

PAGE TWO

PANEL ONE

Still running, the hallway is endless, monotonous. The patterns repeating over and over again. He's made what seems to be no progress.

PANEL TWO

He stops suddenly and looks down. He's horrified, but we don't yet see what he sees.

PANEL THREE

We see now. He's no longer in the hallway, but rather in a kind of vortex, standing on a thin, straight line to nowhere.

ELLEN (O.S.)
I missed you so much...

PANEL FOUR

He takes a step.

PANEL FIVE

Taylor loses his balance as the line disappears.

PANEL SIX

Taylor, falling terrified through a blackness.

(note: per conversations between Joe and I, this opening dream sequence has been stretched to three pages. The idea is that page one opens on darkness and ends with Taylor going into the hallway. Pages two and three are a spread, as they usually are, and then page four picks up with what was previously called page three.)

PAGE FOUR

PANEL ONE

Close on Taylor's face, his eyes open, his brow sweating profusely. He's scared out of his mind. This is the exact moment in which he wakes up.

PANEL TWO

He suddenly sits straight up in bed, breathing heavily. He's alone in his bedroom, in silence.

PANEL THREE

He rubs his forehead.

PANEL FOUR

He picks the watch Ellen gave him up from the bedside table.

PANEL FIVE

Close on the watch. The time is shortly after 6.

PANEL SIX

He puts his elbows on his knees and his hands, clutching the watch desperately, on his forehead as he leans forward, trying to calm down.

PAGE FIVE

PANEL ONE

Showered and dressed now, but still not looking all that good, he walks into the kitchen. Daylight has begun to filter into the apartment. It looks only slightly better than it did when he first arrived back.

PANEL TWO

He opens up a cupboard, and there is nothing there but some miscellaneous items, none of which would provide any sustenance.

PANEL THREE

He stands in front of the refrigerator, about to open it.

PANEL FOUR

The fridge open before him. There's not much there, either -- only some condiments and miscellaneous items. One item stands out: a styrofoam carry-out box.

PANEL FIVE

He picks up the styrofoam box and looks at it, a confused look on his face.

PANEL SIX

He closes the refrigerator door, having placed the carry-out box back inside.

PAGE SIX

PANEL ONE

He stands in the kitchen, contemplating his next move.

PANEL TWO

He picks up his keys from a table near the door.

PANEL THREE

He exits his apartment.

PANEL FOUR

In the stairwell on the way down, he checks his watch.

PANEL FIVE

He opens the door and steps outside.

PANEL SIX

Standing now in front of his building, he looks around and takes stock of his surroundings. The streets are as they were in the previous volume - mostly empty and fairly unkempt. A stray dog picks at some trash in the background, random items like keys and watches dot the landscape.

Despite the relative desolation, it's turning out to be a very nice day.

PAGE SEVEN

PANEL ONE

He starts his walk down the street.

PANEL TWO

He passes a man sitting on his front stoop, drinking a beer, the door to his house open in the background. He's dressed in worker's clothes, and is wearing, casually, a pistol in a holster on his hip. He's friendly, but there's something slightly troubling about him.

He looks up at Taylor.

MAN ON STOOP
How's it goin'?

PANEL THREE

Taylor stops to talk for a moment.

TAYLOR
Not so good.

PANEL FOUR

The man smiles behind a sip of his beer.

MAN ON STOOP
Hell of a nice day.

PANEL FIVE

Taylor looks around. His agreement is half-hearted at best.

TAYLOR
Yeah.

PANEL SIX

Taylor resumes his walk.

MAN ON STOOP
See you 'round, friend.

TAYLOR
(back over his shoulder)
Sure.

PAGE EIGHT

PANEL ONE

Taylor arrives at what he once knew as a kind of "main street" - a three or four block stretch of shops, restaurants, and the like. It's here that we find our first sense of some real activity in the town. While many of the shops are empty and disheveled, several of them are still operative. A handful of people are around, taking care of errands and generally enjoying the day.

PANEL TWO

We focus on one storefront in particular, which is the most active one on the street. It's a small cafe called "The Passive Perk", and the front window features a comical logo of a coffee cup relaxing on a couch.

PANEL THREE

Taylor walks in. It's a clean, nice place, and all told there are 10-15 people present, most of them enjoying coffee and lite fare at the tables. This is the first place we've been that seems "normal".

Two people are in line at the counter.

PANEL FOUR

Taylor takes his place in that line.

PANEL FIVE

A voice calls out to Taylor from the doorway, and he turns to look in that direction. We can't see him yet, but we will find that it is Steve, the man he met towards the end of the first volume.

STEVE (O.S.)
Hey, man! Taylor!

PANEL SIX

Steve joins Taylor in line, now only one person ahead of them. Steve is a relaxed, veteran presence. Taylor is happy to see him, but only so much.

STEVE (CONT'D)
How you holding up?

PAGE NINE

PANEL ONE

The person in front of Taylor is moving on, and it is about to be time to place the order.

TAYLOR
I've been better.

STEVE
It's good you found this block.

PANEL TWO

Taylor and Steve, front and center in front of the clerk.

TAYLOR
Instinct, I guess.

CLERK
What can I get you gentlemen?

PANEL THREE

Steve, a sly smile on his face, looks at Taylor as he places his order.

TAYLOR
I'll have a coffee and a...an apple turnover.

PANEL FOUR

Instinctively, Taylor reaches for his wallet. Steve reaches out to stop him.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
I, uh...

