INT. MARYBETH'S CAR - NIGHT

Joe drives as he and Marybeth ride in tense silence to get Missy. Marybeth glances at the back seat to see if the girls are sleeping.

JOE PICKETT
They asleep?

Start - Sc. 1

Marybeth nods. Joe knows the time for their talk has arrived.

JOE PICKETT (CONT'D)
I... assume you heard?

MARYBETH PICKETT
Apparently, everyone has.

That stings a little. Joe takes that in.

JOE PICKETT
Then, I'll assume that you're mad at me for not telling you.
(nothing)
I know I probably should have, but I didn't want to worry you.

MARYBETH PICKETT
Oh, come on. I know how dangerous your job is. But I thought we were doing this thing together.

He nods, sheepishly.

JOE PICKETT
You're right.

MARYBETH PICKETT
Was Keeley the same guy you had the problem with at the farmer's market?

JOE PICKETT
Yeah.

MARYBETH PICKETT
Is this going to escalate?

JOE PICKETT
No. Don't worry. I can handle it.

MARYBETH PICKETT
Joe, I'm not some damsel for you to protect.
(MORE)

MARYBETH PICKETT (CONT'D)
If there's a dangerous situation going on, you need to tell me.

JOE PICKETT
I would. It's not. It was just... stupid. I let my guard down when I shouldn't have. It was just stupid.

Marybeth sees how bad Joe already feels. She softens.

MARYBETH PICKETT
You know, I once heard something that always made me think of you-- that people who grow up around violence, sometimes have a hard time recognizing danger when it comes.

Joe squirms. She's obviously touching a nerve.

JOE PICKETT
I made a dumb mistake. Let's not make it mean more than that, okay?

Marybeth bristles. Not really the conciliatory tone she was hoping for. Joe tries his best to smooth it over.

JOE PICKETT (CONT'D)
I'll do better. I won't die dumb. I promise.

MARYBETH PICKETT
I don't want you to die smart either.

He sighs.

JOE PICKETT
Better than dumb.

They drive in silence for a long moment.

JOE PICKETT (CONT'D)
And just so you know, I didn't shit my pants. That part was exaggerated.

Marybeth shakes her head, irritated.

MARYBETH PICKETT
Well, I'm sure glad we got that straight.

Joe is too. But there's more troubling him

JOE PICKETT
Ever since Ote took my gun, all I can hear is my father's voice in my head, telling me to never look weak. Never give an inch.

He looks at her, uncomfortable with his own anger.

JOE PICKETT (CONT'D)
And I try my best to be a good man. A moral man. But deep down, when I think about everything that Ote almost took from me, I wish I had killed the son of a bitch.

Marybeth doesn't often see her husband so raw, and it scares her a bit. She struggles to find the right words to help. She takes his hand in hers.

MARYBETH PICKETT
Joe, it's okay for you to be angry. You're allowed. It won't make you dangerous.

JOE PICKETT
I know that.

MARYBETH PICKETT
Do you?

Joe looks away.

JOE PICKETT
I know what it looks like when anger is given free reign. And that's not the life I want for my wife and kids.

She looks at him, almost sorry for him.

JOE PICKETT (CONT'D)
What?

MARYBETH PICKETT
Sometimes life has a way of forcing us to deal with unfinished business.

JOE PICKETT
That business is finished. I grew up. It's done.

Marybeth nods warmly, deciding not to push it any further.

END