

FOR LIFE

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

The Capitol, Washington Monument, across the river to Alexandria, over the Virginia Beltway to Highway Route 1.

Sandwiched between a McDonald's and a 7-Eleven, men unload donated items to a Salvation Army secondhand store. A woman exits the store clasping her baby with one arm and a shopping bag in the other. She kisses her babe.

INT. SALVATION ARMY SECONDHAND STORE - DAY

Two feminine, wrinkly hands sort used kitchen items. A distinctive wedding ring graces her left hand. A very pleasant, elderly woman's voice, with a touch on a sexy side, MRS. RUTHY BURNS.

RUTHY (V.O.)

Now, some of these will be good...

One hand turns on an electric can opener, it spins effortlessly. It gets put to one side.

RUTHY (V.O.)

Some will be fixable...

A saucepan with a broken handle goes to another location.

RUTHY (V.O.)

Some will go to the metal recycle bin...

A broken metal spatula flies into a box labeled, "METAL."

RUTHY (V.O.)

Others to the plastic.

A cracked water jug lands in a large box labeled, "PLASTIC."

YOUNG WOMAN (O.S.)

Mrs. Burns, have you been a volunteer here long?

Ruthy's right hand fondles her wedding ring.

RUTHY (V.O.)

Four years, dear. Three days a week, five hours a day. I started two weeks after my husband died.

YOUNG WOMAN (O.S.)

Any children and grand kids?

Ruthy's hands fidget.

RUTHY (V.O.)
Two sons, two granddaughters.

YOUNG WOMAN (O.S.)
I bet you're proud of them. What do
your sons do?

Ruthy's hands squeeze back and forth.

RUTHY (V.O.)
Spence is an accountant.

A long silence.

YOUNG WOMAN (O.S.)
And... the other?

Ruthy's hands clutch tightly to each other.

RUTHY (V.O.)
Taylor helps orphan kids on
weekends.

YOUNG WOMAN (O.S.)
Wow, really? He must be so kind.
What does he do during the week?

Ruthy's hands close into fists. She pauses long. Her voice
loses its lightness.

RUTHY (V.O.)
Dear, when you have kids, love them
deeply... but that doesn't always
mean you like everything they do.

EXT. CONVENTION CENTER - DAY

Police cars. Reporters with cameras atop news vans.
Policeman manning a line between the center and protestors.

A pregnant woman holds a sign, "TAYLOR BURNS - MR. KILLER".
Anti-euthanasia PROTESTORS march in front of the center.
Signs read, "WE LOVE OUR PARENTS", "GENOCIDE", "ASSISTED
SUICIDE IS KILLING SOMEONE".

INT. CONVENTION CENTER - DAY

A huge banner reads, "FREEDOM TO DIE AS WE WISH, SUPPORT
A.C.E. - American Committee for Euthanasia".

A charismatic TAYLOR BURNS, 48, average slight build, stands
behind the podium. A nameplate reads, "Taylor Burns,
President of A.C.E. NOW."

Hundreds, rapt, listen to Taylor's rousing speech.

TAYLOR

Quality of life is more important than quantity. And children of the elderly must be ready to make decisions if their parents can't make the decision for themselves. It's the least we can do to help our parents die with dignity.

Taylor pauses, playing with the audience's emotions.

TAYLOR

It's been our mission! It's been our hope! We have a dream! We're going to change the world for the better!

CHEERS.

TAYLOR

Those who attack us, those who claim euthanasia is wrong, they are the ones who are wrong, very wrong!

Heavy CHEERS.

TAYLOR

One week from today, Washington, D.C., we of A.C.E. NOW will march to the Capitol. And more will join us. One million marchers, right! Let me hear you all!

The crowd stands, semi-hysterical, CHANTING.

CROWD

Freedom to die as we wish. Freedom to die as we wish. Freedom to die.

Taylor waves and steps away from the podium. His assistant, PARKS, 35, a "true believer", clasps Taylor's hand.

PARKS

Taylor, that was superb!

Taylor keeps his eyes on the crowd as he continues to wave to cheers. Out of the side of his mouth:

TAYLOR

Thanks, Parks. Amber with the protesters?

PARKS

Can I lie?

Taylor bites his bottom lip as he glances at Parks.

PARKS

We'll just pretend she isn't your daughter.

Taylor frowns, then recollects himself and turns back, smiling, to the crowd.

EXT. CONVENTION CENTER - DAY

AMBER WALDEN, 25, Taylor's estranged daughter, and seven months pregnant, carries the sign, "TAYLOR BURNS - MR. KILLER". A very tall and big woman, LIZ, 40, walks next to Amber. The protestors CHANT.

PROTESTORS

Say no to killing, say no to killing, say no to killing.

A REPORTER approaches Amber.

REPORTER

Mrs. Walden, what's it like having a father who's president of the A.C.E. euthanasia group? Do you really think he's a killer?

AMBER

We must never lose sight of the fact that all people, regardless of age or illness, can contribute to others in some way.

REPORTER

It must be very hard for you to have such a father. How do you --

AMBER

Christopher Reeve's life teaches us about the vast potential of what some people think are useless people.

REPORTER

But your father claims that his concern is to alleviate peoples' intense physical suffering.

AMBER

There are ways to alleviate physical suffering without killing. Wouldn't it be more compassionate to teach people how to let go of their mental suffering, so they can deal better with their physical suffering?

REPORTER

But Mrs. Walden --

AMBER

Thank you for your interest.

Liz gives Amber a thumbs up. Amber smiles curtly and turns away. Her left hand pats her belly.

EXT. SUNRISE VILLAGE PLAYGROUND AREA - DAY

A wealthy retirement village. Forty lush acres, ten pristine apartment blocks, surrounded by well manicured gardens, swimming pool and more.

Graced by her distinctive wedding ring, Ruthy's left hand reaches into grass next to a sidewalk. She pulls out a quarter, cleans it off as she stands.

She smiles, hiding her 75 years. In fine health and shape, she could pass for 50. Expensive clothes, perfectly styled hair. A sparkling butterfly brooch adorns her blouse. A twinkle in her eyes refutes a stuffy upper class appearance.

The playground area separates a car park from apartment buildings. Ruthy spots another elderly WOMAN pushing a baby carriage, walking toward her on the path with an eight-year-old BOY.

Ruthy giggles and places the quarter right in the middle of the sidewalk. She strolls to a favorite bench not far away. An inscription on the bench reads, FOR MOM & DAD. She strokes the bench, sits and watches.

The little Boy spots the quarter and races for it.

LITTLE BOY

Hey, Grandma, look! I'm a lucky boy!

ELDERLY WOMAN

So you are, Billy.

She pushes the carriage past Ruthy as the boy hops in front. With a knowing grin, she looks back at Ruthy.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Ruthy, I saw you.

Ruthy smiles.

EXT. VET'S OFFICE - DAY

A man pushes a baby carriage past the office.

Taylor drives up, gets out of his SUV wagon, walks to the back door. A German Shepherd's face pushes against the glass, his tail wags happily.

Taylor pauses, shakes his head. He opens the back door, helps the dog out. Advanced arthritis affects the dog's back joints.

INT. VET'S OFFICE - DAY

A stone-faced Taylor's eyes stay glued to his dog as an exasperated VET pets it, and a nervous assistant observes.

VET

He's not that bad yet.

TAYLOR

Doctor, it is bad and what's coming will be even worse. He can die now with dignity instead of living a prolonged life as a cripple.

VET

There are drugs to relieve the discomfort.

TAYLOR

There's no need to protract illness. It's an unnecessary burden on those who must care for the ill.

VET

Mr. Burns --

TAYLOR

Doctor, should I go elsewhere?

VET

No, I... I'll take care of him.

TAYLOR

Thank you, send the bill as normal.

Taylor drops his eyes, walks out. The dog whines, watching Taylor leave. The Doctor strokes the dog.

VET

Call Jan. -- Not to worry, Rover,
you have a better home waiting for
whatever time you have left.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Kids roll and play with their dog on a front yard. Amber drives past, turns into a large driveway bordered by flowers and bushes, highlighted with a huge sign which reads, "SUNRISE VILLAGE, Home of Discriminating Retirees."

She stops at a security gate. Guard BETTY, 35, hefty, greets her.

BETTY

Hey Amber, how y'all doing?

Amber pats her tummy.

AMBER

We are doing just fine, Betty.

They laugh.

BETTY

Still got my money on it being a
girl. Isabella's a nice name,
y'know. How about Abigail?

Amber grins, drives off.

BETTY

Bertha?

Amber winds around a flowering tree-lined bend. She enters the "Campus".

She passes by a middle aged woman pushing her wheelchair-bound elderly father along the sidewalk. She parks in front of the playground area.

INT. SUNRISE VILLAGE RECEPTION - DAY

A model car display sits near the entrance. Couches on the left, card tables on the right. Postal boxes further on the left. A reception counter further on the right.

Hallways go off on both sides to residential apartments. Ever smiling EVE, 55, sits behind the reception counter. Many elderly stroll or shuffle to and fro.

Above Eve, a large painting of Mr. Colt, 65, distinguished in business attire. Below the painting reads, "Sunrise Village founder Mr. Harry Colt."

MR. COLT holds his air of authority with pride as he stands near Eve. She offers him a bowl of candies. He takes one.

MR. COLT

I'll be in the office til three today.

EVE

Yes, Mr. Colt.

He strides away.

Ruthy bounces in from a hallway.

RUTHY

Home! Home, sweet home. Eve, I think you need a hug.

Eve swings around her desk.

EVE

The Sunrise Hugger reads my mind again! Mrs. Burns, you're the sun in Sunrise.

They hug.

RUTHY

Mail in yet?

EVE

Sure is. And here you go.

Eve tosses Ruthy a candy, which Ruthy catches and laughs. She goes to her mailbox, pulls out a handful of mail. She takes one junk letter and backhands it into a waste basket.

AMBER (O.S.)

Nice shot, Nana.

RUTHY

Why my little sweetheart.

Ruthy turns to be greeted by her granddaughter, Amber. Ruthy pats Amber's tummy.

RUTHY

Okay, ultrasound this morning, right? Come on, tell me.

AMBER

A boy.

RUTHY

Bravo, how about a future president, general, admiral --

AMBER

No thanks, presidents and soldiers can get killed young.

RUTHY

Says the wife of a policeman.

AMBER

Touché.

INT. SUNRISE VILLAGE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ruthy and Amber stroll, arm in arm, away from the Reception Area.

RUTHY

Does Jake know yet?

AMBER

He wanted a girl.

RUTHY

Smart hubby you have.

They pass by forty feet of windows, showing a Gym Room. A dozen elderly walk treadmills, lift weights, pedal bicycles, row. A few wave to Ruthy and Amber who wave back.

RUTHY

Aren't they sweet. I did thirty minutes on the treadmill today.

AMBER

Nana, you're going to make a hundred with ease.

RUTHY

A hundred? Ha, but seventy-five tomorrow, yes. We're going to have a wonderful party.

They enter the Residential Hallway where everyone has a ledge, three foot long, a foot wide, next to their doors. Decorations vary. July 4th is the main theme this month.

AMBER

Nana, I was checking all your legal papers you gave me and couldn't find your Health Care Proxy with my name as agent.

RUTHY
Didn't I give you one last year
with the general Power of Attorney?

AMBER
That one I have, but all I have for
your medical is a copy of the one
you gave your second son nine years
ago.

Ruthy's eyes widen.

RUTHY
We'll have to make a new one with
your name as soon as possible.

AMBER
Jake can get the forms.

Hunched over a walker, JANET, 80, shuffles towards them.

RUTHY
Hi Janet, nice day.

Janet stops, raises her head as Ruthy gives her a hug.

JANET
Ruthy, they say these are the
Golden Years.

RUTHY
Yes.

JANET
Well, let me tell you something.
The Golden Years suck.

Ruthy laughs. Amber's stunned. Janet GRUNTS, then shuffles
by.

RUTHY
She's such a dear.

Ruthy watches Janet. She dabs a tear with her scarf.

RUTHY
Confused, but she's so sweet.

Ruthy and Amber arrive at Ruthy's apartment.

INT. RUTHY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Three bedroom, luxurious.

They enter a foyer area, which branches to the left - a kitchen, to the right - bedrooms, and straight ahead - the dining/living room. Multi-colored, glass butterflies adorn the dining table chandelier.

Four books rest on the dining table. "DEADLY COMPASSION" and "FORCED EXIT" sit on top.

RUTHY

I'll put the kettle on.

Ruthy goes into the kitchen as Amber tidies a bit. She grabs a vase with wilted flowers.

AMBER

Nana, these flowers were dead last week, why do you insist on keeping them?

Ruthy pokes her head out of the kitchen.

RUTHY

Dear, when you watch something beautiful die naturally, you can learn a great deal about how to truly live.

AMBER

You told me that before and I still don't get it. They're ugly and finished.

Ruthy turns back to the kitchen.

RUTHY

There's still some petals to fall.

AMBER

Right, wait til fall, you have two more months.

Amber dusts around many photos above a piano. Most show Ruthy and her extended family. Amber pauses at one, which shows Ruthy, her deceased husband, sons Taylor and SPENCE, 50. Spence is much bigger than Taylor, height and width.

Another shows Taylor with his father, crippled in a wheelchair. Taylor's expression portrays his grief. Amber holds it next to a happy photo of Ruthy and her husband.

AMBER

This photo of Grandpa and your second son is so depressing. Can I put it away in the drawers?

RUTHY (O.S.)
Sweetheart, why don't you tidy the
butterflies?

Amber frowns, picks up a photo of Taylor, her mom, BARBARA, 47, herself and her husband JAKE, 28, from happier times. The St. Louis Arch rises behind them. Scribbled along the bottom, TO MOM & NANA, LOVE, TAYLOR, BARBARA, AMBER & JAKE.

She puts her thumb over Taylor's face.

RUTHY (O.S.)
Have you seen your father recently?

Amber doesn't reply.

