

"Dead End"

By

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BLACKNESS

A GUN SHOT, followed by the SOUND OF something heavy FALLING to the floor. Then the SOUND OF footsteps, and finally the SOUND OF a door CREAKING, being opened and closed.

FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT-DAY

We see a body on the floor. LUKE ELLIS is lying lifelessly on the ground, directly beneath the kitchen counter, eyes staring into nowhere. Blood is emanating out from the side of his head. He's a young man, 20 or 21. He's pale, skinny, with scraggly black hair.

The apartment is eerily silent since the earlier commotion. We hear a clock TICKING away. A small black gun is lying on the bloody counter. It's a strangely serene, almost peaceful sight. The young man looks neither perturbed or troubled, but rather at peace, finally.

The previously peaceful scene has now changed instantly into one of NOISE and CHAOS. The apartment is full of various people; forensic scientists, policemen, a coroner, neighbours. The SOUND OF voices, of cameras going off, and FLASHING lights, fill the residence.

Standing over the now cordoned off body of Luke Ellis are two detectives. KENNY TOWNSEND is a large, chubby, red-faced man with thinning blonde hair. He's wearing a cheap-looking suit.

TODD SHARP is a slim, average sized man with short black hair. He looks completely calm, almost to the point of disinterest.

TOWNSEND

(murmurs)

Fuck me.

Townsend runs his hand through his hair, sighs heavily.

Sharp just stares blankly at the body, hands in pockets.

TOWNSEND

Unbelievable, huh?

SHARP

(shrugs)

I guess.

Townsend stares at Sharp. For a moment it appears as if he's about to lose his composure, but just shakes his head.

SHARP

What?

TOWNSEND

(angrily)

"I guess"?

SHARP

(sarcastically)

Oh, well, please forgive me for my evidently unsatisfying response. Where did I go wrong this time? Please, do tell.

TOWNSEND

(stepping closer to SHARP)

I think it's pretty fuckin' obvious where you went wrong "this time!"

SHARP

(whispers)

Christ, will you calm down? Look I'm sorry for making such an incendiary remark, but d'you think we could maybe save this for another time?

Townsend closes his eyes, breathes deeply.

TOWNSEND

(quietly)

I guess.

SHARP

Well that's all we can really do now, isn't it?

Townsend opens his mouth, ready to berate him again.

CORONER (O.S.)

Hi, Detective TOWNSEND, right?

A pudgy, grey-haired man is standing in front of the two men now.

TOWNSEND

It is, yeah.

CORONER

(pleasantly)

Hi, Bill Nilsson, I'm the coroner.

The two shake hands.

TOWNSEND

(indicating to Sharp)

Oh, this is my partner, Todd Sharp.

Sharp produces a forced smile.

NILSSON

(shakes hands)

Hi, Bill Nilsson.

SHARP

Pleasure.

The three men stare down at the corpse.

TOWNSEND

So.....

Nilsson turns to Townsend.

TOWNSEND (Cont'd)

.....any news regardin'.....this?

NILSSON

Oh yeah, well, he's definitely dead alright.

SHARP

(to himself)

There's a revelation.

Townsend gives Sharp a quick look.

TOWNSEND

I meant is there any news regardin', you know, the cause of death?

NILSSON

Oh yeah, of course! Well, uh, from what we've learned from inspecting the scene, and talking with the neighbours, it's still pretty inconclusive at this point, really. I mean, if you were to put a gun to my head—Sorry, bad example. What I mean is, if I were to guess, I'd say suicide. I mean, that was, you know, my first impression anyway, but having talked to the neighbours, I really think that's the case now.

TOWNSEND

What'd they say?

NILSSON

Well, none of 'em said that they heard any commotion before the incident, and no one's claimed to have seen anyone enter or leave the flat during the time in which the shot was fired.

TOWSEND

That seems pretty conclusive to me.

NILSSON

(sighs loudly)

Yeah, I guess it is. (Beat) Although, one person has claimed to have seen a figure walking away from the apartment around the time of the incident.

TOWNSEND

(surprised)

Really? Why didn't ya mention that first?

NILSSON

Well, to be completely honest, it's a bit of a weak thread really. I mean the person can't give us any sort of description of the figure, other than it was a stocky enough male wearing all grey.

TOWNSEND

Fair enough. Not much to go on there, really. (Beat) Still, at least it's somethin', you know? You never can tell what'll come back into play.

NILSSON

(quietly)

True.

Nilsson gazes back towards the body.

Townsend looks at Sharp.

He's staring down at his feet.

NILSSON

Still, we won't know for sure what happened till all the evidence gets back to forensics.

TOWNSEND

True.

NILSSON

Anyway, I better get going. It's been a pleasure, Mr. Townsend. I wish you all the best in the investigation.

TOWNSEND

Yeah we better be gettin' back to the station too.
The two men shake hands vigorously.

TOWNSEND

Thank you. I appreciate you comin' out here to help us with.....this.

NILSSON

(chuckles)

Not a problem. It's my job.

NILSSON

(extends his hand)

Goodbye, Mr. Sharp.

Sharp turns his head suddenly towards the coroner.

He looks surprised, as if he'd forgotten the man was still there.

SHARP

Oh yeah, see ya.

The two men shake hands. Nilsson exits the apartment.

TOWNSEND

(quietly)

"See ya?"

EXT. POLICE STATION-DAY

A large, grey building, situated in the middle of a bustling main street. People are walking by it in steady droves. It's a dull, dry day. There's a large sign, written in white, against a blue background: POLICE.

INT. INVESTIGATION ROOM-DAY

The room is average sized. It's four walls are completely white. Several chairs are strewn across the ground. A large wooden desk is in the centre of the room.

There's a large whiteboard at the very back of the room. Six photographs are stuck on to it with blu-tack. Above the photographs, written in thick black marker, are the words;

"Ellis Case Photos."

Sharp is slouched down in a chair beside the desk. A cup of coffee is resting on the table in front of him. He's bored and tired.

Townsend is standing facing the whiteboard. His hands are on his hips. His jacket is off, exposing a short white shirt with sweat stains.

SHARP

(tapping his cup of coffee)

Why d'you do that?

Townsend turns to him.

TOWNSEND

(sounding tired)

Do what?

SHARP

Write "Ellis Case Photos"? I'd think it's pretty obvious that they're photos, and we both know the name of the victim. So why do it?

TOWNSEND

(angrily)

Look, it's just standard procedure, okay? I'm well aware that you don't need to be told they're photos, and that we both remember the victim's name, but.....can you just leave it be? Please?

SHARP

(chuckling)

Okay, sorry I asked.

Townsend returns to the whiteboard.

SHARP

So, uh.....

Townsend sighs softly. His shoulders visibly sag.

SHARP (Cont'd)

.....when are we, uh, when are we gonna start?

Townsend faces him.

TOWNSEND

(quietly)

Soon.

Sharp nods weakly in response.

SHARP

It's just.....

