

# **THE UNSLEEPING**

written by

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**EXT. CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN REENTRY CENTER - DAY**

A crisp autumn wind whistles through the high chain-link fences. Half-smoked cigarettes strewn in the No-Parking Zone tremble as it passes.

TREVOR BROOKS, early 20s, rests against his rusty blue sedan, heedless of the chill. His fingers twitch as he watches the seductive dance of the cigarettes.

Lean and tall, in a flannel shirt, his square, dour face matches the glum red-brick building in front of him.

SID THOMAS, 20, steps out of the building. Short, scrawny -- almost vampiric in appearance -- he slouches into the collar of his denim jacket.

He LIMPS toward Trevor. The two men share an awkward hug.

SID  
Where's mom?

TREVOR  
She told me she'd be here, too.

Sid nods, glances at the road like she still might--

TREVOR (cont'd)  
Big day for you. Should we splurge  
for buffalo wings? A big steak?

Sid opens the passenger door and casually raises his middle finger back towards the ugly building.

SID  
Wherever, man.

**INT. GALAXY BURGER - DAY**

Trevor and Sid stare up at a futuristic, stainless steel menu board. Bright space-themed pinatas with *For Sale!* signs dangle listlessly above them.

Taped to the counter: *\$0.50 surcharge on all credit cards.*

SID  
Why do they call it the E.T. Shake?

Trevor's gaze is on that stupid *\$.50 Surcharge* sign.

TREVOR  
Comes with Reece's Pieces. You know?  
Those are E.T.'s favorite.

SID

What the hell is an E.T.?

Trevor counts the \$1 bills in his wallet...

TREVOR

You've seen that movie. Everyone has.

Sid's eyes narrow in a mixture of insecurity and anger -- as though Trevor is insinuating something much deeper.

SID

You making fun of me?

TREVOR

(ignoring Sid)

Goddamn fifty cents -- I'm going to the car to get my checkbook.

Sid's reptilian eyes smolder as they track Trevor's head through the crowd.

Behind Sid, a fat BUSINESSMAN in a suit steps to the far end of the counter and gestures impatiently for an employee.

Sid's eyes flick to the Businessman, who has now started a fuss with a pimply-faced employee.

BUSINESSMAN

... don't want to talk to your manager! I want you idiots to get an order right the first time!

Sid's mouth twitches... his hands curl out of his pockets.

PIMPLY EMPLOYEE

Sir, only my manager can--

BUSINESSMAN

You mindless burger flippers are worth half the shit wages you--

Reaching to the counter, Sid grabs a pen and flicks it. It tomahawks across the gap--

and CLACKS against Businessman's neck.

SID

(calm, but LOUD)

Shut your hole, fat-ass.

SILENCE fills the restaurant. Businessman stares back at Sid -- surprised... calculating... *dismissive*--

SID (cont'd)  
 You like yelling at people who can't  
 fight back, butterball?

Now Businessman rises to the bait--

BUSINESSMAN  
 Better than I like trash like you.

Sid's eyes flare. DELIGHTED. Stark against his gaunt cheeks.

SID  
 You ever been punched in the face?

BUSINESSMAN  
 What?

Sid coolly picks up a plastic fork from the counter.

SID  
 Waddle over here and answer me.

Businessman stutters, now looking for that Manager. He's  
 three times Sid's weight, but seems smaller.

SID (cont'd)  
 I'm trash? How? Cause I don't have a  
 suit like you?

BUSINESSMAN  
 Well... maybe we should all...

But Sid's enjoying this. His eyes are locked on, an UNSTABLE  
 furnace behind them ablaze.

SID  
 I bet you blubber when you cry.

BUSINESSMAN  
 This is--

Sid brandishes the fork, eyes wide. He grins... TENSES--

Trevor's arm snakes around Sid's shoulders.

TREVOR  
 Jesus, Sid. I thought they fixed you.

Businessman is visibly relieved. He relax--

Sid LUNGES! Incredibly fast, the plastic fork held forth  
 like a trident -- but Trevor's ready. He holds Sid back.

But not before Businessman lets out a SQUEAL OF FRIGHT.

**INT. WALMART - DAY**

Trevor sucks on his milkshake. He watches Sid tramp through the aisles... watches him limp... limp... limp...

It makes Trevor uncomfortable. He looks away --

TREVOR

Goddamn.

-- down to the cuff of his flannel shirt. He fingers it. It's a nice cotton. A name-brand shirt. Nicer than what you'd find here. The kind of thing smart guys who refuse to pay stupid \$0.50 credit card charges can afford--

His head jerks up to find Sid standing inches away. Silent. Watchful. A new toothbrush and toothpaste in his hands.

SID

You took that fat guy's side.

TREVOR

I didn't take his side.

SID

Y-y-you grabbed me first!

TREVOR

Fat dude didn't have a parole officer who'd flunk him.

Sid processes the thought and gives a nod. It's a jerking motion, as though he struggles with the internal energy that fucks up his head.

TREVOR (cont'd)

Good -- what else? You're going to need some deodorant, some new socks probably.

As he talks, they walk down the mega-store's endless, precise rows.

**EXT. SAGEVIEW TRAILER PARK - DAY**

Trevor's car winds through crooked, unpaved lanes. Trailers of various colors and phases of disrepair dot the bare earth -- casting long, late-afternoon shadows.

A rottweiler chained to a tractor tire barks menacingly as the car stops in the packed dirt, next to the nastiest trailer in the lot.

**INT./EXT. TREVOR'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

The hideous trailer LOOMS in the windshield.

TREVOR

Can't believe mom is still here.  
Goddamn Denver needs more tornadoes.

Sid is quiet. Trevor points to an overgrown, abandoned lot a hundred yards away.

TREVOR (cont'd)

At least they finally took your dad's old trailer away.

But Sid hasn't looked over. Trevor SIGHS.

TREVOR (cont'd)

Sorry I never visited you.

SID

You didn't miss nothing. I ain't changed at all.

TREVOR

Was it bad in there?

SID

Not so bad like you'd see on the TV shows -- but you know how I am.

(looks down)

It was still a cage, you know? Things ain't so bad if I can wander a bit, but they lock you in at night and I--

TREVOR

I know. But now you're out.

Sid's eyes flick upwards and catch hold of Trevor. The depth of despair he sees rivets Trevor in place.

SID

Don't let me go back.

TREVOR

That's up to you.

SID

Don't let me do anything stupid to get locked up again. Kick my ass if you need to. Just promise me--

TREVOR

Promises don't mean shit.

SID

How would I know? Ain't nobody ever made me a promise.

Trevor rolls his eyes... but Sid waits.

Trevor looks around the shitty neighborhood. His eyes settle on the TRAILER. He really, really doesn't like being here.

TREVOR

Fine, I promise to do what I can. Now get in there before mom gets home from wherever.

SID

I can't go to your place for a bit?

TREVOR

I've got mid-terms all next week.

SID

Oh. Maybe after that, you know, if we get some good weath--

TREVOR

This is my last semester. I'm taking a shit-ton of credit hours.

Sid nods. Mutters thanks, LIMPS away. *That fucking limp.* Trevor sticks his head out the window.

TREVOR (cont'd)

My last test is on Thursday. We can get together on Friday.

SID

No, you got college to worry-

TREVOR

Really. I missed hanging with you.

Sid's face bursts into a smile. It's guileless and genuine. The innocence of a child somewhere under all his demons.

TREVOR (cont'd)

Just take your time, keep trying to make good choices.

With that, Trevor pulls out of the dirty yard, spraying dust into the air. Sid stands on the sagging, crooked porch of the trailer.

SID

I will. I *promise!*

**INT. TREVOR'S CAR - DAY**

Trevor's hand rests on the steering wheel. It's morning now. A new day. He has a nice watch around his wrist, and he smiles grimly at the gleaming bauble as he ignores the hideous trailer once more LOOMING past the windshield.

The passenger door opens and Sid flops in -- holds his hands up to the heater.

SID  
Supposed to be nice today.

TREVOR  
Not raining anymore, is it?

SID  
Mom's awake -- you wanna go in and say *hi* before we leave?

Trevor doesn't bother to answer. He peels away, face tight, as Sid starts digging through Trevor's glove box...

SID (cont'd)  
Got any cigarettes?

TREVOR  
Told you, I quit.

SID  
Might still be... what's this?

He waves a piece of paper. A phone number and a name: *HOLLI*.

SID (cont'd)  
Holli? Who hung out at Zeke's house?

TREVOR  
I still have that? I haven't seen that girl since you got busted.

SID  
You guys hooked up?

Sid crumples the paper, slams the glove box HARD.

SID (cont'd)  
You KNEW I liked her!

TREVOR  
Everyone liked Holli.

SID  
But I liked her *f-f-first!*



**EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY**

Morning mist floats above the evergreens. A RIVER ROARS nearby. Trevor holds one of the paintball guns.

TREVOR

Balls in here. Cartridge goes here.  
Safety on. Safety off. Pow pow.

**EDGE OF THE RIVER GORGE - DAY**

SID

That is one pissed-off river.

The river gorge is only a dozen feet deep here, and the ROAR of the whitewater is intense. Trevor leans against a tree, and is startled by a huge PRAYING MANTIS. It's focused on a grasshopper an inch away.

TREVOR

Check this out.

Mantis STRIKES. Perfect! It pulls the writhing grasshopper deeper into an embrace. Begins eating its head.

TREVOR (cont'd)

You think the grasshopper knows  
what's happening? Or is just, like,  
*Where's my head disappearing to?*

Mantis and grasshopper disappear in an EXPLOSION OF RED.

SID

(grins, lowers gun)  
Mantis was, like, *Did God just send  
down a fucking asteroid?*

**IN THE FOREST - LATER**

They dash through the forest. The CLICKA-CLICKA of paintball guns echoes off the tree trunks. Sid WHOOMPS into the leaf litter, rolls behind a fallen tree.

A fresh trickle of blue paint runs down his shoulder.

TREVOR (O.S.)

I got you!

Sid grabs a handful of leaves, wipes at the paint.

SID

Did not!

**DEEPER IN THE FOREST - LATER**

Trevor stalks between the trees. Gun ready - tracking left. Slowly, a humanoid form RISES from the leaves to his right.

Sid's barrel shows an easy shot into Trevor's chest. But the barrel tracks downward... past Trevor's waist...

SID  
(whispering)  
I liked her first.

The barrel steadies. CLICKA-CLICKA

Blossoms of red paint sprout at Trevor's groin. He SCREAMS as he goes down in a heap. His screams turn to MOANS.

Sid rushes over, all innocence.

SID (cont'd)  
Oh my gosh! Sorrysorrysorry.

**NEAR THE RIVER - LATER**

Trevor runs through a golden stand of aspens. He's covered with splotches of dried red paint.

Ahead, Sid dashes beneath towering pines, equally covered covered with pockmarks of dried blue paint. His limp is more pronounced with each step.

CLICKA-- A tree near Sid SPROUTS a blue rosette.

Sid veers left to--

**THE RIVER GORGE - CONTINUOUS**

Limping along the sharp edge of the gorge, Sid finds a likely spot. Lowers himself over the edge. Perches on the narrow trunk of a bush growing from the gorge wall.

Sid takes aim at the trail behind him.

Thirty feet below, the river ROARS.

**NEAR THE RIVER - CONTINUOUS**

Trevor blows past the blue-spattered tree, the sound of the river growing with each footfall. He leaves the trail, dashes downhill to cut Sid off.

He bursts out on the edge of the gorge. Nothing downhi--

A streak of red whizzes past.

Trevor barrel rolls into a stand of bunchgrass, crawls to the far side. He glimpses Sid's faceguard, rises on his knees -- CLICKA CLICKA as he fingers the trigger.

Sid's black face guard erupts into BLUE.

And falls away...

### **THE RIVER GORGE - CONTINUOUS**

Panting, Trevor slides to the edge of the gorge. The ROAR of the river is like a wind roaring over the rocky lip.

Fresh gouge-marks show a violent skid down.

Waist-deep in an eddy, Sid looks up at Trevor with a cocky devil-may-care grin.

Trevor starts to stand, but a puff of movement catches his eye. He glances -- is HORRIFIED -- to see a boulder, disrupted by Sid's fall, topple from the gorge wall.

The THRUM of the river swallows Trevor's SHOUT as the rock hurtles down... down... and dashes against Sid's head.

Sid's eyes go WIDE AND WHITE. He slinks bonelessly beneath the waves and re-emerges downstream, picking up speed.

Trevor sprints along the gorge. He gains on the current, passes a cadre of dog-walkers--

TREVOR

Get help!

The lip of the gorge is a bit lower now -- with a rough trail hacked into the face. Trevor navigates the first step, sees Sid floating by face-down.

Trevor JUMPS... hurtling down into the raging--

The world explodes into an ANGRY, BELLOWING chaotic froth. Somehow he finds Sid's arm! He turns his brother face-up just as they SLAM into a rock. Trevor grimaces, turns--

Another ROCK. Trevor pulls Sid against his chest... OOPMH. He takes the impact on his back... they tumble over a small waterfall... speed through a chute...

More rocks RISE FROM THE FROTH...

**TITLE OVER BLACK: 10 Months Later****INT. STRIP MALL OFFICE - LINCOLN PARK, DENVER - DAY**

Trevor sits behind an old, sparse desk. His dress shirt looks good on him. A sign on the wall behind him declares in bright pastels: *PAYDAY ANYDAY!*

TREVOR

I can't help you.

Across from him is ALGER FANNON, 30's, in a worn Aerosmith t-shirt. His small eyes look imploringly at Trevor.

ALGER

I can't work without my truck.

TREVOR

I warned you a month ago.

ALGER

Had to take care of my--

TREVOR

And again two weeks ago.

Trevor pulls a paper from a folder. A Title of Ownership.

TREVOR (cont'd)

Did I leave any of this unclear?

ALGER

No. But...

TREVOR

Did you drive the truck here?

ALGER

(fidgets guiltily)

No.

Trevor presses a buzzer on his desk. The door to the office creaks open, and the giant frame of MARLON ANEFAL -- Polynesian and ponytailed -- steps in.

Marlon shakes his head. *No truck.* Trevor leans in on Alger.

TREVOR

Don't make me field someone for your damn truck.

ALGER

I need another week!

**INT. RECEPTION OFFICE - PAYDAY ANYDAY - DAY**

Trevor steps out of his office into the reception office of *ANYDAY LOANS*. Facing the entrance is a high, ill-used counter with a cheap stainless steel top that looks like it's been bashed by a thousand angry fists.

There's no Muzak here -- only the ominous, random CLINK-CLINK from the pipes in the ceiling. Outside, the traffic on downtown Denver's worst streets is loud and cranky.

Posters abound: *CHECK-CASHING! TITLE LOANS! PAYDAY LOANS!*

He walks over to Marlon's desk at the back of room.

TREVOR

You got a cousin that can handle the D.K. or Repo on this? Tonight?

MARLON

You told Fannon he had 'til tomorrow.

Trevor drops the file on Marlon's desk.

TREVOR

That's what I wanted him to think.

MARLON

(impressed)

That's why you the boss, man.

TREVOR

We need 80% out on the street with no downs this month. Those bonuses don't pay themselves.

**INT. RECEPTION OFFICE - PAYDAY ANYDAY - DAY**

Trevor's got sunglasses on, a backpack over his shoulder.

TREVOR

I'm out early. All yours.

Marlon looks up from a comic book. Friendly. Goofy. Not nearly as intimidating as he looked a minute ago.

MARLON

Ciao, boss-man.

TREVOR

(over his shoulder)

If you sneak your damn dog in, at least close my office door first.

**EXT. TRUJILLO TACOS DRIVE THRU - DAY**

Trevor manually rolls down his window, leans out--

TREVOR  
I'll take a number three.

INTERCOM  
Would you like Coke, Diet--

TREVOR  
Iced Tea.

Waiting, he reaches into his backpack bag and pulls out a SANDWICH and starts to eat.

He reaches back into the bag for a pair of GLOSSY sheets.

*1st Sheet:* a Dealer's Spec Sheet for a new sport sedan.

*2nd Sheet:* (more worn): *Modern Approach to Straight Teeth!*

Trevor looks into his CRACKED rear-view mirror and gives himself an awkward, toothy smile... evaluates...

**EXT. HOSPITAL LOT - DAY**

The August afternoon sun bakes down upon a large parking lot. Iced tea and brown bag in hand, Trevor strides towards a looming building with large letters athwart the roof line:

*ROCKY MOUNTAIN TEACHING HOSPITAL.*

**INT. HOSPITAL - HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

Sid's room. A room for the not-quite-dead.

Sid lies comatose in an immaculate bed. I.V. lines drape each arm, sensors decorate his shaved head.

Hospital machines BEEP and HUM in plaintive cacophony. Diodes on them FLASH intermittently.

JULEEN THOMAS, 50's, sits in a corner of the room. From her dowdy dress to her gravelly voice, she appears every bit the careworn truck-stop waitress she's been her whole life.

This is Trevor and Sid's mother.

Trevor's eyes linger on his mother's frowsy dress, and he fingers his own dress shirt.

TREVOR  
You eat anything?

He sits down next to her and moves aside a half-knitted afghan, a ragged tabloid magazine. It's clear she spends hours and hours in this room.

JULEEN  
I have a bag of Cheetos here somewh--

TREVOR  
(gives her the bag)  
Have my lunch, ma.

JULEEN  
I can't--

TREVOR  
Really -- some friends came by and  
took me to...

