

Hiraeth

LOGLINE:

A former gangster, serving a
25 to life prison sentence,
makes a break for it to
reconcile with his estranged
daughter.

INT. PRISON HALLWAY - DAY

The hallway of a state penitentiary: cold, dark, moist. The cement walls are bare and empty; PRISONERS in orange jumpsuits wander to and fro, exiting their cells, headed toward common areas.

INT. PRISON SHOWER - DAY

A man with dark hair and broad shoulders stands alone in an a large, open, communal shower; his eyes are closed as he feels the hot water wash over his skin.

This is LOUIS (45). He has a large snake tattoo on his back, and several other tattoos on his arms. His face is weathered, hardened by many years behind bars.

We hear the bathroom door creak as it opens; it closes again with a soft CLICK.

Louis looks up, but nobody is there. He shrugs to himself, returning to his shower.

Suddenly, a fist slams into the back of his skull, knocking him to the ground.

Louis' head is pressed to the gurgling drain, the water hitting his now bleeding face.

A large, muscular man, RICK (30s) stands above him. He kicks Louis square in the stomach, hard, and Louis yells out in pain.

Louis climbs to his feet, dizzy, trying to stabilize himself on the wall. He slips, collapsing to the tiled floor.

RICK
Fuckin' Vipers.

Rick spits on him.

RICK (CON'T)
See that, Alfonso?

Another man, ALFONSO (30s) approaches from the shadows, looking at the snake tattoo on Louis' back.

RICK (CON'T)
Told ya. He's one of *them*. Gonna
have to do somethin' 'bout that.

Alfonso grabs Louis, holding him to the ground, full force.

Louis struggles, trying to get away.

Rick takes a SHIV out of his pocket. It is poorly constructed, made from an old toothbrush and a rusting razor blade. He slowly brings it to Louis' back.

RICK (CON'T)
This ain't snake turf no more.

Louis yells out in pain as Rick begins to cut away at the tattoo, carving it off of his body.

AMELIA (V.O.)
Dear Daddy...

An off-screen voice begins reading a letter. This is Amelia, Louis' eight year old daughter. Her voice is sweet, naive, and young.

The water runs red as Louis screams, desperately trying to get away.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CON'T)
I dreamed about you last night.

His screams echo through the empty concrete halls of the prison.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A male DOCTOR (50s) administers a bandage to Louis' back. He wears a white jacket, and a stethoscope around his neck.

The doctor pulls out a roll of medical tape, sticking the bandage to Louis' back.

Nearby, a prison guard, JACKSON (40s) stands by, questioning Louis.

JACKSON
And you won't tell me who did this to you?

Louis looks at him, saying nothing. He's not a snitch.

Jackson sighs, shaking his head.

JACKSON (CON'T)
Alright, then.

DOCTOR
Keep it covered, otherwise it'll get infected.

Louis nods.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

Sunlight pours through the barred window of a bare prison cell. Louis sits facing the wall, his lip is split and swollen, a bruise around his eye has turned a deep purple.

A small box filled with letters and miscellaneous papers sits on his lap. He flips through the papers, pulling out a yellowing newspaper clipping.

The headline reads "GANGSTER SENTENCED 25 TO LIFE FOR SECOND DEGREE MURDER". His own mug shot stares up him from the faded page.

He shoves it back into the box, and pulls another paper out: a folded hand-drafted letter, written by a child in purple crayon.

He holds the letter in his hands, staring at it intently.

AMELIA (V.O.)

In my dream, you still lived here at home with me.

Louis sighs, his hands shaking slightly.

INT. PRISON HALLWAY - DAY

Louis leans against the wall, cradling a phone receiver between his shoulder and ear.

LOUIS

Can I just - - can I *please* talk to her?

An adult FEMALE VOICE can be heard on the other line.

FEMALE VOICE

I don't think that would be appropriate.

LOUIS

She's my family, too--

FEMALE VOICE

How was your parole hearing?

Louis says nothing.

FEMALE VOICE (CON'T)

That's what I thought.

He sighs, frustrated, resting his forehead on the wall.

LOUIS

Please--

FEMALE VOICE

Look, I've gotta go, I have to get
her ready for school.

We hear a CLICK. The other line is dead. Louis sighs,
hanging up.

INT. PRISON KITCHEN - DAY

Louis and several other prisoners work in the kitchen,
prepping food. Louis wears a hairnet, inmate's uniform, and
kitchen apron. He holds a large kitchen knife, chopping
carrots with ease.

A male guard, TERRANCE (30s) stands nearby, keeping watch on
the inmates as they work.

INT. PRISON CAFETERIA - DAY

The inmates line up in the prison cafeteria, each holding a
plastic tray.

Louis stands behind the cafeteria counter, ladling spoonfuls
of mashed potatoes onto each man's tray as they pass.

AMELIA (V.O.)

In my dream, you never had to go
away.

Another inmate, MARTY (30s) stands beside Louis, scooping
peas onto the trays.

Louis spoons potatoes onto another INMATE's tray. The
potatoes hit the plastic with a wet THUD.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Bubbles fill the sink as Louis scrubs pots, pans, and
kitchen knives. The guard, Jackson, keeps a close eye.

