

AT RISE: A table and chairs. A pack of cigarettes is on the table.

COIE

You don't have to lie to me. I know you're a cop.

RILEY

It's not a secret. I told you I was. I'm going to ask you some questions now if that's alright.

COIE

You think I killed him.

RILEY

Why don't you sit down.

COIE

I wasn't even there.

RILEY

No?

COIE

I wasn't there. I don't even know what happened.

RILEY

We have your fingerprints.

COIE

That other policeman took them from me when they brought me here.

RILEY

We have your fingerprints on the knife. You wanna tell me why?

COIE

I live there. I've touched everything. I'll tell you where I was. With a friend. I was out with a friend.

RILEY

You said it wasn't you. Okay. Have a cigarette.

COIE

Get them away from me. I don't smoke.

RILEY

You sure? You smell like smoke.

COIE

You smell like a toilet. (beat) I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that.

Beat.

RILEY  
Do you want to hear a joke?

COIE  
Huh?

RILEY  
A joke. Do you watch cop shows? TV cop shows?

COIE  
No. I don't know.

RILEY  
On TV there's two kinds of cops. The one that comes in, mean and full of testosterone, kicking things and screaming. Right? And then there's the other kind that listens and thinks and isn't a big pig. That one's me. I'm not here to do anything except find out what happened. Do you want to hear a joke?

COIE  
Okay.

RILEY  
It's great. I've got a million jokes. I'm trying to make them my thing. My trademark. "What do you get when you cross the Atlantic with the Titanic?"

COIE  
What?

RILEY  
Halfway.

Beat.

COIE  
You get what? I don't... Oh! That's funny.

RILEY  
Yeah, you have to think about it.

COIE  
You get halfway. I like it.

RILEY  
Thanks. Have a cigarette.

COIE  
Have you read the warnings on the side? Uh-uh. You shouldn't either.

RILEY

Mmm-hmm. Probably a good idea. I'm restraining myself now. Trying to quit. I'm going to ask you more questions.

COIE

And then I can go?

RILEY

Depends on the answers, but probably yes. Was your husband having an affair?

COIE

He was?

Overlapping.

RILEY

I'm asking-

COIE

Oh my God. He was?

RILEY

I don't know. I'm just-

COIE

I didn't know. I thought he-

RILEY

-Asking because the door-

COIE

-Just hated me. He hated me.

End overlapping.

RILEY

The door was open. It showed no signs of being forced. And when a man is killed in his home with a kitchen knife, the assailant is typically a lover or someone who's been there before. Did you and Gregory argue the last time you saw each other?

COIE

I wouldn't ever do anything to hurt anyone.

RILEY

Did you fight?

COIE

Yes.

RILEY

Tell me what happened.

COIE

He came home and started a fight. I was cooking dinner and he walked in the door and he said,-

Time Jump. The previous day. COIE's apartment.

(Note: Time Jumps should flow seamlessly into each other without blackouts or delays.)

RILEY speaks for GREG.

GREG

Why are you here? What's all this?

COIE

Hi, honey. How was the meeting?

GREG

What are you doing?

COIE

I knew that you'd want to relax after the big day so I thought I'd make you tacos. How did the meeting go? Did they like your proposal?

GREG

We got the contract.

COIE

I'm so excited. That's wonderful.

GREG

Yesterday. The meeting was yesterday. We got it yesterday.

COIE

Oh. I thought... Why didn't you tell me? I would have cooked yesterday.

GREG

Coie.

COIE

Why didn't you tell me?

GREG

I did. We just... We talked... Never mind. Just get dressed.

COIE

I am dressed.

GREG

For the wake. You need to change for the wake. What the hell is wrong with you?

COIE

You don't have to yell.

GREG

This can't... I can't... Let's just get going.

COIE

I thought the wake was Thursday.

GREG

Yeah. Today. Today is Thursday. Turn off the stove and get dressed. Your mom was expecting you there at noon to help set up.

COIE

All right. All right. I wish we would write these things on the calendar.

GREG

We talked about it yesterday.

COIE

All right. If you say so. I don't remember that.

GREG

What?

COIE

Nothing.

GREG

What's the problem?

COIE

Nothing. I just wish we could write these things on the calendar.

Beat.

GREG

Honey. I can't keep dealing with this. With the way you're acting now. You make me crazy. Look at what you're doing.

COIE

I wish you'd told me you got the contract.

GREG

I did! That's why we went out to dinner last night.

COIE

I thought... Oh.

GREG

Warren's wake is in... Is now. It's starting now. And you're making... You're making taco's.

COIE

I'm so stupid.