But Juleen's eyes are back on Sid.

JULEEN  
Isn't he just such an angel?

Trevor stands up with a sigh.

His eyes catch something sticking out of his mom's purse. A CHEAP PAMPHLET with shining crosses and an open-armed Jesus.

A 6'4" blue-eyed Jesus -- probably with perfect abs.

The kind of pamphlet that drives Trevor *abso-fucking-lutely* nuts. He snatches it from her purse.

TREVOR  
Are these people after you again?

Juleen doesn't answer. She keeps her eyes down.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
You think Sid likes them in the room?  
Having them pray about what we should  
do with him!?

Before Juleen can say anything, the door opens.

In steps DINA AZZOLA, 30s. Mousy, efficient, friendly. She checks the machines, fingers the IV lines, puts eye drops in Sid's eyes with practiced precision.

Juleen hustles over to Dina's side.

JULEEN

His cheeks are coloring up!

Dina nods. She's heard this from Juleen a thousand times.

DINA

I'll mention it to the docs.

Juleen strokes Sid's hair.

JULEEN

He looks like an angel, doesn't he?

DINA

He was -- *is* a handsome young man.

Juleen continues to coo over Sid. Trevor watches. Irritated. Impatient. He walks to the window and stares out at the mountains -- lets his mind wander from this fucking hospit--

JULEEN

... like on Christmas Eve, right?

Trevor jerks back towards the bed. Juleen looks at him expectantly.

TREVOR

Come again?

JULEEN

You couldn't sleep. You were too excited. But not Sid. He slept like a perfect sweet boy.

Trevor's mouth twists.

TREVOR

When I ten? When we got the bicycles?  
That Christmas Eve?

Juleen's eyes unfocus for a moment. Trevor watches her closely, and gives a look of disgust as--

His mother's eyes slowly re-focus and she gives a beatific smile down to Sid.

JULEEN

(dreamily)

Yes! Such a perfect boy.

Trevor glances at Dina. She's overheard, and has a little smile for them as she leaves the room.

He FOLLOWS her out the door.



**INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY**

It's a rather sedate hospital hallway. Not a lot of urgency on the the Long Term Care floor. The MUZAK from the ceiling is a sharp contrast to the machines in Sid's room.

Trevor waves the pamphlet at Dina.

TREVOR

You were going to keep these nutters away from her.

DINA

It's good for your mom to interact--

TREVOR

With what? *Real* people? Why? She talks to Sid all day, stringing us along while she plays out her fantasies.

DINA

What else *can* she do?

TREVOR

(sighs)

Anything new this week? At all?

DINA

Comas are still a mystery--

Trevor snorts and crumples up the pamphlet.

TREVOR

That's why these Bible thumpers and their Aragorn-looking Jesus get so much attention -- they're the only ones who will give anybody an answer around here.

DINA

Your mom doesn't need answers. She needs your support.

He raises an eyebrow at her.

TREVOR

That Christmas story you heard in there? It's all bullshit.

DINA

Excuse me?

TREVOR

That Christmas? My only present was a pair of gravy-stained action figures some kid lost at the diner.

DINA

Maybe it was a different Christmas?

He shakes his head. Dead certain.

TREVOR

Sid lived with his dad most of the time. He only spent the one Christmas with us. My mom spent that Christmas Eve in the sleeper cab of whatever trucker had the most pills to share.

DINA

That's terr--

TREVOR

She showed up the next night -- thought it was still Christmas Eve.  
(caustic laugh)  
She made me pretend one of my action figures was for Sid.

Dina doesn't know what to say.

TREVOR (cont'd)

That's the lady your hospital lets make all the decisions about Sid.

**INT. SID'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

Trevor steps into the room silently. Juleen isn't around, but her knitting is still there.

He crosses to Sid. He stares down -- watches. Nothing but the rise and fall of Sid's scrawny chest.

TREVOR

Sid?

The machines continue with their maddening cadence.

He reaches out, peels back one of Sid's eyelids. A perfectly healthy EYEBALL stares out at...

TREVOR (cont'd)

Sid?

... nothing.

**INT./EXT. TREVOR'S CAR - MOVING - DAY**

A solidly middle-class neighborhood. Trevor's car RATTLES as it rolls through, slows, ready to turn into a driveway.

And there's a red FORD EXPLORER parked next to the driveway.

In the Explorer, an attractive young woman with dark flyaway curls locks eyes with Trevor.

Trevor is stunned. He forgets the steering wheel and misses the driveway -- sends a trash can bouncing across the yard.

TREVOR

Goddamn.

He's not talking about the trash can.

**EXT. TREVOR'S HOUSE - DAY**

The dark-haired young woman stands next to the Explorer as Trevor stalks over.

This is HOLLI COKER, early 20's. She has a tasteful nose ring, and is well-tanned. There's an edge to her -- the hot bartender even the frat boys are afraid to offend.

Not the kind of girl who spends much time being nervous, and has no practice at hiding it. It's all over her face...

HOLLI

Huh. Can't believe you still have that car.

That doesn't break any ice with Trevor.

HOLLI (cont'd)

Been a while.

TREVOR

What the hell are you doing here?

HOLLI

I had to come back to town to--

TREVOR

No -- what are you doing parked in front of my house?

She looks away from him. Unconsciously bobs her head.

HOLLI

Well... shit... I was rehearsing.

Holli turns back to the Explorer before Trevor can say anything. She slides open the back door, and we meet...

ELLA. She's two and a half years old. Sundress. Flyaway curls like Holli. Turned up nose.

HOLLI (cont'd)  
This is Ella. My daughter.

Holli picks up the girl.

HOLLI (cont'd)  
*Your daughter.*

**EXT. TREVOR'S HOUSE - DAY**

Trevor's lawn is the type of DEEP-GREEN you only get with damn-the-environment levels of fertilizer and water usage.

Holli has rolled out a blanket for Ella, who munches on a cup of Cheerios.

Trevor, still in his dress-shirt, sweats under the August sun. He remains standing as Holli sits next to Ella.

HOLLI  
She's two and a half years old.  
Thirty one months, to be exact.

Trevor's eyes move as he calculates.

HOLLI (cont'd)  
If you think I was with any other  
guys back then, I *will* hit you.

TREVOR  
How would I know who you were with?  
You just disappeared!

HOLLI  
It was a bad scene back then.

Trevor has a retort for that, but Ella pushes her way onto Holli's lap.

HOLLI (cont'd)  
Can you say "Hi" to Mr. Trevor?

Ella shyly digs her face into the crook of Holli's arm.

TREVOR  
So. What? I owe you money now or  
something?

Holli's eyes flare. Trevor's glad he's needled her.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
 You just show up? Three years later?  
 How did you even know where I live?

She doesn't answer.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
 You could've called -- I have the  
 same number!

HOLLI  
 So do I.

TREVOR  
 Then you should've answered it any of  
 the twenty times I called thirty-  
 whatever months ago!

HOLLI  
 She *is* yours.

TREVOR  
 Is that why you stopped by?

HOLLI  
 All I can do now is try to make  
 things right.

Trevor looks down -- is surprised to see Ella has her eyes  
 locked on him. Innocent. Curious. CUTE.

Holli stands -- sets Ella down.

HOLLI (cont'd)  
 I need a glass of water.

Trevor nods toward the front door.

TREVOR  
 On the right, above the sink.

As soon as Holli disappears inside, Trevor lifts his phone  
 and holds it out towards Ella--

A smart girl, she recognizes *picture time!* and beams...

ELLA  
 Sheeze!

... as his phone camera CLICKS.

Despite himself, Trevor smiles back at her.

**INT. TREVOR'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Holli stands in Trevor's kitchen, evaluating the scene. It's clean, the table and counters are nice, but it's *off*.

There are no accessories -- no magnets on the fridge, no pictures on the wall, no dish towels, no trinkets. Like a sterile catalog shoot that hasn't been staged yet.

It looks incredibly lonely.

**EXT. TREVOR'S HOUSE - DAY**

Trevor has his tie off. He's seated next to Ella. He's busy showing her how a tie works. They don't notice--

Holli on the porch, ignoring her glass of water, absorbed in the scene. Her eyes full of emotion.

Trevor looks up. He stiffens a bit and sets the tie down.

TREVOR

Are you staying in town?

HOLLI

For a couple weeks. Maybe more.

TREVOR

And then go where?

HOLLI

Can we come by again? Like, tomorrow?

Trevor hesitates. Holli steps down off the porch.

HOLLI (cont'd)

It's not for money. But it is important.

TREVOR

Can we do a test -- DNA, blood type, or something?

HOLLI

(weary smile)

Whatever you want -- but no needles.

Trevor glances down at Ella.

TREVOR

No needles.

Holli bends down to pluck the only two dandelions that besmirch Trevor's fine lawn. She puts them stem-first into her glass of water. A makeshift vase.

She hands it to Trevor.

HOLLI

Put this on your table. It'll spruce  
the place up a bit.

With that, she scoops up Ella and the blanket as easily as she did the dandelions.

HOLLI (cont'd)

Say goodbye to Mr. Trevor.

Ella's not so shy now -- she waves vigorously. Trevor raises a hesitant hand. He watches Ella... then Holli... Ella... Holli... as they cross to the Explorer.

**INT. TREVOR'S HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS - DAY**

A bit dazed. Trevor walks back into the house. He PLOPS the glass with the dandelions onto the center of the table.

They do add a touch charm to the lonely kitchen.

We follow Trevor as he walks deeper into the house.

It's a two-story duplex. Low ceilings on the ground floor, but nice tile in the foyer. A hallway separates the kitchen from the living room before it ends at--

**INT. TREVOR'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - DAY**

A short flight of stairs that leads to a guest room on the left, bathroom on the right, master bedroom straight ahead.

No pictures, no decorations. Sterile. Lonely.

Trevor veers right. Into the bathroom. But we stay in the hall and PAN a full 180 degrees -- facing down the stairs.

The stairs are gloomy despite the light outside, they look ominous as the SHOWER turns on in the bathroom.

**EXT. CITY STREET - DAY**

Holli's parked a block away. Her composure is gone. She's not quite crying -- but waterworks are a single bad thought away.

In the backseat, Ella kicks her legs happily. Oblivious.

HOLLI

Ella, sweetie, did you like Mr. Trevor? Was he a nice mister?

ELLA

Nuggets!

HOLLI

Yes, you were such a good girl at Mr. Trevor's house! Let's find you some chicken nuggets.

**INT. TREVOR'S BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Trevor brushes his teeth in his boxers. A half-full beer bottle rests on the counter.

He spits, rinses. Washes his face. He examines his teeth in the mirror. Offers up that toothy grin again. *Braces?*

He suddenly STOPS... reconsiders the image in the mirror.

He grabs his cell phone, pulls up the PICTURE of Ella. He stares at it stares... at her... back into the mirror... back at her... jawline... cheekbones... brows... eyes...

*Maybe?*

As quickly as he grabbed it, he clicks the phone off, grabs the beer, turns off the light, leaves us in--

**INT. TREVOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Darkness. And the foreboding, deep SILENCE that's found only in the dead of night.

Trevor's eyes flick open. Something has woken him. He turns to the clock. Illuminated Display: **2:12**.

From downstairs. Faintly--

SCRATCHING -- like a coffee cup sliding along a desk, tinged with an electric HUM. The faint HUM warbles, turns into... a MOAN?

Trevor sits up. Nervous. Holding his breath as he...

Listens... liste--

PA-THUMPSHHH like a heavy drawn-out heartbeat.



Trevor's hand shakes as he reaches for the empty beer bottle on the nightstand.

The HUM returns... builds... SCRISH... SCRISH

*Footfalls? Coming closer?*

Fuck this. Trevor jumps from his bed, throws open the door, reaches for the hallway light switch.

His hand freezes--

A DARK FORM looms at the bottom of the stairs--

Trevor raises the bottle with one hand. His other hand scrabbles across the wall in search of the light switch.

His fingers can't find it--

The form DARKENS, SWELLS as it lifts towards--

His finger catches the switch -- LIGHT floods the hallway.

Nothing.

Empty stairway. Empty hallway. Trevor's hard GASPS are the only sound.

TREVOR

Hello? I'm getting my gun!

No response.

He edges towards the stairs... leans out... doesn't want to take another step... scans... steps...

Backwards. Into his room. He closes the door -- tight.

He grabs a BASEBALL BAT from the closet and steps back to his door, balances the empty beer bottle on the door handle.

And leaves the bedroom light on as he crawls back into bed.

**INT. TREVOR'S ROOM - DAY**

Sunlight streams through the windows. Trevor rolls over in bed. A soft PING sounds as his forehead bangs against the metal barrel of the baseball bat.

He startles upright in bed. Looks around. The beer bottle is still there, balanced on the door handle.

*Not a dream?*

He looks over to his alarm clock. **8:01.**

TREVOR  
(jumping out of bed)  
Shit!

**INT. TREVOR'S HOUSE - LATER**

Dressed, Trevor dashes down the stairs two at a time--

SKIDS on a puddle of water in the hallway and FALLS ON HIS ASS near the kitchen table.

As he HISSES in pain, his eyes trace the puddle of water back to the table...

Where Holli's glass -- her makeshift vase -- lies sideways and empty.

And, in the center of the table, where the glass had been --

DESSICATED and BROWN like they've been dead for weeks -- are the dandelions.

**INT. TREVOR'S OFFICE - PAYDAY ANYDAY - DAY**

Trevor stands at the counter, tapping away at a computer. Marlon walks by, opening the mail.

TREVOR  
Remember the guy with the shitty old Lexus -- missed a payment 'cause he had to do a paternity test?

MARLON  
(nods)  
Cost him, like, three-hundred bucks, he said.

TREVOR  
Jesus.

**INT. TREVOR'S HOUSE - DAY**

Trevor still has his tie on. Holli looks damn good in a Lululemon-type outfit.

They're seated at the table. So is Ella, who, from her booster seat, is busy turning her quesadilla into shrapnel.

TREVOR  
Why did you do it?

HOLLI  
The day the cops raided the house on  
8th, when Zeke and everyone got  
arrested? That was the same day I  
found out I was pregnant.  
(shrugs)  
Messed up my head, you know?

TREVOR  
For three years? With me?

HOLLI  
You were selling drugs!

TREVOR  
Just weed to college kids -- which is  
less than what you were in on, I bet.

Holli looks away. *Guilty as charged.*

HOLLI  
Did you get any fallout after the  
raid?

TREVOR  
My brother did. Two years worth. You?

HOLLI  
Your brother?

TREVOR  
Sid. Short, scrawny--

HOLLI  
Oh, geez, that's right. Crazy Sid. I  
forgot he was your brother.

TREVOR  
Half-brother.

HOLLI  
No wonder you put up with him.  
(shudders)  
Man, even JoJo and Zeke were kinda  
afraid of him. He was so... so...

TREVOR  
I know how he was.

No one speaks. Ella gleefully tosses her sippy cup across  
the room.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
 Why are you back in town?

Holli ignores the question. She reaches into her purse, pulls out a Tupperware full of sliced veggies.

HOLLI  
 Ella, if you want any candies, you need to eat these first.

ELLA  
 Cannies?

HOLLI  
 If you eat these first.

That works for Ella. She digs in. Trevor is impressed, but he knows Holli is avoiding . .

TREVOR  
 What's going on? You don't want to tell me why you're in town?

HOLLI  
 (proudly)  
 She gets veggies every meal. Do you?

TREVOR  
 Is Tabasco Sauce a vegetable?

Holli waves a carrot stick at the nice surroundings.

HOLLI  
 If you want to be high class, you should be more concerned with what you put inside yourself than with what you put around yourself.

**EXT. TREVOR'S HOUSE - DAY**

Ella holds a red Popsicle, her attention captured by a colony of ants that lives in the cracks of the driveway.

Trevor and Holli sit on the stoop. Far away from each other.

HOLLI  
 I was real good, you know? As soon as I knew -- bam! cold turkey -- no cigarettes, no drinks, no parties.

TREVOR  
 Where'd you go?

HOLLI

Back home -- Fort Collins. At my  
sister's place.

Ella's lost interest in the ants. She wanders over.

ELLA

Pretty? Pretty?

HOLLI

You want Miss Pretty?

Holli reaches into her purse, pulls out an elegant  
articulated WOODEN DOLL. Ella bounces in excitement.

HOLLI (cont'd)

(to Trevor)

Found it on Pinterest.

TREVOR

For her birthday?

HOLLI

No. For because.

TREVOR

You do the birthday thing with Ella?  
Christmas, too? Right?

HOLLI

Of course.

Trevor nods. Smiles.

TREVOR

Kids should have that stuff.

Trevor watches Ella. He doesn't notice Holli watching him.  
It's a tender look... but it fades as she resolves to...

HOLLI

Three years ago -- did you know where  
Zeke got the drugs?

TREVOR

Downtown?

HOLLI

No -- it came from Albuquerque. From  
some bad dudes. Everything had to  
come from them. Or else.

She lets it hang in the air.

TREVOR

Why are you--

Holli stands. Her hands flutter.

HOLLI

I made sure Ella got everything she needed. *Everything*. We got good doctors, all of her checkups--

Trevor sits up. His brow furrows.

HOLLI (cont'd)

--the safest car seat--

TREVOR

What did you do?

HOLLI

I couldn't give her those things without *money*. Right?!

Holli's agitation grows. Her eyes widen as her hands wipe at her legs, at her hair. She's scared. Lost...