RUTHY (O.S.)
Talk to him on the phone lately?

Amber bites her bottom lip.

RUTHY (O.S.)
Did you protest him in Richmond on
the weekend?

Ruthy brings out cups and cake.

RUTHY
How's your mom? Is St. Louis
treating her okay?

Amber loses it.

AMBER
My father! My father is an ass!

Ruthy waits.

AMBER
He just walks out. Three years now
and he won't even see her. She's
got breast cancer, damn it! And
your son shits on her.

Amber crashes in a chair.

RUTHY
You know why.

AMBER
I'll protest him until I die.

RUTHY
We've gone through this before.

AMBER
How can you still love him?

RUTHY
He couldn't handle your
grandfather's death.

AMBER
He'd even try to kill you if you
weren't so healthy.

RUTHY
Amber, have you ever thought about
how scared a caterpillar would be
if it fell out of a tree?

AMBER
And... you want me to talk to the
ass.

RUTHY
But what would a butterfly think?

AMBER
Nana --

RUTHY
I don't agree with what he does and
it even frightens me if I think too
much about it, which I don't do.
But he is my son and he'll stay
here a couple of days. Can you two
make a truce for my birthday?

Amber fiddles with the four books.

AMBER
You really think he'll read these?

RUTHY
Honestly?

AMBER
Yeah.

Ruthy stares at the books, shakes her head, no.

INT. GIFT AND CANDIES STORE - DAY

A cold, husky CLERK, 40, gazes at a big box of special
chocolate hearts with cherries on the cashier counter.

CLERK
Not cheap...

He picks it up, fondles it.

CLERK
...eh?

TAYLOR (O.S.)
A birthday present for my mother.

CLERK
Well, ain't you a nice son.

The Clerk's stone eyes look up and penetrate Taylor. The Clerk grins.

CLERK
Know you from somewhere?

TAYLOR
Could you just ring it up?

CLERK
Movie star? Yankee pitcher?

TAYLOR
Look, I'm running late.

The Clerk doesn't do anything. Taylor slams a twenty on the counter, grabs the candies.

TAYLOR
Okay, here's twenty, keep the change.

He hurries to the door.

CLERK (O.S.)
Good bye, Mr. Killer.

Taylor pauses.

CLERK (O.S.)
Stay away from my mother.

Taylor EXITS the store, strides past a playground with a mother swinging her toddler.

RUTHY (O.S.)
(singing)
Here we go up in the swings so
high/ just you and I/ we touch the
sky...

INT. SUNRISE VILLAGE LINE DANCING ROOM - DAY

Ruthy sings and line dances, leading thirteen elderly women, Amber and one man, JEFFERSON, 94, the "sage" of Sunrise Village. Ruthy swings and swirls with twice the agility of any others.

RUTHY

Like a butterfly/ we swing and we
sway and we seem to fly/ you and I.

They end as everyone stops and hugs each other.

RUTHY

Next week, same place, same time.

JEFFERSON

Wonderful, Ruthy. You know, if I
was younger --

RUTHY

Jefferson, I'd melt your pacemaker.

Ruthy and Amber stroll out into the HALLWAY.

AMBER

You sang me that Swing song when I
was little.

RUTHY

Like it?

Amber pats her tummy.

AMBER

Already singing it to Jake, Jr.

They hug.

AMBER

See you tomorrow.

Amber dashes off. Jefferson and another woman approach Ruthy.

JEFFERSON

Join us for dinner?

Ruthy hesitates, her eyes lose focus, she gazes blankly down the hall. Jefferson and the woman exchange worried looks.

JEFFERSON

Ruthy, you okay?

Ruthy returns to her chirpy self, laughs self-consciously.

RUTHY
Oh, yes, of course.

JEFFERSON
Bit of a senior moment?

Ruthy looks away.

RUTHY
Nothing to worry about.

She takes Jefferson's arm and the three walk down the hall.

RUTHY
Is it crabs tonight?

EXT. SUNRISE VILLAGE MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

Taylor drives into the front parking lot. His cell phone RINGS.

TAYLOR
Yes, Parks.

PARKS (V.O.)
I booked your ticket to New York.

TAYLOR
Thanks, I wouldn't miss it for anything.

PARKS (V.O.)
The stadium's filling up. We've topped thirty thousand.

TAYLOR
Great, Parks, this is big. We get a good crowd there, it's more power for our march here. And I just know DC is going to change how people think. See you in two days.

Taylor hops out, grabs a small suitcase and a bag with the box of chocolates. A young COUPLE with a 9-year-old girl, JANIE, pass Taylor's car. Janie dashes to Taylor.

JANIE
Will you help sponsor my swim-a-thon, Sir?

DAD's eyes go wide. MOTHER appears frightened.

DAD
Janie, best not to ask strangers.

He pulls his daughter back.

JANIE
But, Daddy --

TAYLOR
Quite okay, what are you raising
money for?

JANIE
We're going to help poor kids in
the city. Want to help?

TAYLOR
I sure do.

Taylor takes out a fifty dollar bill.

JANIE
Oh my gosh, I don't have any
change, Sir.

TAYLOR
I don't want any.

She looks at Taylor in awe.

TAYLOR
And no need to give me a receipt.
Your parents are here, so I trust
you.

JANIE
You're super, Sir. Thank you so
much.

DAD
Uh, thanks.

Taylor smiles, walks off.

DAD
Holy Moses, you know who that was?

MOTHER
Yes.

JANIE
Who, Mommy?

MOTHER
Janie, don't always believe
everything the media reports. That
man's got a big heart.

Taylor strides to the entrance. Jefferson ambles from the other direction. They meet coolly.

JEFFERSON
Must be eight months or more.

TAYLOR
I've been busy.

JEFFERSON
Very original excuse.

Jefferson walks past.

JEFFERSON
One day when you have a question...
if I'm still alive.

Taylor scoffs, heads to the doors.

The doors open automatically. A bent over, old woman shuffles out, using a cane. Taylor hesitates, watches the old woman. He looks away.

A shuttle bus pulls in. He looks back. The old woman struggles to get up the steps. Taylor turns to the building.

INT. SUNRISE VILLAGE RECEPTION LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Eve talks on the phone. As an elderly couple pass her, she offers them candies.

Taylor walks in, signs the visitors' book. She glances at his name, frowns.

EVE
You'll find Mrs. Burns in Room C,
it's play reading time.

TAYLOR
Thanks.

He heads to the elevator.

Eve dashes to Mr. Colt's office.

EVE
Mr. Colt, Sir.

MR. COLT
Yes.

EVE
Mrs. Burns' son, Taylor, has just
arrived.

Mr. Colt nods.

MR. COLT

Okay, alert Security, show his photo to any new officers. But please remind everyone he's never done anything wrong, nor brought his work here. So he's as welcome as any other family of our residents.

EVE

Yes, Mr. Colt.

Mr. Colt looks out his window, gray clouds form.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Taylor strides down the hall, stops in front of glass windows to Room C meeting room. Five elderly read from scripts. Ruthy spots Taylor, smiles wide, excuses herself and bounces out. They embrace.

TAYLOR

Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday, dear lovely Mom, happy birthday to you.

He hands her the bag.

RUTHY

Can I guess?

TAYLOR

Nothing but the best for the best.

RUTHY

Ummm, delicious -- come.

Arm in arm.

INT. RUTHY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ruthy and Taylor enter. Ruthy turns to the KITCHEN.

RUTHY

Remember where the guest room is?

Taylor heads to the bedrooms.

TAYLOR (O.S.)

Did you rearrange any walls?

Ruthy opens the chocolates, savors one. Taylor comes back, heads to the fridge.

TAYLOR
Go easy on those. How's your cholesterol lately?

RUTHY
Wouldn't know.

TAYLOR
Three hundred last time, right?

He checks out the food. Grabs a Pepperoni and whole milk.

TAYLOR
Mom! You're going to kill yourself with this stuff.

RUTHY
We don't discuss killing, remember?

He pulls out a bottle of wine, grabs glasses.

TAYLOR
Sorry, here's to your birthday. May you have many more.

They toast. She offers him the chocolates. Taylor stares at them, shakes his head. He checks the cupboards, rustles the snacks.

RUTHY
Talked to Barbara lately?

TAYLOR
We don't discuss marriage, remember?

They both pause, look at each other, half smile. Ruthy touches his cheek gently.

RUTHY
She's not coming. But Amber and Jake are.

TAYLOR
You need more snacks. I'll go to the store.

RUTHY
Can you get some beer for Spence?

TAYLOR

He should quit beer and go on a diet.

Taylor leaves. Ruthy sighs, takes another chocolate.

INT. LINCOLN CONTINENTAL - DAY

SPENCE BURNS, 50, Taylor's pudgy and much bigger older brother, pops a candy in his mouth as he drives.

He blasts the HORN at kids playing in a quiet suburban street. The kids speed out of his way.

SPENCE

Never play in the street, got that, Clara?

CLARA, 6, plays with dolls in the back, with an open book.

CLARA

Yes, Daddy.

Next to her sits hefty yet bored WAYNE, 19, Spence's stepson, eyes shut, headphones on.

Spence turns to his wife, JOELLE, 38, striking. Her deep red fingernails match her lips which she purses at herself in a makeup mirror.

SPENCE

You look gorgeous, Joelle, we have two rooms at the motel, right?

JOELLE

Spence, honey, if your mom would only give you some of your future inheritance, we could buy a motel.

Joelle turns to Spence, grins.

Clara pretends with her dolls, two females, one obviously older than the other, and one male. She holds the young female as if it's talking.

CLARA

Daddy's always right. Yes. I love Daddy. If Mommy wasn't married to Daddy, I would marry Daddy.

JOELLE

Clara, baby, you can't marry your father.

CLARA

Right, Mommy's still married to
Daddy.

Clara puts down the older female doll and makes the young female kiss the male. She closes her book.

INT. RUTHY'S APARTMENT - DAY

The patio door opens. Amber sneaks in, carrying a large, framed photo composition of many varied butterflies.

AMBER

Surprise! Happy Birthday, Nana!
Look what I got you.

Ruthy bounces out of the kitchen, spots the photo and melts.

RUTHY

Amber...

They hug.

AMBER

I know a perfect spot.

She holds the photo up on the wall in the foyer, covering a garden painting.

RUTHY

Sweetie, you win cherry chocolates
for this.

Amber's face changes drastically to a stern coldness as Ruthy reaches in the kitchen for Taylor's chocolates. Ruthy grabs them, turns back to Amber. Ruthy notices Amber's face, gives a "What's up?" expression.

AMBER

Every birthday, every anniversary,
Valentine's Day and Christmas.

RUTHY

Amber, I have a new theory.

AMBER

You've tried them all.

RUTHY

What if he's hiding behind his
work, trying to protect himself
from more grief?

Amber puts down the photo, takes off the painting and hangs the photo.

AMBER

No thanks.

RUTHY

Will you ever forgive him for not being the man you thought he was?

Amber chews on her lip.

RUTHY

It's my fault.

AMBER

Nana, no, don't say that.

RUTHY

I didn't teach him how to handle death.

Ruthy sighs.

RUTHY

Amber, I'm going to keep trying, until I die.

Ruthy hugs Amber.

RUTHY

Now cheer up, it's my birthday, time for joy.

KNOCKS on the door. It swings open to reveal Spence, Joelle, Wayne and Clara. Clara holds Spence's hand.

SPENCE

Hey, Happy Birthday, Mom.

Spence warmly hugs Ruthy. He hands her a big present. Joelle and Wayne give brief hugs. Clara races to hug Amber.

RUTHY

Lovely to see you all.

AMBER

Hi, everyone.

JOELLE AND WAYNE

Happy birthday, Ruthy.

Joelle and Wayne ignore Amber. Wayne grabs a couple of chocolates, heads to the couch, puts on his headphones.

Ruthy opens the gift, a pillow with butterflies on it.

RUTHY

It's beautiful, thank you so much.

CLARA

Amber, Amber, you're so big. Does he kick? Can I feel him?

SPENCE

Hey, Amber, how's it going?

AMBER

Give Nana a kiss first.

CLARA

Right, sorry Nana, Happy Birthday.

RUTHY

My, how you've grown.

JOELLE

Yes, talking about growing, we just couldn't find anything to fit Clara for the party tonight. Ruthy, do you think --

RUTHY

My pleasure.

Ruthy pulls out a gold credit card. Amber's face hardens.

JOELLE

And maybe something for myself so we match? And, of course, Wayne.

RUTHY

Please get Clara a new dress and get yourselves something, too.

SPENCE

Mom, uh --

RUTHY

Don't worry, Spence, I'm sure you need a new shirt. My birthday will be happier if I know you all have something special.

Joelle grabs a chocolate.

JOELLE

Thank you, Ruthy. We haven't checked into the motel yet, so we must get going. Come on, Clara.

CLARA
Can I stay with Amber?

JOELLE
It's your dress we need to buy, so
come along now. -- Wayne, honey.

Clara looks to Spence who nods reluctantly, gives Ruthy a hug.

SPENCE
See you at the party.

They leave. Ruthy looks at her chocolates. She dabs a tissue to her eyes.

Amber boils.

AMBER
Nana!

RUTHY
Amber, you know Joelle's bipolar.

AMBER
Bipolar or not, she's just using
you.

RUTHY
You're going to be a mother soon.

AMBER
Never, never will I spoil my kids.

Amber collapses in a chair.

RUTHY
Amber, being a parent isn't as
black and white as you think.

EXT. SUNRISE VILLAGE SIDE PARKING LOT - DAY

Taylor leaves his car, arms full of groceries. Spence and family exit the building. They meet. Taylor and Spence are friendly. Wayne's indifferent. Clara holds Spence's hand and moves behind Spence. Joelle quickly preens herself.

SPENCE
Hey, brother.

TAYLOR
What's up?

SPENCE
Motel and a bit of shopping.

Joelle gives bag laden Taylor an unusual nice hug. She whispers in his ear.