A loud YELL erupts from off screen; through the window in
the kitchen doors we can see a fist fight has broken out
between two of the prisoners, Rick and TOMMY (30s).

Jackson grabs his radio and speaks into it.

JACKSON

Code three in the cafeteria, south
wing, 10-5.

VOICE (O.S.)

Copy.

Jackson rushes through the door, leaving Louis alone in the kitchen.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Tommy takes a swing at Rick; a crowd of other prisoners surround them, cheering and chanting.

Jackson tries his best to keep them apart.

Rick is seething, his face red, saliva flying like a mad dog let loose. He pulls the shiv out of his pocket, wielding it at Tommy.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Louis looks through the kitchen window, watching the fight unfold. Water continues to pour into the sink. He does not notice.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

There is a quick glint as the florescent lights flash across the shiv's makeshift blade.

Jackson's eyes widen as his hands instinctively fly to his neck, red spilling through his fingers.

Everything seems to happen in slow motion as Louis watches the situation unfold through the window; Jackson's body hits the floor like a nuclear bomb has gone off. The sound of the fight and yelling becomes a blur of loud ringing until Louis snaps back to reality.

It's chaos, all hell has broken loose. Every inmate has immediately become hostile. The pool of blood on the floor grows as it spills from its source: Jackson's neck.

Jackson struggles to breathe, his skin is pale, his eyes wide, glazing over.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Louis' fists clench involuntarily. He looks down at his hands in the sink, realizing he is holding a knife.

He gets an idea. It's now or never.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Louis walks down the hallway. Two armed PRISON GUARDS race

past him, heading toward the cafeteria.

Another guard's voice can be heard over their radios.

GUARD (O.S.)
We have a medical emergency in the
cafeteria, requesting an ambulance
immediately...

An ALARM begins to blare, and a loud voice comes over the speakers.

VOICE (O.S.)
All inmates return to your cell
blocks.

Louis rounds the corner.

INT. MEDICAL WARD HALL - DAY

The alarm continues to blare. A female PRISON NURSE (30s) races past Louis, exiting the medical ward.

The door swings behind her, but he catches it before it shuts, cautiously creeping inside.

INT. MEDICAL WARD - DAY

The Doctor hurriedly gathers medical supplies as he speaks on the phone.

DOCTOR
Yes, we need an ambulance to the
North Central Correctional
Institution...

He turns, seeing Louis. Startled, he drops the phone.

DOCTOR (CON'T)
What are you doing in here?

Slowly, Louis takes the kitchen knife from the waistband of his pants and holds it up.

LOUIS
Take off your clothes.

The doctor looks at him, wide-eyed.

DOCTOR
Excuse me?

LOUIS
Your clothes.

A female DISPATCHER can be heard on the other line of the phone.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)
Hello? ...Sir?

LOUIS
Tell them to send the ambulance.

Shakily, the Doctor reaches for the receiver.

DOCTOR
Uh, yes. Everything is...uh, please
send the ambulance.

He hangs up the phone.

Louis looks at him, narrowing his eyes, not backing down.

The alarm continues to blare throughout the prison.

The doctor reaches for the buttons on his shirt, shakily undoing them.

INT. PRISON HALLWAY - DAY

Louis, now wearing the doctor's clothing and white jacket, exits the medical ward.

The door closes behind him; we catch a glimpse of the Doctor sitting on the floor of the ward, wearing only his boxers, his wrists bound to a cabinet with medical tape.

Louis places a medical mask over his face, hooking the elastics over each of his ears. Confidently, he walks toward the cafeteria.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Blood is spilled all over the floor; two PARAMEDICS are lifting Jackson onto a stretcher. He writhes in pain.

Rick and Tommy are both face down on the ground, handcuffed. The guards yell at the inmates, trying to control them. The alarm continues to blare.

Louis approaches one of the paramedics, ANDY (30s). Andy looks at him.

ANDY
Are you the staff physician?

Louis nods.

ANDY (CON'T)
This isn't looking good.

The other paramedic, JUDITH (40s) straps Jackson in, and they begin to push the stretcher out of the cafeteria. Louis follows.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Another prison guard, MCCARTHY (40s) leads the way, using his keys to open the doors and escort the paramedics through. Louis follows along, pretending to check Jackson's heartbeat with a stethoscope.

They head through a series of locked doors, before exiting to the front of the building where an ambulance awaits.

It's raining. The wheels of the stretcher splash in the small puddles on the ground.

They reach the ambulance, and Andy opens the doors, wheeling the stretcher onto the vehicle.

LOUIS
The warden asked me to tag along so
I can report back with his status.

Andy nods and Louis climbs into the back of the ambulance with him.

Andy pulls the doors closed behind them and the ambulance takes off, sirens wailing.

INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

Judith administers an IV into Jackson's arm, hanging the saline bag from the ceiling.

An unintelligible voice can be heard over the radio. Andy grabs the receiver, speaking into it.

ANDY
St. Anthony's General, DMS 87-13.