TREVOR

Are you in trouble?

HOLLI

That oil boom in the Dakotas. All those workers. Bored. With money. The guys from Albuquerque needed help to keep up with the demand.

TREVOR

Oh, geez, Holli--

HOLLI

A mom with a baby. The cops would never check what's in her car--

TREVOR

How much trouble are we talking?

HOLLI

They want me to testify against the guys from Albuquerque.

(voice cracks)

But I can't do that.

Trevor waits.

HOLLI (cont'd)

They shouldn't give me more than a couple months in jail. My lawyer says nine months max.

TREVOR

What about Ella?

Holli draws in on herself. Her hands stop.

HOLLI

Foster care -- but they won't even promise I can get her back.

TREVOR

What about your sister?

HOLLI

(shakes her head)

Married an Army Engineer who got stationed in Okinawa.

TREVOR

Your mom? Dad?

HOLLI

Last talked to Mom when I was ten. Dad's joined up with the Jehovah's Witnesses -- he's scarier as one of them than when he was drinking.

TREVOR

Then just testify--

HOLLI

You never met these guys, Trev. I do that, Ella ends up in the orphanage.

TREVOR

Then?

Holli's eyes plead as she looks at Trevor. Her voice is soft, but insistent.

HOLLI

You.

**INT. TREVOR'S KITCHEN - EVENING**

On autopilot -- Trevor rummages through his freezer. It's a bachelor's feast of Pizza pockets, tamales, pot pies.

He grabs a tamale, regards it, and tosses it back.

**INT. TREVOR'S KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - LATER**

There's now a grocery bag on the counter. And an orchid.

Trevor holds a half-eaten celery stick, his other hand curled around an open jar of peanut butter on the table.

He chews by force of will -- swallows with a shudder and eyeballs the rest of the celery stick like an enemy.

**INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT**

The kitchen lights CLICK off and Trevor pads toward the stair, but--

Miss Pretty, Ella's wooden doll, lays sprawled on the floor. Left behind. Eerily LIFELIKE.

He jumps -- and laughs at himself for being so on edge. He grabs the doll, sets it PRECARIOUSLY on the stairway banister, and notices . .

On the second stair, one crossed over the other -- the dessicated DANDELIONS--

CLACKALACKA! The wooden doll crashes right next to his face.

He startles like he's been shot--

BANGS his head into the railing... falls down... groans. He looks up at the cocked head of the wooden doll peeking over the stair's edge.

Trevor scrambles up, snatches the doll, takes a slow breath... and puts the doll back on the banister -- very carefully.

He steps into the closet, emerges with a wicked-looking crowbar, and continues on his way upstairs.

**INT. TREVOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

The digital display of the alarm clock casts a soft glow over Trevor's sleeping form.

**2:11.**

We're right next to Trevor and *getting closer . . getting down to his level... closer... closer...*

The rise and fall of his chest now OBSCURES and REVEALS the glowing numbers as he breathes--



**2:12.**

A small, sharp CRACK! echoes through the room.

Trevor's chest stops moving. He's awake. He knows something has woken him.

He turns carefully away from the clock, toward the other nightstand, to grab the crowb--

MISS PRETTY STANDS NEXT TO THE CROWBAR!

Shocked, Trevor stares. The doll remains upright -- and STARES BACK. Her left leg is cracked, and she stands at an angle -- favoring the left side and leaning a bit forward.

Like Sid did.

Trevor slowly shrinks back, moving away... the doll's head moves in sync -- tracking him with dispassionate *menace*.

AND STEPS TOWARD TREVOR

Every tendon in Trevor's body flexes and freezes in paralyzing fear.

Miss Pretty takes another step... *CLACKA-CLACKA* now on the bed... *CLICK-CLICK*... her head bobbing like a raptor ranging its prey.

And the doll LIMPS. Just like Sid. A mocking, exaggerated -- but perfect impression of Sid.

The doll is inches away. Trevor spasms backwards--

Right off the edge of his bed--

He crashes to the ground... WHEEZES and GASPS to regain the breath that's been knocked out of him...

A *CLICKA-CLACKA* sound skitters across the floor -- coming at him from under the bed?!

Trevor launches back onto the bed, grabs up the crowbar, stands on his blankets, whirling and swirling -- holding the crowbar high... looking for...

In the silence that follows, a *PATTER* of rain starts against his bedroom window, and the tension dissipates.

Trevor crouches and flicks a bedside lamp on. Miss Pretty is nowhere in sight... and she's nowhere to be found as Trevor nervously searches the room.

**INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY**

Morning light makes everything feel safer. Trevor's door is shut tight, but it shudders slightly as GRRRNK -- the sound of a dresser being moved -- rumbles through.

The bedroom door opens slowly.

Dressed for work, the crowbar in-hand, Trevor peers out...

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

His head slowly comes around the corner... eyes down... watching for that damn doll.

He's afraid, but he is starting to feel a bit ridiculous.

Until he lifts his eyes and sees the NEW ORCHID on the table -- brown, dead, and curled in on itself.

**INT. HOSPITAL - SID'S ROOM - DAY**

Trevor nearly runs into Dina as he steps into Sid's room. Juleen is there, too, next to Sid, her face EBULLIENT.

Juleen starts to talk, but Trevor doesn't pay attention. His eyes are on Sid as he crosses the room.

Nothing about Sid has changed. He lifts the sheets -- Sid's pale, atrophied legs look like they haven't moved in days.

Dina and Juleen watch him. Juleen has a look of triumph in her eyes, and she turns to Dina.

JULEEN

He *is* getting better.

DINA

That's not what I was saying, Ms Thomas. These machines are designed to be overly sensitive . .

Not sure what they're talking about, Trevor looks back down at Sid and his face fills with doubt and confusion as he can find nothing new. *What did I see last night?*

**INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - LATER**

Trevor leans across the counter at the nurse's station. Dina is alone behind the counter. It's very quiet in Long-Term today. It seems impossible they're in a busy hospital.

DINA

I've been telling your mom it's not much. But you know how she is.

TREVOR

What happened?

DINA

The EEG -- those sensors where we shaved his head -- got a couple hits. Nothing big, but two distinct events.

TREVOR

Meaning what?

DINA

(shrugs)

Most coma patients transition into the vegetative state pretty quickly. Sid has never done that. It could be him finally transitioning.

TREVOR

Is that better? Or worse?

Rather than answer, she waves him behind the counter with her.

DINA

Let me show you something.

Digging in a file, she pulls out a scroll of paper and flattens it on the counter.

It's a series of WAVE-FORMS. Like a lie-detector or a seismograph -- but these are a bit loopier, more like calligraphy, and they fill the page.

DINA (cont'd)

These are your brother's brain waves. A healthy brain -- yours for instance -- only has deltas during deep REM sleep. But Sid?

(traces waves)

All deltas.

TREVOR

Except... ?

Her finger moves to the right edge of the paper. The happy delta loops suddenly narrow and sharpen all the way to the edge of the page.

DINA

It only lasts a minute. It's happened the same time each night, so could be some deep-seated Circadian rhythm re-firing.

TREVOR

But you're guessing?

DINA

It's just an EEG. It only tells us what's on the surface. We don't--

TREVOR

(frustrated)

I know. I know.

**INT. TREVOR'S OFFICE - DAY**

DANNY PETERSON, 30, faces Trevor across his desk. Dull-looking -- in a hooded sweatshirt despite the August heat. Wireless headphones dangle from his neck.

An envelope lies in the middle of the desk. A stack of bills is visible within. Trevor touches it with a single finger.

TREVOR

Where'd you get this, Danny?

DANNY

I got it square.

TREVOR

I hear you're in for a couple grand with Romeo. How'd you square up with him, and still have my share?

Danny bobs his head guiltily. He twitches like he needs a cigarette -- or something stronger.

DANNY

I'll work something out with Romeo.

TREVOR

You're paying me back first?

DANNY

Don't take my car, man, I love my car, can't be without my car.

TREVOR

Better I take your rusty Acura than Romeo takes your face off.

Danny's TWITCHING worsens. Trevor considers . . . then pushes the envelope back across the table.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
I'll extend you another ten days. If you can do one thing for me.

Danny's face is an open book. *Anything!*

TREVOR (cont'd)  
You know who is... who's moving drugs these days. Who has it to move and where--

DANNY  
Yeah, yeah! I can get you whatever you need. Rocks, pills--

TREVOR  
No. Just questions that I need you to ask around. About Albuquerque...

**INT. ANYDAY LOANS - DAY**

Marlon's giant face is skeptical as he watches Danny saunter out the front door with his headphones on.

MARLON  
First extension you ever give is to that strung-out *hupo*?

TREVOR  
He's finding something out for me.

Marlon raises an eyebrow.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
Information is as valuable as currency. Thomas Jefferson said so.

MARLON  
(scoffs)  
Says a *haole* that was born rich.

Trevor heads back to his office, but Marlon COUGHS.

MARLON (cont'd)  
Franchise HQ called -- I told them you were in Five Points on a D.K.

TREVOR  
Thanks for covering. I had a doctor thing come up for, uh, a friend.

MARLON  
 (wide smile)  
 No problemo. What are friends for?

A thought gives Trevor pause. He smiles awkwardly at Marlon -- he's trying to return the favor, but even an office friendship is difficult for him.

TREVOR  
 I'm having lunch in the park. Where's your dog? I'll take him -- let him wiggle around instead of baking in your hot-ass car. How's that?

Somehow, Marlon's smile broadens.

MARLON  
 You'll see how good he is, boss. He only shits where he's told, and he never, ever barks.

TREVOR  
 He's still won't get to hang out in the office.

MARLON  
 You'll see, Jefe.

**EXT. CRESCENT PARK - DAY**

Holli sits next to Trevor on a blanket. A newly-purchased wicker basket holds a rotisserie chicken and a package of Hawaiian rolls -- and a tasteful veggie tray.

A pair of balloons are tied to the wicker basket.

Ella, in the grass, feeds a crescent of watermelon to a patient Dachshund.

HOLLI  
 A weiner dog?

TREVOR  
 It gets worse. His name is Muggle.

The dachshund prances by, watermelon dangling from its jaws. *Goggy! Goggy!* from Ella as she chases after.

HOLLI  
 Have you thought about Ella? About what I said?

TREVOR

It's a lot to think about in just a few days. Are you sure you--

Holli doesn't let him finish -- doesn't let him get to a no.

HOLLI

You look tired.

TREVOR

I haven't slept well.

HOLLI

It's stress. I had the most awful dreams when I was pregnant.

(laughs)

Made me wonder if it meant my kid was going to be a monster.

He glances over to Ella. She is trying to walk on all fours like the dog. And doing a pretty good job of it.

TREVOR

Not yet, at least. But she's only just met me.

It's supposed to be a joke, but Trevor says it like he might believe it. Holli moves the conversation away from Ella.

HOLLI

I heard about Sid -- the coma and all. Tough. On your mom, especially, I bet.

TREVOR

(snorts)

Her? She ignored Sid her whole life -- let him stay with his piece of shit dad. Now that it doesn't take any work, she's all-American mom.

HOLLI

Trevor! That's awful to say.

TREVOR

Every day, she leaves him plugged in, basks in sympathy, and forgives herself all over again.

Holli is silent. Ella giggles off-screen. Trevor feels like an ass for shitting on the nice picnic scene.

TREVOR (cont'd)

At least he's predictable now.

HOLLI

(smiles)

The news guys said you were a hero.

Trevor's gaze freezes Holli. This is a bad subject.

TREVOR

You think that qualifies me to take care of your daughter?

HOLLI

(not backing down)

Our daughter -- and it shows you'll do the right thing when it counts.

TREVOR

You don't know that at all.

HOLLI

You jumped into a goddamn river to save him.

No answer from Trevor. This conversation really bothers him.

HOLLI (cont'd)

I remember how much Sid worshiped you. You must have been close.

This make it worse for Trevor. He shakes his head. Is going to say something--

But Ella comes over and flops down in Holli's lap.

HOLLI (cont'd)

Hey, you! Are you getting sticky watermelon hands all over me?

Ella reaches her hands up to Holli's face, and promptly gets tickled. Ella giggles in delight. Trevor watches. An unconscious smile seems to lift his mood.

Holli hasn't stopped furtively watching Trevor.

HOLLI (cont'd)

Ella, show Mr. Trevor what a smart girl you are!

Holli pulls a Sharpie from her purse... draws an 8 on her palm.

HOLLI (cont'd)

Five, six, seven . . .

And shows her palm to Ella--



ELLA  
 (claps her hands)  
 No-man!

HOLLI  
 Smart girl! *Snowman!*

Trevor offers his hand to Ella, and she high-fives it as hard as she can.

TREVOR  
 Where'd she learn that?

HOLLI  
 Our rental place on Polk is house number 818. She asked why our house had snowmen on it. The landlord thought it was hilarious.

Ella squirms off her mom's lap, and squats next to Muggle. The dog's floppy ears fascinate her. She pulls them.

TREVOR  
 No, no. We pet.  
 (guides Ella's hand)  
 Like this. So soft. So soft.

She gets the hang of it. Trevor pets the dog with her, watching her little hand. Entranced by this little human.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
 You want your balloons. Can you say balloon? Baaaaloooon?

ELLA  
 No-man!

Trevor laughs as he ties a balloon around each of her little wrists. Ella waves her arms like--

FURIOUS BARKING

From Muggle tears the August day apart.

***BARK!GRRRR!*** The dog quivers with the force of his rage.

This little dog is going to BARK HIS LUNGS OUT... at...

??

No one's within fifty yards.

Trevor looks around, confused.

Muggle snaps at Holli as she tries to grab him. The dachshund slides away as Trevor comes over, but won't take his eyes from that spot. SPITTLE flies from his mouth--

Muggle STOPS. Suddenly. Looking quite satisfied.

Trevor glances at Holli. *Stupid dog*, he shrugs.

Just as he turns to see ELLA IS GONE.

**EXT. CRESCENT PARK - DAY**

Frantic, Trevor races through the trees along the north edge of the park.

TREVOR

Ella! Ella!

Panicked YELLS from Holli, over by the playground, can be heard. Trevor wheezes, keeps running. Sweat on his face.

He's NAUSEOUS with worry. If something--

The balloons! The blue and white orbs dance distantly in the summer breeze. He sprints--

TREVOR (cont'd)

Ella!

She's on a rise at the end of the park. Sliding to a stop in front of her, Trevor runs his hands up and down her little arms and legs. Everything's fine.

In the distance, Trevor sees a tall man with a VERY LONG PONYTAIL leaning against a Cadillac parked on Severn Ave.

Ponytail man stares back.

ELLA

No-man! No-man!

TREVOR

Yes, Ella. Big girl. Big girl word.

He reaches to pick Ella up. Sniffs -- notices the STILL BURNING butt of a cigarette in the grass next to her.

A car door slams, a V-8 engine REVS. Trevor looks up to see the Cadillac roll away.

ELLA

No-man!

**INT. TREVOR'S HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS - NIGHT**

Trevor lounges on the couch, a plate on his stomach. He dumps salt across a final slice of cucumber as he looks at PICTURES OF ELLA on his phone.

His cooler sits in the hallway. Ella's blue and white BALLOONS are tied to the handle. They sway gently as Trevor passes by on his way upstairs.

We stay on the balloons as Trevor flicks off the downstairs lights... the upstairs hallway lights... closes his bedroom door. Darkness reigns--

Save for the MOONLIGHT reflecting from the latex surface of each balloon.

They sway like TWO EYES in the gloom.

**INT. TREVOR'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - NIGHT**

The night is interrupted by the CHIME and GLOW of Trevor's cell phone ALARM. He stirs awake -- grabs the phone and thumbs the chime away.

Digital Clock: **2:10 am.**

Trevor stands. His eyes are on the bedroom door. He's not going to sit by and wake up in a panic again.

But -- first -- he picks up the crowbar... pauses... taps the crowbar against his leg. It RINGS off his kneecap.

TREVOR  
(hisses in pain)  
Not dreaming.

His phone screen FLASHES: *Battery Warning! Shutting Down.*

Trevor mumbles *shit*, finds the cord, plugs the phone in.

He walks around the room a bit. A glances out the window -- nothing but peaceful, moonlit lawn under the a sky full of August constellations.

Digital Clock: **2:11 am.**

He reaches over and turns on his bedside lamp.

And listens to the silent night. *Too silent?*

He creeps to the bedroom door. Breathless. Tense. He opens it slowly.

Behind him, the CLOCK turns to **2:12**.

Slowly... slowly... an electric hum whispers from the looming darkness... moving closer.

mmmmmmmmmmMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM--

Trevor CROUCHES reflexively. Scared.

MMMMMMMMMMmmmmmm... dissolving. *Gone? His imagination?* He opens the door

... wider... wider...

BUZZZZ! Behind him!

He whirls, crowbar raised high--

But *it's just the VIBRATO of his phone turning on.*

His back to the open door, the relief on his face turns to a wide-eyed rictus of horror as he REALIZES...

THERE'S SOMETHING BEHIND HIM. ON THE STAIRS. Watching him.

He trembles... does not turn around. He doesn't need to -- he can FEEL it.

We look down on his face, with a view of the OPEN door. Beyond his shaking shoulder, we can see the into the yawning darkness of the stairwell.

A form... a WHITE FACE?... casually... eerily... DRIFTS UP THE STAIRS. It's undefined. A white blot upon the darkness -- vampiric in its pale, looming presence.