JOELLE

This time, if you want.

And a provocative smile, unseen to Spence, yet noticed by Wayne, who frowns, shakes his head. Taylor hesitates.

TAYLOR

Right, I'll get this to Mom, see you all later.

As they separate, Taylor watches them go. Clara peers back at him. He smiles and half waves with one hand on a bag. She races to their car.

Taylor's eyes move from Clara to Joelle as she reaches the car. Joelle turns, smiles gaily, waves. Taylor doesn't respond.

INT. RUTHY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Taylor enters with groceries. Amber reads a magazine at the dining room table. Ruthy's four books for Taylor are stacked in the middle of the table.

TAYLOR

Hi.

Amber doesn't look up. Taylor eyes her tummy.

TAYLOR

Pregnant, eh?

AMBER

What would you care?

TAYLOR

Guess I'll have a grandson or granddaughter.

Amber's silent.

TAYLOR

Thought you didn't want kids.

AMBER

He was unplanned.

TAYLOR

He? A grandson?

Amber looks away toward the windows.

TAYLOR

Why didn't you have an abortion?

Amber lashes out, throws the magazine at Taylor.

AMBER

Right, Mr. Killer! Kill the old,
kill the unborn! Kill, kill...
you're one shit of a father.

RUTHY (O.S.)

Now, now, it's my birthday.

Ruthy stands in the foyer.

INT. SUNRISE VILLAGE PARTY ROOM - NIGHT

MUSIC. Balloons. One hundred guests with smiles and laughter everywhere. Jefferson, Eve, Mr. Colt and a dozen friends surround Ruthy. Close by, Amber talks with her friend Liz.

Taylor and Spence chat near the entrance while Spence downs cakes and cookies. Amber's husband, JAKE, 28, solid, short back and sides, holds himself official and tight, like a top detective, enters.

SPENCE

Hey, good to see you.

Jake warmly shakes hands with Spence.

JAKE

Yeah, how you all doing?

TAYLOR

Hi, Jake.

Jake ignores Taylor.

JAKE

Better say Happy Birthday to Nana.
We'll talk later, Spence.

Jake heads to Ruthy. Amber greets him first.

JAKE

Hi honey, I have the Health Proxy.

AMBER

Great.

Clara races up to Jake for a big hug.

Spence and Taylor watch.

SPENCE

You're lucky you still have a dog.

Taylor's eyes drop.

TAYLOR

One day they might understand my work. It... it's just being compassionate to everyone to allow each of us to die when we want.

SPENCE

Well, don't worry, brother. If my heart gets any worse, I might be your next patient.

TAYLOR

Yeah?

SPENCE

I got this pill, that pill. Can't keep up with them all.

TAYLOR

So why are you eating that crap?

Joelle approaches.

JOELLE

Taylor, it's been years since we've had a dance.

Taylor glances away, spots Ruthy.

TAYLOR

I was thinking the same about Mom. I better give her a spin.

He leaves. Joelle frowns.

SPENCE

I'm up, Joelle, let's hit the floor.

Joelle grins.

JOELLE

Sure, honey.

Taylor bumps into Jefferson.

JEFFERSON

Got a question yet?

TAYLOR

No.

JEFFERSON

You should.

TAYLOR

Huh?

JEFFERSON

How are you going to get answers?

Jefferson ambles off. Taylor shakes his head, approaches Ruthy who grabs a cake from a passing tray, as she jokes with others.

RUTHY

So when I was pregnant with Spence, I met a woman who had six kids. Six kids, wow! So I asked, "How did you manage raising six kids?" She said, "Well, dear, the books tell you this way to raise children and the doctors tell you that way, but really, we all just muddle along the best we can."

They laugh.

TAYLOR

So you practiced on Spence before tackling me?

RUTHY

Good for you I did. I jabbed him with a diaper pin in a very wrong place.

TAYLOR

I'm glad you practiced. Bless me with a dance? It's been eons since I held such a lovely woman in my arms.

RUTHY

Taylor Burns, as romantic as your father.

They move off and join a slow dance.

RUTHY

But you're a klutz with your daughter.

TAYLOR
Miss the news? I was disowned two
years ago. Is that part of the
muddling along?

They stop. Ruthy puts her hand on Taylor's cheek.

RUTHY
Taylor, when you're a parent, it's
for life...

Ruthy hesitates, her lips tremble.

RUTHY
for life...

TAYLOR
Mom, you okay?

Her whole body shakes, her eyes wide.

TAYLOR
Mom!

She tries to speak.

TAYLOR
Mom!

Others rush over. Ruthy spins around, her eyes shut.

RUTHY
...for life.

She faints. People SCREAM. Taylor hugs her.

TAYLOR
Pull the cord! Pull the cord!

Hands reach for a wall emergency cord.

INT. SUNRISE VILLAGE SECURITY ROOM - NIGHT

BUZZERS. Lights blink on wall diagrams of buildings and
floors. Betty and two other security officers grab medical
gear and race out.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

SIRENS. An ambulance turns into the Emergency Entrance.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Taylor paces. Spence, Amber and Jake sit and stand around
Ruthy, asleep in bed. A NURSE enters.

NURSE

The doctor's available now.

They leave. Amber kisses Ruthy before she goes out.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

They greet the DOCTOR.

DOCTOR

I'm sorry, it's a major stroke. It appears her right side is partially paralyzed and there may be some cognitive problems.

AMBER

What are the chances of recovery?

DOCTOR

Hard to say right now. We'll do more tests. I wish I had better news.

SPENCE

Thank you, Doctor.

The Doctor leaves.

Taylor and Spence exchange looks, as does Amber with Jake. Taylor glances to Amber and Jake, back to Spence. He speaks to everyone.

TAYLOR

So, what do we think?

AMBER

Excuse me?

TAYLOR

Well, maybe we should start discussing alternatives for Mom.

AMBER

Did you forget Nana gave me the Power of Attorney and wanted me to make all health decisions if she was unable?

Amber walks back into Ruthy's room.

JAKE

Taylor.

Taylor turns to Jake.

JAKE
Don't try any of your games.

Jake follows Amber.

TAYLOR
Lovely.

SPENCE
I'm not too sure us sons can be
screwed that easy. The will's still
just you and I, right?

Taylor stares at the door to Ruthy's room.

INT. HOSPITAL EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

Ruthy sits on an examination bed. She gazes out the window.
Amber, Taylor and Spence watch Ruthy and the Doctor.

DOCTOR
Mrs. Burns, do you know what day it
is?

Ruthy looks at the Doctor. She lacks any expression.

DOCTOR
Do you know how old you are?

RUTHY
You're so handsome.

DOCTOR
Thank you, and you're very pretty.
Do you know who they are?

He points to Amber, Taylor and Spence. Ruthy doesn't look at them.

DOCTOR
Mrs. Burns, let's do some walking.

He helps Ruthy off the bed. Ruthy spots a small bit of paper on the floor. She reaches down, picks it up and puts it in her mouth. The Doctor grabs it.

DOCTOR
No, no, Mrs. Burns, don't eat it.

Ruthy smiles.

RUTHY
You're so handsome.

He walks her across the room. She limps with her right leg and her right arm hangs.

DOCTOR
I'd like to test her cognitive
ability another way. Mrs. Walden,
please walk with her.

Amber changes places with the Doctor. As she walks Ruthy across the room, Ruthy holds close to Amber and puts her head on Amber's shoulder.

DOCTOR
Fine, now, Mr. Burns, either of
you.

Spence walks Ruthy, but Ruthy hesitates and keeps her head upright.

DOCTOR
Next, Mr. Burns.

Taylor goes to replace Spence. Ruthy's eyes widen, she reaches with her left arm to Amber. Her head shakes. Amber races over and hugs her.

Taylor bites his lip, drops his head.

TAYLOR
Excuse me.

He leaves.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Taylor exits, clearly shaken. The Doctor follows.

DOCTOR
Mr. Burns.

Taylor turns, shakes his head.

DOCTOR
No, please, you shouldn't take this
personally. Your mother's had a
stroke, she --

TAYLOR
Doctor... nice try.

Taylor walks off.

INT. HOSPITAL CAFE - DAY

Taylor, Spence and Joelle eat lunch. Joelle boils.

Taylor's down, plays with his coffee.

JOELLE

You're not going to let her push
you around, are you?

SPENCE

Joelle, we --

JOELLE

Come on, now, you're the sons.

SPENCE

Maybe a lawyer.

Taylor spills his coffee on his legs.

TAYLOR

Shit!

He jumps up.

TAYLOR

It's my day.

AMBER (O.S.)

So feel sorry for yourself.

Their eyes turn to Amber who stands with Jake.

AMBER

It'd be nicer if you thought about
your mother more than your pants.

TAYLOR

Amber, look, it's pretty clear
we're not going to get very far.
Though it's nice you remember
Spence and I are her sons.

AMBER

Sons who rarely visit, while I've
seen her every few days for years.

JOELLE

So that's been your good fortune to
live close by, isn't it, dear?

Amber freezes her eyes on Joelle who grins in return.

AMBER

Nana chose to retire close to me
for very good reasons.

Amber turns back to Taylor and Spence.

AMBER
If you'd like to know what I've
decided...

INT. RUTHY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Amber, Taylor, Spence and Joelle sit at the dining table. A half-empty bourbon bottle rests in front of Spence. He and Joelle eat Taylor's chocolates.

In the living room area, Ruthy sits in a rocker recliner, stares at Clara who plays with her dolls.

Ruthy's four books rest on a side table next to her. Her left fingers tap on the books as if she has music in her head.

Outside the bay windows in the playground area, Wayne practices Thai kick-boxing.

Inebriated Spence downs another glass. Joelle grabs the bottle.

 JOELLE
Honey, please stop for now. You
know the doctor doesn't want you to
drink.

 SPENCE
Huh?

Amber checks her watch, looks to the door.

 TAYLOR
I do think hiring a fully qualified
nurse is a bit much when a nurses'
aide could easily do the job.

 AMBER
Worried about using up your
inheritance?

 TAYLOR
Amber, please.

 JOELLE
It is something to consider, when
she's just going to die.

Amber flashes at Joelle who shrugs.

KNOCKS. Amber dashes to the door, greets MARIA, 55, Hispanic.

AMBER
Hi, Maria, come on in.

SPENCE
Hey, what you know, she uh, she --

TAYLOR
Spence!

SPENCE
Yeah, well, I gotta pee.

Spence staggers up and heads to the bathroom.

AMBER
I'm sorry, Maria, he's had a bit too much.

MARIA
It's not a problem. I know you all must be feeling very down.

TAYLOR
I'm Taylor, that was Spence, we're Mrs. Burns' sons. This is Joelle, Spence's wife. The girl and lad outside are his kids.

JOELLE
The girl only.

TAYLOR
Sorry, Joelle's kids, the lad's Spence's stepson.

MARIA
Glad to meet you all.

Maria heads to Ruthy.

MARIA
And this must be Mrs. Burns. Hi Mrs. Burns, I'm Maria, your nurse.

Ruthy's eyes rise, she nods her head and reaches out with her left hand. Maria grabs it and gives it a kiss.

RUTHY
You're so pretty.

MARIA
Sweet talk me some more, you're a winner.

Ruthy returns her gaze to Clara, and her tapping fingers resume.

AMBER

Maria, are you sure you can do 24 hours?

TAYLOR

Wait a minute, just one nurse?

JOELLE

Amber's in charge, remember?

Joelle grins and heads to the bathroom.

MARIA

Mr. Burns --

TAYLOR

Taylor's fine.

MARIA

Taylor, this is my specialty. I do the first four days straight through. Normally someone in her condition sleeps through the night fine, so I'll sleep, too. Then I make a suggestion for follow up care.

TAYLOR

Yeah, well --

AMBER

I'll show you Nana's bedroom. We put an extra bed in.

Amber and Maria leave. Taylor sits down on the sofa next to Ruthy. The side table is between them.

TAYLOR

Mom?

She doesn't respond.

Clara glances up at Taylor. He half smiles at her. She looks around, no one else is there. She gets up and races out the patio door to be with Wayne.

TAYLOR

Mom, can you hear me?

She stops tapping.

TAYLOR
 Mom, you heard me, right? You know
 it's Taylor here, right?

She glances over at the family photos.

TAYLOR
 What is it, Mom? What are you
 looking at?

She shuts her eyes, taps again. Taylor notices her tapping fingers, shifts the books a little in order to read some titles.

He lays back in the sofa, gazes at the ceiling.

Joelle comes in.

JOELLE
 Taylor.

He doesn't answer.

JOELLE
 Taylor?

He looks at her. She smiles seductively, strokes one breast.

Amber and Maria return, followed by a staggering Spence. Joelle assumes her normal exterior, strolls to the patio door.

JOELLE
 Wayne, Clara, honeys, time to go.

MARIA
 I'll give her a good bath.

Wayne and Clara come in.

JOELLE
 Help Spence, will you, honey?

WAYNE
 Sure, Mom. -- Spence, you're the
 shits. Come on.

SPENCE
 The toilet, I already did my shit.

WAYNE
 Yeah, come on.

Clara eyes Spence.

CLARA
Daddy's no good now. Can I stay
with Amber?

JOELLE
Maybe tomorrow, baby.

Clara and Amber hug. Clara looks at Taylor. He smiles.

TAYLOR
Bye, Clara.

She races to keep up with Wayne who pulls Spence out the
main door. Maria helps Ruthy up.

JOELLE
Well, better get Spence to bed.
Thanks so very much, Maria. I'm so
sure Ruthy will just love having
you here. See you all tomorrow.

They leave. Maria looks at Amber who shrugs her shoulders.

Maria leads Ruthy to the bathroom. As they pass Amber's
butterfly photo, Ruthy pauses and strokes the photo.

TAYLOR
You staying tonight?

AMBER
Yes.

TAYLOR
I might go for a run.

EXT. SUNRISE VILLAGE - DUSK

Taylor runs past a pond and pavilion, up a grass slope, into
the parking lot, which connects to the playground area.