STEVE
Lemme get this.

PANEL FIVE

Steve turns to the clerk.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Double that.

PANEL SIX

Steve presents a tattered card -- roughly the size of a business card, with handwritten marks on it -- to the clerk, which she takes as payment.

PAGE TEN

PANEL ONE

Steve and Taylor take a seat at one of the few open tables, coffee and pastries in hand. This cafe is a gathering point for residents of the town, and the crowd is diverse.

Steve is replacing the card in his shirt pocket as they sit down.

TAYLOR
Thanks.

STEVE
Don't sweat it.

PANEL TWO

They settle into their seats.

STEVE (CONT'D)
I've got some credit built up.

PANEL THREE

Taylor looks around at his surroundings, taking mental notes, as he talks to Steve.

TAYLOR
That how it generally works?

PANEL FOUR

On Steve as he responds. In the background, LYNN - an attractive young woman in her late twenties, about 5 foot 6, 120 lbs, long brown hair - walks towards the table where Steve and Taylor are having their conversation. She's not yet paying attention to them.

STEVE
A lot of times. But, every place is different.

PANEL FIVE

Lynn recognizes Steve as she passes the table. She's happily surprised to see him, and he feels the same.

LYNN
Hey, Steve! It's good to see you.

STEVE
Lynn, Lynn, Lynn. How are things?

PANEL SIX

Lynn to Steve.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LYNN
Good, actually.

LYNN (CONT'D)
Listen, I never did thank you for
that work you did for me.

PANEL SEVEN

She looks at Taylor. Steve waves off her thanks.

STEVE
No problem.

PAGE ELEVEN

PANEL ONE

She looks back at Steve, intrigued. Throughout the exchange with her Taylor is polite but not especially engaged.

LYNN
Who's your friend?

PANEL TWO

Steve gestures to Taylor, who holds his hand out to Lynn. She reciprocates.

STEVE
This is Taylor, a new arrival.

PANEL THREE

Lynn to Taylor. He's looking up at her.

LYNN
Oh, man, I feel for you. The first few weeks are definitely the hardest.

TAYLOR
And after that?

PANEL FOUR

Lynn looks back at Steve and shrugs her shoulders just a bit.

LYNN
You get used to it.

PANEL FIVE

On Taylor. He's got a distant look in his eyes, even as he attempts to be congenial.

TAYLOR
Doesn't sound like much to look forward to.

PAGE TWELVE

PANEL ONE

She begins to make her exit, looking again at Taylor as she does.

LYNN
Listen, I'll see you fellas later.

LYNN (CONT'D)
It was nice meeting you.

PANEL TWO

She waves goodbye as Taylor responds.

TAYLOR
You too.

PANEL THREE

Back on Taylor and Steve.

STEVE
She's a cool chick.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Anyway, you were saying?

PANEL FOUR

On Taylor.

TAYLOR
How things work.

PANEL FIVE

Taylor sips his coffee, still black. Steve stirs some sugar into his.

STEVE
Right, right.

STEVE (CONT'D)
You sort of get a feel for each
different place.

PANEL SIX

Taylor takes a bite of his turnover.

STEVE (CONT'D)
How're you doing with that, anyway?
You need any help?

PAGE THIRTEEN

PANEL ONE

On Taylor.

TAYLOR
Actually, there is one thing.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
What about shopping? For the day to
day things, I mean.

PANEL TWO

Steve reclines in his chair a bit as he speaks through a bite
of his own turnover.

STEVE
It ain't exactly easy to run a
business here, so there aren't a
lot of options.

PANEL THREE

He leans back in a bit, reaching for his coffee.

STEVE (CONT'D)
But, as it happens, I know a place.

PANEL FOUR

Taylor chuckles as Steve cracks a sly smile.

TAYLOR
Why am I not surprised?

PANEL FIVE

On Steve, still smiling.

STEVE
Gotta keep busy.

PANEL SIX

On both of them.

STEVE (CONT'D)
You know how to get to Keswick?
It's about four or five blocks
away.

PAGE FOURTEEN

PANEL ONE

Steve gestures as if he's giving directions.

STEVE
Head over there - just take this
street - then when you hit it, go
south for a couple more blocks.

PANEL TWO

A little further out with the shot as Taylor takes in what Steve is saying.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Can't miss it.

PANEL THREE

Similar to P2, different angle.

TAYLOR
And how should I...

STEVE
Tell him you know me.

PANEL FOUR

On Taylor. He accepts the news but shows little emotion.

STEVE (CONT'D)
You should be able to find whatever
you need.

STEVE (CONT'D)
And if you don't, just wait a week.

PANEL FIVE

Taylor relaxes into his chair. While still not himself, he's starting to settle in just a bit.

TAYLOR
I really appreciate your help.

PANEL SIX

Close on Steve, smiling.

STEVE
Hey, man, it's what I'm here for.

PAGE FIFTEEN

PANEL ONE

Close up on a street sign, in less than stellar condition. The cross streets are 34th and Keswick. Right now the sign is all we can really see.

PANEL TWO

Further out showing the corner. This area is more deserted than the "main street" from which Taylor came. Although he has only walked a few blocks, there is a definite sense of isolation.

Taylor walks through the scene.