Townsend lets out another sigh.

SHARP (Cont'd)

.....we've been sitting here for like ten minutes now, and we haven't exactly been making leaps of progress.

TOWNSEND

That's because we've only gotten the evidence from the scene a coupla minutes ago, and I'd like a minute or two to analyse them. Is that okay?

SHARP

Fine.

Townsend turns back to the whiteboard.

He turns back around.

TOWNSEND

You know you're more than welcome to come join me up here!

SHARP

Oh no that's fine, really. I'd only slow you down.

TOWNSEND

Only slow me down. That's your go to excuse for most cases these days, Sharp!

SHARP

Hey man, you're just better at this job than I am.

TOWNSEND

Yeah, mostly because I actually fucking try!

SHARP

Hey just because I'm not gung-ho like you doesn't mean I don't try. I help and speak up when the situation presents itself.

TOWNSEND

(irritated)

Well the situation hasn't exactly been presentin' itself so far, has it?

SHARP

(calmly)

Well we haven't started yet, right?

Townsend rolls his eyes.

He returns to the whiteboard.

Sharp takes one long gulp of his coffee.

SHARP

Why do we even go to the trouble, huh?

Townsend doesn't turn away from the whiteboard.

TOWSEND

(sounding a bit calmer than before)

What?

SHARP

Why do we bother going to the trouble of all this? I mean, the guys in forensics will solve it for us anyway, right? I mean that's basically been the case for a long time now. We're pretty useless, really. So what's the point?

Townsend closes his eyes, takes a deep breath.

TOWSEND

We go to the trouble, Sharp, because it's our job.

Townsend faces him.

TOWSEND (Cont'd)

(more agitated now)

It's our job and our duty to help solve these cases, okay? It doesn't matter if they're as easy as piss or the most difficult thing we've ever done, okay? We got a job to do, and it certainly doesn't matter if forensics will solve it in the end. We're paid to do our best, and that's what we're gonna do, understand?!

SHARP

(raising his hands in defence)

Sorry, sorry. My mistake. I obviously touched a nerve there.

TOWSEND

A ner-

Townsend closes his eyes, takes a deep breath and returns to the whiteboard.

He stares blankly at it.

He's not even really looking at the photos.

Sharp glances around the room randomly, killing time.

TOWNSEND

Christ I'm sick a' this!

Sharp looks at his partner blankly.

TOWNSEND (Cont'd)

We had nine a' these cases last year alone! And now we're startin' off the year with another one! Fuck me!

Sharp remains silent. He's staring down at his black shoes.

Townsend begins pacing up and down his area of the room.

He's obviously been holding this in for a while.

TOWNSEND (Cont'd)

I mean Christ! It can't be that bad, can it? Sure life is tough, but with all the services these kids have; all the hotlines and support, and yet they still choose to-

Townsend ceases walking and faces the whiteboard.

He rests his head against it, sighing deeply.

TOWNSEND

(quietly)

Why does it always have to end like this?

SHARP

Like what?

Townsend turns quickly towards his partner.

TOWNSEND

Like this! Suicide!

Sharp smirks.

SHARP

But we don't know that, not yet.

TOWNSEND

Oh come on, Sharp! Didn't you hear what Nilsson said? It's pretty obvious what happened here!

Sharp slouches back into his chair.

SHARP

Well, all I'm saying is we can't be sure of anything yet. Shit, maybe it really was a murder, if we're lucky. Have some actual work to do this time, instead of having to come to the same conclusion we always come to.

TOWNSEND

And what conclusion's that?

SHARP

(chuckles)

Same shit, different day.

Townsend steps forward towards his partner.

TOWNSEND

(angrily)

Oh, nice attitude. You think this is all some fuckin' joke, do ya? You think suicides are for our own amusement, huh?

Sharp leans forward in his chair.

SHARP

Look man, you told me that we have a duty to do our jobs to the best of our abilities, and fair enough, I get that. But don't give me this shit about having to admire, or even respect, these people, okay? I mean, how can I respect someone who just gives up? Please, Townsend, please tell me how I should go about doing that? Cause I for one have no fucking idea.

TOWNSEND

(disgustedly)

How can ya.....

He walks back to the whiteboard.

Sharp begins swinging in his chair, mindlessly picking at a splinter on the surface of the table.

Townsend continues to stare at the whiteboard of pictures.

A long silence.

Townsend sighs quietly.

TOWNSEND

(calmly)

Alright.....

Sharp looks up from the table.

TOWNSEND (Cont'd)

.....let's just get started, shall we?

SHARP

Fine by me.

TOWNSEND

Okay.....

Townsend plucks the photo of Ellis' dead body in the apartment from the whiteboard. He holds it up in front of him. He starts walking over to his partner.

TOWNSEND

.....let's begin with what we know.

BLACKNESS

INT. APARTMENT-DAY

Luke opens his eyes, one after the other. He blinks. He's staring at the bottom of the kitchen counter. There's globules of blood spattered across it. He waits a few seconds, before eventually rising up from the floor to a sitting position. He looks around the apartment.

His face contorts. It's filled with confusion, bafflement.

He gazes down at the floor. Puddles of blood are scattered across it. He sees that the apartment door is still open. He then sniffs the air, noticing that the smell of smoke from the gun shot is still present.

He realises what's just happened; he's been shot, in the head. He turns around and sees below him a large, dark pool of blood where his head once rested. He raises his fingertips to the side of his head. It is soaked with blood, with a deep gash in it.

He scrambles quickly away from the pool of blood.

His mouth opens in disbelief.

He starts breathing loudly. His chest is rising and falling dramatically.

He rises up from the floor. It is an unsteady, awkward ascent. He holds on to the kitchen counter for stability. As he does so, he notices the gun lying on its surface.

He picks it up, and sniffs the inside of the barrel. He makes a face. The smell is still potent.

He places the gun back down, before moving to the sink. He grabs a white cloth. He makes his way into the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM-DAY

Luke enters the bathroom. He shuts the door, makes his way over to the sink.

He twists the tap on, placing the cloth directly into the flow of the water. He keeps it there for a few seconds. He stops the flow, squeezes the cloth and places it gently to the side of his head.

He jumps slightly at the coldness of the material.

He holds the cloth to the gash in his head and keeps it there.

Luke leans over the sink, eyes closed, breathing heavily.

He then gazes intensely into the mirror, still holding the cloth to the side of his head.

Tears start forming in his eyes.

Luke closes his eyes, and lowers his head into the sink, exhaling deeply.

INT. APARTMENT. KITCHEN-DAY

He opens his eyes and raises his head again. We see that he is no longer standing in the bathroom. He is standing in his kitchen, leaning on the counter with his forearms.

He is no longer bloody. He is perfectly clean and tidy. There is no gash in the side of his head. The floor is completely clean.

Luke jerks back when he realizes where he is and what's just happened.

He gazes down onto his now clean clothes. He feels them with his hands, before then feeling the part of his head where the gash previously was. Nothing. Totally clean.

