

**Title Card:** When a prisoner serves their entire sentence, or "maxes out," they transition out of prison with no legal conditions, structure, monitoring, or reentry assistance.

EXT. TENT CITY - EARLY MORNING

The quiet of dawn. Tents with American flags fill the park. At the end of a row a tent is unzipped and a homeless man, **WILL MICHAELS**, beaten down but not defeated, steps out into the early morning sun.

As he walks he sees a candy wrapper on the ground. Picks it up and throws it in the trash. Gets to work digging for cans.

**Super: Inspired by actual events.**

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - LATER

He finds a bench and sits, surveys the houses - its a nice neighborhood. People leave for work, lights come on. Checks his watch--it was a nice watch in its prime.

Across the street he notices **KATIE & CLARK SOTO**, a young professional couple, exit a small house. He watches them kiss goodbye, get into their respective cars and leave.

He gets the sense someone is watching him. He turns just in time to see blinds snap shut as someone releases them.

EXT. BENCH - MORNING - ONE WEEK LATER

Will collects cans. Sees Katie and Clark leave. They politely ignore him. He checks the time.

Across the street an old lady, **MRS TAVERSON**, is peeking in the window of a neighbor's house. She notices Will watching her - busted! She scowls and quickly moves on.

EXT. BENCH - THAT SAME EVENING

Will sits, taking a break. Notices Katie arriving home.

His phone buzzes a text. It reads:

*310-555-1002: Next Friday but will confirm.*

He nods and slips his phone back in his pocket.

EXT. BENCH - MORNING

Will collects cans from the trash. Katie appears in her front window. She empties out her bag onto an already messy couch. He catches a muffled:

KATIE

Sorry, babe, I'll clean up when I get home.

CLARK (O.S.)

Like last time?

She rolls her eyes but her head snaps up as she hears

MRS. TAVERSON(O.C.)

Hey!

Mrs. Taverson approaches Will, finger wagging.

MRS. TAVERSON (CONT'D)

You!

Will glances back to see Katie is heading to her car, resolutely trying not to notice what is happening.

MRS. TAVERSON (CONT'D)

You've been loitering around this neighborhood long enough. You can't just sit there.

WILL

I'm not sitting

MRS. TAVERSON

How dare you speak to me that way, you, you worthless--is this what we pay taxes for?

Will turns back to the garbage can and towards an approaching Katie, with whom he accidentally locks eyes. She stalls a beat, then averts her gaze, embarrassed, as Mrs. T continues.

MRS. TAVERSON (CONT'D)

(Irate)

DON'T YOU--I'M SPEAKING TO--THAT'S NOT YOUR TRASH! WE'LL SEE WHAT THE POLICE HAVE TO SAY ABOUT YOU!

Mrs. T finally leaves. Katie is at her car. Stops suddenly and looks into her bag, *does she have a dollar?* She only has a \$10. *Too bad.* She starts to put it back, *it's too much,* then abruptly turns, holding it out to Will.

KATIE

Here.

He looks at it, then away. Doesn't take it. A beat.

She's taken aback, *now what?* She grabs a rock off the ground and puts the \$10 under it on the bench.

WILL

I don't take charity.

Katie freezes, affronted. Unsure of what to do she just goes to her car.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

She throws her bag and gets in, basically pissed.

As she buckles her seatbelt she notices Will in her rearview mirror pocketing the \$10. Scoffs. Rolls her eyes. Drives off.

INT. WILL'S TENT

Will eats a 1/2 can of beans and cheap bread. His tent is tidy, a small stack of books including *The Odyssey*, his rolled sleeping bag and a small row of dented cans. A buzz; he pulls out his phone and reads a text, the words superimpose on screen.

*310-555-1002: Update, 3pm Tomorrow instead.*

Will freezes. *Fuck.* Types:

*Will: I'm sorry, I--*

Stops. Thinks. Then deletes what he wrote and types:

*Will: Ok.*

He dials.

INT. DONOVAN'S HOUSE - DAY

DONOVAN, muscled, intimidating, reclines on the couch. Phone buzzes.

DONOVAN

Hello?

WILL (O.S.)  
Hey. I need some stuff. Can I come through?

DONOVAN  
Uh, I'm kinda busy right now. Got the kids.