PANEL THREE

Making his way down the block, he passes an old woman walking her dog. She and Taylor pass extremely close to each other, but the woman's gaze and gait don't waver, as if she doesn't notice him at all. Her presence is ghost-like, and this is the first panel where we see her (it should remain plausible, however, that she might have been there before).

PANEL FOUR

Taylor stops after they pass.

PANEL FIVE

He turns around to look for the woman, but she is nowhere to be seen.

PAGE SIXTEEN

PANEL ONE

In front of the store.

It's a medium-sized establishment with a shop on the first level and some living space on levels two and three, accessed by a stairway at the back. The front window is painted with the words "General Store". A smaller sign in the corner of that window, near the door, gives the operating hours, and a small "open" sign hangs in the door.

PANEL TWO

From outside the shop, Taylor opens the door and walks in.

PANEL THREE

Inside the shop now as Taylor enters, tentatively. It's packed with merchandise of all sorts - clothing, toiletries, groceries, hardware, etc. As far as we can see there's nobody else here.

PANEL FOUR

Taylor picks up a basket in order to begin shopping.

PANEL FIVE

He passes by the main counter. The cash register sits there on top of a glass display case. There's a sign facing out that reads - in a script reminiscent of hand-painted billboards and signs from the past - "Please Ring Bell for Service." However, there is no bell to ring.

PANEL SIX

Taylor grabs a roll of paper towels from a shelf. As he places them in his basket, a magazine/newspaper stand catches his eye.

PAGE SEVENTEEN

PANEL ONE

Seen from the side, Taylor leans in close to the rack and studies the front page of a newspaper. From this angle we can't see what's written there.

PANEL TWO

The paper (titled simply "The Examiner") in his hands. We're looking at it with him. One headline reads "Middle East Tensions Escalate", with a subhead of "President to Address Nation in Prime Time". Accompanying that story is a picture of a government spokesman addressing reporters at a news conference. A second, less prominent headline reads "Governor to Broker Energy Deal".

A voice comes from somewhere else in the store. Though we can't see him, it is the owner, BUTCH.

BUTCH (O.S.)
You'll drive yourself crazy trying
to keep up with that nonsense.

PANEL THREE

Startled, Taylor turns his eyes from the paper to the main counter. Butch is now standing there, casually cleaning one lens of a pair of glasses. There's also a book on the counter now that wasn't there before.

Butch speaks again, not looking at Taylor. We're far enough away that we don't immediately get a full sense of him.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
It hardly matters anymore.

PANEL FOUR

In closer now, his face much more clear to us. He's smiling.

He's about 10-15 years older than Taylor, and has a rugged handsomeness about him. He exudes confidence and independence.

The book in front of him on the counter bears a particular design (see my notes).

BUTCH (CONT'D)
And besides...

BUTCH (CONT'D)
...that's not even today's paper.

PANEL FIVE

Taylor looks back at the paper in his hands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PANEL SIX

He puts it back on the shelf.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
So what can I help you with today?

PAGE EIGHTEEN

PANEL ONE

Taylor speaks as he walks over to Butch at the counter. Butch is relaxed and confident.

TAYLOR
A, uh...little bit of everything, I
guess.

PANEL TWO

Taylor moves toward the counter.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
My name's Taylor...

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
Steve sent me.

PANEL THREE

Closer in on Butch as he raises his eyebrow and smiles slightly.

BUTCH
Steve?

PANEL FOUR

Focused more on Taylor now, closer to the counter, a look of surprise and inquisitiveness on his face. Something about Butch has caught his eye.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
He a friend of yours?

PANEL FIVE

Taylor doesn't respond immediately. The two of them look at each other for a moment, Taylor studying Butch closely.

PANEL SIX

Taylor responds, still distracted, His mind is elsewhere.

TAYLOR
He, uh...yeah. Sort of.

PANEL SEVEN

Close on Taylor's face, his eyes narrowed slightly as he continues to study Butch.

PAGE NINETEEN

PANEL ONE

We see both of them again. Taylor seems to have come to some sort of realization. Butch doesn't want any part of it.

TAYLOR
You're...

BUTCH
Name's Butch.

PANEL TWO

Butch starts to walk from behind the counter, eager to move the discussion along.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
So what's it been, a week? Couple
of days?

PANEL THREE

Butch walks over to where he keeps the bags of coffee, and picks one up.

TAYLOR
Couple of days...I think.

BUTCH
This is good stuff - hard to get a
hold of.

PANEL FOUR

Butch tosses the coffee to Taylor.

PANEL FIVE

Butch in front of a shelf of groceries, from which he grabs some spaghetti noodles.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
Supplies are pretty good right
now...

PANEL SIX

Butch, in front of another shelf, grabs a loaf of bread.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
...so I'll get you covered on the
basics.

PAGE TWENTY

PANEL ONE

Taylor and Butch at the counter. Butch is bagging Taylor's items, which consist of the coffee, the bread, the pasta, the paper towels, and two or three other, similar items.

PANEL TWO

The bag full, Butch pushes it over to Taylor.

BUTCH
That should keep you going for a
week or so while you get your sea
legs.

PANEL THREE

Taylor chuckles slightly at the irony of the statement.

PANEL FOUR

Then, gets a bit more serious.

TAYLOR
Listen, I don't know exactly...

PANEL FIVE

Butch holds up his hand.

BUTCH
Consider it a loan.

PANEL SIX

Taylor responds.

TAYLOR
I'll make it right. I promise.

PAGE TWENTY-ONE

PANEL ONE

The two of them walk to the door.