He stops, spots the woman with her wheelchair-bound, elderly
father. She tucks a blanket around her father's legs. He
touches her gently. She kisses his forehead, pushes him
along the walk.

Taylor watches them pass by. Across the playground, he sees
Ruthy's apartment patio. Amber sits, reading. Ruthy rests
next to her, staring. Amber holds Ruthy's hand.

MR. COLT (O.S.)
Hello, Mr. Burns.

Taylor turns to see Mr. Colt.

TAYLOR
Hi, uh, Mr. Colt, right?

MR. COLT
Yes, it's been a while since we
last talked. How's your mother?

TAYLOR
Not too good.

MR. COLT
So I understand.

Mr. Colt pauses long.

MR. COLT
Mr. Burns, as you are probably
aware, there are a number of
residents here who don't feel
comfortable when you visit.

TAYLOR
A lot of people are afraid of
things they don't understand.

MR. COLT
Wise words, Mr. Burns, and a lot of
people are afraid of things they do
understand.

Taylor and Mr. Colt lock eyes.

MR. COLT
I trust you won't do anything that
increases their concern.

TAYLOR
I'm not here to bother anyone.

MR. COLT
Thank you, Mr. Burns.

Mr. Colt turns, strides away. Taylor looks back over at
Ruthy and Amber.

TAYLOR
What a happy fellow.

INT. SPENCE AND JOELLE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Joelle stands at the bathroom door, staring at Spence
sprawled in bed, zonked out. Wayne sits close by. Through an
open joining room door, Clara hugs her three dolls and
watches TV.

WAYNE

When are you going to dump this jerk?

JOELLE

Ruthy's will, honey.

WAYNE

She might stay a vegetable for years.

JOELLE

Taylor kills old people.

Wayne looks long at Joelle.

WAYNE

Assisted suicide.

JOELLE

Then maybe Taylor can do some assisting.

Joelle smiles, unbuttons her blouse buttons.

JOELLE

You would like one of those Harleys, wouldn't you?

Joelle rubs her breasts against Wayne's head. Wayne hesitates.

WAYNE

Mom, are you taking your medication?

JOELLE

I'd rather take you.

WAYNE

I have a girlfriend now.

JOELLE

I don't mind.

Joelle looks in on Clara.

JOELLE

You be good, baby.

INT. CLARA AND WAYNE'S MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Clara watches as Joelle shuts the door.

CLARA

Yes... Mommy.

She takes the older female doll and puts her under a pillow. She shuts her eyes, hugs the young female and male.

INT. RUTHY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Taylor, Amber, Ruthy and Maria finish dinner. Amber and Maria sit next to Ruthy.

TAYLOR

Like the meal, Mom?

Ruthy glances up to Taylor. He smiles. She looks back to her food.

AMBER

Nana, want some cake?

Ruthy's eyes rise at Amber.

AMBER

Yes, okay, here.

She puts cake on Ruthy's plate. Ruthy stares at it. Maria forks it and brings it to Ruthy's mouth.

MARIA

Open wide, Mrs. Burns.

Ruthy opens her mouth, in goes the food. She chews and cream slides down her cheek. She tries to wipe herself with her bare left hand. Amber gives her a tissue.

AMBER

Here, Nana, wipe your cheek.

Ruthy stares at Amber, sticks the tissue in her mouth, and tries to eat it. Maria grabs the tissue.

MARIA

I think it's time to get ready for bed. Okay, Mrs. Burns?

RUTHY

You're so pretty.

MARIA

And you're an angel.

Maria helps Ruthy up, leads her to the bedrooms.

Amber picks up plates, takes them to the kitchen. Taylor watches her. She returns, picks up more.

AMBER
I think it's better if you leave
the apartment.

She heads to the kitchen, comes back.

AMBER
Did you hear me?

TAYLOR
I'm not sure.

Amber fumes.

AMBER
I said, I think it's better if you
leave the apartment.

TAYLOR
Well, that's too bad.

Taylor stands, grabs his dishes.

TAYLOR
My mother invited her second son to
stay here and her second son, me
remember, intends to stay.

He walks into the kitchen.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

MUSIC. Taylor stands in the hall, watches the line dancing
group. Another woman leads the group. Ruthy stands in the
back row, tapping her fingers on her leg. Dancing next to
Ruthy, Amber encourages Ruthy who just stares.

Taylor's phone RINGS. He strolls away from the glass window.

TAYLOR
Yes, Parks.

PARKS (V.O.)
You at the airport?

TAYLOR
No, look, like I said yesterday, my
mom's had a stroke.

PARKS (V.O.)
So what, man, what about your talk
tomorrow?

Taylor turns back toward the Line Dancing Room.

TAYLOR
You'll have to --

PARKS (V.O.)
Taylor! Forget your mom. This is
New York. We might fill the
stadium. You got to do it.

TAYLOR
Parks --

PARKS (V.O.)
Taylor Burns, listen to me. What's
more important, one old dying lady
or our work?

Taylor looks to Ruthy. She turns her head, eyes straight at
him.

PARKS (V.O.)
Taylor, you still there? Taylor,
this is the big week, New York,
Philadelphia, Washington. Taylor?

TAYLOR
Parks, sorry, you'll have to do
this one. I'll see you in Philly.
Count on me.

Taylor hangs up. His phone RINGS. He checks the caller's
name, looks up at Ruthy who still gazes his way. He mutes
his phone.

INT. OFFICE ROOM - DAY

Parks holds his phone, in semi-shock.

PARKS
Damn, what's wrong with him!

An assistant, BOB, 30, looks up from his computer.

BOB
Maybe he's trying to figure out
which way to kill his mom.

PARKS
You're not funny, Bob.

INT. SPENCE AND JOELLE'S MOTEL ROOM - DAY

A groggy Spence wakes, sits up on the side of the bed. The
sound of the SHOWER. It stops. Spence looks around.

SPENCE
Whew, how'd we get here?

JOELLE (O.S.)
That you Spence honey, you awake?

SPENCE
I, uh --

Spence winches, grabs his chest.

JOELLE (O.S.)
Spence? Spence!

Wearing her bathrobe, Joelle opens the bathroom door, spots Spence as he spasms in pain.

JOELLE
Shit!

Rather than a compassionate expression, Joelle displays anger. She dashes to her purse, pulls out a pill box, takes one and sticks in under Spence's tongue.

JOELLE
Lay down, lay down, it's okay,
Spence, I'm here.

Spence stares wide-eyed at Joelle, he nods his head rapidly. Joelle helps him lie down. She strokes his head as he relaxes.

SPENCE
S-sorry, honey.

JOELLE
Sorry? Is that all you can say!
Sorry, honey, sorry, honey.

She shakes the pill box at him.

JOELLE
Do you know what it means if you
die on me before your mother dies?
Do you know what that means for our
baby, Clara?

SPENCE
Honey, I'm sorry.

JOELLE
Shit!

She throws the box at him as she stands, paces the room.

JOELLE

What if your heart gives way before Ruthy dies? Taylor will get all her money. Damn it, think of me!

Joelle sits next to Spence, changes her tone.

JOELLE

Spence, my love, you know how much you mean to me. Think of our baby, Clara. Don't drink any more, okay, my love. You're my one and only. I'll be lost without you. But at least if Ruthy dies first, I'll be able to give Clara the best. She's our baby, think of her.

SPENCE

I can't kill my mother.

JOELLE

No, I'd never want you to, but Taylor does it to old people, he believes in it. Your mother's gone, she's just a vegetable waiting for God to take her home. Will you ask Taylor to help, for me and Clara? My love, will you do that, okay?

Joelle strokes and kisses Spence. She pulls off her bathrobe and lays down with him.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Spence plays with his jacket buttons. He, Amber and Taylor sit with the Doctor.

DOCTOR

I had two neurologists check all the tests. One was with Mrs. Burns as the tests were done. I'm afraid they agree on the diagnosis.

Amber cries. Taylor looks out the window.

DOCTOR

You could try a third opinion if you wish.

TAYLOR

How accurate do you feel their findings are?

DOCTOR
Mr. Burns, there's always
possibility for error.

Taylor turns to the Doctor.

TAYLOR
Doctor, how accurate do you feel
their findings are?

DOCTOR
You asked me to get the best.

Spence puts his arm around Amber. Taylor looks back out the window.

EXT. SUNRISE VILLAGE PLAYGROUND AREA - DAY

Taylor and Spence sit on Ruthy's favorite bench. The elderly man in his wheelchair and his daughter walk across the way. Taylor looks hard at Spence.

TAYLOR
Do you realize what you're asking?

SPENCE
Well, uh, Mom's kinda had it,
right? The doctor reckons she'll
only get worse. There's no hope.

Taylor stays quiet.

SPENCE
Taylor, hey, isn't it what you do?

TAYLOR
Assisted suicide is illegal in
Virginia.

SPENCE
Yes, but there's ways, right?

TAYLOR
There's always ways.

Taylor's eyes go to the elderly man and daughter.

TAYLOR
Joelle push you to ask me?

SPENCE
We, uh, discussed it.

TAYLOR
Yeah.

Taylor stands.

TAYLOR
You discussed it.

He walks away.

SPENCE
But Taylor, isn't your name the
agent on the Health Care Proxy?

Taylor stops, turns.

TAYLOR
I thought she made a new one with
Amber on it.

SPENCE
I never got a copy, did you?

Taylor looks towards Ruthy's apartment, his eyes squint.

INT. RUTHY'S BEDROOM - DAY

A large room bedecked with butterfly paintings and mobiles. Taylor searches dresser drawers, fumbles through clothes, jewelry, photographs. He comes across a box of papers. He finds a Power of Attorney with Amber's name.

He checks more, finds the Health Care Proxy with his name. He finishes flipping through the rest of the papers.

The wind blows in an open window, RATTLING some butterfly mobiles. Taylor looks up at the mobiles. He nods.

EXT. SPRING VALLEY SIDE PARKING LOT - DAY

A butterfly flies past as Taylor exits his car. Hazy eyes, he walks to the apartment building side entrance. He stops at the doors, his eyes riveted on the handle.

JEFFERSON (O.S.)
Excuse me, Taylor, but are you
going to open the door?

Startled, Taylor turns to see Jefferson.

TAYLOR
Sure, uh, Jefferson. Sorry, I --

JEFFERSON
No need to apologize, lad. I've
been there before.

Taylor opens the door, lets Jefferson enter.

JEFFERSON
You ever been like your Mom?

TAYLOR
No.

JEFFERSON
No?

Jefferson's eyes pierce Taylor.

TAYLOR
Well, okay, when I was a baby.

JEFFERSON
Answer your question?

TAYLOR
I didn't ask one.

JEFFERSON
Then I guess I'm hearing something.

Taylor's stuck.

JEFFERSON
Gotta go, see you, maybe.

Jefferson ambles off.

TAYLOR
Maybe?

JEFFERSON
Good question. It's always a maybe.

Jefferson turns back to Taylor, smiles.

JEFFERSON
And at my age the odds get small.

Jefferson disappears down a hallway as Taylor holds the door. He enters, the door shuts.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

A door opens. Security officer Betty steps out of a guards' room just as Taylor passes by, walking with Ruthy.

BETTY
Hey, Mrs. Burns, how are you?

Ruthy stares as Betty gives an unresponsive Ruthy a warm hug.

BETTY
 We still love you, Mrs. Burns.
 Don't you ever forget it.

Betty turns to Taylor.

BETTY
 Sorry, Mr. Burns.

TAYLOR
 Yeah, thanks.

Betty bustles off. Taylor and Ruthy continue walking.

Elderly Janet, with her walker, approaches from the other direction. They meet.

TAYLOR
 Mom, do you want to give Janet a hug?

Ruthy and Janet stare at each other.

JANET
 The Golden Years suck.

Janet puts her hand on Ruthy's shoulder. She GRUNTS, shuffles by.

EXT. SUNRISE VILLAGE POND PAVILION - DAY

Amber and Spence walk with Ruthy near the water. Picnic lunch items adorn a table. Taylor sits, watches Clara, close by on the ground as she plays with her dolls. Wayne lies on the slope, headphones on, eyes closed.

TAYLOR
 You have nice dolls, Clara.

Clara glances around, she gets up.

TAYLOR
 It's okay, you can play here.

She looks Taylor over.

CLARA
 You kill people, don't you?

TAYLOR
 No, that's not my work.

CLARA
 Daddy and Mommy say you do.

TAYLOR
I try to help people die
peacefully.

CLARA
Is that a different way to say you
kill them?

Joelle approaches from the parking lot.

JOELLE
Clara, honey, I have another dress
for you.

Clara runs off to Joelle. Taylor watches as Joelle gives him
a sexy smile.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ruthy sits in her lounge chair, gazes at the TV and taps her
fingers on her four books. Taylor sits down on the sofa next
to her, holds out the favorite chocolates. He mutes the
sound.

TAYLOR
Mom? Want a chocolate?

She glances away from Taylor, toward the family photos.

TAYLOR
You did that before, Mom. Are you
trying to tell me something?

He walks to the photos.

TAYLOR
Which one, Mom?

Taylor points at a few.

TAYLOR
This one?

Ruthy doesn't respond.

TAYLOR
This?

Taylor tries to follow Ruthy's eyes. He touches the one of
him and his dad in the wheelchair. Ruthy looks directly at
Taylor. Her eyes tear.

TAYLOR
Shit.

Taylor looks long at the photo. Back to Ruthy, whose eyes close, tears run down her cheeks. Holding the photo, he sits next to her.

TAYLOR
Mom, do you want to die?

INT. HALLWAY BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Amber hears Taylor, her whole body shakes.

TAYLOR (O.S.)
Mom, did you --

Amber speeds to the

LIVING ROOM

AMBER
Stop it!

Amber pushes Taylor away from Ruthy.

AMBER
Get away from her!

TAYLOR
Amber, I wasn't going to --

AMBER
Maria! Maria!