GREG

I can't deal with your... With this. I can't deal with this. Get dressed.

COIE

I'm stupid. I'm so, so stupid.

GREG

(softer)

Listen. Honey, stop. One of the guys at work recommended this councilor. Didn't work for him, but we need to try something.

COIE

I know.

GREG

Ever since your dad got sick. These last two months you've been... It's been hard on everyone.

COIE

Honey. I know. I want to work.

GREG

I love you. Get changed. I'll call and leave a voice mail for your mom. We'll still make the viewing.

COIE

I'm not going.

GREG

Of course you are. It's your dad. If you're not there your mother-

COIE

(suddenly animated)

I'm not going! I'm not. Don't make me.

GREG

Don't freak out now. We have to go.

COIE

Get away from me. Don't touch.

GREG

Calm down. Coie.

COIE

I'm going. I'm getting away.

GREG

Coie. Please. Where are you going?

Time Jump. Present. Holding room.

RILEY is RILEY.

COIE

I left. I ran out before he could grab me and I got away. I got away.

RILEY

This happened often?

COIE

It's my fault. I'm always making mistakes and he's so patient. I just make him crazy. I don't know what I should have done. What should I have done?

RILEY

So, when you got home-

COIE

What should I have done?

RILEY

Are you asking me? I don't know. Well, there are people you can call. It sounds like you were trying to do that. But I want to get back...

COIE

Do you get into fights?

RILEY

Me? I'm not seeing anyone right now, but, you know, everyone argues. Getting back to this. When you got home, you found him.

COIE

Maybe he's not really dead. The hospital might be able to help him.

RILEY

I'm afraid...

COIE

Oh God. Do I have to see him? To identify him. Do I have to?

RILEY

No. No, we have a positive I.D. Sit down.

COIE

You're not sitting down.

RILEY

Alright. Here. There was no sign of a break in. The assailant just walked in. Like they were invited. Or they had a key. Did anyone else have a key?

COIE

My mom did but she said she lost it a couple months ago. Oh God. You think my mom did it?

RILEY

I would be surprised if she did. But if your mother had a copy of your key, then didn't your father have access to it as well?

COIE

No. Why would... No, because I wouldn't want him to come over.

RILEY

Why didn't you go to your father's wake?

COIE

I... I... I would have.

RILEY

Why didn't you?

COIE

I wanted to. I'm not bad like that. I didn't know it was yesterday. I forgot. I wasn't ready because we got in a fight and I had to leave. I had to leave because-

RILEY

Okay.

COIE

-Because I had to. It's not like I didn't want to go. I loved him. He was my dad. Of course I loved him. Why do you think I hated him? You think I wanted him to die? That I'm happy he's dead? He's my dad.

(shift)

Why didn't I love him? OhGodohGodohGod.

RILEY

Did he come to your apartment?

COIE

No. No he didn't.

RILEY

When was the last time you saw him?

COIE

I don't know. I don't know. (shift) No. Greg and I went to my parents for dinner. Two months ago. He told us he was sick.

RILEY

Two months ago?

COIE

I think so. Maybe.

RILEY

Did anything happen?

COIE

When Mom and Greg were clearing the table. Warming up dessert in the oven. He said...

Time Jump. Two months previous.  
WARREN's house.

RILEY speaks for WARREN.

WARREN

I'm dieing.

WARREN puts a cigarette in his mouth.

COIE

You are not.

WARREN

The diabetes is eating me.

COIE

If you would listen to the doctor you'd be fine. No smoking.

WARREN

It's too late for cancer.

COIE

Take your insulin. Watch your diet, no dessert for you.  
You'll be fine for years.

WARREN

Sit down, baby.

COIE

You sit, Daddy. I'm going to clear a few things.

WARREN

Your mother will get that. Sit with me.

COIE sits.

WARREN (CONT'D)

All this in and out of doctor's offices, the shots, the numbness in my feet. It makes a guy think about life. I think a lot about you.

COIE

Daddy.

WARREN

We all make mistakes when we're young. Baby, I wanted to say that I know it couldn't have been easy.

COIE

(confused)

What couldn't?

WARREN

Living with me. Forgiving me the way you did.

COIE

Forgiving you for what?

A memory is trying to come back to  
COIE.

WARREN

Thank you for that. I just wanted you to know how much I appreciate that you never told your mother what I did.

COIE

I have no idea what you're talking about!

WARREN

Okay.

WARREN puts a cigarette in his mouth.

COIE

Shut up. Oh god, my head is just...

(sniffing)

What is mom cooking? The smell. Blueberries?

