by Mayor Franny's speech: mouths AGAPE, eyes wide.

MAYOR FRANNY LITTLE

(beat, smiles like a boss)
No questions?

I/E. SILVER DOLLAR SALOON & THE STREETS / FOLK FESTIVAL - NIGHT

Dove Hannigan stands next to her dad, 'Front Street' Mike, who TUNES HIS GUITAR on stage. Dove begins SINGING the John Prine cover from earlier (ACAPELLA opening), but even better...

DOVE HANNIGAN

When I get to heaven, I'm gonna
shake God's hand, thank him for
more blessings than one *WOMAN* can
stand, then I'm gonna get a guitar
and start a rock n roll band, check
into a sweet hotel. Ain't life
grand?

(next lyric, the guitar
kicks in and everyone
starts SCREAMING)

And then I'm gonna get a *MOTHER*
FUCKING cocktail...vodka and ginger
ale...

As the SONG PLAYS

MONTAGE

Jenny and Eddie SING and CLAP at the bar...

PEOPLE in the streets mill about...enjoying the festival...

Kellen drives Beau home in the flatbed truck...

Crematorium John and Marleen walk through the crowded street festival. They feed each other tufts of cotton candy...

Bridger rides in his police cruiser, window down, constantly repositioning...

Dove Hannigan and 'Front Street' Mike go on SINGING...

Eddie's and Jenny's PHONES BUZZ. They exchange a look...

Bev Bathhouse and Amos Urbanski order beers and CLINK glasses...

M.C. and Dotty Striker CLINK glasses with them...

Kellen drops off Beau Ryder in front of a

SHABBY SHOTGUN HOUSE in the flats...

Beau waves and Kellen waves...

Beau enters the house and Kellen drives off...

Eddie and Jenny stand in front of

UNION WORKERS OUTPOST BUILDING

The whole building ablaze...

INSIDE THE UNION WORKERS OUTPOST BUILDING

All records torched. Nothing but ashes left behind...

Dove Hannigan and 'Front Street' Mike come to the SONG'S close.

The crowd CLAPS and CHEERS, then drops to silence.

EXT. DARK HOUSE AND DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

MOONLIT

The flatbed truck doors SLAM closed...

CU on boots WALKING across pavement...

CU on boots WALKING through a yard w/ twigs and leaves...

CREMATORIUM JOHN (O.S.)

You could be dead w'ight now.

(emerges from shadows,
eating cotton candy)

Instead of coming home wid' ice
c'weam.

Kellen and Crematorium John face off from about ten feet apart. We see Kellen holds a pint of ice cream.

CREMATORIUM JOHN (CONT'D)

I p'efer w'ocky w'oad myself.

(beat)

Your fa'ter says you don' w'ike de
work wid' o'ter people.

KELLEN

That's right.

Beat. Kellen holds his hand over a knife attached to his belt.

CREMATORIUM JOHN

(slow stepping toward
Kellen)

It's b'wave wha'd you did. Stup'd
as all git out, but b'wave. And I
t'ink you have a style dat has yet
de reveal itse'f.

This visibly hits Kellen: he's glad to be recognized, but he's not totally falling for whatever this is either.

KELLEN

Appreciate it.

CREMATORIUM JOHN

You've been ova'looked. But I see
it.

(comes closer, licks his
fingers, taps Kellen's
chest)

It's dere. P'wain as day. And I'd
w'ike de help culti'vade it.

(beat, chews)

Would you gimme dat chance? Trust
and work wid me? Be a team... I
t'ink we could do big t'ings
t'getter.

Long beat. Crematorium John holds up a tuft of cotton candy--clearly wanting to feed it to Kellen.

Crematorium John draws circles w/ the tuft of cotton candy like it's an airplane. He makes a BUZZING sound, imitating a plane engine.

There's an eerie intensity to these two men--it feels like they could maul each other at any moment.

OVER KELLEN'S SHOULDER: We see Marleen in the distance, arms crossed like a bodyguard, leaning against a 70s pink Hearse.

Kellen closes his eyes, opens his mouth. Crematorium John sticks the cotton candy in Kellen's mouth, along with an unnecessary portion of his finger...

Kellen chews--his face is riddled with how violated he feels.