Trevor WHIMPERS... still hasn't turned around... but goddamn he can sense it.

At the top the stairs now... at the edge of clarity... the vampiric face stops. And begins to--

SWAY softly. Like a predator. It reminds us of Sid, looking for trouble, in the way it teasingly, maliciously--

TREVOR (cont'd)

Aaahhhhhh!

Trevor whirls. Charges! Flicks on the hallway lights.

Ella's WHITE BALLOON hovers innocently above the top stair.

Alone.

Trevor chokes off his scream. He sags to his knees--

*POP!* -- the balloon explodes--

He *FLAILS* back into the room, slams the door shut with a kick, leaving in the hall... staring at his door.

For a long, silent moment.

The bedroom door opens... Trevor edges to the stairs... hooks a fragment of balloon with the crowbar.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
Am I going crazy?

The limp latex fragment has no answers as it dangles there.

**INT. HOSPITAL - SID'S ROOM - DAY**

Sid lies on the bed. Same as always. Juleen and Dina stand next to him as Trevor enters the room.

JULEEN  
He is getting better!

Trevor looks at Dina. She's already nodding toward the--

**INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Dina lifts a cautionary finger to Trevor, shushing him, and smiles primly at a doctor walking by. Once the doctor's out of range, she steps closer to Trevor--

DINA  
Remember I told you the EEG machine  
got a couple hits?

Trevor nods.

DINA (cont'd)  
Well... it keeps happening.

Dina pulls out the charts, lays them across a counter. These ones are better -- a page full of colored waves. With an alphabet soup along the margin. Fp1, Fp2... Cz, Fz.

He follows her finger: Spikes. Mountains. Valleys. ENERGY.

TREVOR  
What do the docs say now?

Dina gestures along the vertical margin.

DINA

These letters along the side -- they represent placement of the sensors. There's a bias here -- possible activity in one region of the brain.

TREVOR

Possible?

DINA

It's just an EEG. The damn things are very sensitive -- it could be a glitch, environmental, anything. It happens all the time.

TREVOR

But it could say something?

DINA

It doesn't say anything. It only measures the outer layer of the brain. It could be that something's going on deeper in the cortex at night.

Trevor's brow furrows. *At night?*

DINA (cont'd)

Could be environmental. Power line interference is common -- could be as simple as the A/C compressors kicking on every morning at 2:15, straining the grid . .

Trevor PALES. He's an idiot not to have . .

TREVOR

2:15 you said?

DINA

Give or take.

He yanks the paper from her. Traces his finger to the bottom margin. TIME-STAMPS.

**Left Bottom: 2:12:05 AM**

**Right Bottom: 2:12:45 AM**

The paper shakes in his hand. He grabs another sheet from Dina. The one from two nights ago.

TREVOR

Two-twelve!?

Grabs a third sheet . . a fourth . .

Same result--

TREVOR (cont'd)  
 (quietly)  
 Every night, same exact time.

Dina grabs up the papers, annoyed that Trevor has bent them.

DINA  
 All the more reason to blame it on  
 something external -- a computer  
 program turning on, a regular power  
 surge. Nothing natural is that  
 precise--

A look of concern crosses her face.

DINA (cont'd)  
 Trevor, are you okay?

**EXT. 16TH STREET MALL - DAY**

Lush, beautiful flowers bloom from bright over-sized  
 planters. Holli drifts her palm along their soft petals as  
 Trevor pushes an absurdly large stroller.

Ella is fast asleep in the stroller.

HOLLI  
 Poor thing kept waking up last  
 night -- she was excited to see you,  
 though.

Trevor, still distracted from the hospital, smiles down at  
 Ella as he maneuvers the stroller. It's muggy out here, and  
 dark, threatening clouds have kept the late-afternoon crowds  
 away.

HOLLI (cont'd)  
 I got you a present.

She reaches down and grabs a small paper bag from one of the  
 stroller's many pockets.

Trevor stops the cart . . opens the bag carefully . . looks  
 back up to Holli in confusion. He reaches into the bag and  
 pulls out a several two-pronged plastic implements . .

HOLLI (cont'd)  
 They're for putting into your  
 electrical sockets -- so Ella can't  
 shock herself.

TREVOR

Oh.

He looks ashamed. He had no idea such a thing--

HOLLI

I'm just trying to show you it will be okay. Someone from the State will come by, make sure you have these kind of things. That you have the tools you need.

She realizes she may have come on a bit heavy.

HOLLI (cont'd)

But, you know, only if you decide--

TREVOR

Are you sure, Holli? I mean, if you got along with your dad, or if your sister hadn't just moved to the other side of the world...

He doesn't finish -- Holli's had two and half years to trust him before this. And she's only come to him because she's desperate.

They walk in silence for a bit.

HOLLI

Ella's going to be so sad she slept through this. Can we come by for dinner tonight?

TREVOR

Sure.

They pass a card table full of flip-flops -- all of which are 75% OFF! this late in summer.

Holli drifts toward it.

HOLLI

Gonna need some of these for the prison showers.

She's trying to make light of it. Unsuccessfully.

Trevor waits for her, looking around. A nearby busker has the attention of a young couple. An elderly quartet of women sit at an outdoor cafe. The tinted doors of the Souvenir--

In the reflection of the tinted window, HE SEES SID STANDING NEXT TO HOLLI.



Trevor watches in frozen horror as the reflected Sid looks up and gives an OMINOUSLY CHEERFUL grin to Trevor as he reaches a hand toward Holli--

He whirls.

Only to see Holli casually sauntering back towards him.

She hesitates at the look on Trevor's face, but smiles and checks on Ella.

HOLLI (cont'd)  
Dinner at six, then?

TREVOR  
Let's eat at your place.

HOLLI  
My place? We're in a dinky little short-termer by the railroad. I don't even know what pots we--

TREVOR  
I'll bring mine!

Holli regards Trevor skeptically--

He holds up the bag of socket guards.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
You can show me what else I might need to kid-proof a place.

Whatever thoughts Holli may have had disappear in her glee over the *implication* of what Trevor's saying.

HOLLI  
(nods vigorously)  
Ella will be so excited to show you her room!

**EXT. BEHIND STRIP MALL OFFICE - DAY**

Muggle squats next to a broken bottle in the weed-strewn gravel. *Shitting on command*. Marlon stands nearby, an empty grocery bag around his hand.

If the front of the strip mall looks ugly, it's paradise next to this ugly little garden of weeds and crumbled concrete cast-offs.

Focused on Muggle, Marlon senses something, turns--

Jumps in fright to see Trevor's tired face a foot away.

MARLON

What's up, boss-man? Thought you left  
for the day.

Trevor sits on a crooked plastic chair that's held together  
by bulges of duct tape.

MARLON (cont'd)

Would I get in trouble if I said you  
look like shit, boss?

Trevor shakes his head. He knows he looks like shit.

MARLON (cont'd)

Ain't never seen you back here. You  
looking for a smoke?

TREVOR

No. I come out here *not* to smoke.

Marlon looks confused. There's a makeshift ashtray nearby  
and plenty of butts on the ground. This is a popular place  
for all the tenants of the strip mall to smoke.

Trevor's head is full of thoughts. He needs to talk. He  
gestures to the ugly waste.

TREVOR (cont'd)

This reminds me of where I grew up.  
Of why I don't smoke anymore, of why  
I do the things... it just helps me,  
that's all.

Marlon nods his head appreciatively, like he's happy Trevor  
shared that.

An ugly tomcat saunters into sight twenty feet away. Trevor  
watches as it pauses next to a broken milk-crate. It stares  
back at him balefully.

TREVOR (cont'd)

Do you believe in ghosts?

MARLON

(surprised)

Like, me personally? Or you asking me  
as a cultural Islands thing?

The tomcat moves closer. One of it's eyes is matted shut.  
Muggle smells it - wiggles with worry.

TREVOR

Either.

MARLON

My aunt does. But she's crazy. Her friends -- they're crazy, too.

TREVOR

Because they believe?

MARLON

They've got the *Fofo* with them still. *Fofo* is, like, witch-doctor stuff. Old gods, you know?

Trevor watches tomcat and Muggle lock eyes. Both animals freeze as they size each other up.

TREVOR

Not you -- no old gods for you?

MARLON

You know me, T. The only gods I believe in are XBox and Red Bull.

The tomcat HISSES. Muggle wiggles, whines, and scampers behind Marlon's massive calves. The damn thing *never once barks at the cat*.

MARLON (cont'd)

Everything okay? You ain't yourself. Anything I can help with -- even if it's of the clock?

Trevor ignores the heartfelt offer. His eyes haven't moved from Muggle.

TREVOR

Your damn dog does bark when you're not around. Maybe he believes in ghosts.

Marlon laughs, scoops up the trembling dachshund.

MARLON

Now I know you crazy, Boss. This dog wouldn't bark at the Devil himself.

Trevor's sunken eyes regard the dog, and he slowly nods.

**EXT. TREVOR'S HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS - DAY**

The front door swings open and Trevor TENTATIVELY steps inside. He scans the room with each step.

On the table, the withered orchid looks like a warlock's long, beckoning finger. He gives the table a wide berth.

Trevor opens a cabinet, looks in carefully--

Snatches a large pot out of the cabinet and SLAMS it shut before anything can jump out at him.

He sets the pot on the table -- looks at it next to the orchid and changes his mind. He grabs the pot and carries it upstairs, his arm COCKED.

A handy weapon in case that damn wooden doll is upstairs waiting.

**INT./EXT. TREVOR'S CAR - MOVING**

The August sun is low in the sky as Trevor turns left onto 45th Street.

Traffic on the I-70 overpass sparkles in the low-angle light. The mud-brown waters of the South Platte offer no sparkle, and the rusty railyards to the south look like a poor impression of murky river.

Each of these an natural barrier that forms the Globeville neighborhood -- the closest thing Denver has to an island.

Historic, but shabby. Charming, but ominous -- in the way isolated places can be.

The same can be said for the small mother-in-law cottage marked **818** as Trevor parks next to Holli's Explorer.

**INT. HOLLI'S HOUSE - ELLA'S ROOM - EVENING**

Emma has her hand wrapped around Trevor's index finger and toddles him around her room.

Her small room is plain, with boring tan walls in need of a re-paint. But a bouquet of bright stuffed animals on Ella's pink bedspread gives plenty of elan to the room.

Trevor notes the green STUFFED DRAGON that has the place of honor next to her pillow as Ella re-grips his finger and pulls him out into the--

**INT. HOLLI'S HOUSE - HALLWAY/HOLLI'S ROOM - EVENING**

The cottage is a simple place, with Holli's large room directly across the hall from Ella's.

Trevor sneaks a peek inside -- from the look of it, she and Ella are living out of the two giant suitcases at the foot of her small bed.

As Ella tugs on his finger, his foot bumps against--

CLACKA-CLACK--

*Fuck me.* The wooden doll. Miss Pretty. HERE?

The doll's head is cocked, looking up at--

Trevor snatches it up before Ella can step near. He holds the doll tight, as though it might try to run. Up close it's as lifeless as ever--

But it's left leg is SPLINTERED.

He holds it at a distance as Ella pulls him into--

**INT. HOLLI'S HOUSE - KITCHEN**

Holli strains spaghetti noodles from Trevor's pot as he walks into the room, still holding Miss Pretty.

The kitchen is a Living Room / Kitchen combo. It's so small, there not room for a fourth chair between the table and the living room couch.

Holli looks up as Trevor holds the doll out.

TREVOR

When did you--

HOLLI

(smiles)

Oh, hey, you found her. I was wondering if we'd left her at your house or something.

(to Ella)

Did see that, Ella? Tell Mr. Trevor thank you.

Ella regards it nervously. *As if she knows something?*

He still has the doll in his outstretched hand as Holli dumps a jar of spaghetti sauce in the noodles and reaches into a cupboard.

What's he going to say? What could he say? He sticks the doll in a drawer and turns back to the table.

And notices Holli has filled two wineglasses. She notices him staring, and misinterprets the strain on his face.

HOLLI (cont'd)  
If you want, I have beer instead.

TREVOR  
Uh, no. This is fine.

Holli sets a plate in front of Trevor.

HOLLI  
Cut this up for her, please. Small bites.

As he does, Holli plops Ella onto her booster seat and ties a bib around her.

ELLA  
'Sketti!

HOLLI  
That's right. You're going to need this bib, little missy.

Holli hands Trevor his wineglass.

HOLLI (cont'd)  
You should know... even if my sister were around, I'd have come to you first. I really would have.

She CHINGS her wine glass against his.

HOLLI (cont'd)  
Cheers.

Trevor smiles back at her. She really looks good tonight -- and it is good wine. He takes a very long sip.

Ella point urgently at the counter--

HOLLI (cont'd)  
Oh, I almost forgot!

She grabs a vase with THREE FLOWERS in it and places it in the center of the table. A red flower, a white flower, and a purple flower.

Simple, tasteful, and it completes this wonderful almost-family scene.

Ella holds her hands up to her face and GIGGLES. She and Holli share a conspiratorial look -- and watch Trevor.

TREVOR

What?

Ella giggles harder.

HOLLI

Mr. Trevor, do you know what kind of flowers these are?

He has no idea. Ella's bright eyes watch him--

TREVOR

I dunno. Pansies?

Ella can't contain herself. She looks at her mom and holds a hand over her mouth.

HOLLI

(exaggerated, to Ella)

Can you believe Mr. Trevor doesn't know? Can you believe that?

Ella shakes her head, ready to burst out of her seat at the next question--

HOLLI (cont'd)

What kind of flowers are these?

ELLA

Ya-sint!

HOLLI

That's right! Hyacinths!

Trevor laughs, and reaches over to tickle Ella, who giggles in delight.

In the background, Holli tops off his wineglass.

#### **INT. HOLLI'S HOUSE - LATER**

The kitchen is empty. Ella's bib lays on the ground, covered in RED sauce. An empty wine bottle lays on its side.

Darkness has fallen outside.

In the living room, a flatscreen and a cable box sit on an ancient roll-top cart.

An animated movie plays on the television. Ella is asleep on Trevor, the stuffed dragon in her arms. Trevor watches the movie. Holli watches him.

Trevor glances over. Catches her. He smiles.

TREVOR

She still has sauce in her hair. I can smell it.

Another bottle of wine is open on the coffee table. His words are a bit slurred.

HOLLI

Let's put her to bed and we can watch something else.

TREVOR

You don't like this movie?

HOLLI

The first ten times I saw it.

Trevor rises carefully, hands Ella to Holli.

TREVOR

I've got extra blankets in the guest room. I can bring them down--

HOLLI

Let's put her up there. She sleeps great, as long as it's quiet.

#### **INT. ELLA'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Trevor places Ella on her bed.

The stuffed dragon slips from her arms and falls to the ground. He puts it next to her, lays her blanket over her and the dragon.

He watches her for a long moment before flipping on her nightlight.

#### **INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Holli has refilled both wineglasses. She's surfing through a selection of movies with the remote.

HOLLI

How about a horror movie?



Trevor looks up to see that she's joking with him.

HOLLI (cont'd)  
Still having bad dreams?

He bolts his glass of wine like it's a shot of whiskey.

TREVOR  
They're not dreams--  
(waves it off)  
I don't want to talk about it.

Holli holds up the remote.

HOLLI  
You pick.

Instead of tossing the remote over, Holli walks it over from her end of the couch. And then sits down--

Very close beside him.

TREVOR  
Uh. Any preference?

HOLLI  
Just not a cartoon.

TREVOR  
You used to like watching James Bond movies--

She puts her head on his shoulder. He stiffens.

HOLLI  
You liked those movies. I just thought you were cute.

TREVOR  
Oh.

TAP, TAP, TAP on the remote as Trevor busies himself...

HOLLI  
I'm sorry. For not telling. You deserved to know.

TREVOR  
Maybe you did the right thing -- that was a bad scene back then.

HOLLI  
You weren't so bad.

Trevor sits up. Holli has to take her head off his shoulder.

TREVOR

You followed your instincts. Maybe  
you should trust them.

Holli looks at him. Surprised. Scared. She needs him to--

HOLLI

Fuck what I thought. When I see you  
and Ella together -- I was wrong.  
(puts her hand on his)  
You're a good guy, Trevor.

He shakes his head, his cheeks flushed from the wine.

TREVOR

You wanna know why I jumped in the  
river?

HOLLI

Because your brother was drowning?

Trevor shakes his head. *That's not why* -- but he can't say  
it--

Holli squeezes his hand. Leans closer to him.

HOLLI (cont'd)

You tried to help--

Trevor leans forward. Tortured. Pulls his hand from hers.

TREVOR

I gave him that limp!  
(softly)  
I did it on purpose. I'm a bad  
person. A bad guy.

She puts her hand on his back. Rubs hard.

HOLLI

It don't matter anymore. You tried to  
make it right--

TREVOR

I'm worse than my mom...worse even  
than Sid's dad. I'm just like they  
are.

Holli starts to CRY. She puts her hands up to her face as  
the tears flow.

HOLLI

Look at me! I go back to Fort Collins to straighten out. And I do the same dumb--

(wipes her eyes)

I do worse! I used Ella -- and now these guys from Albuquerque want to hurt us. Ella deserves better--

TREVOR

You're doing great with her.

HOLLI

The judge is gonna take her -- and won't give her back!

TREVOR

You can't know--

Holli grabs his hand. Her tear-streaked face implores...

HOLLI

Please? Trevor? Please?

Trevor haunted eyes stare back at her. She scoots up tight to him, her voice rises.