WARREN

Blueberry cobbler from the back yard. You used to hide back there for hours. Eat them by the handful.

COIE

I hate blueberries. You shouldn't be smoking.

WARREN

Too late to quit now.

WARREN touches COIE. COIE explodes. She grabs his hand and squeezes hard. WARREN is in pain.

COIE

Touch me again and I will kill you.

Time Jump. The present.

RILEY moves to comfort COIE.

COIE

Don't touch me! No. I'm fine. I'll be fine. I'll be fine.

Beat.

RILEY

Your father-

COIE

-Is dead. Just let him be dead.

RILEY

Okay.

COIE

I didn't kill Greg. I love him.

RILEY

Okay. But you have an idea who did.

COIE

No.

RILEY

I'm going to get you some help. Someone to talk to. But I need you to help me out here. Who can I call that will tell me where you were? Did you go to a restaurant? Or a store where someone might remember you? Who can I call?

COIE

I don't know. I don't... (far away) The boy.

RILEY

What boy?

COIE

There's a little boy who plays out in the hallway. I think...  
I think he was out there last night.

RILEY

Good. He's a neighbor?

COIE

I hear him out there playing sometimes.

RILEY

You don't know which apartment he lives in?

COIE

I don't know if he even lives on my floor or if he just plays  
there.

RILEY

But he was there last night?

COIE

I think.

RILEY

I want to talk to him.

COIE

I want to get out of here.

RILEY

Coie-

COIE

Don't touch me!

Beat.

RILEY

We have your fingerprints. You've given me no one who can  
corroborate your story. No witnesses.

COIE

The boy. Talk to the boy.

RILEY

Oh, I'll look for him, but what is he going to say?

COIE

That I wasn't there, because I wasn't. When he tells you that  
I wasn't there, that it was someone else, then can I go?

RILEY

If I can find him. And if he backs up your story. It would be easier if you could tell me where to look.

COIE

(low)

I've found him.

COIE becomes WILL.

RILEY

Let's start with the name.

WILL

Will.

RILEY

Will. All right. Where can I find Will?

WILL

I'm right here.

RILEY

Okay, but where's Will?

WILL

I'm not a baby. I'm right here

Beat.

RILEY

What?

WILL

I'm right here. Am I in trouble, because I didn't do anything.

RILEY

(lost)

No. You... Ah. You're Will?

WILL

Uh-huh?

RILEY

You're the kid who lives in Coie's apartment building?

WILL

I'm not a kid. I'm almost eight. What are you going to do to me?

RILEY

Nothing. I... I'm confused. Do you know why you're here?

WILL

Coie was in trouble. She was scared and I wanted to help her.

RILEY

(to self)

She was scared. Bad history with the father. And she conjures up the boy.

WILL

I don't want to be here.

RILEY

Sure. I, uh... Will. William. You don't want to be here. Okay. Hey. Would you like to hear a joke? Because I'm the kind of cop who tells jokes.

WILL

Uh-huh.

RILEY

Okay. Cool. It's funny. "What do you get when you cross the Atlantic with the Titanic?"

WILL

What?

RILEY

Halfway.

WILL

That's funny.

RILEY

You like it?

WILL

Yeah. What's an Atlantic?

RILEY

It's one of the oceans. Atlantic. Pacific. You know what the Titanic is?

WILL

Yeah. A movie. I saw the poster.

RILEY

Well, yeah. Look ah, Will. I think I should get my boss. I didn't expect you to be here. And I'm not really prepared to go into this.

WILL

Is this about Mr. Harris?

RILEY

It is. Were you... Do you know what happened?

WILL

I don't like him. He's not nice.

RILEY

Oh. Did you see him last night? Were you playing in the hall?

WILL

I don't bother anybody. I know I'm supposed to be quiet.

RILEY

Last night.

WILL

He... I was playing and he came home.

Time Jump. Last night. Apartment  
building hallway.

RILEY speaks for GREG. WILL is using  
the cigarette pack as a toy car on the  
floor.

GREG

They asked where you were.

WILL

Who did?

GREG

Never mind. Why are you out here?

WILL

I was just playing.

GREG

Yeah. You're making too much noise. People are trying to  
sleep.

WILL

Sorry. I'll be quiet.

GREG

Come inside.

WILL

Why?

GREG

It's almost the middle of the night.

WILL  
I'll be quiet.

GREG  
I'm really getting sick of this. What the hell is the matter with you? You're acting like a child.

WILL  
I am not.

GREG  
Your mother kept asking me where you were. Your family expected you there and you let them down.

WILL turns away.

WILL  
I'm sorry.

GREG  
Where are you going?