Reveal: Don is getting his toenails painted by Cherrie, his 4-year-old and oh-so-adorable daughter.

WILL (O.S.)  
Please? This is really important.

INT. WILL'S TENT - CONTINUOUS

Will waits, desperation rising every second.

Beat.

Beat.

DONOVAN (O.S.)  
Aight. Tonya gets home at 9, you can come then. What you need?

WILL  
(Relieved)  
Ok then.

EXT. SHADY HOUSE - NIGHT

Will approaches a shady house. Knocks. Nothing.

He knocks again, louder. From inside we hear

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Yeah?

WILL  
It's me.

Footsteps, dead bolts and chains. The door cracks open and Donovan peers out. Opens the door when he sees it's Will.

DONOVAN  
Whas good?

They do a low key dap, Will slips him something. Donovan looks like he wants to return it but knows better, instead grabs a thin manilla envelope which Will takes eagerly.

WILL  
It's all there?

DONOVAN  
Yeah.

WILL  
Thanks.

DONOVAN  
Look bro, you know, you could get  
fucked for this.

WILL  
You want to let me in then?

DONOVAN  
C'mon man...you know my girl... the  
kids... an stuff. It's just...  
What about the mish?

WILL  
You ever been?

Beat. He hasn't but he knows all about the mission.

WILL (CONT'D)  
Alright then.

Will leaves. Donovan watches him go, torn. Then shakes it off  
and goes back inside.

EXT. BENCH - NEXT MORNING

Will watches the Sotto house, attempting to appear  
nonchalant. Katie appears in the window. We hear a muffled:

KATIE  
Let's go!

Clark appears and they head out, but this time, as they do,  
Katie considers Will and locks the deadbolt on the door.

Will freezes. *Fuck! New obstacles.* He busies himself in the  
trash can as Katie walks past and leaves, ignoring him.

He quickly looks around to make sure no one is watching,  
grabs his shopping bags and sprints to the house. Once he's  
there he tries a light kick to the door just in case. Very  
locked. *Fuck! Now what?*

He considers for a moment but his focus is ruined by a movement in the corner of his eye-- Mrs. Taverson! She moves with surprising speed towards the house. Panicked he jumps behind some trash cans, just in time to avoid detection.

Will watches as she knocks on the door.

MRS. TAVERSON

Yoohoo!

No answer. She looks in the window. Satisfied they're gone she looks around to make sure no one is watching before *going directly to their hide-a-key*. He is both aghast and grateful as she lets herself into the house.

Will waits a few seconds then silently moves to the window, peering inside to see Mrs. Taverson riffling through papers and *reading their mail*. He chuckles softly to himself.

She snaps a couple pictures of things with her phone camera, replaces everything, and heads towards the door.

Will rushes back to his hiding spot and waits as she returns the key, glances around, and shuffles swiftly away.

Will counts to 5, making sure the coast is clear then bolts out, grabs the key, lets himself in.

From outside we see him pull the curtains shut.

EXT. SOTO'S HOUSE - LATER

The door opens and a clean, freshly shaven Will emerges in an ill-fitting button up, tie, dress pants and shoes. He carries his usual shopping bags and a large black garbage bag full to bursting. Checks for observers. Leaves.

EXT. SOTO'S HOUSE - LATER

Katie arrives home. Parks. Walks towards the house

INT. SOTO'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

She enters reading the mail. Hits the light. Stops dead in her tracks. Sees a piece of paper on the entry table.

She grabs it and quickly reads. Dials Clark.

CLARK (O.C.)

Hey babe--

KATIE  
Someone was here.

CLARK (O.C.)  
What? Where?

KATIE  
In the house. Someone--

CLARK (O.C.)  
Broke in? You, are you there?

KATIE  
I just got home.

CLARK (O.C.)  
What if they're still-you need to  
leave.

KATIE  
They're not--

CLARK (O.C.)  
I'm calling the cops.

KATIE  
Wait wait wait. They just...they  
left a note.

CLARK (O.C.)  
Sorry?

KATIE  
And took out our trash.

Reveal: the house is spotless. Clean, organized. Perfect.

CLARK (O.C.)  
Wait, sorry I don't--

KATIE  
I know, I know, just, listen.  
(reading)  
I'm sorry if I caused a big shock  
for you, that is not my intention.

Katie's voice morphs into Will's as she reads.