He makes another face, full of disbelief and shock.

There's suddenly a knock on his now closed apartment door.

He begins walking over to it.

His face contorts again.

He's visibly trying to stop himself from walking over, but he can't.

He doesn't stop.

He keeps on walking.

It's clear he's no longer in control of himself.

He eventually reaches the door. He opens it.

An average-sized, bulky young man is standing in front of him now. He's wearing all grey, with the hood of his jumper pulled over his head.

He points a black hand gun at Luke.

Luke opens his mouth.

MAN

(in a gruff voice)

Don't speak.

Luke freezes up.

MAN

Put your hands up.

Luke raises his hands. They're shaking.

MAN

Turn around, and walk over to the kitchen.

He motions with his gun towards the direction of the kitchen.

Luke starts walking.

MAN (Cont'd)

Slowly. Keep your hands up.

The man starts walking with Luke towards the kitchen.

Luke's face is still full of confusion and bafflement.

The two men reach the kitchen.

MAN

Put your hands on the counter.

Luke obliges.

MAN

Alright, this is a robbery. Stay here and don't move.

MAN

If you make one sound, or if I see you've moved, you're dead,
got it?

Luke nods his head intensely.

MAN

I wanna hear you say it.

LUKE

I got it! I got it!

Luke makes a face.

Those aren't his words.

The man begins slowly moving away from Luke.

Luke suddenly turns around and faces him.

LUKE

Look, please! Just-just take what you want and-
We hear the sound of a gunshot.

Blood spatters onto the top of the kitchen counter.

INT. INVESTIGATION ROOM-DAY

We see hot coffee splattering onto the floor of the room.

SHARP

(quietly)

Shit.

Townsend turns his head towards his partner.

He sighs when he sees the split coffee.

TOWNSEND

(sarcastically)

Oh, well done.

Shard smiles sourly. He is now sitting on the table, coffee in hand.

SHARP

It's okay.....

He takes a few tissues from his pocket.

SHARP (Cont'd)

I came prepared.

He begins cleaning the spilt liquid.

Townsend brings his attention back to the photo of the body of Luke Ellis in his hand.

TOWNSEND

Anyway, to recap.....

Sharp finishes cleaning up the coffee.

He throws the soggy tissues in the bin near the door.

TOWNSEND (Cont'd)

We know that, apart from one witness, who's claim is pretty vague and, quite frankly useless at this point, no one claimed to see anyone leave or enter the kid's apartment, right?

Sharp sits on top of the desk, legs planted firmly on the ground.

SHARP

Right.

TOWNSEND

And no one's claimed to have heard any commotion before the incident took place, correct?

SHARP

Correct.

TOWNSEND

So it all really points to suicide, doesn't it?

SHARP

It does.

Townsend gives his partner a look, before returning to the whiteboard.

He gazes at the picture.

TOWNSEND

But I've been lookin' at this photo, tryin' to think about, ya know, what happened.....and I noticed the gun, on the counter.

SHARP

(chuckling)

Shit! Well done, Townsend. You know what they say; "One step at a time."

Townsend turns around and faces his partner instantly.

TOWNSEND

(irritated)

I know what the fuckin' murder weapon is, okay? I just-
He sighs in frustration.

SHARP

(sincerely)

No, please continue.

TOWNSEND

I just don't get how it got there. I mean if he, you know, offed himself with it, wouldn't it be on the floor with him?

Sharp gives this some thought.

He nods slowly in agreement.

SHARP

Yeah, I guess you're right.

SHARP (Cont'd)

But what if he "offed" himself over the sink, so that the gun would land there. That could explain how the gun is on the counter, and he's on the ground. He could've fallen from the counter on to the floor.

Townsend takes a few seconds to absorb this.

TOWNSEND

No.....if that were the case, there'd be a lot more blood on the surface of the counter. There's only a small amount on there.

He gestures with the photo.

TOWNSEND (Cont'd)

No, I don't buy that. And I definitely can't believe the gun could've ended up on the counter from where his body was. And given that the wound was on the side of his head, I just don't think it's plausible.

Sharp takes a sip of his coffee.

SHARP

Alright, so what are you saying?

TOWNSEND

I'm sayin'.....

Townsend moves closer to his partner.

TOWNSEND (Cont'd)

That I don't think this was a suicide, Sharp. I think it was a homicide. Murder. I think there was a second man. Remember that witness who claimed to have seen someone comin' outta the apartment. I think that's our guy!

SHARP

(unconvinced)

You're jumping to a lot of conclusions here, aren't you?

TOWNSEND

Well for Christ's sakes, Sharp! It fuckin' fits! All of it! I've been lookin' at this picture for the last while, and once I noticed the gun on the counter, I just started puttin' it together in my head, ya know? Been goin' over it. It all just kinda came together all of a sudden. This was a murder, no doubt in my mind. The killer probably tried to make it seem like a suicide!

Sharp makes a face at his partner.

SHARP

(chuckles)

I think you have a bit too much caffeine in you, Townsend.

TOWNSEND

Fuck you! It's the best lead we got so far.

Townsend walks back up to the whiteboard.

Sharp strides a few paces forward.

SHARP

But that's all it is, Townsend. A lead. A theory. It's a good theory, I'll admit, but we've no serious evidence to back it up.

Townsend stops in front of the whiteboard.

He sighs softly.

Suddenly, he raises his head and turns back towards his partner.

TOWNSEND

Forensics.

SHARP

Come again?

TOWNSEND

Forensics have the gun! They have samples from the scene! That's our fuckin' evidence! Go check and see if they've found anythin' yet!

SHARP

Don't they always come to us the second they have something?

TOWNSEND

Just go anyway, please!

Sharp mulls it over for a few seconds.

SHARP

(softly)

Fine.

He turns around and walks out of the room.

SHARP (Cont'd)

(to himself)

Told you they'd solve it for us.

Townsend holds the photo of Ellis' dead body in front of him.

He grins.

BLACKNESS

INT. APARTMENT-DAY

Luke's eyes open, one after the other.

He instantly stands up, bypassing the option of sitting on the floor.

He starts flexing his fingers, then moving his arms and legs.

He twists his head around.

LUKE

Hello.....Hell-O.....My name is Luke.....

His face relaxes somewhat.

He sighs in relief.

He gazes around the apartment, looking at the globules of blood on the floor, at the still-open door.

He touches the gash on the side of his head.

INT. APARTMENT. BATHROOM-DAY

He presses the wet cloth to the side of his head.

He winces from the pain.

He stares into the mirror.

He lowers his head.

He starts weeping, softly.

INT. APARTMENT. KITCHEN-DAY

Luke raises his head.

We see that he is no longer in the bathroom.

He is once again standing in the kitchen, forearms resting on the counter.

He jerks back in shock and surprise.

There's a knock on the door.

He walks over to it.

He's clearly trying to stop himself, but to no avail.

He opens the door.