HOLLI (cont'd)

Look at you! Your place, your clothes. You grew up in a world of shit and you're trying to leave it all behind.

(grabs his face)

And that's okay! Just keep doing that! Give Ella all the things you should've had. It'll only be a few months...

He breaks eye-contact, stares down at his feet. He nods his head in an *almost* yes. He lifts his face back up--

She KISSES him. Hard. It surprises the hell out of him.

They stare at each other. She scoots tight against him. He doesn't stop her.

HOLLI (cont'd)

This ain't to make you say yes. This is for me.

She kisses him again. Presses him back. Trevor's arms close around her. They melt into the couch.

The bright time display on the cable box stares down.

**INT. HOLLI'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Holli and Trevor lay tangled on together on the couch, a blanket over them. You can practically see the wine vapor coming off of them.

The time on the cable box ticks over: **2:12**

TIIIIIRK from the table as a something... a plate? scrapes across its surface...

Trevor stirs--

A DARK SHADOW GLIDES PAST THE COUCH. Toward the hallway.

Trevor twitches in his sleep--

A CREAK from the down the hall -- a door opening...

The time on the cable box starts to FLASH, FLASH, FLASH.

Trevor's eyelids flutter.

The distant sound of whispering VOICES...

Trevor's eyes snap open.

He's disoriented -- it takes him a moment to remember where he's at. Holli murmurs in her sleep. He smiles down at her, reaches out for her--

His smile vanishes as he notices the flashing **2:12...**

The WHISPERING VOICES down the hall grow louder, more insistent, tumbling towards him.

murmurmurmur

murMurMur

MMMMMMMMMUR

The pitch heightens... it's like a kid's voi--

ELLA! HOLY SHIT, HE FORGOT ABOUT ELLA!

Trevor throws aside the blanket, vaults over the couch, and--

**INT. ELLA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

--flips the room light on. ELLA'S BED IS EMPTY.

Her stuffed dragon lays in the middle of the floor--

TREVOR

Ella!

His head jerks around around the roo-

Ella stands in the corner. Wide awake. Strands of her hair STAND STRAIGHT -- the way hair stands up from a static charge.

She holds the WHITE HYACINTH -- except now it's dead and brown . . crumbling before our very eyes.

Ella sees the terror on his face. Her little face crumples.

ELLA

No-Man?

KERRAP! The bulb in Ella's nightlight explodes!

Startled, Trevor scrambles over to her. Holds her tight, her little head up against his neck.

Holli is at the guest room door now. Confused. Adrenalized.

An electric CRACKLE zips through the house...

And Sid's vampiric face looks at Trevor from over Holli's shoulder--

TREVOR

Look out!

Ella's shrieking intensifies. Trevor lurches towards Holli, still squeezing Ella, and slams his toe into a leg of the bed--

Holli is there, catching him, ripping Ella from his arms.

The hallway is EMPTY.

Sprawled on his ass, Trevor looks at the stuffed dragon. Bits of stuffing leak from a fresh tear on its left leg.

Left leg. Same as Miss Pretty's shattered leg.

Sid's bad leg.

**EXT. HOLLI'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

The front door swings open. Trevor stumbles onto the porch. Holli follows after, holding Ella.

HOLLI  
Chrissakes, Trev. That's crazy!

TREVOR  
You just saw it!

HOLLI  
What I saw was you jumping around like a madman, scaring the hell out of Ella!

Trevor gestures helplessly.

TREVOR  
It's the same time every night! The same time! Explain that.

He looks at Ella, but Holli turns the girl away from him.

Behind them, the railyards and the river are a blot of darkness against the lights of the city.

HOLLI  
Are you too stuck in the past to ever grow up--

TREVOR  
It's real!

HOLLI  
--or are you just trying to find a reason to not take Ella?

The question leaves Trevor open-mouthed.

TREVOR  
(weakly)  
It sounds crazy, I know! But it's not safe. Not with him. You *know* how Sid--

HOLLI  
Give me a break.

Ella's wide eyes watch as Trevor backs toward his car--

TREVOR  
I can't let him near her. He's trying to ruin everything.

**INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - DAY**

Dina walks through cafeteria, purse on her shoulder, keys still in her hand. Headed straight for the coffee urn--

Trevor, disheveled, startles her as he JUMPS in front.

TREVOR

Did he do it again last night?

DINA

I haven't been upstairs yet, I need some coffee firs--

Trevor has his own coffee. He grabs her mug, pours his coffee into it.

TREVOR

Let's go.

**INT. ELEVATOR - DAY**

Dina sniffs suspiciously at her free coffee, but doesn't take her eyes off of Trevor.

DINA

You look like hell. You okay?

TREVOR

(tightly)  
Never better.

DINA

I need you to talk to someone before you look at any more printouts.

TREVOR

What?

It's apparent now how much space is between them. Dina is standing as far away from Trevor as the elevator allows.

DINA

You said some disturbing things last time. About Sid -- about things happening at night.

(beat)

In your situation. Your family? There's no shame in mental--

TREVOR

The pattern is real! It's on your machines!

DINA

I need you to talk to somebody.

TREVOR

Let's see if the charts say I'm actually crazy first.

The elevator DINGS. Dina slams on the *Hold* button.

DINA

Know anybody else who will get those charts for you?

Trevor doesn't answer.

Dina lets the doors open. She stalks out into the hallway... and opens the door to an empty examination room.

DINA (cont'd)

Good. You'll talk to Dr. Ware and then *maybe* I'll get those printouts.

**INT. HOSPITAL - EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY**

DR. WARE holds a clipboard. The doctor has to be in his 70's, with a skeletal face of an endurance athlete -- the kind of old man who thinks *half*-marathons are for weenies.

DR. WARE

Mr. Brooks? Pleasure to meet you. My sympathies for your brother.

TREVOR

(impatient)

Thanks.

DR. WARE

Please, sit.

TREVOR

I'm okay.

Dr. Ware waits finds a stool for himself.

DR. WARE

Nurse Azzola tells me you've been having *episodes* each night?

*Episodes.* Trevor bristles at the word.

TREVOR

So has my brother, according to *your* machines.



DR. WARE

I'm more concerned about you. You say these happen each night? And they come with feelings of...

(searches for word)

*Doom?*

TREVOR

What else would you feel at two a.m.?

DR. WARE

Anything else? Paralysis of your arms, constriction in your chest?

TREVOR

No.

Dr. Ware waits. *All the time in the world*, his face says. Trevor has to give him something.

TREVOR (cont'd)

I graduated college. I have a job. I'm not crazy.

Dr. Ware nods, scratches something on his clipboard.

DR. WARE

Nurse Azzola tells me you often bring in fast food. Is that a regular part of your diet?

TREVOR

It's for my mom.

DR. WARE

Would you mind if we measured your blood sugar?

TREVOR

As long as I don't have to pay for it.

DR. WARE

(nods)

Any medications? Anything for your nerves, your mood?

TREVOR

Not even aspirin.

DR. WARE

Ever have trouble breathing, particularly at night?

TREVOR

Never.

DR. WARE

Any major changes in your life? Any new stressors?

Trevor cocks his head.

TREVOR

You think I'm having night terrors?

Dr. Ware looks at him. *You're the one who said it...*

TREVOR (cont'd)

They're not...

Trevor tails off. Anything he says will sound ridiculous.

DR. WARE

You think your brother is awake in there -- have you considered why you think that? Have you consulted a psychiatrist about--

TREVOR

You can't say that he isn't awake! Not until you look at him with the MRI, or with something stronger.

DR. WARE

With your brother's injuries?  
(patient smile)  
We wouldn't even know what we're measuring.

TREVOR

Has it ever happened? Have they ever found out that someone was awake the whole time?

Dr. Ware thinks. His voice remains clinical.

DR. WARE

Actually, yes. There's a documented case. In Europe, I believe. Of a--

TREVOR

So it's happened?

The doctor's smile returns.

DR. WARE

In that case, the patient eventually woke up. He even regained some motor control -- could talk to people by moving his eyes.

If this guy could pat Trevor on the head and give him a lollipop, he probably would.

DR. WARE (cont'd)

See? You should never give up hope.

TREVOR

How long was he awake before anybody noticed?

Dr. Ware opens the door. Frowns in thought.

DR. WARE

Twenty-something years.

**INT. HOSPITAL - NURSES' STATION - DAY**

Dina spreads the familiar wave-form papers across the counter. Her finger traces along, but Trevor is quicker.

TREVOR

See?

DINA

So? It's a glitch. Like the others -- barely enough for us to notice.

TREVOR

Where are the other pages? Like, afternoon a few days back.

DINA

That's all on the computer. It'd take me a while.

(looks around)

Why would I do that for you?

TREVOR

What if I could show you that same glitch, but at a different time?

(leans in)

I'm not asking for faith. I'm asking you to look up one thing that will say if I'm crazy or not.

Dina wavers--

DINA  
 (sighs)  
 A specific time, you said?

TREVOR  
 Two days ago, about 1:45 p.m. If you see the same spike, your patient just got a lot more interesting.

DINA  
 What happened at 1:45?

TREVOR  
 My friend Muggle saw the devil.

**INT. PAYDAY ANYDAY - DAY**

Trevor stands at the battered counter, his phone against his ear. Marlon is at his desk -- absentmindedly going through the mail as he watches his young boss.

TREVOR  
 ... okay... please tell Nurse Azzola that I called. Can I give you my number again?

The front door opens. In walks Danny, his ever-present earphones draped around his neck -- but now held together with gray DUCT TAPE.

Danny has a BLACK EYE and a FAT LIP. He marches straight up to the counter and SLAMS a greasy key on the counter.

His fat lip adds a mumble to his words . .

DANNY  
 Take the damn car.

TREVOR  
 What happened?

Danny turns back to the door.

DANNY  
 Ain't answering no more questions. Them guys from Albuquerque are stirred up right now. They might even stop by and ask why you want to know.

With that, Danny's headphones are back over his ears and he's out the door.

Marlon smirks at his boss.

MARLON

Was that the information you were looking for, Mr. "knowledge-is-better-than money"?

TREVOR

Maybe.

Trevor swipes the key from the counter.

MARLON

(grinning)

There is no knowledge that is not power.

TREVOR

You quoting Jefferson now?

Marlon leans back in chair and winks at Trevor.

MARLON

Nah, boss . . . Mortal Kombat.

**INT. TREVOR'S OFFICE - DAY**

The SCRITCH-SCRATCH of Trevor's pen is loud in the room as he fills out paperwork. Danny's Acura key is taped to the outside of a manila folder.

Marlon opens the office door. Muggle is at his heels.

Trevor puts the last of the paperwork in the folder, holds it out to Marlon.

Marlon doesn't take it.

MARLON

You were asking about a paternity test a few days ago? My cousin works in a lab that does those . . . I asked him and he can do one on the cheap for a hundred bucks.

TREVOR

How many *cousins* do you have?

MARLON

Ah, Boss, they're not, like, strictly cousins. They're *ohana*.

Trevor shakes the folder impatiently.

TREVOR  
Another Island thing?

MARLON  
Yeah, man. *Ohana* is, like, the family you get to choose. It's the community you that you let in, that you let help you get through. You know?

TREVOR  
(not meaning it)  
Sounds lovely.

Marlon takes the folder.

MARLON  
You should actually show up to one of my weekend barbeques. You'll see, man. Everyone needs *ohana*.

Trevor's phone TRILLS. Dina's calling him back about his brother. He stands and heads out of his office.

TREVOR  
My problem is that I have *too many* relatives.

**INT/EXT. TREVOR'S CAR - STRIP MALL PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS**

TREVOR  
What did you find?

Dina doesn't answer. Her silence is answer enough. Trevor grips the phone. Vindicated. SCARED.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
The same activity, the waves?

DINA  
It's not as big as the others.

TREVOR  
But I was right.

Dina doesn't respond. right away. He lets her stew as digs under his car seat, then to the passenger seat, reaching to the far recesses--

Success! He pulls out ancient pack of Marlboro Reds -- with a single bent cigarette. He reclines into the passenger seat.

DINA

There's no such thing as ghosts or whatever crazy thing you want me to say. An EEG won't change that.

Trevor's old car still has an electrically heated cigarette lighter in the dashboard. He pushes it.

TREVOR

Something's happening to Sid!

DINA

Something's happened to *you*, Trevor. You're the one who's changed. Think about what you're saying.

TREVOR

You been at work all day?

DINA

Yes -- and every second I spend on this call is a second later I get to leave.

TREVOR

All day long in the hospital?

DINA

(impatient)

Yeah.

Trevor pulls the cigarette lighter from the socket. But it's STILL COOL. *Shitty old car*. He starts digging in the glove box for matches . .

TREVOR

Good -- now imagine you don't get to leave. You have to stay there, staring at the ceiling for ten months. And nobody will help you.

DINA

Give me a break. If Sid really was stuck in there somehow, why wait until now to stir things up?

And with that, she HANGS UP.

Trevor can't find any matches in the glove box, but--

TREVOR

(muttering)

Since when did Sid ever have a reason for anything he did?

-- his fingers close around a crumpled bit of paper. He unrolls it... stares at... phone number and a name: **HOLLI**.

The cigarette falls from Trevor's mouth as Sid's words echo:

*I liked her first!*

**INT. MCDONALD'S - TREVOR AND HOLLI'S TABLE - NIGHT**

Ella plays plays on the slides and tubes of PlayLand. Bigger kids swirl around her, but she's fearless.

Trevor and Holli face each other across a bright plastic table. Holli looks at Trevor like he's nuts.

HOLLI

Now he's after me?

TREVOR

He's awake in there!

HOLLI

(skeptical)

And the doctors--

TREVOR

Can you imagine? Trapped like that,  
in your own body?

(shudders)

It's worse than being buried alive.

Holli grimaces sympathetically, but shakes her head, remembering.

HOLLI

You're still not making sense, even  
if he's somehow awake. Sid *adored*  
you!

Trevor looks at Holli intently.

TREVOR

Holli... I... I *hated* Sid. My whole  
life I had this freak half-brother  
who lived down the way with his  
equally scary dad. Always in trouble,  
always showing up at weird hours of  
the day. Eating food from the fridge.  
Scaring my friends off.

HOLLI

Brothers always have--



TREVOR

The worst was when my dad would visit. He'd stop by maybe a couple times a year -- and I was always so excited for it. To hang out with him And then my mom started insisting we take Sid along.

Trevor really needs to say these things. He's tired, emotional, confused. He fights a losing battle to keep his voice low.

TREVOR (cont'd)

He was my dad! Sid had one already! And Sid would drive my dad nuts -- until my dad came less and less.

He wipes a hand across his face--

TREVOR (cont'd)

Then one day my dad shows up out of the blue. Wants to take me to a baseball game! Coors Field! But we get there and Sid starts complaining about his stomach hurting. He won't stop, he won't stop, and my dad's getting angrier and angrier -- until he just takes us home in the middle of the game.

Holli touches Trevor's arm. He snatches it away.

TREVOR (cont'd)

My dad dropped us off. And he didn't even say goodbye. He just drove off! Sid couldn't understand what was wrong, what he'd done!

(voice cracking)

There was an old tire iron in the dirt. I picked it up -- and I hit him! I hit him! Again and again! I was so mad at him for ruining everything. Even when I heard that *crack!* in his leg, I kept going.

Trevor looks up at Holli. His red eyes are haunted. He looks like he's 12 again.

TREVOR (cont'd)

He didn't even fight back. He just huddled there... skinny... ugly...

HOLLI  
 (stunned)  
 Christ.

TREVOR  
 He never said anything -- told his  
 dad some homeless guy attacked him.

He tries to compose himself. He can't.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
 I tried to tell him how sorry I was,  
 but he wouldn't let me. Even to me he  
 insisted a homeless guy had done it.

HOLLI  
 Your brother forgave you.

TREVOR  
 No! I was the only person he thought  
 he could ever trust. Pretending it  
 wasn't me was easier than seeing  
 there was no one he could trust.

HOLLI  
 You gotta lighten up on yourself--

TREVOR  
 If I'd saved him that day in the  
 river, I could have kicked him to the  
 curb with a clean conscience.

Trevor sits up.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
 But he doesn't have to pretend  
 anymore. And I've broken the only  
 promise anyone ever gave him.

**INT. MCDONALDS - PLAYLAND - SAME**

We TRACK THROUGH Ella. Surrounded by children's LAUGHTER.  
 She crawls through the red plastic tubes... goes down the  
 slide... blue tube... and into the BALL PIT.

POV moves off Ella. It pans across the room at a deliberate  
 pace-- looking through the mesh... past diners... empty  
 tables...

To Trevor and Holli. By their movements, they're in an  
 animated conversation.

POV sways side to side... focusing... PREDATORY.

## INT. MCDONALD'S - TREVOR AND HOLLI'S TABLE - RESUMING

TREVOR

He's going to make me set things  
right -- or else.

Hollis shakes her head, pauses, then REALIZES--

HOLLI

You can't think that! You can't *kill*  
*him?!?*

She grabs his arm hard, nails digging in.

TREVOR

He's stuck in a cage. It was always  
his worst fear. He made me promise to  
help if I could.

HOLLI

Could you even do it? Kill him?

Holli's eyes dig into him, pleading with him to be the kind  
of guy who says *NO* to that question.

TREVOR

Remember Salo? The Swedish kid with  
the neck tattoo -- he fell down the  
stairs at Zeke's house and broke half  
his teeth?