INT. SOTO'S HOUSE - EARLIER

Will lets himself into the house, pulls the curtains.

Will strips and throws his clothes in the wash machine including the dress shirt and pants we saw him leave in.

WILL (V.O.)  
Strange as it sounds, I needed a place to get ready. Believe me, if I had a better option I'd use it.

Will wipes off a foggy mirror, freshly showered. From his bags he gets a toothbrush, toothpaste, disposable razor, and shaving cream. Shakes the cream and squirts. He's out. Sees Katie's shave cream in the shower. No. Considers the alternative. Looks back at her cream.

Will shaves with bright pink shaving cream and...seems to enjoy it.

EXT. PRISON - AFTERNOON - RELEASE DAY

Will, freshly released.

WILL (V.O.)  
My time maxed out this year and I was released with \$200, a phone, and no one to call.

He looks uncertainly at the phone.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

WILL (V.O.)  
I had been in so long I didn't know what to expect

Will looks in scared awe at the digital billboards.

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

Will holds a sign: *Looking for work*. Cars zoom past.

INT. GAS STATION - DAY

He tries the bathroom - locked. Approaches a **BORED CASHIER**.

WILL  
I need the bathroom key.

He points to a sign that says: *Restrooms for customers only*.



Will counts his money - he has \$0.86. Finds the cheapest thing they have - a roll of Smarties. Reluctantly buys it.

INT. GAS STATION BATHROOM - DAY

Will washes his shirt in the sink. There's an angry knock and a voice yells "hurry up I gotta piss!"

EXT. TENT CITY - DAY

WILL (V.O.)  
I have fallen on hard times.

Will walks towards his tent. Unzips it, goes in.

INT. DONOVAN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Donovan is on the phone with Will, typing up the letter.

WILL (O.C.)  
...then write, "I don't want," or  
no, write "I'm not interested in,"  
no, no, write--

CHERRIE (O.S.)  
Daddy I need help! I can't flush!

DONOVAN  
(calling to Cherrie)  
Just a minute baby!  
(into phone)  
Can't you just write it there?

WILL (O.C.)  
I can't read my handwriting. I'm  
almost done.

Donovan sighs.

DONOVAN  
Go on...

EXT. DONOVAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

WILL (V.O.)  
I'm not interested in charity--

Will and Donovan's dad, reveal that Will has slipped him 50 cents to pay for the papers. Donovan shakes his head.

INT. SOTO'S HOUSE

WILL (V.O.)  
--and I noticed that since you're  
busy, you could use some help too.

Will does the dishes.

Sweeps.

Dusts Clark's nightstand. Sees a nice watch. Picks it up  
longingly. Wipes it and puts it back in its place.

WILL (V.O.)  
Nothing's missing except for the  
garbage I took out.

He pulls the letter out of the MANILLA ENVELOPE, sets it on  
the table. Scribbles a P.S.

Struggles to tie his tie in the mirror.

He gives the place a last look. Satisfied, he leaves.

INT. IMMERSON LAW OFFICES - AFTERNOON

Will sits and waits, trying not to look nervous.

WILL (V.O.)  
I won't ever bother you again.

Checks his watch, it's 2:59pm.

WILL (V.O.)  
Yours with respect and gratitude,

WOMAN (O.S.)  
William Michaels?

He looks up to see **TINA**, professional, smartly dressed.

WILL  
(standing)  
Yes ma'am.

TINA  
(shaking his hand)  
Tina. Do you have your CV?

WILL  
My...?

TINA  
Resume.

WILL  
Oh.

He nervously pulls his resume out of the same MANILLA ENVELOPE. Watches nervously as she reads. Reads. Reads.

WILL (CONT'D)  
(Blurting)  
I was in prison.

She studies him. A tense moment. Then, leaning forward:

TINA  
Me too.

He is shocked, she smiles. They walk off.

TINA (CONT'D)  
A few of us have. The non-profit sector can be pretty thankless...

INT. SOTO'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

KATIE  
(reading again)  
PS. Mrs. Taverson let me in.

Clark speaks but Katie isn't listening, she's staring at a rock atop a \$10 bill on the table.

She looks across the street towards the empty bus bench.

And realizes she had it all wrong.

FADE TO BLACK.

**TITLE CARD: THE CLEANER**

**END.**