BUTCH

If Steve sent you I'm sure that's true. He's got a way of reading people.

PANEL TWO

They stop at the door, and Taylor once again gives Butch a searching look.

PANEL THREE

Taylor turns away slightly as he speaks, so as not to seem too confrontational.

TAYLOR

If you don't mind my asking, how did you end up...

PANEL FOUR

Butch opens the door.

BUTCH

I'll see you next time.

PANEL FIVE

Taylor steps out of the shop. Butch remains inside.

PANEL SIX

Outside with Taylor, the door closed. Butch is in the middle of flipping the sign in the door from "open" to "closed". Taylor looks back at him.

PAGE TWENTY-TWO

PANEL ONE

The next day, Taylor walks down the street, carrying his notebook and pen.

PANEL TWO

He's walking up a set of steps to a library. The building is in a state of neglect - cluttered and overgrown, with the doors hanging perpetually open. The sign says "County Library," but somebody has spray-painted the word "Bibliotheque" over the word "Library".

PANEL THREE

Inside now as Taylor surveys the scene. The place is deserted and abandoned, but not entirely trashed. A modicum of respect seems to have been paid to making sure it doesn't fall into total disrepair.

PANEL FOUR

He walks back to the information desk.

PANEL FIVE

He approaches a door marked "Microfilm Room".

PAGE TWENTY-THREE

PANEL ONE

He walks into the microfilm room. It, too, has largely remained intact and organized.

PANEL TWO

He heads over to a filing cabinet and pulls open a large drawer marked "Examiner 2002".

PANEL THREE

He pages through the files.

TAYLOR

Butch...

PANEL FOUR

He pulls out a folder of microfilm.

PANEL FIVE

He sits down in front of a microfilm reader and loads up a sheet.

PANEL SIX

Looking out at Taylor, as if from the machine. The light illuminates his face a bit.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

...my ass.

PAGE TWENTY-FOUR

PANEL ONE

Back on the "normal" timeline, looking at the outside of the same coffee shop in which Taylor and Steve met earlier. It is the same structure on the same street, and we should see this, but it is cosmetically different in many ways, including the name, which is now the "Pick-me-Up Cafe".

The street is cleaner, more vibrant.

PANEL TWO

Inside the shop, at a table with Ellen. She looks tired, weary. She's nursing a cup of tea, and there's a cup of coffee there as well, along with a muffin out of which she's only taken one bite.

PANEL THREE

A man dressed in a suit opens the door and walks in. He cranes his neck to scan the crowd.

PANEL FOUR

Ellen stands up and gestures for him to come over.

PANEL FIVE

He meets her at her table and they shake hands. This is the DETECTIVE who is handling Taylor's missing person case.

There's little energy in Ellen's actions, little life in her face despite an attempt to smile.

ELLEN
Detective Allen...

ELLEN (CONT'D)
...thanks for meeting me here. I
needed to get out of the apartment.

DETECTIVE
I understand.

PAGE TWENTY-FIVE

PANEL ONE

Now seated across from each other, Ellen hands him the cup of coffee.

ELLEN
I got you a coffee.

DETECTIVE
Thank you.

PANEL TWO

The detective takes a sip of the coffee.

As this scene unfolds it is reminiscent of Taylor and Steve's conversation earlier. We should get the sense of shared space and similar but discordant realities.

PANEL THREE

The detective sets his coffee cup back down on the table and looks down at it for a moment.

PANEL FOUR

He looks back up at Ellen.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
I wish I had good news, but I'm afraid there are more questions than answers.

PANEL FIVE

He leans in to speak to her.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
I know this is hard, but I need to learn more about Mr. D...Taylor.

PAGE TWENTY-SIX

PANEL ONE

The question makes her uneasy.

ELLEN
Like, what do you mean?

PANEL TWO

The detective leans back, looking down again at his coffee as he chooses his words carefully.

DETECTIVE
This case is unusual. It might help
if I knew more about his
personality.

PANEL THREE

He looks at her again.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
For example, if Taylor is
ali...wherever he is, how do you
think he's holding up?

PANEL FOUR

On her face, a far-off look in her eyes. She considers the question for a moment as she finds it surprisingly difficult to answer.

PANEL FIVE

She composes herself and speaks.

ELLEN
He's a strong person...he would try
to find his way back.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
I know it.

PAGE TWENTY-SEVEN

PANEL ONE

On the detective, somewhat skeptical.

DETECTIVE

Were there any problems before he took this trip?

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Maybe not even anything you knew about, but anything you suspected?

PANEL TWO

On Ellen.

ELLEN

I hadn't been happier in my life than in the time just before he left.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

If he didn't feel the same, I think I would have known.

PANEL THREE

Staying with Ellen. Something in the cafe has caught her eye, but we don't know what it is. We only see that she's speaking to the detective with a distracted gaze.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

We're not complicated people.

PANEL FOUR

She simultaneously refocuses on the conversation and becomes a bit more distraught.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

We were just trying to do the same things as everybody else....

ELLEN (CONT'D)

I like to hope that we still are.

PANEL FIVE

On the detective.

DETECTIVE

I'm going to do whatever I can. But you need to understand that in cases like this it's very rare to...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PANEL SIX

She looks directly at him for the first time.

I know... ELLEN

But please. ELLEN (CONT'D)

PAGE TWENTY-EIGHT

PANEL ONE

Outside of the cafe, Ellen and the detective stand facing each other.