The same man as before is standing there, dressed all in grey.

He's holding the black gun in his left hand.

He swings his left arm back and hits Luke on the side of the head with his gun.

Luke falls down to the floor, screaming in agony.

He's bleeding from his left temple.

The man grabs him by the collar and drags him across the clean floor.

He shoves him up against the base of the kitchen counter.

He points the gun in his face.

MAN

Where's the fuckin' money, Ellis?!

Luke looks at him bemused.

LUKE

I.....I don't what you're talking about, Derek! I paid back all my debts weeks ago! You can check it!

DEREK

Bullshit! You still owe us two hundred for last week!

LUKE

I.....I.....well I don't-

He slaps Luke across the face with the gun.

DEREK

You got two seconds to gimme that money, or your brains will be all over this floor!

LUKE

I swear, I paid back all of my debts! Please! Just give me a chance to-

A gun shot.

Then Luke's body slumps to the floor, dead.

INT. INVESTIGATION ROOM-DAY

We see the picture of Ellis' dead body in the hand of Townsend. The body is lying in exactly the same position as it had been the last time we saw it.

Townsend gazes at it. He nods his head softly.

He then pins the picture back up on the whiteboard.

INT. APARTMENT-DAY

Luke's eyes open, one after the other.

He stands up immediately.

Globules of blood are splattered across the floor and on the counter. The gash in his head is back.

INT. APARTMENT. BATHROOM-DAY

Luke is pressing the wet cloth against the side of his head.

Tears are welling in his eyes.

INT. INVESTIGATION ROOM-DAY

Townsend moves closer to the whiteboard.

He gazes upon the pictures on the whiteboard; There are six photos on the whiteboard, including the one of Ellis' dead body;

One was of Ellis smiling with a girl on a bench, another was of him as a tween playing football with another boy in a field.

Two of the remaining photos were of the crime scene (specifically the floor and kitchen counter).

The final picture was of Ellis and his mother, celebrating the young kid's sixth birthday.

Townsend steps closer to the whiteboard.

He gazes across all the photos.

He sighs.

He looks dejected, depressed by what he's looking at.

He then plucks the picture of Ellis and the girl and begins to analyse it closely.

INT. SHOPPING MALL-DAY

A CLOSE UP of Luke's face. His eyes open immediately, and he jerks back in fright and surprise.

As he jerks back, we realise he's standing in a large mall.

It's full of people flowing in every direction. Noise pervades all areas; children SCREAMING, babies CRYING, music BLARING. There's a faint smell of cotton candy in the air. Rays of sunlight are shining in from the glass ceiling above.

He glances around frantically.

An arm starts tugging Luke's jumper.

He turns around.

Alisson Harper. His ex-girlfriend.

Or rather, his current girlfriend.

ALLISON

(perkily)

Come on! I see a free bench over there!

She points to the far end of the mall.

Allison is small, skinny and pale. She has short, straight black hair.

Luke stares at her.

But she continues pulling him, this time by the hand.

ALLISON

Come on!

Allison drags Luke valiantly through the waves of people towards the free bench at the end of the mall.

LUKE

Wait, Allison!

Luke brings her to a halt in the middle of the crowd.

ALLISON

(cheerfully)

What?

Luke just stares at her awkwardly.

LUKE

I, um.....is this.....are we.....can-can I.....

Allison makes a bemused face at him.

LUKE

I, uh.....eat your foot!

Allison makes an even more bemused face at him.

ALLISON

Come again?

Luke just stares at her, mouth open.

ALLISON (Cont'd)

(chuckling)

You want me to eat my fo-

LUKE

Never mind! Sorry, I don't what I'm saying! Come on, let's go!

Luke starts tugging her along through the crowd of people.

Luke sighs in relief. He's in control once more.

Allison quickly catches up to her boyfriend, before eventually passing him out.

Luke suddenly stumbles as Allison tugs him along at an even quicker rate.

LUKE (chuckling)

Ally! Will you slow down please?

She just laughs gleefully in response.

Luke then begins laughing too, embracing the sheer silliness of their situation.

The two reach the free bench and sit down, exhausted.

LUKE

(breathing heavily)

What's the rush?

Allison grins at him. She takes his hand in hers.

ALLISON

Well, most of the time all the benches are taken. So, whenever there's an opening, I feel we owe it to ourselves to make the most such a rare, precious opportunity.

Luke chuckles.

ALLISON (Cont'd)

Well.....us and our butts.

They both laugh.

Luke begins glancing around the mall.

ALLISON

You okay?

Luke looks at her.

LUKE

(distractedly)

Hmmmm? Oh yeah, I'm fine.

They smile at each other.

Allison begins digging around in her brown satchel.

Luke begins glancing around the mall once more.

She pulls out an expensive-looking camera.

She tugs at Luke.

He looks at her.

ALLISON

(exaggerated French accent)

Monsieur Luke! I'm ready for my close up!

Luke smiles.

LUKE

I don't doubt it.

Allison hits him playfully on the arm, smiles wryly.

She pulls Luke close to her. They both get into position for the shot.

LUKE

You sure this really warrants a photo?

ALLISON

Hey! It's not every day we get to sit down! On a bench! In the mall! On a Saturday!

Luke's face suddenly changes.

ALLISON (Cont'd)

Come on, smile! I have a feeling that-

LUKE (Mouthing) (together with Allison)

This one's a keeper.

The camera flashes, capturing the young couple smiling together on the bench.

It's the same exact photo that Townsend was holding.

Luke looks away from Allison, who's reviewing the photo in the camera.

We suddenly see images of the two lovers, walking together, in this exact same mall.

They're laughing, smiling, holding hands.

We see them sit down on this very bench, inaudibly chatting to one another.

We see Alison then take that very same photo she's taken only moments ago.

Luke's face suddenly changes. He remembers this place, now. He remembers this meeting, all too well.

Alison looks at him.

ALLISON

What?

Luke comes back to the present.

LUKE

Nothing.

ALLISON

What do you think?

She shows Luke the photo.

ALLISON

(exaggerated teen girl voice)

Isn't it just, like, totally amazing?!

LUKE

Yep. Couldn't have put it better myse-

Luke stares at the image for a few moments.

ALLISON

What's wrong?

LUKE

(quietly)

Nothing, I just uh.....nothing.

Allison begins flicking through previous photos on the camera.

Luke leans forward, forearms on his knees.

A close up of Luke's face.

He's focused, concentrated.

Allison continues her browse through various captured memories.

A voice begins emanating through the speakerphones in the mall.

Allison leans over to Luke.

She shows him her camera.

ALLISON

What d'ya think of this beauty, honey?

It's a picture of her and her pet Labrador, Tiger.

Luke smirks.

LUKE

Wow, she sure is beautiful. (Beat) You're not too bad either.

ALLISON

(sarcastically)

Ha ha.

She returns to browsing through the photos.

Luke leans back into the bench, resting his head against the wall.

