

WALTER. I'll never understand it — you wanted to see how far she'd push it —

JOE. Right.

WALTER. — How far she'd go to pull it off?

JOE. And now we know. *(Walter moves away, lost, as — Kenni joins them.)*

KENNI. I'm sorry, Mr. Foster.

JOE. Keep an eye on your old man, okay? — He's taking this hard. *(Chris joins them.)*

CHRIS. You need anything, Dad?

JOE. We should head to the restaurant. They're holding a room for us. Will you tell the others?

CHRIS. Sure.

JOE. *(More intimate.)* She's okay, Chris. She's in a better place. You gotta believe that. *(Chris nods — and then circulates amid the others, as — everyone finishes their coffees, grabs their jackets, purses, etc. ... and leaves. The last person remaining in the room is Joe. Joe places the eight-by-ten photo of himself and Becky in a prominent place ... sets a few candles in front of it ... and then, as he starts to leave: Becky appears, opposite, behind him. She wears a long coat.)*

BECKY. *(Quietly.)* It's nice. *(Joe turns, sees her.)* You imagine it, I guess. What your family, your friends — what they'll do when you're gone. *(Silence.)* Joe...? Please say something ... *(In silence, he walks to her, stands before her. We await the embrace, but instead he simply says:)*

JOE. You hungry? *(He moves away — taking off his suit coat, loosening his tie.)*

BECKY. Joe...?

JOE. I think we've got some cold cuts.

BECKY. I missed you, Joe.

JOE. Mm-hmm.

BECKY. And I'm sorry — I'm so sorry — but I just had to —

JOE. So, how was being dead? Around here, it didn't go over so great.

BECKY. Yes — I know — but please let me tell you this: *(He pops open a beer. Finally gestures: Go ahead.)* I drove ... and I lost track of time. Avoided the news — didn't read a paper — just found a road and followed it. It was so strange. I knew what people thought happened. Knew no one was looking for me. That I could turn that car in any direction I wanted. I could go anywhere.

JOE. They found the body.

BECKY. What?

JOE. Beverly Tipton. Her body washed up. A few days ago. The state patrol called me. Told me you were no longer presumed dead. Only missing. *(She stares at him ... stares at the room, the candles ...)*

BECKY. But if you *knew* — *why would you do all this if* —

JOE. I didn't tell them. Any of them.

BECKY. You let them think I was dead?

JOE. No. I think you did that. *(Beat.)* Look, Beck — there are things you want me to say, and God knows someday I'll probably say 'em, but not yet. Right now I've just got to live with it a little. And so do you.

BECKY. But I just wanted to —

JOE. *(Sharp.)* You don't get to put a marker in your life. Oh, you can walk away, you can always walk away — but you don't get to come back to the same place you left. Ask anyone. *(Indicates an audience member.)* Ask this guy. Am I right?

*(To the audience member, as needed.)* (See, I told you.) // (I'll talk to you later.)

*(To the same audience member.)* Did she offer you a beer? *(Gets response.)* You want one?

*(As needed.)* (Okay, here you go.) // (If you change your mind, the fridge is right there.) *(If the audience member says yes to the beer, Joe gets him one.)*

BECKY. What are you doing?

JOE. What's it look like? You think I can't see *these people*?

BECKY. Joe, listen —

JOE. No, you listen to me — I'm gonna tell you how this goes: *(Joe gestures to the booth and immediately lights isolate Joe. Turns to audience.)* I called Chris at the restaurant. Told him that his mom was home, and safe. And everyone came back to the house. ~~*(The Living Room. Night. The candles remain lit. Chris, Walter, Kenni, Steve and Ginger appear at the edge of the room, surrounding Becky. Long silence. Finally ...)*~~

~~KENNI. *(Quietly.)* Welcome home.~~

~~BECKY. Thank you. *(Kenni embraces Becky. Then she turns to the others.)*~~

~~KENNI. Chris? ... Dad? ... *(Chris and Walter do not move. Instead, Steve steps forward.)*~~