DETECTIVE
I'll be in touch.

ELLEN
Thank you so much.

PANEL TWO

They shake hands.

PANEL THREE

Ellen turns to walk away.

PANEL FOUR

The detective does the same.

PANEL FIVE

As he does so he passes by Butch, the store owner with whom Taylor interacted earlier. There is nothing awkward or notable about them passing - Butch is a normal part of the traffic on the street.

Butch doesn't look exactly as he did earlier (he should be dressed and groomed differently), and we don't pay any undue attention to him. While it *is* him, the effect should simply be that it raises the question for readers, and it's up to the them to either notice or not.

PAGE TWENTY-NINE

PANEL ONE

Inside Taylor and Ellen's apartment, still on Ellen's timeline. The door is open as we see her walking in.

PANEL TWO

She puts her keys on the counter and approaches the fridge.

PANEL THREE

She opens the fridge and reaches in to grab a bottled water. The fridge is fairly empty, as it is on Taylor's timeline, but we once again take notice of a styrofoam carry-out container. It's the same container Taylor looked at earlier.

PANEL FOUR

She closes the refrigerator door, water in hand, and walks over to the couch.

PANEL FIVE

She lays down on the couch. An assortment of pictures and personal artifacts relating to Taylor are spread out on the coffee table in front of her, though she's not interacting with them. Right now she just wants to rest.

PANEL SIX

Close on her upper body. As she clutches the water bottle she sheds a tear.

PAGE THIRTY

PANEL ONE

From inside the apartment, on the door. Though we don't know it yet, we are back on Taylor's timeline.

A KNOCK comes.

PANEL TWO

The KNOCK continues from off the panel as we see Taylor, scruffy and groggy - not looking particularly good at all - start to stir from sleep on the couch.

PANEL THREE

Taylor walks to the door.

PANEL FOUR

He opens the door to find Steve there, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed.

STEVE

Where you been, man? Haven't seen you in a lotta days.

PANEL FIVE

Taylor steps aside to let Steve in.

TAYLOR

Trying to keep busy.

PANEL SIX

On Steve.

STEVE

That's a good sign.

PAGE THIRTY-ONE

PANEL ONE

Taylor walks to the kitchen as Steve heads to the couch.

TAYLOR
You want some coffee?

PANEL TWO

On Steve as he takes a seat and relaxes on the sofa.

STEVE
Sure, that'd be good.

PANEL THREE

Taylor starts to prepare a pot of coffee.

TAYLOR
I'm glad you stopped by. I've got a
question for you.

PANEL FOUR

On Steve as he starts to roll a joint on the coffee table, on which we can also see Taylor's notebook and several random papers.

STEVE
Shoot.

PANEL FIVE

Steve holds up the joint and looks back at Taylor.

STEVE (CONT'D)
By the way, you mind?

PANEL SIX

Taylor continues to make the coffee, not even looking back at Steve.

TAYLOR
Nah, go ahead.

PAGE THIRTY-TWO

PANEL ONE

The coffee made, Taylor sets two cups down on the table and prepares to take a seat.

PANEL TWO

He sits down next to Steve, who is holding smoke in his lungs as he offers the half-finished joint to Taylor.

STEVE
You wanna hit this?

TAYLOR
No thanks.

PANEL THREE

On Taylor, just finishing up a sip of his coffee.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
What do you know about Butch, the
guy from the store?

PANEL FIVE

Steve settles back into the couch, in full relaxation mode.

STEVE
Good guy. Helped me out a lot when
I first arrived.

PANEL SIX

Steve turns to Taylor and sits up a bit. Taylor's taking another sip of his coffee and composing himself.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Don't know much more, though. I
wouldn't call him a friend.

PAGE THIRTY-THREE

PANEL ONE

Taylor relaxes a bit, coffee cup still in hand.

TAYLOR
Any idea how he got here?

PANEL TWO

Steve prepares to take another hit.

STEVE
Nah.

STEVE (CONT'D)
I found him the same way you did.

PANEL THREE

On Taylor, deep in thought as more exhale smoke comes from Steve (off the panel).

STEVE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Where's that comin' from?

PANEL FOUR

Taylor stands up and begins a walk back to the kitchen.

TAYLOR
Just curious.

PANEL FIVE

Taylor spikes his coffee with Irish whisky.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
I think I want to talk to him some more.

PANEL SIX

On Steve, continuing in full relaxation mode.

STEVE
He's a nice guy, man, but be careful. I can't imagine you'd want to piss him off.

PAGE THIRTY-FOUR

PANEL ONE

Afternoon. Taylor walks into Butch's store.

PANEL TWO

As he enters, we see Lynn, the woman from earlier at the cafe, grabbing a grocery bag from Butch at the counter as she prepares to leave.

LYNN
You're a lifesaver. See you next
time.

PANEL THREE

She starts to leave, and notices Taylor.

LYNN (CONT'D)
Hey, there!

LYNN (CONT'D)
Taylor, right?

PANEL FOUR

Taylor recognizes her.

TAYLOR
Yeah, uh...

PANEL FIVE

She rearranges her grocery bag to shake his hand.

LYNN
Lynn.

TAYLOR
Right, Lynn.

PANEL SIX

She looks at him with warmth and invitation.

LYNN
So you look good...

PAGE THIRTY-FIVE

PANEL ONE

On Taylor. Butch is visible in the background, casually observing their interaction.