He sighs.

Allison begins putting the camera back in her satchel.

Allison grabs Luke's hand gently.

ALLISON

Shall we go print it out?

Luke jerks his head towards her.

LUKE

(distracted)

What?

ALLISON

(chuckling)

And here I always thought you kept daydreaming solely for school.

Luke smirks.

LUKE

Sorry, I was, uh.....just a bit tired.

ALLISON

As I said, shall we go print the picture it out? I like it the more I see it.

LUKE

Yeah, sure. Let's go.

They both rise from the bench and begin walking slowly, hand in hand.

Luke looks at his girlfriend. He smiles at her.

She sticks her tongue out.

He chuckles.

They continue making their way through the crowd.

He looks at her again, and his expression has suddenly changed.

He looks grave, saddened.

EXT. ALISON'S HOUSE-DAY

The two are speaking inaudibly to each other.

Luke suddenly breaks down in tears, falls to the ground.

Alison kneels down beside him, meekly rubs his back. It's a pathetic attempt at comfort.

Luke suddenly gets up, and walks away. He's enraged, disgusted, heartbroken.

INT. MALL-DAY

Alison smiles warmly at him. She winks.

INT. INVESTIGATION ROOM-DAY

Townsend walks back over to the whiteboard and pins the picture of Ellis and Allison back up.

He just stands there, staring. Hands on hips.

INT. APARTMENT-DAY

Luke's eyes open once again, one after another.

He breathes slowly, in and out.

He begins pulling himself up into a sitting position. He's a lot calmer now.

He glances around.

He rises to his feet, feeling the side of his head as he does so.

He looks back down at the floor, at the globules of blood scattered across the floor, at the dark pool of liquid where his head had been resting.

INT. BATHROOM-DAY

He turns on the tap, places the cloth under the faucet.

He places the cloth to his head. He closes his eyes, sighs.

He droops his head forward.

INT. APARTMENT. LIVING ROOM-DAY

He walks over to his couch, still holding the cloth to the side of his head.

He sits down, legs apart.

We hear a clock ticking away.

Luke falls back into the couch.

He stares at the floor.

We suddenly see images of the photos of his dead body and the two lovers.

We see police taking photos of the body, we see Alison taking the photo of the two together.

Luke's face is suddenly lit up.

He understands now, if only partially.

He's in those photos. Perhaps more. And they're being looked at, being used.

He slouches back into the couch.

He sighs.

He looks flustered, confused, upset.

A few moments pass.

Suddenly, his face changes.

He chuckles, and relaxes.

A small grin breaks out across his face.

Luke quickly rises up from the couch.

EXT. FIELD-DAY

Once Luke has fully risen, we see that he is no longer in his apartment, but in a wide, lush field. It's a beautiful day, cool breeze, clear sky, sun shining brightly.

He immediately jerks back in shock.

He glances around frantically.

ANDY (O.S)

Luke! Pass the ball will ya?!

Luke turns towards the direction of the voice, and sees who it is.

ANDY MARKS. He's a well-built boy, athletic, intense, short blonde-hair.

Luke realises that a ball is lying right in front of his feet.

Luke flexes his fingers, moves his legs, arms.

LUKE

Hello, my name is.....Hugh.

ANDY

(slightly annoyed)

Luke! Come on!

LUKE

Okay, sorry!

Luke kicks the ball firmly back to him.

He begins glancing around the field, in every direction.

He glances over to an area of benches.

Both his and Andy's mother are sitting there, drinking a bottle of wine.

They wave.

He waves back, hesitantly.

He sighs, looks down.

The ball goes flying past Luke's feet.

He raises his hand apologetically to Andy, before running after it.

Luke catches up to the ball.

He kicks it in front of him for a few yards, before hitting it long to Andy.

He gives Andy a sour look as he does so. It's clear he has no benevolent feelings towards the boy.

MRS. ELLIS (O.S.)

Luke!

Luke looks towards his mother, placing a hand over his eyes.

MRS. ELLIS (Cont'd)

Come in for a picture! Both of you! Come on!

Luke makes a small smile. His belief has been confirmed.

Luke and Andy both lightly jog over to their mothers.

Luke's mother takes out her camera.

MRS. ELLIS

Come on bunch in together, will you?

The two boys come closer.

Andy swings his arm over Luke's shoulder.

He makes another slightly disgusted face towards the boy.

MRS. ELLIS

Smile!

The two boys produce fake smiles.

The camera flashes.

We see the freshly taken photo of the two boys smiling.

INT. INVESTIGATION ROOM-DAY

We see the freshly taken photo of the two boys smiling in the hand of Townsend.

He pins it back up onto the whiteboard.

The door of the room swings open.

Townsend turns around.

Sharp is walking languidly towards him. He's holding a recently renewed cup of coffee.

TOWNSEND

So? Any luck? Have they found anythin'?

Sharp places his cup of coffee down on the table.

SHARP

Yep.

TOWNSEND

What? What they find?

Townsend moves closer and closer to his partner.

SHARP

Well.....they said they've found a few marks on the gun and the counter that they..... have their doubts about.

TOWNSEND

Christ that's brilliant! I knew it! I fuckin' knew it, Sharp!
I was certain there was more to this than just a suicide!

SHARP

Woah, calm down! It's not a foregone conclusion yet. They still don't know for sure.

TOWNSEND

Ah, come on Sharp! I think it's pretty obvious at this stage!

SHARP

Well, maybe you're right. But just don't, you know, jump to conclusions just yet.

TOWNSEND

I know, I know.....I knew it though! I fuckin' knew it!

SHARP

Yes, yes I know you did. (Beat) In fact I think everyone in the station knows as well.

Townsend chuckles.

Sharp takes a sip of his coffee.

SHARP (Cont'd)

But, and I hate to stop you from gloating once more, but they also said it would be another while before they could give us, you know, a proper sample or anything.

TOWNSEND

Ah that's fine! Sure the important thing is that we have some tangible evidence now.

SHARP

I guess.

TOWNSEND (Cont'd)

Anyway, we've got more than enough to keep us occupied until then.

He gestures back to the whiteboard, to the photos.

SHARP

(unconvinced)

What, the pictures?

Townsend nods genuinely.

SHARP

Come on, man. I mean I humoured you beforehand with this, but not now. Forensics will take care of it. They have all the important stuff. Let's just take it easy, relax.....we aren't needed anymore.

TOWNSEND

Look Sharp, we've been through this. We're here to do the best we can, and that's what we're gonna do.

Sharp rolls his eyes.

TOWNSEND

Look I take your point that forensics will probably take over from here, but that still doesn't give us the right to just slack off, you know? I mean for all we know, those photos might still offer some clues as to what happened. But we won't know that unless we analyse 'em, will we?

Sharp sighs.

SHARP

(lowly)

Fine.

TOWNSEND

Thanks, Sharp.

Sharp sits on top of the desk, grabs his coffee, takes another swig.