TAYLOR
Amber, please --

AMBER
Maria!

Maria charges in from the hallway.

MARIA
What's wrong?

TAYLOR
Nothing's wrong. Amber
misunderstood --

AMBER
Maria, please help Nana to her
room.

Maria takes Ruthy.

TAYLOR
Amber.

AMBER

I don't like you! I don't like who
you are! You've become evil!
Where's my father?

TAYLOR

Amber, please.

AMBER

Stay away from Nana.

TAYLOR

She's my mother.

AMBER

Stay away!

Amber races to

RUTHY'S BEDROOM

She grabs her phone, dials.

AMBER

Maria, we mustn't leave Nana alone.
We mustn't leave her ever with
Taylor alone.

Amber frowns at the phone, dials again.

AMBER

Jake, oh thank god you're there.
He's going to kill Nana.

INT. RUTHY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Amber fidgets with photos on the piano. One hand stays on a photo of Ruthy, her and her mother, Barbara. The other hand busies itself. Jake enters with a box, she dashes to him. They hug.

JAKE

Where is he?

AMBER

Gone for a walk.

JAKE

I have two cameras now to put up in
her bedroom. I'll get more
tomorrow.

AMBER

I want him out, for good.

JAKE
Legally, we can't stop him being
here.

AMBER
Oh, Jake...

Amber collapses in a chair.

JAKE
I'll talk with him tomorrow.

AMBER
Why? Why did this happen to Nana?

INT. RUTHY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Ruthy and Maria sleep. Maria stirs, gets up, goes to the
bathroom.

Amber comes in, wiping sleep from her eyes.

AMBER
Hi, Nana.

She kisses Ruthy.

AMBER
Nana, you awake?

Ruthy doesn't move. Amber pulls back, eyes wide.

AMBER
Nana? Nana!

Amber burst into tears.

AMBER
Oh, Nana, did he kill you?

Taylor enters.

TAYLOR
I heard you scream, what's wrong?

AMBER
You bastard! You bastard!

Amber jumps up and charges at Taylor, hitting him in the
chest. Maria races out of the bathroom.

TAYLOR
Wait --

MARIA
What's going on?

AMBER
He killed Nana!

Amber crashes down in a chair.

TAYLOR
I didn't.

Maria sits next to Ruthy, takes her pulse.

MARIA
She's not dead.

Maria checks Ruthy's eyes.

MARIA
She's in a coma.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Taylor, Amber, Jake and Spence sit at the table. Taylor and Amber bite their lips. Spence plays with salt and pepper shakers. He spills one.

SPENCE
Sorry, I, uh... sorry.

He wipes it into a napkin, but most of it falls in his lap.

AMBER
She didn't write anything about feeding tubes.

TAYLOR
She didn't want machines keeping her alive.

SPENCE
Feeding tubes are a type of machine, aren't they?

AMBER
It's not like a heart or lung machine.

TAYLOR
Amber --

AMBER
I'm not going to starve her to death.

TAYLOR
It's not starving to --

AMBER
Stop it!

Amber stands.

AMBER
It's my legal decision. You won't
kill her that way.

Amber heads off to Ruthy's bedroom.

JAKE
Taylor, I want you to know there
are cameras now in Nana's bedroom.
I am hopeful they will not have to
be used in court.

TAYLOR
(sarcastic)
Thanks, Jake, you're a good son-in-
law.

JAKE
Your humor's enlightening.

Jake walks away.

TAYLOR
Jake.

Jake stops, but doesn't turn around.

TAYLOR
Amber said it's her legal decision.
I'd like to see the Health Care
Proxy with her name as agent.

Jake turns, pauses.

JAKE
I'll tell Amber.

He leaves.

SPENCE
So, what do you think now?

TAYLOR
Nice day.

SPENCE
Come on, brother, you know what I
mean.

 TAYLOR
Yes... I know.

Taylor walks to the living room couch, plops down. He stares
at Ruthy's four books, grabs one.

INT. RUTHY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Maria sits with Ruthy lying in bed with feeding tubes
attached. Amber and Jake walk out a patio door.

EXT. RUTHY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

They stroll ten yards away from the apartment.

Through the living room window, Taylor glances inside one of
the books.

 AMBER
Tell him it's at home somewhere.

 JAKE
Amber, that's lying.

 AMBER
Tell him I'll, I'll look at home
for it.

Jake gives Amber a warm smile. She hugs him.

 AMBER
Oh Jake, what if he finds out he's
got the medical decisions?

Jake looks over to the apartment just as Taylor glances up
from his book and looks toward Jake and Amber.

 JAKE
I have a feeling he already knows.

EXT. SUNRISE VILLAGE SECURITY GATE ENTRANCE - DAY

Fifty yards outside of the entrance, a worried Amber talks
with Liz. Five other protestors sit in cars with signs
ready.

 LIZ
Don't you worry.

 AMBER
I hate it when the police come.

LIZ
Hon, it's your grandma. We ain't
going to let him do it.

Jake walks over.

JAKE
Liz, hold off until the press gets
here.

LIZ
You think I'd miss the fun?

JAKE
Just making sure. Once the guard
calls, it's only fifteen minutes
from the police station.

LIZ
Shucks, they take us six, two hours
later another six.

AMBER
Liz, you're wonderful.

Amber gives Liz a hug. She and Jake stride back to Sunrise
Village.

A CNN van approaches.

LIZ
Righty-oh gang. Let's give 'em
something to film.

INT. RUTHY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Maria and Taylor sit on either side of Ruthy.

MARIA
Amber's worried.

TAYLOR
She needn't be.

MARIA
She believes you plan to kill your
mother.

TAYLOR
I have no intention of harming my
mother.

MARIA
Can you assure me you aren't going
to assist in her death?

TAYLOR

Butterflies are more beautiful than caterpillars. Do you know why my mother loved butterflies?

Maria glances at all the butterflies.

TAYLOR

She felt most people are like caterpillars and never want to fly free.

Maria looks at him questioningly.

TAYLOR

She hoped one day to fly free.

EXT. SUNRISE VILLAGE PLAYGROUND AREA - DAY

Amber sits on Ruthy's favorite bench. She strokes her tummy and sings.

AMBER

Here we go up in the swings so
high/ just you and I/ we touch the
sky/ like a butterfly/ we swing and
we sway and we seem to fly/ you and
--

She breaks down and cries.

INT. SUNRISE VILLAGE RECEPTION LOBBY - DAY

A TV shows protestors outside Sunrise Village. Signs read "TAYLOR BURNS LEAVE NOW!", "BURNS GO HOME", "SAVE MRS. BURNS". Police cars drive up. Police barrel out, approach the protestors.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

We've never had such a protest here in Springfield, Virginia, more known for its famous interstate exchange. But today the attention goes to Sunrise Village Retirement Home. There Mrs. Ruthy Burns lies in a coma and her son, Taylor Burns, also known as Mr. Killer, is with her.

Jefferson stands near the elevator, watches the TV. Taylor approaches as the door opens, they both enter. Mr. Colt races over as the door shuts.

MR. COLT

Mr. Burns, wait!

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Neither Taylor nor Jefferson reopen the door.

JEFFERSON
Colt's a bit excited today.

Jefferson presses 2nd FLOOR. Taylor presses 3rd FLOOR.
Jefferson talks, not toward Taylor.

JEFFERSON
There seems to be a cycle in many
people's lives. The day we're born
and for many days, we can't do
anything for ourselves. We lie in
bed and get hugged. The last day
and often for many days, we can't
do anything for ourselves. Only lie
in bed and get hugged.

The elevator stops, Jefferson steps out.

JEFFERSON
What price can you put on a good
mother?

Taylor watches Jefferson walk away. The elevator doors shut.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Taylor shuts one of Ruthy's books, as he and Spence sit on
the lounge. Clara plays on the floor. Joelle reads Junk mail
ads at the dining room table.

Taylor rests the book, picks up a deck of playing cards. He
shuffles them in many ways, "bridge", "Las Vegas", etc.
Clara watches him with interest. Taylor cuts the deck,
flashes the Ace of Hearts at Clara. He shuffles more.

SPENCE
Well, we can stay two more days,
but I gotta get back to work.

Taylor cuts the deck again, shows Clara the Ace of Hearts.
He shuffles. She stares at the cards.

TAYLOR
Yeah, work's important, isn't it?
We need some milk. I'll go to the
store.

Taylor cuts the deck, the Ace of Hearts. He smiles at an
enthralled Clara, puts the cards down next to her, walks to
the door.

JOELLE

Taylor, can you get me some nail
polish?

Taylor looks at her like, "Come on, give me a break". Joelle
smiles.

JOELLE

Some chocolate then? Bittersweet?

Taylor shakes his head, leaves.

Clara watches Taylor go. She picks up the cards, cuts them,
searches for the Ace of Hearts.

Spence turns on the TV news, which shows a super-charged
Parks on stage in New York.

PARKS

Those who oppose us often say we're
just doing this to gain our
inheritance from our elderly
parents.

The audience JEERS.

PARKS

Nothing could be further from the
truth!

CHEERS.

Spence mutes the sound as Parks expounds his message.

SPENCE

Taylor missed his buddy.

JOELLE

Turn it off, please, honey, I don't
want Clara hearing that trash.

SPENCE

Sure.

Spence turns off the TV, lies down for a nap.

Joelle's cell phone RINGS. She checks the caller's name,
glances at Spence. She goes

OUT THE PATIO DOOR

and walks away from the apartment. She answers the phone in
her sexiest voice.

JOELLE

Hi, Babe.

MAN (V.O.)

Miss you like crazy. What's up,
Sugar?

INTERCUT - JOELLE AND SPENCE/CLARA

Clara finds the Ace of Hearts on the top of the deck. She
laughs, puts down the cards, curls up to Spence.

SPENCE

Hey, Clara baby.

CLARA

Daddy, when you and Mommy divorce,
can I live with you?

SPENCE

Clara, Mommy and I aren't going to
divorce.

JOELLE

I'm still in DC. Spence's mom's had
a stroke.

MAN (V.O.)

Hot dogs! When's she going to die?

JOELLE

I'm working on it.

MAN (V.O.)

I'll count the minutes and seconds.
Grab that will and off we go.

CLARA

All my friends have divorced
parents.

SPENCE

Everyone?

CLARA

Yes.

JOELLE

Spence is pushing Taylor.

MAN (V.O.)

Mr. Killer, himself, top stuff. You
be careful, Sugar. I don't want to
see you end up in jail for murder.

JOELLE
No way, Babe. You keep your pants
warm, I'll be back soon.

SPENCE
Where's Mommy now?

CLARA
Outside.

SPENCE
Clara, Mommy might get a bit
excited sometimes, but I'll show
you, we love each other. Come on.

Spence picks up Clara, walks out on the patio. Joelle spots
them and waves.

JOELLE
Gotta run.

MAN (V.O.)
Love you forever.

Joelle hangs up, races toward Spence.

JOELLE
Beautiful day, honey.

SPENCE
Sure is.

The three hug.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Taylor unlocks his car, gets in.

MR. COLT (O.S.)
Mr. Burns.

Mr. Colt with two security officers approach.

MR. COLT
I believe you are leaving today.

Taylor glances at the officers, turns on the ignition.

TAYLOR
My mother's very ill. I believe you
should talk to my daughter. It's
her friends outside.

Taylor drives off.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Amber washes dishes. Taylor enters with groceries.

TAYLOR
Spence and family gone?

Silence.

TAYLOR
I noticed some of your friends
visiting.

Taylor sorts the food.

TAYLOR
The management isn't too keen on
the publicity.

He puts cherries on the counter next to Amber.

TAYLOR
Cherries still your favorite?

Amber doesn't look at Taylor, nor grab any cherries.

TAYLOR
Maybe we could talk about your
legal decisions with my mother.

AMBER
If you left, the management would
be fine... and so would I.

Amber walks out.

Taylor eats a cherry.

INT. TAYLOR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Taylor lies in bed, reads, "DEADLY COMPASSION".

TAYLOR (V.O.)
"In relating to the sick, the
suffering, the incompetent, the
disabled and the dying, we must
relearn the wisdom that teaches us
always to care, never to kill.
Although it may sometimes appear to
be an act of compassion, killing is
never caring."

His phone RINGS. He looks at the caller's name, mutes the
sound.

INT. TAYLOR'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Taylor sleeps. Ruthy's four books lie close by. His phone RINGS. He stirs, looks at the caller's name. It continues ringing. He stares at it.

He answers it.

TAYLOR
Yes, Parks.

PARKS (V.O.)
Buddy, where have you been? I've been trying to call --

TAYLOR
Yeah, I'm sorry, but I can't come to Philly.

PARKS (V.O.)
What! What's going on? Taylor --

TAYLOR
My mother's maybe dying. Like I told --

PARKS (V.O.)
But Taylor --

TAYLOR
Sorry, Parks, you'll have to do Philly. I'll do DC. I'm here, I'll do it.

PARKS (V.O.)
Buddy, hey, look, the others --

TAYLOR
Yeah, I know. But I'm here. DC's no problem. See you then.

Taylor hangs up.

INT. OFFICE ROOM - DAY

Parks' eyes fixate on his phone.

PARKS
Get two tickets to DC.

Bob smugly leans back in his desk chair.

BOB
Sir, you did a great job in New York.

PARKS

He's just missing good friends,
that's all.

BOB

I'm sure you can handle Phil --

PARKS

He's just... missing... good
friends! Get the damn tickets.

Parks storms out of the office. Bob smirks.

INT. RUTHY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Amber sings to Ruthy. Taylor and Spence sit close by.

AMBER

Here we go up in the swings so
high/ just you and I/ we touch the
sky/ like a butterfly/ we swing and
we sway and we seem to fly/ you and
I.

Amber kisses Ruthy, then pulls away. Ruthy's eyes partly
open, her head turns toward Amber.

AMBER

Nana? Nana, want to kiss me back?

Amber puts her cheek near Ruthy's mouth. Ruthy purses her
lips against Amber. Amber pulls back, watches Ruthy shut her
eyes.