Really? TAYLOR

PANEL TWO

On Lynn, still smiling. There's a hint of flirtatiousness in her demeanor.

Yeah, really. LYNN

PANEL THREE

They stand together silently for a moment.

PANEL FOUR

Lynn turns to leave.

See you around. LYNN (CONT'D)

PANEL FIVE

He watches her leave.

Bye... TAYLOR

PANEL SIX

Focus shifts to Butch. He's making some notations in a ledger on the counter, speaking to Taylor as he does so. The same book from earlier, with the peculiar design, is on the counter next to him.

I'm surprised to see you back so soon. BUTCH

PAGE THIRTY-SIX

PANEL ONE

Butch puts his pen down and looks up, as Taylor has moved to the other side of the counter, directly opposite him.

BUTCH
Did you forget something essential?

PANEL TWO

On Taylor.

TAYLOR
That's kind of why I'm here.

PANEL THREE

Butch raises an eyebrow. He's skeptical, a bit on guard.

BUTCH
Do tell.

PANEL FOUR

On Taylor, closer in than P2.

TAYLOR
I was wondering if I could ask you
a few questions.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
About...

PANEL FIVE

Butch picks up his pen and returns his focus to the ledger.

BUTCH
I'm very busy.

PAGE THIRTY-SEVEN

PANEL ONE

Taylor takes a few idle steps and speaks, more into the air than directly to Butch. He's not angling for too direct of a confrontation.

TAYLOR

Does the name Raymond Dougherty mean anything to you?

PANEL TWO

Close on Butch's hand as he sets the pen down.

PANEL THREE

Then looks up at Taylor. He's stone-faced, intense.

PANEL FOUR

Taylor watches Butch walk over to the door.

PANEL FIVE

Butch flips the "Open" sign to "Closed".

PANEL SIX

Butch walks back over to Taylor.

BUTCH

Follow me.

PAGE THIRTY-EIGHT

PANEL ONE

Butch, a few steps up the stairway in the back, turns back to Taylor, who hasn't yet decided to do as he's been asked.

BUTCH
Well?

PANEL TWO

We remain downstairs, watching the two of them ascend.

PANEL THREE

The top of the stairway opens into an apartment. It's well-kept and well-appointed, with a dominating mid-century modern motif.

We're in the living room, which features a sitting area containing two leather chairs.

PANEL FOUR

Taylor follows Butch to the sitting area.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
Have a seat.

PANEL FIVE

They sit down across from each other.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
I haven't gone by the name of
Raymond Dougherty in several years,
and nobody here has ever known me
by it.

PANEL SIX

On Taylor, processing the information.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
How - or, better, why - do you?

PAGE THIRTY-NINE

PANEL ONE

Surveying the whole room, Taylor and Butch smaller in the shot. Taylor takes a moment to compose himself before speaking.

PANEL TWO

As Taylor speaks, we start to focus not on him but on some of the antiques in the room. For this panel, we focus on an original George Nelson sunburst clock hanging on the wall.

TAYLOR (O.S.)
In my old li...

TAYLOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'm a journalist.

PANEL THREE

On an Eames molded plywood chair, pushed up against a desk.

TAYLOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
When I was in here the other day I
recognized your face. But not your
name.

TAYLOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
So I did a little research.

PANEL FOUR

On an old tabletop radio.

TAYLOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You disappeared without a trace a
couple of years ago. That struck me
as familiar.

PANEL FIVE

On some glass bottles and flasks on a classic bar.

TAYLOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'm wondering if you'd be willing
to talk about it.

PAGE FORTY

PANEL ONE

On the two of them, at some distance in profile, facing off silently once more. Butch is studying Taylor, who appears to be taking it fairly well despite Butch's obvious advantage in the situation.

PANEL TWO

More on Butch as he speaks.

BUTCH
Are you always this nosy?

PANEL THREE

Taylor lowers his head.

PANEL FOUR

Then stands up, looking away from Butch.

TAYLOR
I'm not trying to be nosy.

PANEL FIVE

He starts towards the door, then looks back.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
I don't mean to make any trouble.
I'm sorry if I disturbed you.

PANEL SIX

Taylor is about to leave the apartment when Butch speaks.

BUTCH (O.S.)
Hold on a minute.

PAGE FORTY-ONE

PANEL ONE

Butch stands up and faces Taylor, who is still at the door.

BUTCH
Sit back down.

PANEL TWO

Taylor takes a seat as Butch wanders to look out the window.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
No one else has noticed, or at
least bothered to follow up if they
did. I'm impressed.

PANEL THREE

He turns back to Taylor.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
I suppose the least I can do is
give you your story.

PANEL FOUR

Butch walks over to the bar and starts to pour two drinks.

PANEL FIVE

Butch hands Taylor one of the drinks.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
I've been here for about four years
now.

PANEL SIX

Butch sits back down.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
Though as I'm sure you've figured
out, it gets hard to keep track.

PAGE FORTY-TWO

As Butch begins to tell his story, we go back four years to the "normal" timeline he was on at the time.

PANEL ONE

A shot of an Irish Pub called "Dougherty's", situated on a moderately busy city street not much different from those in Taylor's neighborhood.

BUTCH (V.O.)
I was a restaurateur.

BUTCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
A successful one at that.