Townsend walks quickly back up to the whiteboard.

TOWNSEND

I mean, look.....

He plucks the photo of Ellis' dead body off the whiteboard. He walks down towards his partner, picture in hand.

TOWNSEND (Cont'd)

Have a look at this. See if you can spot anything, huh?
Sharp hesitates for a moment.

He then grabs the photo and looks at it closely.

BLACKNESS

Luke's eyes open, one after the other.

But something's wrong. He's completely immobile. His face is still, unmovable. He moves his eyes around frantically.

He attempts to move his body, but only manages slight squirms and wriggles. He's confined to the floor.

Out of the corner of his eye, he sees something. It's a bright yellow ray, like the light of a torch.

We see the light begin scanning his body intensely.

He starts screeching and wincing in pain. The light is intense, burning.

The ray of light suddenly moves off of Luke and onto the floor beside him, analysing the globules of blood.

Luke sighs in relief.

He focuses.

His face begins to squirm.

He suddenly begins flailing about, arms and legs flying.

Luke instantly ascends to his feet.

He looks at the ray of light. It's scanning the counter.

He looks down at the floor, at the globules of blood, then at the bloody counter.

Luke runs across the hall, into his utility room.

INT. UTILITY ROOM-DAY

He frantically grabs a mop and a bucket.

INT. KITCHEN-DAY

He fills the bucket with water from the kitchen sink.

He then begins cleaning the floor and kitchen counter.

The bright ray is still scanning the room.

He avoids it with extreme caution.

Within a minute, all the globules of blood, both on the floor and counter, are gone. It's all completely clean, spotless.

INT. INVESTIGATION ROOM-DAY

Sharp's face suddenly morphs into a visage of shock and utter confusion.

SHARP

What the fuck?

Townsend looks at his partner from the whiteboard.

TOWNSEND

What?

SHARP

It's gone.

TOWNSEND

What's gone?

SHARP

The blood! It's gone!

Townsend makes a face at him.

SHARP

I'm serious! Look!

Sharp gets off the desk and walks to Townsend.

SHARP

It just.....disappeared. Right in front of my eyes!

He hands the picture to Townsend.

Townsend looks at it.

TOWNSEND

(quietly)

How the fu.....I.....I don't know what to say, Sharp. We.....uh,
it's.....unbelievable.

SHARP

Damn right!

INT. APARTMENT-DAY

Luke's eyes open, one after the other.

We see his face immediately beginning to contort in pain and discomfort. He starts screeching sporadically, in agony.

Out of the corner of his eye, he sees the ray of light once again inspecting his body.

INT. INVESTIGATION ROOM-DAY

Townsend is analysing the picture closely, intensely.

TOWNSEND

Wait.....this is strange.

SHARP

(chuckling)

This is all fucking strange, Townsend!

TOWNSEND

No, no I don't mean that. I mean this.

He shows Sharp the picture, his finger pointing to Ellis' head.

TOWNSEND

You see? Blood. There's still blood on his head. Nowhere else, except on his head.

SHARP

(chuckling)

Beats the shit outta me man!

Townsend moves away from his partner.

TOWNSEND

Well, at least it's something anyway.....

INT. APARTMENT-DAY

The ray of light is still scanning the side of Luke's head.

He's wincing and crying out in agony.

The light moves off his head and onto the floor directly beside him.

It's weaker now, less intense, distracted.

Luke squirms for a moment, before quickly freeing his body.

He rises up instantly.

He feels the side of his head, the gash.

He touches the wound with his hand, placing his bloody hand in front of his face.

He darts into the bathroom.

He immediately twists the tap on, cupping the water in his hands before rubbing it on the wound.

He winces in pain.

The blood starts flowing down into the hole in the sink.

He grabs a sponge from the bathtub directly across from him.

He rinses it with water.

He cleans the side of his head with it firmly.

He grabs a towel, dries himself.

He gazes into the mirror.

The blood is gone. All clean. Spotless.

He grins, satisfied.

INT. INVESTIGATION ROOM-DAY

TOWNSEND

What the fuck?!

Sharp jumps off his desk, runs towards him.

SHARP

What? What?

TOWNSEND

It's.....it's gone!

Sharp takes the photo from him.

TOWNSEND

The blood! It's gone! It just.....disappeared!

SHARP

What the hell's going on? I mean shit, is this a joke or something?

TOWNSEND

Christ! It's a fuckin' disaster!

He walks back up to the whiteboard.

TOWNSEND (Cont'd)

I mean not only have we lost crucial evidence, but how the fuck are we gonna explain how we lost it!

Sharp continues to stare at the photo.

TOWNSEND

What do ya think we oughta do with these?

He gestures to the photos of the bloody kitchen counter and floor pinned up on the whiteboard.

Sharp looks at his partner pointing to the photos.

He shrugs.

SHARP

Nothing, I guess. What can we do?

Townsend looks at him.

SHARP (Cont'd)

I mean we can either destroy them ourselves to stop whatever the fuck's happening, or we can just do nothing, and hope for the best.

Townsend sighs.

SHARP (Cont'd)

I personally champion the latter option.

TOWNSEND

Yeah, I guess you're right.

Townsend turns back to the whiteboard, plucks off the two photos, holds one in each hand.

He gazes at both.

INT. APARTMENT-DAY

Luke's eyes open, one after the other.

They glance around frantically.

This time, the light is not on his body.

He squirms momentarily, before flailing about.

He rises up quickly.

He glances around the apartment.

The light is scanning the floor beside him.

It's moving slowly along, back and forth.

He sighs.

He runs towards the utility room.

He opens the door.

We see the mop and the bucket.

INT. INVESTIGATION ROOM-DAY

Townsend's face contorts into one of shock, disbelief and anger.

We see that the photo of the bloody floor is now spotless.

TOWNSEND

No.....It's not possible!

He looks at the other photo, the one of the bloody counter, clasped in his other hand.

INT. APARTMENT-DAY

Luke's eyes open, one after the other.

He rises up instantly this time.

He sees the ray of light scanning the counter, intensely.

He smirks.

INT. INVESTIGATION ROOM-DAY

The blood disappears from the counter in the photo.

Townsend's face becomes even more contorted.

TOWNSEND

No! No! This can't be happenin'! This can't be.....Fuck!

He throws the two photos across the room.

Sharp looks at him.

No words are needed. He knows what's happened.

SHARP

This has got to be a hoax or something, man. Maybe we're being fucked with somehow.

Townsend starts pacing across the room.

TOWNSEND

I highly fuckin' doubt a professional outfit like the one we're workin' for are up for makin' a prank out of a case, Sharp! Don't you?!

Sharp says nothing.

TOWNSEND (Cont'd)

And quite frankly I don't give a shit how this is happenin'! We can guess all we want, but the fact is, neither of us have a fuckin' clue! (Beat) But that's not the big problem here!

The problem is that we've just lost some key evidence that could've proved vital to solvin' this case!

Sharp rises up from the desk.