WILL  
You want me to leave.

GREG  
No. I really don't. I truly want everything to be okay. I'm just tired. I'm tired of everything being so hard. I know that I work too much and that we never see each other. I'm sorry.

WILL  
It's okay.

GREG  
I want us to be together.

WILL  
Okay.

GREG  
Come inside.

WILL  
Why?

GREG  
I want you to come to bed. Come here.

GREG hugs WILL. WILL breaks the hug violently.

WILL

No. I don't want to. Don't touch me.

GREG

Shh. Keep your voice down.

WILL

I don't want to go in there. I won't.

GREG

Quiet down. What do you want?

WILL

Let go.

GREG

We can't stay in the hall. So, come in here and sit with me.  
We'll just talk.

WILL

No. Help! Somebody help me!

Time Jump. Present time. Holding room.

RILEY is RILEY.

WILL

I ran away. Down all the stairs to the basement. There's this hole in the wall of the bathroom that I stay in sometimes. No one can find me.

RILEY

Are... Do you hide down there a lot?

WILL

Mr. Harris always tries to make me go into his apartment.

RILEY

When he does, you go for help and run away?

WILL

I always get away. Because I'm small. I can hide. Coie doesn't run. She stays there.

RILEY

Why does she stay?

WILL

I heard her say she loves him. But I don't even like him a little.

RILEY

Sometimes relationships can be complicated.

WILL

Mom says I'm little for my age but when I get bigger I won't run anymore.

RILEY

I know.

WILL

I've been small a long time.

RILEY

William. Mr. Harris was hurt last night. Bad. Did you see anything? Anyone?

WILL

I didn't do it.

RILEY

I didn't think that you did.

WILL

He's bigger than me. I couldn't do anything.

RILEY

I know.

WILL

I can't ever help.

RILEY

Do you think Coie hurt Mr. Harris?

WILL

She was afraid. She's always too afraid to do anything. She needs someone to protect her. I wanted to, but I'm too small.

RILEY

Did she have someone else?

WILL

(agitated)

Can I go now?

RILEY

Was there someone else?

WILL

I need to go.

RILEY

Who protects Coie?

WILL becomes TARA.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Sit down. William?

TARA

Do I look like my name is William?

RILEY

No. You don't. What's your name?

TARA shrugs. She takes a cigarette and lets it hang from her lips.

RILEY (CONT'D)

Okay. You're someone new. I'm Officer Riley. Did you just get here? (Beat.) You must know Coie. How do you... Do you live in the same building? (Beat.) Alright, do you want to hear a joke? Jokes are my thing. I've got a million of them. "What do you get when you cross the Atlantic with the Titanic?"

TARA

Your mother.

RILEY

Okay. Gregory Harris was murdered last night. Your fingerprints were found on the murder weapon.

TARA

You tryin to play me?

RILEY

I'm serious. You know where it happened.

TARA

Everybody knows. It was on the news.

RILEY

But you were there, weren't you? You were in the room.

TARA

(sarcastically)

Sure I was.

RILEY

You smoke this brand?

TARA

Menthols. Or whatever's around.

RILEY

This brand was found at the crime scene. So why don't you sit down. I have some questions for you.

TARA  
You ain't been a cop too long.

RILEY  
Long enough.

TARA  
Not long enough to know you gotta read me my rights.

RILEY  
I read you-

TARA  
You didn't read me nothin'. I know you can't keep me here.

RILEY  
I can until you answer some questions.

TARA  
You want an answer? The condom broke, you were born. I want a lawyer.

RILEY  
You can't have a lawyer if you don't tell me your name.

Beat.

TARA  
Tara.

RILEY  
Tara what?

TARA  
You're not gonna find me in your computer. Now you get me a lawyer. A woman.

RILEY  
Well, Tara, guess what, you don't get a lawyer because you already waved your right to one.

TARA  
Lying cop. I know how this works. Why the hell would I wave... Coie did.

RILEY  
Yep.

TARA  
Stupid bitch. (to RILEY) You can't keep me here.

RILEY

Maybe not here. Not in this room. But in one padded and white? I have a good chance at that one. Want to see?

TARA

I'll watch you try. And then I'll disappear. I'll leave her behind and you'll never see me again. You'll be left with her. And she doesn't know a damn thing.

RILEY

But you do. You were in the room. Tell me.

TARA

What oh what could possibly of happened? How bout this: guy's asleep on the couch when I get in. It's dark and I bump into the table.

Time Jump. Last night. COIE's apartment.

RILEY speaks for GREG.

TARA bumps into the table. GREG wakes up groggy.

GREG

What? What time... Oh, geeze.