HOLLI

Yeah, Salo was passed-out drunk.

Trevor shakes his head.

TREVOR

Salo was passed out drunk on the  
*floor*. Sid dragged him to the stairs,  
threw him down.

Holli lifts a hand to her mouth in horror.

TREVOR (cont'd)

He owed Sid a twenty and Sid was sick  
of asking for it.

(grabs Holli's hand)

Now pretend that you believe me --  
that ghosts are real and Sid's awake.

(beat)

What's Sid going to do? To you -- to  
me... if I don't keep my promise?

She can't agree.

HOLLI

Don't cross that line. You can't know for sure.

TREVOR

Every night, it's worse. Stronger.

HOLLI

Don't go home tonight, then! Drive around, clear your head.

TREVOR

What if he's really stuck in there?

HOLLI

Fuck him! Think of Ella!

TREVOR

Once I make things right--

HOLLI

Right is what's best for Ella!

(pleading hiss)

I can't let her stay with a killer!

Do you want her to stay with my dad?

She raises a hand. She's going to slap the shit out of this goddamned idiot sitting across from her...

Holli grits her teeth and grips his arm instead.

HOLLI (cont'd)

No holidays? No singing? To grow up how you did? Is that what you're going to *let happen* to her?

Trevor is tortured. Holli loosens her grip on his arm, runs her hand up and down his arm soothingly.

HOLLI (cont'd)

What's most important here?

In the background -- not quite in focus -- we see Ella standing WAIST DEEP in the ball pit.

Trevor's gaze tics to the side...

... drawn towards Ella . . .

She's in his peripheral vision... when--

She VANISHES beneath the surface of the ball pit in a flash -- faster than any two-year old could move.

Only the tiniest, surprised little SQUEAK escapes from her.

Trevor stands. *Did I just see that?*

He starts towards the ball pit.

TREVOR

Ella?

A sinuous RIPPLE disturbs the balls...

Trevor tenses. An electric HMMMMM disrupts the overhead music. Is he the only one who notices?

He runs across the room.

TREVOR (cont'd)

*Ella!?*

Patrons look up at him. Wary. Holli chases after Trevor.

More RIPPLES in the balls. Something beneath the surface--

Trevor grabs the mesh wall of the ball pit, starts to rip that fucker open--

Ella BURSTS to the surface on the other side of the pit. Her little eyes are wide. But she doesn't seem scared.

Holli touches Trevor's arm, forces his fingers from the mesh, gives him an urgent look.

HOLLI

(to Ella)

Time to go, honey.

Ella smiles at them and starts out of the ball pit. Trevor reaches -- but Holli's quicker. She grabs Ella before she's half out.

HOLLI (cont'd)

Did one the big kids knock you down?

The only other kids are over by the slide, headed toward the ball pit.

TREVOR

Something grabbed her!

Nearby patrons side-eye Trevor.

Stray hairs on Ella's head STAND STRAIGHT. Holli pats the strands with with her palm, shows Ella.

HOLLI

The toys made you all staticky. See?

The other kids now splash through the ball pit.

TREVOR

You didn't see it?

HOLLI

Chrissakes, Trev. Get some sleep.

Holli sets Ella down and starts tying her daughter's shoes

TREVOR

I saw it!

HOLLI

Tell Mr. Trevor bye bye, Ella.

The other kids come tumbling out of the ball pit... they pass by as Trevor leans toward Ella, he glances--

NONE of the other kids have their hair standing up.

Trevor freezes. He turns to the ball pit... frowns...

He drops to a knee, pulls out his wallet, slides out a picture of Sid.

He holds it up to Ella's face.

TREVOR

Who's this, Ella?

Ella's eyes light up. *Recognition?*

TREVOR (cont'd)

Who is this?

She bursts into a smile.

ELLA

No-man!

TREVOR

(to Holli)

You see! You see!

But Holli doesn't see. In fact, Trevor's intensity scares Ella, and has drawn even more attention from the other patrons -- especially when Holly SLAPS Trevor--

HOLLI

Get over yourself! Some of us have to face real danger, real people who want to hurt us -- and you're hiding behind a damn ghost because you don't want to grow up!

TREVOR

You just saw what Sid--

Holli's crying now. Ella watches her mom...

HOLLI

(with finality)

I can't believe I thought this was a good idea.

As Holli stomps off, a couple of cowboy-booted patrons stand up. They have hard looks for Trevor that make their message clear: *Don't bother that lady no more.*

The restaurant doors DING to a close behind Ella and Holli.

TREVOR

(to nobody)

He's after Ella.

**INT. TREVOR'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT**

Trevor's phone is pressed tight against his ear.

TREVOR

Dina? Are there any cameras or monitoring stuff in Sid's room?

DINA (ON PHONE)

Uh, some alarms that go off if stuff gets unplugged.

(now suspicious)

Why?

Trevor fights to stay calm. Thinks.

TREVOR

I... if there was a camera, maybe we'd see him something when the EEG--

DINA (ON PHONE)

Well, there's not. And I'm turning my phone off. I have to work the morning shift tomorrow.

The rattling of Trevor's car slowly fades into the--

**INT. SID'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT**

BEEPING of medical devices in Sid's room.

The lights in the room are off. Sid lies in a HALO OF LIGHT cast by the various devices.

The door to the room OPENS SILENTLY. Trevor slides in. Nervous. A sterile WHITE PILLOW is in his hands.

**INT. HOLLI'S HOUSE - SAME**

Red-eyed, Holli sits at her table. She twirls an embossed card in her fingers -- lost in thought.

Ella toddles in, holding her stuffed dragon.

ELLA

Mama sad?

Holli snaps out of her thoughts and sets the card down.

HOLLI

You found Mr. Dragon! You want to take him to bed?

She leaves, and we TIGHTEN ON the card:

U.S. Department of Justice  
**CRIMINAL JUSTICE DIVISION**  
 FAWN CALDERWOOD

**INT. SID'S HOSPITAL ROOM - RESUMING**

As Trevor crosses to Sid, he brushes against the bank of electronics. Two flat-screen monitors flare to life, jostled from hibernation.

First Flat-screen: *MedNet Login against a blue background.*

Second Flat-screen: *Wave-forms.*

... with a timestamp ticking along the bottom. Real-time.

Trevor leans over his brother, pillow gripped with both hands.

TREVOR

Sid?



He turns to the wave-forms dancing along the flatscreen, expecting them to change. They do not.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
Sid? Sidyousonofabitch?

The wave-forms trickle along, unperturbed.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
Are you trapped in there?

Nothing.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
Is this a goddamn game to you?

Stupid damn unchanging..

TREVOR (cont'd)  
Are you on my stairs at night?

... wave-forms...

TREVOR (cont'd)  
Goddammit! Are you trapped? Is this about my promise?

... in their slow delta rhythm. Saying nothing.

Trevor's face tightens into a mask of RAGE.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
Tell me you want it and I'll do it!  
(raises pillow)  
You are the most miserable, evil,  
unlikable cocksucker.  
(sudden thought)  
Are you going to hurt me?

We slowly tighten on the wave-forms. Slow, slow -- as if a great breath is being in-drawn--

TREVOR (cont'd)  
The girls, too?

--BLEEP. A single spike.

Horror and relief contort Trevor's face.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
You sonofabitch.

He closes his eyes and raises the pillow like it weighs fifty pounds.

**INT. ELLA'S ROOM - SAME**

Holli tucks Ella in, the little girl's pink blanket stark against the plain walls.

HOLLI

Should we try somewhere new, kiddo?  
Where it's warm all year round, maybe  
finally see the ocean?

Ella watches her mom. Not understanding, of course. But trusting. Patient.

Holli gives her a kiss. Ella dutifully holds up Mr. Dragon for his goodnight kiss.

HOLLI (cont'd)

Good night, Mr. Dragon.

Ella giggles. Shakes her head. *Not Mr. Dragon.* She holds out the stuffed dragon once more.

ELLA

Sid!

Holli's face freezes. *Did she hear that right?*

HOLLI

Sweetie, did you hear Mommy and Mr.  
Trevor talking?

Ella waves the stuffed animal.

ELLA

Sid! Sid!

The stuffed dragon's eyes goggle lifelessly at Holli. She blinks, shakes her head -- pushes it from her mind.

Or not...

She pauses at the door. Looks back at Ella. At the DRAGON.

HOLLI

Do you want to sleep in Mommy's bed  
tonight?

Of course she does!

As her little feet swing over the edge of the bed. We catch a glimpse of a FRESH BRUISE around her ankle -- like you might get if someone yanked on your foot.

Her little feet patter over towards Holli's feet.

HOLLI (cont'd)  
 And you can sleep with one of Mommy's  
 soft animals, too.

The dragon lands on the ground in a HEAP as Holli flicks off  
 the lights.

**INT. TREVOR'S ROOM - RESUMING**

The pillow touches Sid's face. No reaction from the wave-  
 forms...

Trevor's arms shake. He not sure if he can really do this,  
 even as her presses down harder--

A VOICE rings out of the darkness.

JULEEN  
 What are you doing?

Trevor startles. He tucks the pillow into an armpit.

TREVOR  
 Ma?

The room LIGHTS burst to life.

Juleen sits in an unlit corner, upright in the seat she's  
 practically lived in this past year.

JULEEN  
 What are you doing to my baby?

Her voice is slurred. *Just waking up... or drunk?*

TREVOR  
 He's not your baby. Not for a long,  
 long time. Not ever.

JULEEN  
 (unsteadily)  
 Quiet. My angel's resting--

TREVOR  
 He's not resting.

JULEEN  
 A'course he is -- such a sweet, sweet  
 boy. Beautiful boy.

TREVOR  
 He's not!

His force startles Juleen. And, yes, we can now see it isn't sleep that's dazed her. She's high on something.

JULEEN  
... little angel... he is...

Trevor grips the pillow like he'd rather smother her.

TREVOR  
He was never an angel, no thanks to you.

JULEEN  
... angel with a golden heart.

TREVOR  
If it's not in a bottle or a backseat, you wouldn't know anything about it!

Juleen sits upright. 100% drunken righteous indignation.

JULEEN  
You cain't talk to me--

TREVOR  
You never gave two shits until he got hurt. Now that it doesn't take any--

JULEEN  
I'm better -- ain't I been better?

Her drunken state is answer enough for Trevor.

TREVOR  
He wants to go. He *needs* to go!

The though stupefies Juleen.

JULEEN  
Let him go?  
(despondent)  
I'm trying... to make it right...

TREVOR  
Trying? It's too late. You should have tried before.

Her eyes de-glass a bit as Juleen nods -- a trailer-full of regret washes over her worn face.

JULEEN  
I ain't gonna see you no more neither, am I, when Sid goes?

Trevor doesn't answer. No answer is necessary.

JULEEN (cont'd)

He can wake up! It can be the way it  
coulda been.

She pats the seat next to her.

JULEEN (cont'd)

Come sit'n talk to your ma.

He drops the pillow softly -- nudges it under Sid's bed with  
a toe.

TREVOR

I've got to go.

JULEEN

What girls was you talkin' about?  
Anything new going on with you?

Trevor's eyes tic to Juleen's face. *Have I said anything  
about?... but, no, she doesn't know about Ella or Holli.*

TREVOR

Nothing at all, ma. Just some girl  
that Sid used to know.

This makes Juleen smile. The glassy eyes return.

JULEEN

Someone he knew... he had so many  
friends...

#### **INT. TREVOR'S ROOM - NIGHT**

All the lights in his room are on, and they reflect harshly  
from the white, undecorated walls of his room.

Trevor stares at nothing, eyes dark with fatigue. He's still  
fully dressed.

The illuminated numbers of his alarm clock flicker from  
*01:59 to 02:00.*

TREVOR

The hell with this.

Keys jangle as he strides out the door.

**INT. TREVOR'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT**

ROCK MUSIC plays on the tinny speakers in Trevor's car.

Car display: **2:10a**

The car rolls through a suburban neighborhood full of streetlamps and porch lights. A friendly sort of darkness.

Display rolls over to **2:11a**.

He taps the wheel nervously, turns the radio up. His headlights illuminate a fork in the road and a helpful, large green sign with DIRECTIONS:

Left Arrow: *Valley Creek Little League Complex*

Right Arrow: *Mountain View Cemetery*

TREVOR

Really?

He turns left, but soon wishes he'd made a u-turn.

The little league fields are empty swaths of darkness.

In the distance, sickly SODIUM VAPOR LIGHTS illuminate a shuttered concession stand and a drinking fountain. They look small against the vast dark--

A SHADOW SKITTERS beneath them...

... gone in a flash. Headed his way.

Trevor gasps. Swearing, slams on the accelerator, glances at the display... sick realization on his face as--

**02:12a.**

The wheezing of the engine fades away... clicks OFF. The car loses momentum. The headlights FLICKER.

TREVOR (cont'd)

Goddammit!

He turns the keys. Nothing... the wheels take a last turn--

TREVOR (cont'd)

(punching the wheel)

No! No! No!

The car stops dead in the road.

The headlights BLINK OUT.

Leaving... only...

Trevor's panicked BREATH in the blackness... keys RATTLE as he tries the ignition... a muttered *shit*--

A SHADOW whisks by in the distance -- briefly eclipsing the sodium vapor lights. Trevor scrambles in his seat. Powerless.

A sudden faint GREEN GLOW rolls over his sweating face.

GLOWS on... WINKS out... GLOWS on...

One thing in his car is now working.

The display: **02:12a**. TWINKLING off and on...

Like a beacon.

**EXT. TREVOR'S CAR - BASEBALL FIELD - SAME**

We see the OUTLINE of the distant car with cat-like clarity in the darkness.

Soft green GLOW . . soft green GLOW . . soft green GLOW.

We close on the car with a LURCHING GAIT . . 40 yards . . accelerating . . 30 yards . . 15 yards . .

**INT./EXT. TREVOR'S CAR - RESUMING**

Trevor's lungs freeze in place . .

Hunched and forward-leaning, a BLACK FORM stands outside the passenger window. It shambles forward with a LIMP.

A pale relief upon the darkness hints at a face -- a face SHARP and ARCH-BROWED like Sid.

A pleading WHIMPER escapes TREVOR'S lips. He mashes his eyes shut.

*SCRIIIIIIIIITCH* . . . . along the passenger door.

*SCRAAAAAAATCH* . . . . down the rear door

*SCRIIIIITCH* . . . . the trunk.

Trevor tilts his head to the rear view mirror. But he can't bring himself to open his eyes.

TREVOR  
 I'll do it, Sid!  
 (gasps)  
 I'll goddamn do it!

SCRIIIIITCH . . . now on the driver side.

Trevor's fingers CURL around the door handle... takes a panicked gulp of air -- yanks the handle, pushes out...

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEETCH!

... and the door stops after only a few inches. Stuck against the DARKNESS outside.

The **02:12a** flashing stops.

The DARK SHAPE looms through the driver's window -- it drifts toward the gap in the open door... towards Trevor's trembling, exposed arm--

TREVOR (cont'd)  
 I'll do it! *I PROMISE! I PROMISE!*

The car door swings open. Trevor spills out as...

The headlights of the car light up, ROCK MUSIC returns to the car's tinny speakers, dogs BARK in the distance.

The dome light of the car shines down as he lays in the road gasping, staring back up at the redeeming bright--

**EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - DAY**

Sunlight rises over parked cars as Trevor's car weaves among them and finds a spot.

**INT/EXT. TREVOR'S CAR - DAY**

Trevor, wearing a blue flannel shirt and a grim look, grabs a McDonald's bag from the passenger seat. Looks inside.

A McMuffin, some napkins, and a HYPODERMIC NEEDLE.

He crinkles the bag shut. Psychs himself up. Gets out of the car, slams the door shut, but turns back to the car.

He follows the SCRATCH... traces it all the way to the rear bumper... across the trunk... the passenger side.

Real as can be. Nothing left to doubt.



**INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY**

Dina stands at Sid's door. *Expecting him?*

DINA  
What's in the bag, Trevor?

Her body language is as unfriendly as the question.

TREVOR  
Uh... McMuffin.

DINA  
Uh huh. Your mom never comes in this early -- you bring that McMuffin for yourself?

TREVOR  
There a rule against food now?

Dina doesn't budge.

DINA  
Let me look in the bag.

TREVOR  
What for?

DINA  
New rule.

He hesitates for a moment too long.

TREVOR  
I, I think I'll go eat in the cafeteria.

DINA  
If I wait a few minutes, call the cafeteria, they gonna see you sitting there? *Eating. Your. McMuffin?*

TREVOR  
Jesus, Dina, what's up?

DINA  
Tell you what -- let me look in the bag and you can go right in.

Trevor searches for a response. Dina folds her arms -- frowns at him.

DINA (cont'd)  
You think I'm stupid?

TREVOR

Uh--

DINA

You call me up asking if there's cameras? And now you're here like this? Can I look in the bag?

TREVOR

No.

DINA

So you *do* think I'm stupid.

Trevor looks around. Several other nurses hover nearby. They know when one of their own is riled up.

TREVOR

(quietly)

Seven fifteen last night. Check out the EEG. He attacked a little girl!

DINA

Let me see the bag.

TREVOR

Let me see the EEG.

Dina looks past Trevor's shoulder, toward the nurse's station. *Enough of this shit.*

DINA

Securit--

TREVOR

Wait! Ok, I'm leaving.

(steps back)

Just check it out. Seven fifteen, and then ask yourself who's crazy.

Dina shakes her head.