CREMATORIUM JOHN (CONT'D)

(smiles)
 Bootif'ool. Now, one more t'ing
 (takes a bite, licks his
 fingers)
 Your dad says you 'ave some'fin of
 an apo'woy fer me?

Long beat. Stare down. The cotton candy stepped on the line,
 but this request takes it too goddamn far.

KELLEN

My dad says a lot of things.

Kellen turns, walks away--it's a big *fuck you*--leaving
 Crematorium John standing there, holding a bouquet of cotton
 candy.

Crematorium John's eyes narrow w/ pure rage: bad move,
Ke'wwen.

INT. RED DODGE NEON W/ SILVER RACING STRIPES - NIGHT - SAME TIME

OVER QUINN'S SHOULDER: on a stakeout, she sees it all.

EXT. DARK HOUSE AND DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Kellen JINGLES his keys...

He SLIDES his key into a lock, turns it, and

A DOOR OPENS TO

INT. MAYOR FRANNY LITTLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - SAME TIME

On Franny Little, gently holding her pregnant belly, as
Kellen Striker enters, holding the pint of ice cream.

MAYOR FRANNY LITTLE

Hey, baby.

KELLEN

Hey, honey. How was your day? Got
 ya' some ice cream.

They kiss. Kellen is the father of Mayor Franny Little's
 baby.

Door CLOSES.

INT. 1970S PINK HEARSE - NIGHT

Crematorium John and Marleen sit in their car. Pink dice dangle from the rearview mirror.

MARLEEN

I have an idea.

(short beat)

What do you say we pay a little visit to his darling young wife? Serve up a bit of motivation. Hmm?

A creepy grin spreads across Crematorium John's face.

CREMATORIUM JOHN

Mos' certain'wee.

He's in.

CUE the CLOSING SONG, something creepy...

Off Crematorium John and Marleen, looking out the window at

KELLEN and MAYOR FRANNY'S HOME

CRANE UP to AERIAL VIEW

EXT. MEADERVILLE, MONTANA - AERIAL VIEW - NIGHT

The city twinkles--hemmed in by the cordillera mountain range and The Berkeley Pit, brimming w/ dark, toxic water. The Virgin Mary GLOWS atop the ridgeline.

SMASH TO BLACK

CREDITS...

Austin Film Festival Reader Comments

Script Title: Meaderville

Category: Drama Pilot

Concept:

There is certainly enough material to warrant an entire season of this show, and then some. Further, this pilot successfully allows the reader to get to know about this unique world while also leaving them feeling like they can never know enough, or maybe they could after several seasons of well-crafted intrigue and reveal, which the reader feels comfortable that this writer could deliver on.

Plot:

The main plot of this story is fairly novel and is presented through unique characters, incidents, and circumstances in a way that makes it a very enjoyable read that leaves the reader curious about the future of the show. Additionally, this story does an impressive job weaving in several subplots (for example, the pregnant mayor whose child was fathered by one of the characters but who is also in a secret relationship with that characters sister) that really tease the reader into wanting to know even more about this world.

Structure:

I thought the structure of this script made it a good, compelling read. The story unfolds at a patient yet engrossing pace that would make me excited to watch the drama unfold week after week.

Character:

I found the characters built in this script to be very interesting. They have unique yet consistent voices, and they all have interesting relationships to one another that are gradually yet clearly presented to the reader throughout the course of the story. In particular, the mastermind Crematorium John character is a unique and complex character that I would enjoy watching throughout the course of a season of this show.

Dialogue:

The dialogue felt authentic to the characters, the geography, and the story. Additionally, dialogue was varied between each character, which added to the authenticity of the story and makes it a fun, interesting read.

Overall:

Overall, I found this to be a very well-crafted pilot. It takes place in a part of rural America that is not overly represented in television today. It then goes one step further by making it a well-developed, immersive world with many characters with constantly unfolding motivations and relationships. These characters are also successfully

complex, such that the reader gets the sense that none of them are truly good or evil, and therefore that more time is needed and warranted to feel like we would really understand them. Finally, it does all of this through an interesting story with intriguing subplots that certainly left me feeling like I would want to know more about how this series unfolds. Importantly, all of these stories are told equally through engaging action and compelling dialogue, a balance which also keeps the reader fully engaged and excited to continue turning the page, even beyond just this pilot episode.