AMBER

She kissed me, she's still here and
knows us! Do either of you want to
kiss her?

SPENCE

Sure.

They both come close to the bed. Spence kisses Ruthy.

SPENCE

Hi, Mom, I love you.

He puts his cheek near Ruthy's mouth. Ruthy doesn't do
anything. He shrugs, turns to Taylor.

SPENCE

Have a go, brother.

Taylor kisses Ruthy. Ruthy's head turns away. Taylor pulls
back, eyes watering. He leaves the room.

AMBER

I'm sorry, maybe it was just wishful thinking.

SPENCE

Don't you worry, Amber. Taylor and I know how much she loves you.

AMBER

But she loves both of you, also.

SPENCE

Yeah, we know that, too, but different.

AMBER

Maybe she's trying to tell us something.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Amber busies herself with the photos. She stares at the one with Ruthy, Barbara and herself. Lost in thought, she holds it and strolls to

RUTHY'S BEDROOM

Maria sits next to Ruthy.

AMBER

I feel so much better when he's out. I'm so afraid for Nana.

MARIA

Maybe he's just scared and doesn't know what to do. I often think people supporting euthanasia are just plain scared to watch someone like your Nana die in her own time.

AMBER

That's what my mother says. She still loves my dad, but she sees him now like a scared child.

Amber's eyes drop to the photo.

MARIA

I must meet her one day. People who can forgive are hard to find. Why don't you make some coffee. I'll bathe Nana.

Amber walks to the

KITCHEN

She boils water, grabs cups.

Someone KNOCKS on the apartment door. She opens it.

Parks stands with his assistant Bob behind him. Amber's face turns cold. They both hesitate. Amber chews her lip.

PARKS

Excuse me, is Taylor Burns here?

Amber slams the door shut. Her whole body shakes as she slides the bolts.

AMBER

Maria! Maria!

INTERCUT - AMBER AND PARKS

PARKS

Hey, look, I just want to talk with him.

Amber's hysterical.

AMBER

MARIA!

Maria rushes in. Amber and Maria hug.

MARIA

Amber, what is it? Someone hurt you? Who's out there?

Amber can't answer.

PARKS

Hey, whoever's Maria in there. I didn't hurt Amber. I just want to talk with Taylor. Hey, I'm sorry, I'm not here to cause any harm.

AMBER

Don't open it. He's here to kill Nana.

MARIA

Go away, Mister. Taylor's not here.

PARKS

We're not going to kill anyone. Please, can you --

AMBER
Go away! Go away!

MARIA
Mister, I'm going to call security.

PARKS
No, look, it's okay we'll leave.

Parks and Bob head up the hallway.

PARKS
One hell of a fucking old people's
nut house.

BOB
Watch it.

Bob points at Betty and another security guard racing toward them.

BOB
Stay cool, Sir.

They act nonchalant as the guards pass by and knock on Ruthy's apartment. Parks and Bob duck out a side door.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Parks and Bob exit, look around, check their bearings.

PARKS
Where's the car?

Taylor drives by. They spot him and dash after him.

PARKS
Taylor! Taylor!

Taylor pulls into a parking spot, gets out.

TAYLOR
Hi guys, good to see you.

PARKS
Shit, buddy, what's going on?

TAYLOR
Like I said --

PARKS
No, come on, we need you.

TAYLOR
Parks, listen, okay, listen.

Parks relaxes.

PARKS

Yeah, what?

TAYLOR

I thought my daughter had the Health Care Proxy.

PARKS

So?

TAYLOR

My mother never made one for her. Only one with me as agent from nine years ago.

PARKS

Hey.

BOB

Good one, Taylor.

TAYLOR

Right, so don't you guys worry. And tell everyone else I'm okay. I just need some time.

PARKS

But --

Taylor grabs some dry cleaning from his car.

TAYLOR

You want to come in, have a drink?

PARKS

Uh --

BOB

Thanks, Taylor, but we better head back to the airport.

PARKS

Yeah, uh, okay, we'll let everyone know you're --

TAYLOR

And don't worry, I'm here, so I'll do the DC rally.

INT. PARKS' CAR - DAY

Parks drives from the parking lot toward the Security Gate, as Bob casually lights a cigarette.

BOB

Excuse me, Sir, I have a hunch and if I'm not mistaken, how would you like to be the next president of A.C.E. NOW?

Parks is taken by surprise. Bob smiles.

BOB

I'm betting Taylor wants to retire.

PARKS

Hey, no way, Bob, you don't know Taylor. He... he's just caught up. He'll take care of his mother. Don't you worry.

They drive out the gate. PROTESTORS march. A cameraman sits atop the CNN Van.

BOB

Okay, maybe I'm wrong.

Bob smirks as he blows smoke out his window at protestors, who recognize Parks and Bob.

PROTESTOR

Go back to Oregon, you assholes!

A tomato flies in through Bob's window, striking the dash.

INT. RUTHY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Amber fidgets, tidying Ruthy's ornaments and photos. Jefferson sits holding Ruthy's hand.

AMBER

I got so scared.

JEFFERSON

Maybe they're scared, too.

AMBER

Maybe we're all scared. Jefferson, how many children do you have?

JEFFERSON

Alive, three. Two died. Fourteen grandkids, though they're hardly kids.

They laugh.

JEFFERSON

And twenty-five great ones. A few
have died.

Unconsciously Amber grabs a photo of Taylor and one of
Spence.

AMBER

Do you love them all?

JEFFERSON

Each and every one.

AMBER

The same?

JEFFERSON

Do you like cherries?

AMBER

Sure.

JEFFERSON

Watermelon?

AMBER

Yes.

JEFFERSON

The same?

Amber frowns, glances at the photos in her hands, quickly
puts them back on a dresser. She looks out the window.

AMBER

I don't eat cherries or watermelon
if they're off. I throw them away.

JEFFERSON

That's because they can never
return to being good.

Amber spins around.

JEFFERSON

Humans can.

Jefferson stands.

JEFFERSON

When you love someone deeply, it
doesn't always mean you like
everything they do.

He kisses Ruthy.

JEFFERSON

Ruthy, you have a beautiful
granddaughter.

He smiles to Amber and leaves.

EXT. SUNRISE VILLAGE MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

Taylor walks toward the automatic doors. They open before he gets there, stay open as the OLD WOMAN shuffles out, bent over her cane.

INT. SUNRISE VILLAGE RECEPTION LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Amber pulls mail from Nana's mailbox, spots Taylor outside near the old woman. She watches.

The shuttle bus arrives. Taylor approaches the woman and helps her up the steps.

OLD WOMAN

Why, thank you, young man. That's
so sweet of you.

Amber's eyes drop as Taylor enters the lobby.

INT. EUTHANASIA CONVENTION - DAY

A huge banner reads, "FREEDOM TO DIE AS WE WISH, SUPPORT A.C.E. - American Committee for Euthanasia". Taylor stands behind the podium, gives a rousing speech.

TAYLOR

They say we don't want to watch our
loved ones become crippled, ill,
comatose and such. They say we are
the scared ones who can't handle
the realities of life.

The audience JEERS.

TAYLOR

Nothing could be further from the
truth.

CHEERS.

The scene shrinks into Taylor's laptop as he sits in the

LIVING ROOM - DAY

He shuts the computer lid. His left hand holds the photo of him and his father. He gets up, walks to

RUTHY'S BEDROOM

Amber sits next to Ruthy.

 AMBER
 (singing)
 Here we go up in the swings so
 high/ just you and I/ we touch the
 sky --

Taylor appears at the door, unseen to Amber as she strokes Ruthy's hair. Sensing him, she stops, looks around.

 TAYLOR
 Please continue.

He sits down.

 TAYLOR
 Mom used to sing it to me, too.

 AMBER
 Like a butterfly/ we swing and we
 sway and we seem to fly/ you and I.

Amber stops, strokes Ruthy's hair.

 AMBER
 Nana, I understand now.

She kisses Ruthy on her cheek. Taylor's eyes glisten. Amber turns to him.

 AMBER
 Would you like to sing to her?

Taylor hesitates.

 TAYLOR
 Not right now, thanks.

INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - NIGHT

Joelle washes her face. She stops, looks long at herself in the mirror. Her eyes go to two bottles of prescription medication, for JOELLE BURNS. Her face hardens. She grabs the bottles, throws them into the trash can.

She collects herself, stands tall. She sneers, looks at the mirror, laughs.

INT. SPENCE AND JOELLE'S MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Joelle steps out of the bathroom, hand to her head. On the sofa, Spence reads a paper.

JOELLE

Honey, I think the kids need a
break tonight. I have a migraine.
Can you take them out for a flick?

SPENCE

Sure, sounds good.

Spence opens the adjoining door. Clara watches TV. She holds Taylor's cards. Wayne's on the couch with headphones on.

SPENCE

Hey, want to go to the movies?

Clara races into Spence's arms.

CLARA

Sure, Daddy.

Wayne glances up, spots Joelle standing behind Spence. She nods to Wayne. He shrugs, gets up.

EXT. RUTHY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Taylor sits on the patio, stands, looks up at stars. His phone RINGS. He checks the caller, answers.

TAYLOR

Yes.

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION - TAYLOR AND JOELLE

Joelle talks and undresses at the same time.

JOELLE

Taylor, can you come over to the
motel? We'd like to discuss some
new ideas.

TAYLOR

We? You and Spence?

JOELLE

Of course.

TAYLOR

Okay, about fifteen minutes.

Taylor hangs up, his gaze returns to the stars.

Joelle finishes undressing, admires herself in the mirror. She puts on a full length dressing robe.

EXT. SUNRISE VILLAGE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Taylor walks to his car. Stops under a light. He pulls out his wallet, slides his driver's license out revealing a photo of his estranged wife, Barbara.

He pauses long, slides his license back over it.

INT. SPENCE AND JOELLE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Joelle sits at the kitchenette table, tapping her fingers. Three glasses and one bottle of wine. A KNOCK. She jumps up, stops, collects and preens herself. She opens it to Taylor.

JOELLE

Hi, come on in.

Taylor hesitates, looks around the room.

TAYLOR

Spence?

JOELLE

Oh, the kids wanted to see a movie, so he took them out. It's okay, I can tell you what we've been thinking.

Taylor doesn't move. Joelle grins, sits at the table.

JOELLE

Scared?

Taylor enters, shuts the door yet stays standing.

TAYLOR

Spence beat me up once when I was ten.

JOELLE

Was he bullying you?

TAYLOR

I borrowed his bike. Actually I took it without asking. Mine had a flat tire and I was in a hurry.

JOELLE

Well, you needn't worry about that now, do you?

Joelle shifts, allowing the top of her robe to open.

JOELLE

He doesn't have a bike. Like a drink?

Joelle reaches for the bottle exposing one breast. She closes her top.

JOELLE

Oh, sorry.

She pours two glasses, smiles.

JOELLE

Like to sit or are you going to stand there like a --

TAYLOR

Joelle.

Joelle rises slowly, allowing her robe to open, revealing herself fully.

JOELLE

Taylor, I've loved you since I met you. If only you were single then.

She glides toward him.

JOELLE

You're single now.

She allows her robe to drop to the floor.

JOELLE

We have time.

Joelle beckons as she approaches. Taylor stands unmoving. He shakes his head.

JOELLE

You shit!

She lashes out to slap him. Taylor grabs her hand, holds it firmly as she scratches her other hand's fingernails across his face, drawing blood. He pushes her away.

TAYLOR

Joelle, stop it!

JOELLE

Damn you!

She grabs her robe, covers and collects herself as if nothing happened. She picks up a glass of wine and smiles as Taylor wipes his wounds with a hanky. He turns to the door.

JOELLE
 (sarcastic)
 I'm sorry, Taylor. Can I kiss it
 and make it feel better?

He grabs the handle, pauses, keeps his gaze on the door.

TAYLOR
 I repaired my flat tire and never
 took Spence's bike again.

He leaves. Joelle heaves the glass at the door. It SHATTERS.
 She breaks down, crying.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Broken glass near a trash can. Taylor steps over the glass.
 He walks by a street bitch, feeding her litter. He stops,
 looks across the street to a Bar.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Two big FELLOWS throw darts at the far end of the bar. One
 has a tattoo heart of MOM on his arm. Another semi-hidden
 MAN sits, drinks in the shadows of a stall.

Taylor enters, approaches the BARTENDER, also big.

Above bottles of booze reads Virginia's favorite sign,
 "VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS" with hearts. Souvenirs line the
 shelf.

BARTENDER
 Nasty scratches on your face.
 Playing with your cat?

TAYLOR
 Beer, thanks.

The Bartender checks Taylor over.

BARTENDER
 Burns, right, Taylor Burns?

Taylor smiles.

TAYLOR
 Are we old friends?

BARTENDER
 My ass.

He strolls to the far end of the bar, talks to the dart
 players.

Taylor drops his head, lost in thought. He gets up to leave as the Bartender returns.

BARTENDER
Beer? Large or small?

TAYLOR
Small's fine.

The two dart players slide over and stand behind Taylor. The Bartender fills a pitcher.

TAYLOR
I said small's fine.

BARTENDER
It's on the house.

TAYLOR
That's nice, thanks, but I don't think I'll be able to drink it all.

The Bartender grins.

BARTENDER
No problem.

Taylor senses the fellows behind him. He pulls out a twenty, puts it on the bar.

TAYLOR
Please treat the room.

He rises, turns. TATTOO flashes his tattoo to Taylor.

TATTOO
We're a couple of truckies, just average guys. But we got a feeling about our moms and our wives. When you truly love someone who's ill you feel it in your gut.

TAYLOR
Yes, I --

Tattoo slams Taylor in his stomach. He doubles over.

An elderly man's voice.

SHADOW MAN (O.S.)
Hey.

The Bartender looks over at the Man in shadows.

TATTOO

We're not real happy about people
who kill old folk and leave their
wives.