DINA

I'll do you a bigger favor -- I'll give you five minutes before I call Security.

**INT./EXT. TREVOR'S CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Trevor slumps into the driver's seat, flings the McMuffin bag against the passenger door.

*Goddamn.*

He stares at the hospital... thinking... turns the keys in the ignition. The car fights him for a bit, but finally MEWLS to life.

The sedan slides through the parking lot, jounces across the road into the nearby lot of a dental practice... the steering CREAKS as he parks under a tree.

Trevor gets out holding a trucker hat. Pulling it low over his face, he jogs towards the hospital, into the lot, past a *Medical Staff ONLY!* parking sign.

**INT. HOSPITAL STAIRWELL - DAY**

Trevor's feet sound hollowly on metal stairs as he approaches a landing.

A door with a single small window labeled 4TH FLOOR has a service phone next to it. Trevor grabs the phone, presses 0.

FEMALE VOICE (OVER PHONE)  
(very friendly)  
State teaching hospital. How may I direct your call?

TREVOR  
(disguising voice)  
Yes, I was just picking up my wife, and I saw a pickup truck bump into a blue Impala in your Staff Lot. Darn truck didn't even stop.

FEMALE VOICE (OVER PHONE)  
Oh my! I'm so glad you let us know. A blue Impala, you said?

TREVOR  
Yes -- a very nice car. I hope there's not much damage.

FEMALE VOICE (OVER PHONE)  
Me, too. And what did you say your-

TREVOR  
A nice day to you, too.

He hangs up. Waits.

On the landing below him, the door swings open, and we see Dina's head as she scampers down the stairs.

**INT. COURTROOM - SAME**

Mahogany-stained wood. Brown leather. No windows. No clocks.

A somber place -- even now, when court's not in session.

Holli sits on a bench next to a sharp-dressed woman with a stern face framed by a fashionable, swept back bob.

This is FAWN CALDERWOOD, U.S. Attorney. Someone who's going places. And she has bigger fish to fry than the likes of Holli Coker.

CALDERWOOD

We'll keep in you a nice hotel until it's all over.

HOLLI

Ella and I will be safe?

CALDERWOOD

Safer than you are right now. You need to understand that these scumbags can't risk you -- whether you testify or not.

(nods)

This is the smart move, and once it's over, we'll get you and your daughter a fresh start far from here.

Holli twirls a stray lock of hair with tight, stiff fingers.

HOLLI

Can I pick where I go?

A trace of irritation flits across Calderwood's severe face, but disappears as quickly as it came.

Holli's question is as good as saying Yes. Fawn stands and smiles down at Holli.

CALDERWOOD

You'll do the right thing. For your daughter's sake.

(smile disappears)

I don't like witnesses who back out on me. Even think of fucking around with me on this, and you'll do the max on every charge I can throw at you.

**INT. HOSPITAL - RESUMING**

Trevor treads softly down to the third landing. This door has the same window as the 4th floor door. He peers through.

A nurse emerges from a door halfway down the hallway... disappears into a room further down.

He slides through the door -- four long strides and he's there. He pauses... *can I really--* FOOTSTEPS!

--He quickly opens Sid's door and sidesteps in--

To find an elderly SECURITY GUARD in the room, a Sports Illustrated in his hands -- and a jubilant smile on his face. *Something exciting happened today!*

Trevor freezes. The guard holds up a cautionary finger that indicates Trevor should remain exactly like that. The guard's other hand brings up a walkie-talkie.

SECURITY GUARD

Yeah. Blue flannel shirt is here.

**INT. HOSPITAL - 1ST FLOOR RECEPTION - DAY**

Dina stands near the door, arms folded disapprovingly as Trevor is escorted out by a cadre of guards. He locks eyes with Dina as the guards bundle him along

TREVOR

Seven-fifteen last night!

The guards handle him all the rougher and faster. His voice fades as he's trundled out the door.

TREVOR (cont'd)

Seven-fifteen! You'll see!

**INT. HOLLI'S HOUSE - HOLLI'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Holli sits on her bed, her back against the wall, in a pair of comfortable-looking pajamas. But her face is troubled as she taps on her iPhone.

Sensing something, she glances up and see's ELLA'S STUFFED DRAGON, leaned against her doorframe--

*Like it's watching her.*

She startles for a second, and stands with a sheepish grin. Grabbing the dragon she heads toward--

**INT. ELLA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

To Holli's surprise, Ella is awake in the dark. The little girl is SOMBER. Not sad -- just staring at the ceiling.

Holli caresses Ella's hair.

HOLLI

No wonder you're still awake,  
sweetie -- you didn't have your  
dragon.

She tucks it in next to Ella, but Ella makes no move to squeeze the dragon. *Probably just sleepy.*

Holli blows her a kiss on the way out.

**INT. HOLLI'S HOUSE - HALLWAY/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Holli pauses in the hall. She eyeballs her bed -- specifically the PHONE on her pillow... and decides against picking it up just yet.

She pads to the kitchen, pulls a plastic wineglass from the cupboard and unscrews the lid to a cheap half-empty Merlot. Taking a sip of wine, she looks out the window. A few lights twinkle -- all of them far away and across the river.

HOLLI

(to her reflection)  
You're tough. You'll be okay.

The kitchen LIGHTS flare a tiny bit. The sudden BRIGHTNESS is accompanied by a HUMMMM from the filaments -- but it fades quickly.

Holli hasn't looked away from the window. One of the far lights goes out. It suddenly seems ominous outside.

Tension rises as DARKNESS outside the window deepens... Holli moves her face closer to the window... we can feel something... a hint of danger in the--

Holli blinks, and bolts the rest of her wine.

**INT. HOLLI'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Curling her legs comfortably under her, Holli is back on her bed, and takes up the phone with renewed commitment. But, once again, he eyes flit toward the door.

ELLA'S DRAGON IS BACK. Once more against the doorframe -- its overlarge eyes aimed straight at her.

Yeah, Holli is UNNERVED.

HOLLI

Ella, honey?

No answer. There's a long beat as the stare goes on. Holli's fingers remain frozen above the screen of her phone.

Finally Holli scoots off the end of her bed and grabs the dragon firmly, and marches once more to--

**INT. ELLA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Holli hesitates in Ella's doorway. She can see Ella's eyes are still open, but she hasn't looked over to her mom.

More for her sake than Ella's...

HOLLI

Sweetie, do you want to sleep in Mommy's bed again?

Ella's eyes don't move, but she speaks with more sober conviction that any two-year-old ought to.

ELLA

Yes.

**INT. TREVOR'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Trevor is seated, his back against the bed, wearing basketball shorts and a ratty Broncos hoody. Ashes and crooked cigarette butts lay on dirty dinner plate.

Bleary-eyed, he takes a drag on--

BING BING! He lurches for his cell phone.

**TEXT:** *Ella insisted on saying goodbye. Don't text back -- she knows we won't be seeing you again.*

Trevor hits the *PLAY* button on the attached vid:

**VIDEO:** Shows Ella running around in the grass. The sun is setting, long shadows stretch across the lawn. She waves bye-bye.

ELLA (ON VIDEO)

No-Man, No-Man!

The video ends -- frozen on her adorable face. Behind her, a trio of slightly crooked house numbers: 818.

Trevor smiles at the video. A tear rolls down his cheek. He touches the video screen as if he could touch her.

Unsteadily, he stands. Calm. Accepting--

He HURLS the crowbar across the room. It buries into the sheetrock like a dagger.

Trevor stands, stomps across the rooms, and yanks the still-quivering bar free. He punches his other fist through the drywall -- and SHOUTS--

TREVOR

Goddammit, Sid! Anything else left to ruin?

He slams his bedroom door shut, and sits down with the lights still on--

No! -- he stands back up, glares a challenge at the unlit staircase, and flips his bedroom lights OFF.

TREVOR (cont'd)

I'm trying, you miserable shit. Do what you want to me -- but touch the girls, and I'll make sure you rot in that hospital forever.

**INT. TREVOR'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS/DOWNSTAIRS - NIGHT**

Trevor, still dressed, is asleep. Still seated, his back against his bed, head lolling, the crowbar across his lap.

Rolling backwards, we leave him in the gloom... out his bedroom door... down the stairs... the downstairs hallway... and out front door . .

**INT. TREVOR'S ROOM - NIGHT**

The alarm clock's lighted DISPLAY flashes to **2:12**.

DINGGG-DONGGG -- the doorbell echoes loudly--

Trevor's eyes flare open. His hand instantly curls around the crowbar -- DINGGG-DONGGG!

No other sound can be heard. The tomb-like silence, devoid of any creaks or footfalls or electric hum, is all the more foreboding--



DINGGGGGGGGGGG... the doorbell growls the way doorbells do when you press it and don't let off.

Trevor stands, tenses his BARE feet against the floor--

DINGGG-DONG! DINGGG-DONG! Impatient...

Trevor raises the crowbar and haltingly steps toward his bedroom door.

**INT. TREVOR'S HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS**

Trevor creeps down the stairs, looking every which way for something to jump out of the darkness and--

DING! DING!

Trevor's at the foot of the stairs. He can see the length of the hallway, to the front door and its decorative panes.

The panes are softly lit from the ambient light of streetlights outside.

If someone were on the porch he'd see their silhouette.

DINGGGGGGGGGGGGG! -- but no silhouette.

Trevor sidesteps closer... closer. The ringing abruptly cuts off -- as if the ringer knows he's coming.

At the door, tense and ready to explode, Trevor peeks out the window. NOTHING. He looks... looks...

Unseen, behind him, above him, SHADOWS GATHER on the ceiling. Smokily, they coalesce, taking a human form...

Trevor's breath quivers and a bead of sweat runs down his face as he stares outside. He grips the door handle, opens the door a fraction, turns look back behind before--

Two feet away, SID SITS CROSS-LEGGED ON THE CEILING, defying gravity, with a sneer of malevolence.

Trevor GASPS, staggers up the hall--

Now SID STANDS IN THE HALL, a look of murder on his pale, vampiric face--

Adrenalized, Trevor SWINGS the crowbar -- it passes through air. Unbalanced, Trevor stumbles side-footed into the kitchen, across the length of it--

And crashes onto his ass against the counter below the sink.

Grimacing, his head swivels, looking. He risks a glance upward, convinced Sid's on the counter above him--

Nothing. Silence. Trevor's instinct is to run. The kitchen table is between him and the hallway... and we can sense something on the far side of the table.

Trevor gapes helplessly. *What good would running do?*

An electric CRACKLE zips and zaps. And then rises into a HUM, building, building, as though a great pressure--

The soft RATTLE of keys--

SHOOOOM! a small shadow streaks across the room--CRACK! as it shatters into the orchid's clay pot on the counter above Trevor's head.

Dirt cascades down onto Trevor. Bits of clay pot and HIS KEYS bounce off his shoulder.

Small rivulets of dirt SKITTER irregularly from the counter above -- the sound of them almost like laughter.

It's too much. Trevor shakes the dirt free, stands, and throws a large shard of pottery at the darkness.

TREVOR  
Having enough fun?  
(holds him arms wide)  
Come at me! DO IT! I deserve it!

Silence is his only answer... until...

Soft, so soft -- SCRAPE SCRAPE SCRAPE in the darkness to his left. Only feet away... but invisible... Trevor tenses--

The kitchen lights FLARE to life, blinding Trevor for a moment, and as he blinks, he stares down. Not comprehending. Written in the dirt on the kitchen floor, are the a crooked trio of numbers:

8 1 8

Then... Trevor's eyes grow wide with horror. He grabs his phone, and there it is right as he left it -- Ella's video. It auto-plays her little voice: *No-Man, No-man* . . and frozen behind her on the last frame . . 818.

Holli and Ella's house. *No-man, no-man!*

A CURRENT OF AIR rises in the kitchen, dirt wafts along the kitchen tiles as though blown... toward the hallway... LIMPING footsteps sound . . the front door RATTLES.

Trevor snaps out it and chases after.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
Don't you touch her!

**EXT. TREVOR'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

Trevor tears out of the house-- barefoot, keys in hand.

TREVOR  
Sid!

The night has no response as Trevor jumps in his car. The old rust-bucket ROARS to life as it starts on the first try for once.

It rolls across the lawn... clatters off the curb...

And SQUEALS into the night.

**INT. TREVOR'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT**

He works the wheel and tries to call Holli. Straight to Voicemail. So he clumsily thumbs a text message:

*Hes cming wattch out*

The car hurtles down the street -- WAY TOO FAST. He nearly fails to navigate a turn. He drops the phone to fight the wheel with both hands.

His phone bounces... dances with the crowbar -- and slides off the far side of the passenger sheet.

TREVOR  
Shit shit shit shit shit.

It starts to rain. Big fat drops. SPLAT! SPLAT! on the windshield. They drum louder as he squeals onto Downing and really gasses the car through a tunnel of streetlights and sleepy houses.

The windshield wipers stop working in mid-swipe. Trevor flips the mechanism on and off. No reaction.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
Piss off!

The black world beyond the windshield starts to blur...

**INT. HOLLI'S HOUSE - HOLLI'S ROOM - SAME**

Pitch darkness is LIT by the faint light from an iPhone. The sing-song CHIME of a text alert pierces the silence--

Holli mutters sleepily. She rolls over, gropes for the phone, and the screen LIGHTS UP her face... and the darkness behind her...

Where SID stands, next to the bed. Watching.

Ella stirs, inches away from him.

Sensing something, Holli startles. She turns -- holds the phone outward like a pathetic flashlight.

Nothing. But the weak light leaves many dim corners.

She turns back to the phone, her face a mixture of confusion and concern as she sets it down and peeks out a bedroom window.

Faintly, somewhere past her bedroom door . . over towards Ella's room:

scrITCH . . SCRATCH . . **CREEEEEAK**

**INT. TREVOR'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT**

It's darker as Downing Street enters the industrial zone -- fewer streetlights, no porch lights. Through the blurry windshield, a green street sign FLASHES by: *WALNUT ST.*

The car bounces, the engine ROARS, rain drops PING as Trevor yanks the wheel to the right--

A giant sheet of water SHOOMPS over the windshield as the car skids through a puddle -- THUD! as it clatters into a traffic island.

Then he's rolling, and slewing through a left-hand turn onto 38th as the road dives into an underpass--

The SUDDEN SILENCE of the raindrop-free underpass is heavy and ominous.

And all-to-brief as the car hurtles back out under the angry heavens.

From somewhere behind, a policeman's GUMBALL LIGHTS flare.

**INT. HOLLI'S HOUSE - CLOSET - SAME**

Holli steps quickly into the closet and flicks the door ALMOST SHUT behind her. She has a wide-eyed Ella clutched against her chest. Holli's face is frantic.

This large walk-in closet used to be a bedroom -- and as Holli moves aside some hangers, we see there is a small window, covered in TAR-PAPER. The window probably hasn't been used in ages--

She peels the stiff paper away from the window, trying to be quiet as Ella stands there clutching her stuffed dragon.

From somewhere in the house, a floorboard CREAKS...

**INT. TREVOR'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT**

The flashing police lights are still a ways behind Trevor as he fishtails onto 45th. But they're closer.

The car jerks as his engine COUGHS. Trevor pats the steering wheel.

TREVOR

C'mon, baby.

The engine COUGHS again -- the radio randomly BLARES into life -- his headlights start to FLICKER.

Even as his engine fights through, he can feel its power fading.

**HOLLI'S HOUSE - CLOSET - SAME**

Holli's shoulders slump as she stares at a dirty, thick pane of LEADED GLASS. A single solid piece that doesn't open.

Ella would have a hard time squeezing through, much less Holli -- even if they could somehow break that thick, ancient glass...

Holli turns from the window and crawls quickly over to a large suitcase half-buried in a pile of clothes.

Ella watches, her eyes NEAR TEARS, trying to be brave. Not sure what her mom's doing, but knows it's serious stuff.

Holli gives a lying smile to Ella. And hugs her -- fiercely. Then she lays Ella into the suitcase.

Completely trusting, Ella looks SMALL and VULNERABLE in the suitcase. It nearly breaks Holli. But she swallows it as she strokes Ella's hair.

HOLLI  
 (whispering)  
 We're going to play a game, okay  
 honey? No matter what you hear,  
 no matter what happens to Mommy,  
 you stay here, quiet and still,  
 okay?

Ella nods solemnly. Holli gives her a kiss and puts her forehead against Ella's

HOLLI (cont'd)  
 Mommy loves you. Mommy loves you  
 always. Stay still and don't move,  
 no matter what you hear.

Holli flips the lid closed, and shoves the pile of clothes back atop the suitcase.

Hinges SQUEAK softly somewhere past the closet door. Holli tiptoes over the door and peers through the sliver of open door.

Whatever hope may have been left on her face drains away. She has the look of the condemned, of a gallows-walker -- of someone who knows with certainty that *hope is gone*.

She steps away from the door, as far from Ella as she can get, watches the door as faint footfalls come closer . . .

HOLLI (cont'd)  
 (softly)  
 Our father, who art in heaven...

**INT. TREVOR'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT**

The engine goes STONE DEAD, and the headlights BLINK OUT.

But he's almost there. The road runs back toward the river -- slightly downhill. He coasts through the blackness, jouncing and fighting the wheel.

Whatever fucked with Trevor's car isn't strong enough to slow down 2,000 lbs of hurtling metal--

TREVOR  
 (out the window)  
 Not so tough, are ya?!