TARA

Be quiet.

GREG

This isn't where I thought we would be. I thought, I don't know what I thought. I don't know what to do.

TARA

I don't care.

GREG

Well I care. I called the councilor and he agreed to see us. I know this is a rough patch. I know how torn up you've been with your dad being sick.

TARA

I thought he'd never die.

GREG

You don't mean that.

TARA

Yeah? Tell me what else you think I mean.

GREG

Honey, let's not... Can we talk about this in the morning and just go to bed now?

TARA

I ain't goin to bed with you. You're not touching me.

GREG

What the hell is the matter with you? I never know what's going on in your head anymore. What you're going to say. What mood you're going to be in.

TARA

Shut up! You keep talking. Shut up. This whole thing here, us, it's over. Pack and get out.

GREG

You don't mean that.

TARA

I'm done with you. You don't go I'll kill you.

GREG

I don't believe you.

TARA

There's things I don't do. Lying's one of them and you already know the rest.

Beat.

GREG

Alright! You know what? I am leaving because you're insane.

TARA

Get out.

GREG

Everything I do, all the work is for us. So we can get the hell out of this shitty apartment. Out of this city.

TARA

I don't see you leaving.

GREG

I'm not leaving us! We're going to get a house. We're going to have kids and three cats. I love you.

GREG grabs TARA. She lashes out.

TARA

Don't touch me!

TARA begins searching for something.

GREG

I'm bleeding. Look what you did.

TARA finds a knife and stabs GREG. GREG  
cries out and stumbles.

Time Jump. Present. Holding room.

RILEY is RILEY.

RILEY

You admit that you killed him.

TARA

Coie drops dishes. She's scared of the vacuum cleaner. She  
needs someone to protect her.

RILEY

And you were helping her because she can't take care of  
herself.

TARA

Because she's nothing. Way past helpless.

RILEY

What did Greg do to her? Did Greg hurt Coie?

TARA

He could have.

RILEY

He never did?

TARA

He could have!

RILEY

I want to talk to her again.

TARA

Tough.

RILEY

I'm here to help.

TARA

You can't help anyone.

RILEY

Yes I can. Let me talk to her.

TARA

I'm not letting you near her.

RILEY

A minute ago you were telling me that you were going to disappear and leave her all alone. Now you're saying I can't talk to her.

TARA

Why? So you can beat on her, too?

RILEY

I'm not going to hurt her.

TARA

Of course you are. You're a man. A woman can't take care of herself. A woman needs a man to fix things.

RILEY

I'm not her father.

TARA

Close enough.

RILEY

Nowhere near close. Let me talk to her.

TARA

(exploding)

Don't tell me what to do! (beat.) I help her. I'm the only one who can help her. Nobody else ever did.

RILEY

Why don't you sit down.

TARA

Why don't you get your throat cut.

TARA throws the cigarettes at RILEY.

TARA (CONT'D)

You think you can kick my ass, don't you?

RILEY

Please sit down.

TARA

Make me.

RILEY

I don't wanna make you. I want to help.

TARA

Ha! Yeah right.

RILEY

You know, you're going to get her locked up for murder. Maybe I can't talk to Coie, but you're going to prison. How is that helping?

TARA

You think you can just walk in and take over? Just show up and call the shots?

RILEY

Isn't that what you did?

TARA

She needed me to. And now I'm good at it.

RILEY

I'm good at it, too.

TARA

I got practice.

RILEY

I went through the God damned academy.

TARA

I make her problems go away.

RILEY

Oh, they didn't go away. They're crushing your chest. (shift) Listen. I need you to leave. Coie needs you to leave.

TARA

You're gonna help her now?

RILEY

I am.

TARA

And I'm supposed to do what? Huh? Just fade away?

RILEY

Yes.

TARA

Just disappear?

RILEY

Yes.

TARA

And do what? What do I do then?

RILEY

I don't know what you'll do. I know that Coie will learn to take care of herself. That's what we want, right? We want her to be strong? (beat.) Let me talk to her.

TARA

If you hurt her, I'll come back.

RILEY

No one will hurt her. I'll make sure of it.

TARA

You better.

TARA exits. RILEY is alone.

RILEY

Tara? (beat.) She's gone, Coie.

(as COIE)

I didn't ask her to do that. She just did. I couldn't stop her. I loved Greg.

(as RILEY)

I know. It's going to be all right, Coie. You're going to be fine. She's gone now.

(as COIE)

I loved him so much. Oh God.

(as RILEY)

Shh. It's okay. I'm here. I'm going to protect you. No one will ever hurt you again.

END PLAY