Tattoo's partner forces Taylor upright.

SHADOW MAN (O.S.)

Stop it.

TATTOO

If that's not enough, when your
loved one is so down, and your
brain cries out, you want to scream
at God why he's treating your loved
one this way. Your brain, Burns,
right here.

He touches Taylor's head. Taylor puts his arms up around his
head. Tattoo's partner pulls them away.

SHADOW MAN (O.S.)

Stop it!

Tattoo pauses, then slams Taylor in his head. He lands on
the floor.

Shadow Man BANGS his mug on the table.

SHADOW MAN

Enough!

Tattoo frowns at Shadow Man.

TATTOO

Time to leave, Burns. Virginia
ain't for killers.

Tattoo and his friend grab Taylor, drag him

OUTSIDE

TATTOO

Go back to Oregon!

They throw Taylor to the ground. The door BANGS shut.

Taylor struggles to get up, slips, hits his head on a pole.
He uses the pole to stand. Forehead bleeding, he looks
toward the bar, looks down the road. He staggers back into
the

BAR

Taylor enters. Tattoo, his friend and the Bartender stand near the dart board. Tattoo poises to throw.

TAYLOR

What if...

The men turn, astonished. Their faces show their confusion yet respect that Taylor would walk back in.

TAYLOR

What if the old person is very ill?

The men hesitate.

SHADOW MAN (O.S.)

No.

Taylor peers towards the semi-hidden Man.

TAYLOR

Full of pain?

SHADOW MAN

No.

TAYLOR

Very sad?

SHADOW MAN

No.

TAYLOR

Alone?

SHADOW MAN

Can you prove that death is the end of suffering?

TAYLOR

What if they feel they've lived long enough?

SHADOW MAN

No.

TAYLOR

When?

SHADOW MAN

Assisted suicide, never.

TAYLOR

Why?

SHADOW MAN

People don't need approval to kill themselves.

Shadow Man takes a drink.

SHADOW MAN

When a suicidal person asks another to help, they ask another to kill.

Shadow Man pauses long.

SHADOW MAN

When society approves of killing, where does it end?

Taylor turns to go, grabs the door, stops. He looks back at Shadow Man.

SHADOW MAN

Mr. Burns, is it not wrong to ask someone to become a killer?

TAYLOR

What if they can't do it by themselves?

SHADOW MAN

Then maybe someone's love will help them find courage to live until their time's naturally up. And, maybe they can help you find the courage... to allow it.

Taylor stares. A short eternity. He drops his head, walks out.

SHADOW MAN

Tom, I'd like to go home now.

Tattoo walks over to Shadow Man.

SHADOW MAN

Careful with your temper.

TATTOO

I'm sorry, Dad. But what he does hurts.

Tattoo picks up Shadow Man, who has no legs and only one arm.

SHADOW MAN

I know, but your anger hurts you.

TATTOO

Yes, Dad.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

Taylor stops his car on the bridge, high over Interstate 95. He gets out, stands close to the edge, looks down at the speeding traffic.

SIRENS. An ambulance zips by. He takes no notice.

A long moment.

He turns and walks back to his car.

EXT. SUNRISE VILLAGE POND PAVILION - MORNING

A family of ducks paddle in the water. Taylor watches early morning colors. He holds his wallet, takes out his license exposing Barbara's photo and slides his license in another slot, which leaves Barbara's in the best place.

He spots Jefferson out for a walk in the parking lot. He races up the hill.

TAYLOR

Jefferson!

Jefferson stops, eyes Taylor's bruised face and Band-Aids as they meet.

JEFFERSON

Did you sleep-walk into a door,
maybe four doors?

TAYLOR

Dreams can be pretty dangerous.

JEFFERSON

I won't argue with that.

TAYLOR

I have a question, maybe two.

JEFFERSON

Glad you caught me while I'm still
alive.

They share a smile.

TAYLOR

When my dad died... uh...

JEFFERSON

I was there.

TAYLOR

Yeah. I... I never thought about death before he died.

JEFFERSON

Most folk never do.

TAYLOR

He was in such pain. I couldn't help him. There was nothing I could do. I... I felt...

Jefferson touches Taylor.

JEFFERSON

Taylor --

Taylor shakes his head, looks back to the Mother Duck and ducklings.

TAYLOR

After he died and then Barbara got ill, I thought I could make it better. I thought somehow I could help other dads and moms and wives... get out... get out of pain. I thought...

Taylor pauses long, turns back to Jefferson.

TAYLOR

It is possible to let a loved one die naturally, right?

JEFFERSON

That's a very good question.

TAYLOR

And those who live after can actually learn a great deal in the process, right?

JEFFERSON

Isn't it interesting that if a person is open enough, they can learn something new each day.

Jefferson slouches.

JEFFERSON

I'm a bit tired today, give me a hand, will you?

Jefferson and Taylor interlock arms and stroll.

TAYLOR
It's my honor.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Amber holds the photo of Taylor and his father. She arranges the photos so it's most prominent. She sits down to her breakfast, facing the photos.

Taylor enters. She sees his bruises, her eyes widen.

AMBER
You, uh, you okay?

TAYLOR
Yeah, nothing much, I had a fall.

He walks in the kitchen, grabs a bowl and cereal, along with cherries.

AMBER
Nasty fall.

TAYLOR
Could have been worse.

Taylor sits at the table. He sorts the cherries, picks out two rotten ones.

TAYLOR
Ever reflect that when you buy a lot of delicious cherries, there will always be some rotten ones?

AMBER
Can I have those?

Taylor looks at her questioningly. She smiles at him for the first time.

AMBER
I'd like to reflect on them.

TAYLOR
When you were growing up, I never gave you rotten cherries.

AMBER
I know.

Taylor holds the rotten ones, hands Amber fresh ones.

TAYLOR
But when you grew up...

They look at each other long. Both bite their lips.

TAYLOR
Find your Health Care Proxy yet?

Amber drops her head.

TAYLOR
I've thought a lot about telling
Maria we don't need her anymore.
I've also thought a lot about
disconnecting the feeding tubes.

AMBER
Please, please don't.

TAYLOR
Since the Proxy is in my name, it
is my legal decision, isn't it?

Amber looks up, tears stream down her face.

AMBER
Yes.

Taylor rises, wanders to the piano, picks up the photo of
him and his father.

TAYLOR
There was a little boy who went off
with his father.

He stares long at the photo.

TAYLOR
Then his father disappeared and the
little boy was lost.

He looks at Amber.

TAYLOR
His mother found him crying and
took him home.

Taylor makes a pained expression. He rests the photo back on
the piano.

TAYLOR
That boy --

He pulls out his Proxy, hands it to a surprised Amber.

TAYLOR
Here. -- Amber, there's something I
want to tell you.

Taylor smiles. Amber stares at him in awe.

The door OPENS. A tipsy Spence and family stride in.

SPENCE

Hey, how's everyone doing?

TAYLOR

About the same.

Clara races to Amber.

CLARA

Can I feel Jake, Jr. today?

AMBER

Sure, Clara, come on. He's doing somersaults.

Clara and Amber go to the sofa. Headphones on, Wayne plops into a soft chair, reads a sports magazine.

SPENCE

Saw a great movie last night.

TAYLOR

Next time call me, I would have liked to go, too.

Joelle eyes Taylor over. Spence takes no notice of Taylor's bruises.

SPENCE

Sorry, didn't think to ask.

Spence heads in the kitchen, grabs a beer.

JOELLE

Taylor? You, uh --

TAYLOR

Just a bit of bad luck last night.

Amber passes by, on her way to the hallway bathroom, leaving Clara playing with dolls.

JOELLE

I'm sorry.

TAYLOR

(sarcastic)

Sure.

Joelle's face hardens. She mouths the words, "You bastard!" She turns to Spence as he comes out of the kitchen.

JOELLE
Spence, oh Spence!

She bursts into tears, hugs Spence and whispers to him.
Spence's face flusters. He frowns at Taylor.

SPENCE
Hey, brother, you shouldn't say
that to Joelle.

TAYLOR
I didn't say anything bad.

JOELLE
Don't lie, Taylor. And don't you
call me a slut! Wayne! Come here.

WAYNE
What's up, Mom?

TAYLOR
Wait a minute.

SPENCE
Better apologize, brother.

JOELLE
Taylor's into insulting women
today.

Taylor stands.

TAYLOR
Spence, I didn't say that.

JOELLE
He's lying, honey, like when he
took your bike.

Spence's eyes widen more.

SPENCE
Taylor! I'm going to count to
three! One!

WAYNE
Go ahead, Spence, hit him.

SPENCE
Two!

TAYLOR
I'm not going to fight you, Spence.

WAYNE
Wipe him, Spence.

Clara jumps up, stares in fear.

SPENCE
Three!

Spence lunges at Taylor, who ducks and steps away. Wayne shoves Taylor back toward Spence.

WAYNE
Fuck you, Taylor.

Taylor rams into Spence, who swings wildly over Taylor's head.

TAYLOR
Spence, please stop!

Taylor pushes Spence away. Spence lands against a side table. He halts, gasps for air.

SPENCE
Uh, uh...

Spence grabs his chest, eyes wide.

TAYLOR
Spence!

Taylor hugs Spence. Joelle SCREAMS.

JOELLE
No! No! You can't die on me!

Joelle fumbles in her bag. She pulls out Spence's pills as Spence's head goes limp in Taylor's arm.

JOELLE
No!

WAYNE
Fuck, you killed him.

TAYLOR
Help me.

Taylor tries to revive Spence.

JOELLE
How can you do this! No!

Joelle races to the

HALLWAY

Amber comes out of the bathroom.

AMBER
What's going on?

JOELLE
Out of my way, bitch.

Joelle knees Amber in the gut, grabs Amber's head and shoves her back in the BATHROOM. Amber crashes into the toilet, giving her stomach another strike.

INTERCUTS

-- DINING ROOM

Taylor tries to resuscitate Spence. Wayne pumps Spence's heart. Clara watches in shock. From the bathroom, Amber SCREAMS in pain.

AMBER (O.S.)
Aggggh!

Taylor spins toward the hallway, jumps up and speeds to Amber.

-- HALLWAY BATHROOM

TAYLOR
Amber, Amber!

He kneels beside her, his hand touches her's clutching her stomach.

-- RUTHY'S BEDROOM

Joelle kicks and hits Maria down, grabs a butterfly pillow from a chair and crams it on top of Ruthy. Maria springs up, tries to pull Joelle away.

MARIA
Help! Help me! Help Mrs. Burns!

-- HALLWAY BATHROOM

JOELLE (O.S.)
No, she's going to die, damn her.

TAYLOR
Mom!

Taylor kisses Amber's head.

TAYLOR
I love you.

Taylor races to

-- RUTHY'S BEDROOM

TAYLOR
Stop it!

He grabs the pillow, heaves it across the room, shoves Joelle against the wall.

JOELLE
Wayne! Wayne!

-- DINING ROOM

Wayne stops trying to revive Spence.

WAYNE
Fuck him.

He dashes to the bedroom.

Stunned, Clara sits down next to Spence's body.

-- HALLWAY BATHROOM

Amber's whole body shakes, she stretches to reach the emergency cord.

WAYNE (O.S.)
Bastard, get off my mom!

-- RUTHY'S BEDROOM

Wayne yanks Taylor and pounds into him with all his kick-boxing skills. Maria races out Ruthy's patio door.

-- BATHROOM

Amber's hand grabs the cord, pulls as she passes out.

-- SECURITY ROOM

BUZZERS. Betty and three other Security OFFICERS grab medical gear.

-- OUTSIDE PATIO

MARIA
They're killing Mrs. Burns! Help!
They're killing her!

Jake's across the playground, shutting his Police car door. He speeds, pulling out his gun.

-- DINING ROOM

Clara sits next to Spence's body.

CLARA

Daddy, Daddy, you're not dead,
right? Daddy?

She rests her head on his chest.

-- RUTHY'S BEDROOM

Wayne lays into Taylor, on the floor, trying to cover his head from the blows. Joelle grabs the pillow, presses it over Ruthy's face.

Jake enters, gun leveled.

JAKE

Stop! Stop or I'll shoot. Police!
Stop!

Wayne and Joelle look over at Jake.

WAYNE

Fuck you, Jake.

He raises his hand up to smash Taylor.

-- DINING ROOM

The Security Officers barge in the door, Betty goes to Spence and Clara. The other three dash in the

-- HALLWAY

One spots Amber, the other two head to Ruthy's bedroom.

GUNSHOT.

The Officers stop in their tracks, pull out their guns. One talks in his phone.

OFFICER

More backups, quick, shooting!

-- RUTHY'S BEDROOM

Wayne's on the floor, holding his bloody shoulder.

WAYNE

Mom! He shot me!

Joelle stands frozen.

JAKE

Step away, Joelle, or you're next.

She backs away as Jake moves closer and pulls the pillow off Ruthy. He checks her breathing, nods his head toward staggering Taylor.

OFFICER (O.S.)

Whoever's in there with a gun, stop the shooting, this is security and police are on their way.

JAKE

Welcome, the police are already here.

-- HALLWAY

The two Officers crouch, waiting. They shake their heads to each other.

OFFICER

Mister, throw out your gun.

TAYLOR (O.S.)

He is a cop. It's okay, he stopped people killing Mrs. Burns.

JAKE (O.S.)

Jake Walden, Virginia State Police. Come on in, and help me with this.

The Officers still hesitate.

-- HALLWAY BATHROOM

The Officer's one hand rests on Amber's pulse, as he talks in his phone.

OFFICER WITH AMBER

Can you hear me?

Betty joins them.

-- RUTHY'S BEDROOM

Taylor strokes Ruthy's head. Jake keeps his gun pointed at Joelle and Wayne.

OFFICER WITH AMBER (O.S.)

Pregnant woman unconscious.

JAKE
What'd somebody just say?

OFFICER (O.S.)
Mister, throw out your gun.

JAKE
Damn it, what'd someone say about a pregnant woman?