JUDITH
BP 90 over 60.

ANDY
Inbound male, critical condition
with severe lacerations in the neck,
breathing is restricted. ETA, seven
minutes.

Louis looks through the back windows of the ambulance,

watching the prison shrink in the distance as they speed away. The flashing red lights illuminate his face. He turns, looking down at Jackson.

Jackson's eyes are vacant, barely open. His face and chest is covered in blood, the gauze over the wound on his neck nearly soaked through.

JUDITH
Blood pressure 80 over 60.

He looks up at Louis. There is a brief moment of recognition, interrupted by the sound of the heart monitor blaring.

Jackson's eyes roll back into his head, his eyelids closing.

JUDITH (CON'T)
He's spiking.

The heart monitor suddenly flat lines.

Judith looks to Louis.

JUDITH (CON'T)
Pass me the defibrillator. Behind you!

He looks at her wide-eyed, frozen. She sighs, frustrated.

JUDITH (CON'T)
For fuck sake.

She shoves him out of the way, picking up the defibrillator. She places the pads on Jackson's chest.

Andy takes the paddles.

ANDY
Clear!

Jackson's body spasms, the machine wails, indicating he is flat lining.

Louis watches the scene unfold, unsure of his next move.

AMELIA (V.O.)
Dear Daddy. I had a dream last night that I could fly. And you could fly, too.

ANDY
Starting compressions! One, two, three, four, five...

The ambulance rounds the corner, swiftly entering the Emergency Bay at the hospital.

The back doors swing open, and the paramedics rush to get the stretcher out of the ambulance.

Louis climbs out of the vehicle, watching as they rush Jackson inside. Several ER NURSES join them, providing assistance.

AMELIA (V.O.)
We both flew, high into the sky,
above the clouds.

After a moment, Louis turns and runs. He pulls the medical mask off of his face and shrugs off the white doctor's coat, tossing it into a nearby trash can.

The blood from his shoulder wound has completely soaked through his shirt.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Louis runs as fast as he can, his feet hitting the pavement, his wet hair sticking to his forehead.

AMELIA (V.O.)
When we looked down at the earth,
all the people were so small, as
small as ants.

He breathes heavily as he ducks down a back alley, cutting across to the next street over.

A city bus is stopped and several passengers are climbing aboard, shaking out their umbrellas. Louis heads to the back door, sneaking aboard alongside the exiting passengers.

INT. CITY BUS - DAY

Louis walks to the back of the bus, panting. There are several other PASSENGERS, but nobody takes much notice of him.

He sits down, flinching as his shoulder touches the seat. He looks over his shoulder, noticing that his shirt is blood stained.

He sees a crumpled newspaper on the floor. Louis picks it up, doing his best to cover his face.

AMELIA (V.O.)
I didn't feel scared, even though we
were so high up. 'Cause you were

holding my hand, and you said
"everything is going to be okay."

The bus begins to move and Louis looks out the window. A police cruiser drives past and he cautiously ducks behind the newspaper.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Louis stands on the front porch of a nice home in a well kept neighborhood. The rain continues to pour; he is entirely drenched.

He knocks on the door, and after a moment, it opens. The person on the other side of the door is a YOUNG GIRL, of maybe seven or eight.

His eyes light up as he sees her. She looks up at him, quizzically.

LOUIS

Hi.

He smiles, on the verge of tears.

LOUIS (CON'T)

I've been waiting a long time for
this moment.

A female voice can be heard from inside the house.

FEMALE VOICE

Honey? Who is it?

A WOMAN (28) with dark hair comes to the door, standing behind the little girl.

She locks eyes with Louis, staring at him for a long moment.

WOMAN

Dad.

He smiles at her, his eyes filling with tears.

Amelia puts her hand on the little girl's shoulder, protectively. The sound of police sirens can be heard in the distance, slowly getting louder.

AMELIA (CON'T)

What are you...how...?

LOUIS

You stopped visiting...I needed to
see you. I needed to meet my

granddaughter.

Amelia looks down at her daughter.

AMELIA (CON'T)
Go back inside, sweetie.

LOUIS
Wait - - can I just--

AMELIA
Inside. Go.

The little girl rushes inside, throwing one last look at Louis over her shoulder.

The police sirens are louder, nearing the house.

Louis deflates, on the verge of tears.

LOUIS
I'm sorry that I wasn't there for
you. I kept your letters...all of
them.

A police cruiser skids to a stop outside the house, the siren blaring. An OFFICER (40s) climbs out of the vehicle, gun drawn.

POLICEMAN
Put your hands up!

Louis does so. He stares at his daughter.

LOUIS
It was never supposed to be like
this. I didn't - -

Several OFFICERS now have him surrounded. One approaches him from behind, cuffing him, pushing him to the ground.

The crimson stain on the back of Louis' shirt has grown considerably, he's lost a lot of blood.

LOUIS (CON'T)
Everything's gonna be okay. Okay?

He looks up at Amelia, his face pressed into the wet grass.

LOUIS (CON'T)
You're gonna be okay.

FADE TO BLACK.