PANEL TWO

A small meeting room. A panel of four individuals (a healthy mix of genders and races) are sitting and listening to Butch, the fifth member, as he delivers a presentation from a lectern. A pie chart shines on a screen behind him.

BUTCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I was also chairman of the local development board, and had all the respect and connections I could want.

PANEL THREE

Butch at home, in his kitchen, having breakfast with his wife and teenage son. Each of them appears quite happy.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
My family life was exceptional.

PANEL FOUR

Butch in his garage. On one side of the garage is a nice, late-model luxury sedan. On the other is a mostly restored vintage roadster, on which he's presently working.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
And I was happy.

PANEL FIVE

Butch in his office at the restaurant, late at night, going over some paperwork.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
I wouldn't have traded places with anyone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PANEL SIX

Back, temporarily, in the room with Butch and Taylor. Taylor is absorbing the story, listening intently. He doesn't look directly at Butch as he speaks.

TAYLOR
I can relate.

PAGE FORTY-THREE

PANEL ONE

Back on Butch's old timeline. Close, we see him in the roadster, cruising down a country road with a cigar in his mouth.

BUTCH (V.O.)
I left one evening to take a drive,
something I did fairly often in
those days.

PANEL TWO

Further out now, the roadster cruising down the road.

BUTCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I enjoyed driving...enjoyed driving
that car.

PANEL THREE

He pulls into a roadside restaurant/bar. The parking lot is full, the scene is vibrant.

BUTCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I stopped for a burger and a beer.

BUTCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I like rituals, and I liked this
one in particular.

PANEL FOUR

Butch, having set some money down on the bar next to his empty plate and pint glass, waves goodbye to the bartender, who waves back. They obviously know and like each other.

BUTCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I had the freedom and the money to
get away when I wanted to. Do my
own thing.

PANEL FIVE

Similar to P2 on this page, only on a different road and headed in what appears to be the opposite direction. The impression is that he's headed home.

PAGE FORTY-FOUR

PANEL ONE

Butch's hand on the volume knob of his car stereo.

BUTCH (V.O.)

I remember reaching down to turn up
the volume on a song I hadn't heard
in years.

PANEL TWO

Butch, scared out of his mind, swerves the wheel suddenly. We
can't see what's in the road in front of his car.

BUTCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)

When I looked up, I saw something
in the road.

BUTCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I swerved hard to avoid it, and
that's the last thing I can recall.

PANEL THREE

Butch's car goes careening off the road.

PANEL FOUR

The car flips over.

PANEL FIVE

Butch crawling from the car, which sits on its roof, steam
pouring out of it.

PANEL SIX

He passes out on the ground.

PAGE FORTY-FIVE

PANEL ONE

Close on Butch as he sits up in the field, dazed.

BUTCH (V.O.)
When I woke up I couldn't process
what had happened.

PANEL TWO

Farther out now, surveying the scene. Everything has quieted down, and there's no evidence that an accident has taken place. Butch is alone by the side of the road.

BUTCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Where was I? Why wasn't I in the
hospital?

PANEL THREE

Butch stands up.

BUTCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I waited for help that never
came...

PANEL FOUR

Butch walking down the road, thumbing for a ride.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
...before I finally gathered the
strength to make my way home.

PANEL FIVE

Butch exiting a car dropping him off in front of his house.

PANEL SIX

Butch stepping into a dark, deserted home.

PAGE FORTY-SIX

PANEL ONE

Back with Taylor and Butch in the apartment. Butch is standing at the bar, his back to Taylor.

BUTCH
I got back and realized that I had nothing...

BUTCH (CONT'D)
...and, eventually, that it didn't matter.

PANEL TWO

He sits back down, fresh drink in hand.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
I eventually found that this is a world of opportunity if you look at it the right way.

PANEL THREE

He looks directly at Taylor.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
So tell me.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
How are you looking at it?

PANEL FOUR

On Taylor.

TAYLOR
I don't know yet.

PANEL FIVE

He looks back up to meet Butch's gaze.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
That's why I came here.

PAGE FORTY-SEVEN

PANEL ONE

Butch stands up and starts walking to the door.

BUTCH
I have a lot of work to do.

PANEL TWO

Taylor joins him by the door.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
I'd encourage you to find some
perspective.

PANEL THREE

From in the store, we see them descending the stairs.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
This is your life now.

BUTCH (CONT'D)
And there's no reason not to make
of it what you can.

PANEL FOUR

Butch walks Taylor to the front door, where they say their goodbyes.

PANEL FIVE

Butch walks back to the counter and picks up the book with the peculiar design.

PANEL SIX

We remain in the store as Butch ascends the stairs once more, heading back to his apartment.

PAGE FORTY-EIGHT

PANEL ONE

Late evening as Taylor walks down the street, approaching his building.

PANEL TWO

He gets to the outside front door, and Lynn is there waiting for him.

LYNN
Hey there.

PANEL THREE

On Taylor, surprised and a bit taken aback.

TAYLOR
Oh...hi.

PANEL FOUR

Silence for a moment.

PANEL FIVE

On Lynn, apprehensive.

LYNN
Listen...what are you doing right now?

PANEL SIX

On Taylor, very much surprised and unsure.

TAYLOR
I've got some stuff to...think about.

PAGE FORTY-NINE

PANEL ONE

Silence as they stand facing each other, Taylor not looking directly at her.

PANEL TWO

Lynn finally speaks.

LYNN
Listen, I...I don't want to be too
forward, but would you like to go
grab a drink?