Suddenly, out of the drain-smear window, the slick-black silhouette of a Cadillac Escalade, parked awkwardly along the road, fills the scene.

He sees it TOO LATE.

With the engine dead, Trevor tugs uselessly on the sluggish steering, stomps on the unresponsive brakes -- but even if they'd been working--

CRASH!... BLACKNESS...

**EXT. TREVOR'S CAR - NIGHT**

Trevor lays in the mud, stunned. GROANING, he rolls and forces himself up -- but winces and grabs a shoulder. Blood runs from a cut on his forehead.

Both cars are chunks of deformed, rain-glistened metal. The SUV is halfway across Holli's lawn. Trevor's car lays on its side, a wobbling wheel STILL SPINNING.

Trevor sniffs, and instinctively starts to shuffle away from the wreckage and the smell of gas. He pauses on the far side of Holli's Explorer, and leans heavily against it.

A single headlight on Trevor's car flutters to life and ILLUMINATES Holli's house -- just long enough for him to see HOLLI, clutching ELLA, dash from behind the house and toward the railyards...

The little girl's PINK PAJAMAS are bright in the night.

As the light dies, another SHADOW emerges from behind the house -- limping? IN PURSUIT of the girls.

Trevor's throat CROAKS as he tries to yell, and he staggers after them.

**EXT. RAILYARDS - NIGHT**

The railyard is a hundred-acre graveyard -- the silent silhouette of boxcars like the silent tombstones of giants. Trevor stumbles -- still BAREFOOT -- among them, holding his shoulder.

TREVOR

Holli! Ella!

In the maze of metal, his SHOUTS are alternately swallowed up and ECHOED back to him. And there is no response.

He's out of breath. It's hard to tell if his shouts are growing weaker, or if the VASTNESS of this rusted hell is too much for one voice.

He leans heavily against a formless hunk of boxcar and does not notice...

The ARM SLOWLY ENCIRCLING HIS NECK--

It clamps down, and Trevor gags and jerks, pulling the arm with him, and Holli at the end of it!

HOLLI  
(fierce whisper)  
Stop yelling! You're going to--

TREVOR  
You're all right!

He pulls Holli into a hug, and kneels to squeeze Ella as she appears at his legs.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
I'm so sorry Holli. I tried--

HOLLI  
It's not your f--

Trevor's head swivels in PARANOIA--

TREVOR  
Maybe we can get to a church or something?

Holli gives him a strange look. Police FLASHERS are visible on the horizon -- at the edge of the railyard.

HOLLI  
If we can wait for the cops--

*SCUFFLE, SCUFFLE...* Trevor and Holli both look down to see ELLA'S FEET disappear beneath the boxcar!

Holli gasps as they drop to their knees. Trevor's grasping arm JUST MISSES Ella's foot. Holli scrabbles after, but the little girl is quicker in the narrow space.

No hope for Trevor to fit. Barefoot, he dashes over the sharp rocks, wooden splinters, and scrap metal littering the darkness, to the end of the car -- clambering over a pile of railroad ties as he does so -- and gains the corner.

Just in time to see Ella's pink pajamas disappear around another box car on the next set of tracks.



**EXT. RAILYARDS - SAME**

Holli is now galloping through the darkness frantically. Nothing ahead of her. No sound of little feet.

She jumps into the open door of a boxcar, crosses over to the opposite side, ready to jump... but she FREEZES.

She's seen something, heard something. But what she *does not* see is the smoky form of SID STANDING BEHIND HER in the boxcar. His eyes are SUNKEN and UNFATHOMABLE. He glides backward from Holli, into the gloom of the boxcar.

A footfall CRUNCHES the gravel outside the boxcar, and Holli takes a silent step backwards... into the gloom... unaware of Sid in the darkness behind her.

**EXT. RAILYARDS - RESUMING**

Trevor hobbles after another flash of pink pajamas, clears another silent boxcar -- and sees nothing . .

A SCREAM rips through the rail-yard. HOLLI'S VOICE! Just as it dies away, a GUNSHOT echoes over and over and over.

He stops, confused. *Gunshot?* He hesitates, ready to turn back for Holli, but the little PATTERN of feet sound. Trevor crouches and sees a flash of PINK PAJAMA--

He drops to his stomach and clammers beneath a rail-car and Ella's not too far away. But she's still running, and Trevor hobbles after.

Ella zigs and zags. Trevor has no idea where they are, but the little girl seems to have an idea of where to go -- as though she's being led.

The sharp granite gravel rolls under Trevor's torn feet and he WHOOMPS to the ground heavily -- the wind knocked out of him. But he crawls to his feet, presses on, trying not to lose--

And suddenly, they're out of the rail-yard.

A swath of darkness lies before -- the Platte River, a void of nothingness. An abyss.

TREVOR

Ella!

And he sees her -- a little SILHOUETTE, standing still. Holding her stuffed animal. Near the water's edge, probably, but, *damn*, it's hard to tell.

**EXT. RAILYARDS - SAME**

Through a gaps in the cars, we see TWO SILHOUETTES. The little girl. Not moving. And the larger silhouette -- Trevor -- swaying toward her.

Tracking along, a car blocking our view...

At the next gap, the silhouettes are together.

**EXT. RAILYARDS - RESUMING**

Trevor kneels next to Ella and pulls a wet tendril of hair away from her face.

TREVOR

Why are you running from us?

She smiles at him. He tries to lift her up, but it feels so good to stay on his knees and off his torn feet.

The rain has let up, and he can hear the soft murmur of the river. It could be two feet away, it could be twenty --

An ELECTRIC HUM slowly starts to fill the air, and Trevor watches in horror as the few dry strands of Ella's hair reach toward the sky.

Trevor turns toward the railyard, and SHIELDS Ella as a LONG SHADOW emerges from the gloom. Trevor edges back, keeping Ella behind him.

Another shadow emerges to Trevor's left. Close. Content to watch. As though the Devil has come to see this. Trevor chokes down his terror and turns to the first shadow.

TREVOR (cont'd)

Go to hell, Sid.

The shadow sidles closer... closer. Trevor considers running, but looks down at his feet helplessly.

The shadow stops. As though thinking...

A third shadow rises to Trevor's left! Round and large. He's boxed in, with the river at his back. *What is this?*

TREVOR (cont'd)

GO TO HELL!

The first shadow steps closer -- close enough to see. And *IT'S NOT SID*. It's a hatchet-faced man with an eyebrow ring and giant *SIDEBURNS*.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
 (dumbly)  
 You're not Sid.

SIDEBURNS  
 Where's Holli?

Trevor gapes as the shadow to his right steps closer. It's Ponytail Guy from Crescent Park -- who was watching them in the park the day Muggle went crazy.

PONYTAIL  
 It's the dude she's been hanging out with -- the one asking questions about us.

TREVOR  
 (still confused)  
 Just leave the girls alone. I'm the one you want.

Sideburns and Ponytail share a look, and look over to the third shadow -- who is a FAT BIKER-type in a too-small leather vest.

Fat Biker shrugs. Sideburns raises an arm, and there's a LARGE PISTOL in his hand. Pointed at Trevor.

SIDEBURNS  
 The fuck I give a shit about you?  
 Where's Holli?

The ELECTRIC HUM is rising, and the Fat Biker looks curiously out to the river.

PONYTAIL  
 That her kid with him. We get her kid, Holli will come to us.

SIDEBURNS  
 Where's Drex? Was that his gun we heard?

The other two nod as the police lights grow closer.

FAT BIKER  
 (eager to go)  
 Might be Drex already took care of our hot little problem.

SIDEBURNS  
 Wanted to kill that snitching bitch myself -- making me come all the way up here.

Trevor gasps. Realizing. *Albuquerque!*

The ELECTRIC HUM is ringing in Trevor's ears . . .

TREVOR

This doesn't have anything to do with Sid?

Sideburns raises his pistol, his KILLER'S EYES ready to take care of Ella as easily as anyone--

SIDEBURNS

Who the fuck is Sid?  
(hammer cocks)  
Time to tie up loose ends. All of them--

Trevor curls himself in front of Ella and a GUNSHOT splits the night!

Fat Biker coughs, mutters *shit*, and sits down HARD -- staring at his chest as BLOOD FLOWS.

Sideburns is startled, but recovers, crouches, and as the ELECTRIC HUM reaches fever pitch, steadies his pistol at Trevor and Ella--

WHOOOOMP -- a small, jagged rock streaks from the river's edge and CRACKS against Sideburns's skull.

Trevor's off his knees in a flash, flying towards Ponytail. Ponytail's gun is up, but Ponytail's distracted, looking at where the rock came from...

Trevor CRUNCHES into Ponytail's knees and the larger man's pistol shot kicks up shards of rocks. Ponytail is stronger, but Trevor's fighting for Ella. They're both grappling for the gun, their noses INCHES APART -- murder in their eyes.

BLAM -- the gun fires, the bullet burning along Trevor's ribcage before exploding into the river. Trevor paws at the ground with his free hand, his fingers closing around an old RAILROAD SPIKE.

CLANG! CLANG! Against Ponytail's skull -- and the grip on the gun weakens, is turned back towards Ponytail's stomach--

BLAM! BLAM!

Ponytail staggers away, and Trevor's up with the gun, turning towards--

A frozen Ella, and Sideburns LURCHING toward her. Trevor raises the gun, awkward, afraid to hit Ella.

BLAM! Holli is running out the darkness with Drex's gun...

Sideburns stiffens, and jerks away from Ella -- BLAM! BLAM!  
BLAM! Trevor empties his gun, too--

Sideburns totters but hasn't gone down... a couple stumbling  
steps... his long arm reaching for Ella...

He tips over the edge of the riverbank just as his fingers  
close AROUND Ella's collar.

With a SQUEAK from Ella, they both disappear with a SPLASH.

**EXT. RIVERBANK/RIVER - NIGHT**

The river is a field of BLACKNESS in the night -- a void  
upon the night. We can't see a damn thing, much less a  
little girl.

Trevor scrambles along the river bank.

TREVOR

Ella! Ella!

Nothing - no scream, no splashes. Only rain squelching into  
the muddy banks.

Trevor's head swivels frantically. *Anything!?!?*

HOLLI

ELLA!!!

He stumbles further down the bank -- seemingly propelled by  
the force of Holli's CONTINUED SHRIEKS. The sheer  
hopelessness of it makes his legs weak--

Suddenly, Holli's voice CALMS and her words become SOFT...

HOLLI (cont'd)

Sid, please? Please?

Trevor jerks to a halt, and stares back at Holli. *What the--*

A small FLICKER -- a spark, a hint of static discharge --  
flares above the water a five yards away--

Unthinking, Trevor's off the like a shot. Two steps and a  
FLYING LEAP into the darkness... KLOOSH!

The current is surprisingly swift, but another SPARK lights  
up a hump in the water! He strokes frantically, reaches...

It just Ella's dragon. No sign of the girl.

TREVOR

No!

Trevor's numb hand releases the dragon and it sinks away...

TREVOR (cont'd)  
(totally broken)

No...

All hope recedes and he lets the river pull at him, pull him deeper into the cold--

A FINAL SPARK twinkles and a LITTLE HAND, held above the water as though the very air struggles to lift it up, shines in the silvery, already-gone glow--

Trevor heaves toward it in powerful stroke and PULLS ELLA from the water! She's limp and heavy, and the current picks up speed. He holds her aloft, even as the motion pushes him lower into the water.

He wallops her on the back. Another wallop...

He tries scissor-kicking his way to shore. But he's quickly losing to the pull of the current and the ROAR of an upcoming diversion dam starts to fill the--

Ella COUGHS so violently, she nearly flops from Trevor's grasp. He kicks, kicks, kicks... toward the shore. The THROATY RUMBLE of the dam, and the sucking sound of its treacherous HYDRAULIC ACTION grow closer--

Trevor looks blindly to shore knowing that he won't make it, that the current is too--

And THERE IS SID.

An INNOCENT, EARNEST Sid -- whose arms gesture for Trevor to give it another kick, to get closer. As Trevor does, Sid's arms reach for Trevor.

TREVOR (cont'd)

Sid?

He extends his free hand for Sid's outstretched arms and lands tight hold--

Of the BRANCHES of a fallen tree, invisible in the darkness. He hangs on as Ella COUGHS and WHEEZES and the sound of--

HOLLI

Trevor! Trevor!

--grows closer.

**EXT. RIVERBANK - NIGHT**

Holli hugs Ella tight even as the little girl continues to COUGH the last of the river from her lungs. SIRENS wail while Trevor lays in the mud.

His body is completely wiped, but his eyes dance as he looks up to the sky. Typical Colorado - half the clouds are already gone and a corner of the sky is alight with stars.

TREVOR

How'd you get a gun?

Holli reaches out a hand and grasps his arm fiercely.

HOLLI

I had help. We all had help tonight.

(sniffs)

In that closet, I prayed. I prayed for a goddamn miracle, Trevor, and your ugly car came flying out of the darkness.

TREVOR

I was chasing Sid--

HOLLI

I know.

TREVOR

But...

HOLLI

What else could Sid have done? The way you thought about him? It was the only way he could get you to listen, *to be ready.*

A beat.

Trevor's eyes widen in realization as he FLASHES on: *his kitchen floor and the crooked 818 drawn in the dirt.*

All the enticement Trevor needed--

HOLLI (cont'd)

If you hadn't come like a madman...  
if Ella hadn't been sleeping in my  
bed... those sparks in the water...

Trevor FLASHES ON: *The earnest face as Sid reached to pull him from the river--*

Holli looks up at the stars as she squeezes Ella.

HOLLI (cont'd)  
Thank you, Sid.

In the mud, where he belongs, Trevor curls in on himself as the GUILT starts to crush him.

**INT. SID'S ROOM - DAWN**

The machines beep in unchanged rhythm. Trevor leans heavily on the railing of Sid's bed, looking up at the ugly, plain-white ceiling.

Trevor's eyes are deep pools of DESPAIR as he tries to imagine the sacrifice--

TREVOR  
(whispering)  
Ten months?

He tries to look around the room -- at the godforsaken, stifling, draining, intolerable *hospitalness* of all of it.

But he can't -- and he can't look at Sid, either.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
Goddammit, Sid.  
(voice cracks)  
I am such a shit to you... I am such a miserable goddamn--

Trevor can't hold it together. The dams of self-loathing break inside. The SOBS wrack him.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
So many times I could have been what I should have been to you. But I never did it... I hated you... and you knew it.  
(finally looks at Sid)  
And you stayed anyway. To save them. For me.

Still losing it, Trevor leans over the railing and places an arm over Sid's chest in an awkward hug.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
How can I make this right? You have to let me make it up, Sid, please. Please. I can't leave it like this... live with this... I'll do anything... just tell me how to get right with you...



But Sid is just a bag of bones, and gradually Trevor's sobs subside. He looks up to see DAWN breaking over the horizon.

One of the machines gives a PLAINTIVE, OUT-OF-RHYTHM beep.

He straightens, and looks at Sid, then out the window, and back to Sid. Trevor's RED eyes start to GLISTEN anew.

TREVOR (cont'd)

Yeah, man, get out of this cage...

There's a quiet moment in the room . . . and--

The RHYTHM of the machines goes awry. An alarm BUZZES. Monitors FLASH in warning.

Trevor watches, broken and unworthy, as nurses rush in.

Juleen is right behind them, but she is BUFFETED by their rushing forms, and blocked out as she tries to reach Sid's side.

Trevor limps away from the bed, and heads toward the door. He gives the nurses, and his mother, a wide berth.

A last nurse bursts through, and Trevor catches the door, and we hear Juleen's HEARTBROKEN voice--

JULEEN

My baby? My beautiful...

Halfway out the door, Trevor looks back. Juleen has been pushed to the foot of the bed, alone her dingy dress, her haggard face LOST. Alone.

JULEEN (cont'd)

Is he? Is he?

Trevor watches her and hears his own words: *Just tell me how to get right...*

A beat.

He crosses back to his mother in two long strides. He enfolds her into his long arms, and she's no longer alone.

And she is *forgiven*.

He holds her tight, and cries with her. They haven't hugged in god knows how long, but it's a real embrace and there's nothing awkward about it.

JULEEN (cont'd)

He was supposed to come back.

TREVOR  
It'll be okay. *I promise.*

He guides her from the room. The BEEPING machines fade away as the door closes behind them.

TREVOR (cont'd)  
He wanted me to show you something.

**INT. HOSPITAL - FAMILY WAITING AREA - DAY**

Little feet PATTER in the hallway. Trevor follows the sound, wincing with each step. Juleen leans against him.

They find Holli sitting alone on a beige couch. A pile of hospital toys lies scattered about. There's a magazine rack and two empty recliners across from her.

Flitting around all of it with her a new stuffed animal -- another dragon -- is Ella. She runs over, collides into Trevor's legs with a hug and a SQUEAL OF DELIGHT.

TREVOR  
(to Juleen)  
This is Ella. Your granddaughter.

Juleen stares, her ragged face frozen as she slowly sits down onto the recliner. Ella crawls right into her lap, excited to show off her new toy.

Trevor watches knowingly, smiling himself, as Juleen transitions from dazed to entranced.

He sits gingerly next to Holli, leans back into the cushions, and watches a grandmother spark to life.

HOLLI  
Ella calls this dragon Sid, too.

TREVOR  
That is a *great* dragon name.

Exhausted, Holli leans her head against his shoulder. Her hand lays palm up on his knee. Not too close -- but close enough that he can take it if he wants to.

His fingers twitch.