SHARP

(angrily)

Oh will you please just shut up with all that shit!

Townsend stops pacing.

TOWNSEND

I'm sorry?!

SHARP

I said will you just shut up with all this shit about solving the case! "Oh this could prove vital to the final outcome!" "Oh we owe to ourselves to the best we can!" We don't matter, Townsend! We never did! Nothing we do makes a fucking lick of difference around here! Accept it!

Townsend begins walking towards his partner.

He's enraged.

Sharp's phone starts ringing.

Townsend stops walking.

The two stare at each other.

The phone rings a further three times.

Sharp digs into his pocket, pulling it out.

Townsend looks away, sighs.

SHARP

(calmly)

Hello?

Townsend closes his eyes.

SHARP (Cont'd)

Yes.....now? Yeah okay, I'll be down there right away.

Townsend looks at him.

SHARP

It's forensics. They say they've found multiple samples. They want us down there, now.

Townsend opens his mouth to reply, hesitates, stops.

He looks down at the floor.

TOWNSEND

(quietly)

You go. I need some time to.....cool off.

Sharp nods, not looking at his partner.

SHARP

Fine. I'll be back in a minute.

Sharp turns around, picks up his cup of coffee, walks out of the room and down the hall.

Townsend walks back across the room, slouches heavily down into a chair.

He's deflated, beaten.

He stares into nowhere, thinking about what his partner's said.

He rises up, walks over to the whiteboard.

He stares at it.

He takes the photo of Ellis' dead body off the whiteboard.

He looks at it blankly.

INT. APARTMENT-DAY

Luke's eyes open, one after the other.

They move around frantically.

He sits up quickly.

He rises up from the floor. He starts walking down the hallway, towards his bedroom.

INT. APARTMENT. KITCHEN-DAY

We suddenly see Luke standing in the kitchen, forearms resting on the counter.

He jerks back in surprise.

There's a knock on his apartment door.

He sighs.

He immediately starts walking over to it.

His face contorts. He's clearly struggling, attempting to stop himself from walking over.

He reaches the door.

He makes a face.

He slowly reaches his hand out towards the door knob.

His hand starts shaking.

It suddenly falls to his side.

INT. INVESTIGATION ROOM-DAY

Townsend's face contorts somewhat.

He sighs heavily, running his hand over his face.

He looks at the photo more intensely, eyes more focused.

INT. APARTMENT. HALLWAY-DAY

Luke raises his hand again.

He opens the door.

A stocky man is standing there, dressed all in grey. His hood is over his head.

He points the gun at Luke.

MAN

Don't move! This is a robbery.

Luke freezes up.

MAN

Hands up!

Luke starts raising his hands.

His arms start shaking.

They suddenly fall to his side.

The hooded man just stares at him, speechless.

Luke suddenly punches him powerfully in the face.

He falls to the ground with a loud thud.

INT. INVESTIGATION ROOM-DAY

Townsend sighs loudly, scratching his head furiously.

He blinks at the photo, breathes deeply.

INT. APARTMENT. HALLWAY-DAY

The hooded man gets up immediately.

He points the gun at Luke.

MAN

Hands up!

Luke puts his hands up instantly.

MAN

Turn around and start walkin' over to the counter.

Luke obliges without protest.

The man follows him.

They both reach the counter.

MAN

Spread your arms on the counter.

Luke spreads his arms out.

A few awkward moments of silence between the two men.

Luke turns around suddenly.

The man is just standing there, gun in hand.

Luke grabs the gun from him, cocks it, then shoots him in the face.

The man falls to the floor, dead.

INT. INVESTIGATION ROOM-DAY

Townsend throws the photo across the room.

He sighs heavily, running his hand over his face, then back through his hair.

He stands there for a few moments, breathing loudly.

He walks back up to the blackboard.

He plucks the photo of Ellis and his mother celebrating the child's sixth birthday.

He stares at it.

INT. HOUSE. LIVING ROOM-DAY

We see a young boy jerk back in shock and surprise.

He's sitting on a sofa.

It's Luke, aged six.

Just six, in actuality.

He's short haired, rosy cheeked.

He has an ARAGORN toy in one hand, a SAURON toy in the other.

He's wearing a white sock on his left hand.

He looks around.

He sees a collection of open boxes on the floor, a football beside him, open wrappers, a few half-blown up balloons scattered around the place.

MRS. ELLIS (O.S.)

Luke! Come on! We're gonna cut your cake!
He flexes his fingers, moves his legs, wriggles his bare toes.

LUKE

My name is.....Jimmy.

MRS. ELLIS

Luke come on! Hurry up!

Luke sighs.

Luke places the two toys on the armrest beside him.

He jumps off the couch.

He hits the ground and stumbles momentarily.

He starts walking into the kitchen.

INT. HOUSE. KITCHEN-DAY

Luke enters the kitchen.

It is quite a dirty place. Collections of dirt and dust are scattered across the floor. The kitchen counter is covered in crumbs and pieces of food. Plates, glasses and cups are in the sink, unwashed.

Mrs. Ellis is sitting at the small, fabric covered table. She's wearing pink pyjamas and faded pink slippers. She has long brown hair. She looks tired.

In front of her, on the table, is a small chocolate cake, and a glass of red wine.

MRS. ELLIS

Finally! I was beginning to think you weren't coming!

She takes a sip of her wine.

Luke arrives at the table.

He pulls himself up onto a chair, kneels on it, forearms on the table.

MRS. ELLIS

Oh yeah.....

She rises up from her chair and walks to the counter behind her.

She grabs the small silver camera lying there.

MRS. ELLIS (Cont'd)

I wanna get a photo of us together.

Luke rolls his eyes.

MRS. ELLIS

Come on! It's your birthday for Christ's sakes!

LUKE

(begrudgingly)

Okay.

Luke jumps on top of his mother's lap.

They press their faces together, and smile wide.

The flash goes off.

Luke gets down immediately and returns to his seat.

Mrs. Ellis looks at the photo in the camera.

MRS. ELLIS

Perfect!

She pours some more wine for herself.

MRS. ELLIS

So.....

She pushes the chocolate cake slowly towards him.

MRS. ELLIS (Cont'd)

You ready for your cake?

Luke nods affirmatively, smiles.

MRS. ELLIS

Good.

A moment of silence.

MRS. ELLIS (Cont'd)

What do we have here?

She points to the white sock on Luke's left hand.

Luke says nothing.

MRS. ELLIS

(playfully)

What I've told you? Gloves are for hands, socks are for feet!

She shakes her head, sighs.

She smirks at him.

She grabs his hand, slips the sock off.

She grabs his left leg, raises it up, places his bare foot on her lap.

She put the sock back on his foot, gently.

She slaps his foot softly.

MRS. ELLIS

Six years old, and you're wearing socks on your hands! What am I gonna do with you, huh?

Luke smirks, looks down.

MRS. ELLIS

Jonah! Come on, we're cutting Luke's cake!