PANEL THREE

Taylor takes a deep breath and runs his hand through his hair.

PANEL FOUR

Then looks at her, directly for the first time.

TAYLOR
I could probably use one.

PANEL FIVE

Lynn smiles at him.

LYNN
Great! I know a place that's quiet.
I think you'll like it.

PANEL SIX

They start off down the road.

PAGE FIFTY

PANEL ONE

At a booth in an intimate, quiet tavern. It's an old place, with lots of wood and Naugahyde. Old B&W sports photos and related memorabilia dot the walls. Taylor has a bottle of beer in front of him, Lynn is nursing a clear cocktail.

TAYLOR

I guess I haven't accepted it yet...it still doesn't feel real.

PANEL TWO

He takes a sip of his beer as Lynn responds.

LYNN

It's not real. You'll never feel right about it. But you can learn to feel good again.

PANEL THREE

She leans in closer to him.

LYNN (CONT'D)

It's good to remember that everybody here knows how you feel. We're all going through it.

PANEL FOUR

Close on her hand, idly stirring what little is left of her drink.

LYNN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

There's a lot to be said for that.

PANEL FIVE

We see more of the tavern in this shot. There are people at the various tables, and they all look to be having a good time. They're eating, drinking, laughing, and enjoying each other's company.

LYNN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Before I ended up here, I never really knew what it was like to have a sense of community.

PANEL SIX

Two guys in front of a dartboard, high-fiving each other after a nice shot. They're having a damn good time.

LYNN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

There are bad people, of course, but it's...*different*.

PAGE FIFTY-ONE

PANEL ONE

A waitress arrives at the table with two fresh drinks.

TAYLOR

The problem is that whenever I have
a moment where I start to feel good
it's immediately replaced by guilt.

PANEL TWO

Closer in, the waitress sets down the drinks.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

I can't shake what I left behind.
Can't shake Ellen.

PANEL THREE

On Lynn.

LYNN

Was she your wife?

PANEL FOUR

Taylor shakes his head "no".

TAYLOR

No.

PANEL FIVE

We focus in on the watch on his arm.

TAYLOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Not yet.

PAGE FIFTY-TWO

PANEL ONE

Mirroring in some ways the shot of the watch, and showing the same time, we see a clock on a wall.

PANEL TWO

Pulling back further, we find that we're in someone's apartment. There are four people hanging out there, sitting on couches and chairs in the main room -- Ellen (on the couch) and three of her friends. Only one of these friends is of note: a man named Brian, roughly Ellen's age. This is his apartment. The other two friends are a couple, likewise around Ellen's age.

There are some empty plates, beer bottles, and the like. It hasn't been a party, but it has been a friendly gathering.

PANEL THREE

We focus in on Ellen.

ELLEN

I really appreciate this, guys.

PANEL FOUR

She puts her hands on her knees.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

And, I think I'm a little too drunk to go home.

PANEL FIVE

Her and her friends laugh.

PANEL SIX

On Brian.

BRIAN

No big deal -- you can crash here.

PAGE FIFTY-THREE

PANEL ONE

On Ellen, her eyes closed as she suddenly appears quite tired. She looks to be at peace, probably owing to the alcohol she has consumed.

ELLEN

I think that would be best.

PANEL TWO

The other two friends get up to leave. The female puts her hand on Ellen's shoulder, and Ellen places her own hand over it.

FEMALE FRIEND

I'll give you a call tomorrow to see how you're doing.

ELLEN

I'd like that.

PANEL THREE

Brian stands holding the door open as the couple exits.

BRIAN

Thanks, guys. I'll talk to you soon.

MALE FRIEND

Catch you later.

PANEL FOUR

Brian passes Ellen on the couch, on his way to another room. She's all but asleep.

BRIAN

I'll be right back.

PANEL FIVE

He returns with a pillow and a blanket.

PANEL SIX

The pillow now behind her head, he's placing the blanket over her.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Sleep well.

PAGE FIFTY-FOUR

PANEL ONE

Taylor and Lynn walking down the street, headed towards Taylor's apartment. They're walking close together, as friends would.

PANEL TWO

They arrive, again, in front of his building.

PANEL THREE

Taylor looks down at his watch.

TAYLOR
Damn...it got late.

PANEL FOUR

On Lynn.

LYNN
Yeah...I guess so.

LYNN (CONT'D)
I had fun. Thank you.

PANEL FIVE

On both of them.

TAYLOR
So did I.

PANEL SIX

They stand together, somewhat awkwardly. Neither of them knows exactly what to do or say next.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
So, I'll...

PAGE FIFTY-FIVE

PANEL ONE

Lynn reaches out, tentatively, to give him a hug.

PANEL TWO

Taylor consents, and they hug.

PANEL THREE

Lynn pulls back, smiling.

LYNN
I'm here to help.

PANEL FOUR

On Taylor.

TAYLOR
I appreciate it.

PANEL FIVE

On Lynn.

LYNN
I'll see you soon.

PANEL SIX

She turns and walks away.

PAGE FIFTY-SIX

PANEL ONE

Taylor turns and enters the building.

PANEL TWO

He starts walking up the stairs.

PANEL THREE

He arrives at the top of the stairs.

PANEL FOUR

He stands outside of his door.

PANEL FIVE

He stops and turns to look down the hallway.

PANEL SIX

From his POV, the hallway appears as it did in his dream --
endless.