TAYLOR
Amber's hurt.

Taylor races to the door.

JAKE
Taylor, stop!

Taylor pauses, looks at Jake with surprise.

JAKE
They might shoot you.

Taylor smiles, Jake smiles back.

BETTY (O.S.)
That you, Jake?

JAKE
Damn, Betty, get in here.

The three Officers rush in, as Taylor exits.

JAKE
Joelle and Wayne, they're under arrest, attempted murder and assault.

Jake dashes out.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Amber sleeps, almost sitting up as the hospital bed head area is raised quite high. Her tummy's flat. Jake sits next to her on one side. Taylor walks in.

TAYLOR
The doctor told me... I'm sorry.

Jake nods, extends his hand for a warm shake.

JAKE
Thanks, Taylor.

Amber wakes.

AMBER

Daddy.

TAYLOR

That's a nice sound.

Amber smiles.

TAYLOR

I'm sorry you lost Jake, Jr.

Amber nods. Jake strokes her hair.

TAYLOR

Jefferson's with Mom now. She's peaceful.

Jake picks up an empty water pitcher, gets up to leave.

JAKE

Like anything else, honey?

Amber shakes her head. He leaves.

AMBER

I want to tell you something.

TAYLOR

Maybe the same thing I almost told you yesterday.

AMBER AND TAYLOR

I'm sorry.

They hug. He sits on the bed.

AMBER

I only really understood Nana yesterday.

TAYLOR

She's an inspiration, even now, she helped --

AMBER

-- me get my father back.

Taylor appears self conscious.

TAYLOR

Life has detours. -- Maybe next time it'll be a girl. Sons are good, daughters are priceless.

Taylor's expression changes, he checks his watch, looks out the window, clouds darken. Jake enters with a full pitcher.

AMBER
You're still going to the rally?

TAYLOR
I promised them I'd lead it.

AMBER
But... I don't understand.

TAYLOR
Join the world. Sorry, I have to go.

Taylor leaves. Amber slumps back, eyes watering.

JAKE
The bastard.

AMBER
I... I thought he changed.

JAKE
You'd have more luck kissing a shark.

Amber looks out the window, a light rain falls.

AMBER
It's so hard. How does Nana love so unconditionally? I thought I understood her, but not now.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Taylor exits, stands under an overhead as rain pelts down. He pulls out his phone, presses a speed number.

TAYLOR
Hi Parks.

INT. CONVENTION HALL - CONTINUOUS

Many A.C.E. personnel put finishing touches on the podium. Parks talks on his phone.

PARKS
Taylor, that you? You okay, buddy?

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION - TAYLOR AND PARKS

TAYLOR
Yeah.

PARKS

Where the shit are you? Everyone's
--

TAYLOR

At the hospital, don't worry. I'll
be there in thirty minutes, no
sweat. I'm ready for some action,
today's the big one!

PARKS

Great, Taylor. I'll tell everyone
you're okay, right?

TAYLOR

Yeah, see you soon.

Elated, Parks turns off his phone, YELLS.

PARKS

Hey everybody, I just talked to
Taylor. He's ready, he's on his
way!

Everyone CHEERS. Except Bob, whose expression conveys doubt.

EXT. CONVENTION CENTER - DAY

Heavy rain. Dozens of Euthanasia PROTESTORS, with placards
and umbrellas, gather around the entrance, along with
several media cameramen.

Some protestors huddle in a small open tent, watch a TV,
mounted on a high stool, showing the inside of the
Convention Hall where Parks and others mill around.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Taylor's taxi pulls up at the curb of the Convention Center.
He stares out at the protestors. THUNDER.

TAXI DRIVER

Forty-two fifty.

Taylor doesn't respond.

TAXI DRIVER

Mister, forty-two fifty.

TAYLOR

Sorry, here, keep the change.

Taylor hands the driver a fifty.

EXT. CONVENTION CENTER - CONTINUOUS

He exits the taxi, walks briskly to the entrance.

PROTESTOR (V.O.)
Hey, look!

Many protestors YELL out.

CROWD
Go back to Oregon... Burn in hell,
Burns... Killer, killer...

Taylor races in the door as tomatoes fly at him.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Taylor enters. Everyone's elated. Many A.C.E. staff greet him, take his wet coat, hand him a dry one. They lead him through the lobby to the Convention Hall.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Jake helps Amber out of bed.

JAKE
You sure you want to walk?

AMBER
Yes.

Jake supports Amber as they exit the room.

INT. CONVENTION STAGE - DAY

A smiling Parks stands at the podium.

PARKS
Ladies and Gentlemen, it's my
pleasure to introduce the man
you've all been waiting for.
Without whom A.C.E. NOW would never
be the leading euthanasia
organization in the world, Mr.
Taylor Burns.

A standing OVATION. Taylor strides forward, waving to everyone.

TAYLOR

Thank you, thank you one and all.
It's my joy to be here with all of
you. Don't worry about my face, I
walked into seventeen doors. I
don't advise it, though it does add
some color to my complexion.

Laughter.

TAYLOR

I'd like to thank the press for the
wonderful coverage you're giving us
today. I'm sure you'll have lots to
write about tonight.

The crowd CHEERS.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Amber and Jake walk.

AMBER

Jake, are we just too young and
idealistic?

Jake laughs.

AMBER

I really, really thought I
understood.

JAKE

Well, I don't.

AMBER

Maybe we're all like Nana's friend
who had six kids, and we just
muddle along in life the best we
can.

They reach a TV lounge. Many patients view Taylor's speech.

JAKE

Shit.

They stop, watch.

TAYLOR

As you all know, I've worked hard
for the last three years to help
get the Death With Dignity Act
passed in all states. I've been
tireless in my work.

CHEERS from the convention audience.

AMBER

Maybe I just have to accept him more and not try to change him.

TAYLOR

During the last week, I wasn't able to do much because my daughter had a miscarriage, my brother died and my Mother's in a coma. Even though the doctors feel she'll also die soon, yesterday I fought to keep my mother alive. Because I know she's still aware... she's still there inside her shell of a body.

Deadly SILENCE.

AMBER

Oh, my gosh!

Taylor smiles, takes a relaxed stance.

TAYLOR

Sorry if that was a bit sobering. Let's get back on track, okay? We talk a lot about dying with dignity.

(he hypes the crowd)

It's been our mission! It's been our hope!

(cheers)

We have a dream! We're trying to change the world!

(heavy cheers)

Dying with dignity!

The crowd's WILD. Taylor pauses long.

JAKE

No change, he's just the same.

AMBER

Jake...

Amber puts her head on Jake's shoulder.

TAYLOR

Quality of life is more important than quantity... But what does quality of life actually mean? We talk a lot about dying with dignity. For the last three years, I've worked very hard. I thought I could help make the dying process better.

APPLAUSE. Taylor looks long over the crowd.

AMBER

I will, I'll accept him as he is. I shouldn't hate him just because he has a different view.

TAYLOR

And I know all of you feel similar. You have a wonderful wish to help make ours and our loved ones' exits from this life more dignified.

CHEERS.

TAYLOR

But we've missed something. We've missed talking about helping elderly and ill people learn how to live with dignity. My mother has a favorite saying, "When you watch something beautiful die naturally, you can learn a great deal about how to truly live." During this last week, my mother's been teaching me that the dying process can already be a death with dignity. We only have to learn how to deal with it, not interfere with it.

SILENCE. Taylor pauses.

Amber and Jake watch, stunned. Taylor looks at the TV camera, as if looking directly at them.

TAYLOR

I hereby resign as president of A.C.E. NOW.

Taylor strides off the stage, out a side door. Reporters race to catch him. Bob sits near the side door, shakes his head.

The angry crowd ERUPTS with boos and harsh words.

EXT. CONVENTION CENTER - CONTINUOUS

No rain, sunshine. Tears of joy run down the protestors' faces as they watch the TV showing Taylor leave amid the BOOING crowd.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

There you have it folks, Taylor Burns, previously known as Mr. Killer, has changed his tune...

PROTESTOR

Holy Moses.

Taylor exits the Center. The protestors CHEER.

The scene shrinks into the TV screen in the HOSPITAL.

Tears, Amber and Jake hug.

INT. RUTHY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maria sits next to Ruthy. Taylor walks in.

TAYLOR

I'll sit with her.

Maria looks at him surprised.

TAYLOR

It's alright, Maria. I have a feeling she isn't going to last much longer and I'd like to be here with her.

MARIA

Two days ago, I'd stay to watch you.

She gives him a hug.

MARIA

I'd love a walk.

Maria leaves. Taylor grabs the butterfly pillow from the soft chair. The same pillow Joelle used to try to kill Ruthy. He plumps it a few times, checks Ruthy over, then looks toward the hallway. The front door CLOSES.

He fluffs the pillow, puts it on the chair next to her and sits down. He grabs Ruthy's hand.

TAYLOR
 (singing)
 Here we go up in the swings so
 high/ just you and I/ we touch the
 sky/ like a butterfly/ we swing and
 we sway and we seem to fly/ you and
 I.

INT. RUTHY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Maria sleeps on the living room couch. Amber enters, spots Maria, heads to

RUTHY'S BEDROOM

She stops at the door, hears Taylor singing very slowly.

TAYLOR (O.S.)
 Here we go up in the swings so
 high... just you and I... we touch
 the sky... like a butterfly... we
 swing and we sway and we seem to
 fly... you... and... I

Amber's eyes tear. She walks in.

INT. RUTHY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Taylor lays next to Ruthy, cradling her in his arm.

TAYLOR
 Mom, Amber's here.

Ruthy's head tilts to the door. Her eyes stay shut. Amber gives her a kiss.

AMBER
 Nana, do you want to give me a
 kiss?

Amber puts her cheek to Ruthy's lips, which purse.

AMBER
 Nana, what about Dad, do you want
 to give him a kiss?

Ruthy's head tilts toward Taylor. He looks up at Amber, smiles and puts his cheek to Ruthy's lips, which purse. He strokes her head.

TAYLOR
 Here we go up in the swings so
 high...

AMBER
Just you and I...

TAYLOR
We touch the sky...

AMBER
Like a butterfly...

TAYLOR
We swing and we sway and we seem to
fly...

AMBER
You and...

TAYLOR
I. -- Thank you, Mom.

Ruthy's eyes half open, she looks up at a hanging glass butterfly.

Tears run down Amber's cheeks. Taylor's eyes water. He reaches up to the butterfly, gives it a little spin.

AMBER
Nana, you did it.

Ruthy slightly smiles, takes her last breath, the smile stays on her dead face.

Taylor and Amber take it in. He reaches for her face, closes her eyes.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Double new graves for Ruthy and Spence, next to Ruthy's deceased husband. Amber's framed photo of butterflies rests against Ruthy's gravestone.

Joelle and Wayne are not present. Clara stands in-between Amber and Taylor, holding Amber's hand. Jake's arm hugs Amber. Jefferson and a hundred elder friends surround them.

MINISTER
May Ruthy Burns and Spence Burns
rest in peace. Amen.

EVERYONE
Amen.

Taylor reaches down and grabs some dirt, tosses it into the graves. Amber and Jake do similar. Taylor motions to Clara to join. She hesitates.

CLARA
Did you kill my daddy?

TAYLOR
No, Clara.

CLARA
Did you help him die?

TAYLOR
No.

CLARA
Did you kill Nana?

TAYLOR
No.

CLARA
Did you help her die?

TAYLOR
That's a good question, Clara. I'm not sure, but I hope I did help her die more peaceful and happy.

CLARA
When I die, will you help me?

TAYLOR
If I'm alive, I'll try. But if I die before you, will you help me?

CLARA
I don't know how.

TAYLOR
Maybe you can learn.

Clara smiles and grabs Taylor's hand with one hand, holding tight. She reaches for dirt with her other hand.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Taylor walks with Amber, Jake and Clara. Clara wears Ruthy's butterfly brooch, holds hands with Taylor and Amber. They stop at the St. Louis flight gate. The "BOARDING NOW" sign flashes. Both Amber and Taylor chew their lips.

TAYLOR
My stomach's churning inside and out.

AMBER
She'll forgive you.

TAYLOR
Scared shitless is mild, I'm
constipated like glue.

AMBER
Did I forgive you?

TAYLOR
You know, you have a nervous habit
of chewing your bottom lip.

AMBER
Some of my best friends do it.

They smile at each other.

TAYLOR
Clara, you going to be alright with
Amber and Jake?

CLARA
Can I stay with them forever?

TAYLOR
Maybe, we'll see what the court
decides. -- Here's a treat for all
of you.

He pulls out a box of the special chocolates, a second box
stays in his bag. He hands them to Clara, whose eyes light
up.

CLARA
Can I have one now?

Taylor glances at Amber. She smiles.

AMBER
Go ahead, dear.

Clara opens the box and extends it to Taylor before taking
one herself.

TAYLOR
Thank you, but ladies first.

He indicates Amber.

CLARA
Here, Amber, do you want one?
They're really yummy.

Amber takes one.

AMBER

It's been light years since I had one.

CLARA

Now it's your turn, Uncle Taylor.

Taylor takes one. Clara hands them to Jake and then she grabs one.

TAYLOR

Do you know the family tradition?

CLARA

What's that?

Taylor and Amber extend their chocolates to each other and take a bite.

CLARA

Hey, neat!

They all take turns eating from each other's chocolate.

TAYLOR

Mom's last words to me were,
"Taylor, when you're a parent, it's
for life."

AMBER

For life?

Taylor touches Amber's cheek gently.

TAYLOR

For life.

They hug. He shakes hands with Jake.

TAYLOR

You two take care of each other.

He hugs Clara.

TAYLOR

You take care of Amber and Jake,
okay, big girl?

CLARA

I will.

AMBER

Say hi to Mom for us.

Taylor walks to the boarding check in, where elderly grandparents hug grandchildren goodbye.

He stops, looks back to Amber.

TAYLOR
For life, Amber.

AMBER
For life, Dad.

FADE OUT.