Silence.

MRS. ELLIS (Cont'd)

Jonah! Are you coming out or what?

Another silence.

She's about to shout for a third time.

JONAH (O.S.)

(flatly)

Alright.

She smiles at Luke.

Luke moves his foot off of his mother's lap.

She begins caressing Luke's hair adoringly.

MRS. ELLIS

Happy Birthday, Luke.

He smiles at her.

She smiles warmly back at him.

We suddenly see a close-up of her face, snow white and lifeless. She's lying in a coffin. A prominent ligature mark is on her neck. A ten year old Luke is gazing down at her, tears running down his cheeks.

Luke looks down at the floor, grimly.

She takes another sip of wine.

Luke pulls the cake closer to him.

He turns it around.

MRS. ELLIS

Luke wait! Don't-

But it's too late.

He sees what she's done.

A slice of the cake has been cut out.

He looks at her.

She smiles awkwardly. She drops her head.

MRS. ELLIS

I'm sorry, Lukey. I- I didn't mean to. I was just.....really.....I dunno..... hungry. This was all we had yesterday and.. and I thought you wouldn't notice and.. (Beat) Fuck me! I'm-sorry. (Beat) I.....there's a still a lot there. And you can have all of it, I promise!

He just stares at her.

MRS. ELLIS (Cont'd)

Please don't let me ruin your birthday. Not your birthday, okay? I've ruined enough god damn things.....but not today. Not your birthday, alright? (Beat) All I wanted was to-

She puts her head in her hands, and starts weeping softly.

Luke reaches across the table and hugs her.

He then lets go of her and plops back down in his chair.

She smiles reassuringly at him. She wipes a few tears out of her eyes.

JONAH (V.O.)

Can we eat it yet?

Jonah enters languidly into the kitchen.

MRS. ELLIS

Not yet. Luke still has to blow out his candle.

Jonah slouches down into a chair.

JONAH

Well, where is it?

Mrs. Ellis makes an inquisitive face.

JONAH (Cont'd)

The candle?

MRS. ELLIS

Oh yeah! Hold on.

She rises up from the chair and goes to the counter.

Luke stares at Jonah.

Mrs. Ellis returns to the table, a big number six candle in her hand.

MRS. ELLIS

Here we go!

She sticks it into the centre of the chocolate cake.

She then lights a match, subsequently lighting the candle with it.

She smiles at her son.

She starts singing "Happy Birthday to You."

Luke produces a smile.

Jonah remains utterly quiet. He stares blankly at Luke, then Mrs. Ellis.

About three quarters of the way through Mrs. Ellis' rendition, Jonah starts chuckling.

He takes out a cigarette, puts it in his mouth.

He stands up, leans over to the cake and uses the candle to light the cigarette.

He blows smoke into Luke's eyes, then taps some ash from his cigarette onto the cake, before walking back off down the hallway.

Mrs. Ellis stops singing.

MRS. ELLIS

The fuck are you doing?!

He doesn't respond. He just keeps on walking.

She walks after him.

MRS. ELLIS (Cont'd) (O.S)

Excuse me! I asked you a question! What the fuck were you doing back there?! It's his birthday!

JONAH (O.S.)

The fuck do I guy care? I'm not his father.

MRS. ELLIS (O.S.)

But you said you would be! You told me you would be!

Jonah doesn't respond.

We hear a door open, then slam shut.

Mrs. Ellis slumps to the floor, and starts crying.

Luke just sits there at the kitchen table.

Her wailing gets louder.

INT. APARTMENT-DAY

Luke's eyes open, one after the other.

They move around, scanning the immediate vicinity.

He rises up from the ground.

He looks at the floor below him, then at the counter, then feels the side of his head.

All clean. Blood-free.

He walks over to the couch, sits down.

He looks around.

Then he sighs deeply, staring at nothing.

He leans forward, puts his head in his hands.

INT. INVESTIGATION ROOM-DAY

Townsend pins the photo of Ellis and his mother back up on the whiteboard.

He slouches down into his chair once more.

He stares at the floor and sighs.

The door to the investigation room swings open.

Sharp enters quickly, feet pounding on the floor.

Townsend rears his head, and looks at his partner blankly.

TOWNSEND

(flatly)

What's up?

SHARP

They've given us a name.

TOWNSEND

Who?

SHARP

Daryl Jacobs. They found his fingerprints on the edge of the kitchen counter and the gun.

TOWNSEND

Well that's.....that's great.

He smiles weakly.

SHARP

Damn right it is. Although to be fair, the guy didn't make it too hard for them. Leaving prints in multiple places. Truly the marks of a professional!

Sharp laughs.

Townsend chuckles.

SHARP

Anyway, the Sergeant wants us to go to Jacobs' place with the prints and take him in.

Townsend nods.

SHARP (Cont'd)

Once we've gotten his address of course.

TOWNSEND

(quietly)

Right.

SHARP

Well.....I better be getting back down there.

Townsend stares at the floor.

TOWNSEND

Sure.

SHARP

You coming?

He looks at Sharp.

TOWNSEND

Yeah I'll be there in a few minutes.

SHARP

Cool.

Sharp turns around and walks quickly out the door, and down the hall.

Townsend sits there in his chair, looking at nothing.
He gets up and walks over to the whiteboard.
He rubs out the words "Ellis Case Photos."
He takes all the photos off of the whiteboard.
He stuffs them in his pocket.
He walks to the door of the room, the sound of his footsteps
the sole noise we hear.
He gives one last look back.
He switches off the lights.
He opens the door.
It creaks loudly.
He steps out of the room.
He closes the door behind him, locks it.

BLACKNESS

Luke's eyes open, both at the same time
A close up of his face.

INT. APARTMENT. BEDROOM-DAY

His eyes begin looking around, frantically. His face contorts,
suddenly.

Luke is lying on his side, in his bed. His head is resting
sideways, on his pillow. The lower half of his body is covered
with a blanket.

He throws the covers off immediately and sits up.

He moves to the side of his bed, plants his feet on the floor.

He looks around, bemused and confused.

He gets up, walks over to his window. Looks out.

He walks back to the side of the bed. Sits down.

A few seconds pass.

He gets up suddenly, and walks out of the room.

INT. APARTMENT. HALLWAY-DAY

He walks slowly down the hall, towards the kitchen.

The apartment is utterly silent.

He glances around cautiously.

INT. APARTMENT. KITCHEN-DAY

He stops just in front of the kitchen counter.

The six photos are lying on top of it.

He walks forward, picks them up and flicks through them, slowly.

We see the photo of his dead body; the photo of him and Allison; the photo of him and Andy; and finally, we see the photo of him and his mother.

He gazes at this the longest.

He puts them back down on the counter.

He steps back.

Luke just stands there, in the kitchen, staring ahead. Staring into nothing.

Images of his dead corpse lying on the hallway floor are interspersed with the shot of him standing there, alone.

FADE OUT.

THE END

