

LOCUST

BY

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GOD SPEED!

FADE IN:

INT. BRADFIELD DENTAL CLINIC, OPERATING ROOM - DAY

A GAPING MOUTH, tongue drooping over lower lip, saliva kept to a minimum by ejectors, steel wire fastened around teeth by latexed fingers.

RICHARD BAINES, Berkshire County's finest and only dentist, has done this procedure a million times and it shows.

He never fails to create an environment that enable parents such as MR and MRS. STEVENS to feel at ease as their dearest daughter EMILY goes under the dental knife for some braces.

Moments later, the procedure comes to an end and FLORA, his long-serving nurse, adjusts the dental chair to an upright position.

Richard moves a mirror towards Emily and by the effusive expression on her face- it's a job well done, again.

Mr and Mrs. Stevens offer concurring nods of approval: *it's wonderful, it really is.....etc*

Flora puts away the surgical tools whilst Richard freshens up at a nearby sink.

He removes his surgical mask to reveal a face disloyal to his age of 54, save for the graying mustache that lends him a disarming if not slightly comical look.

MR. STEVENS

(to Richard)

Thanks Richard, we tried telling her there was nothing to worry about.

RICHARD

(to Emily)

And you didn't believe them?

Emily looks away timidly.

MRS. STEVENS

Wasn't she a brave girl though?

RICHARD

She most definitely was, and she deserves a reward for that.

Emily smiles in anticipation as Richard takes out a fresh bag of candy from a drawer.

(CONTINUED)

EMILY
Can I choose?

MR. STEVENS
May I.....

MRS. STEVENS
(scoffs)
Oh please.

RICHARD
Of course you may.

Emily's eyes scan the vast reservoir of candies and after what seems like forever-- she points at a pink lollipop.

Richard hands it to her.

EMILY
(to her mum)
Can I eat-

MRS. STEVENS
(cutting her off)
Only after supper dear.

Emma does as she's told and tucks the candy into her pocket.

RICHARD
She's adorable.

INT. RECEPTION - MOMENTS LATER

Richard waves goodbye at the Stevens as they exit the building.

VOICE (O.S.)
Richard, your wife left you a message.

The voice belongs to SARAH COLTS; Richards's affable receptionist.

RICHARD
Did you tell her I was with a patient?

SARAH
Of course I did. She just wanted me to remind you about lunch with the Golding's, before Andrew's match.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD
(disappointed)
The Golding's.....

SARAH
She sounded rather excited, as
always.

RICHARD
(half-jokingly)
Watch it!

Richard goes to leave, but turns back.

RICHARD
I need some.....

SARAH
(finishing his sentence)
Red wine.....I sent Jeff to buy one
already.

RICHARD
Where would I be without you?

Sarah smiles.

EXT/INT. GOLDING'S RESIDENCE, FRONT DOOR - DAY

Richard is at the front door of a sprawling country house.
He looks a little irritated, as if he's been waiting out
here for quite some time.

He presses the door bell.

Moments later, JACK GOLDING, a balding round man in
bifocals, answers it.

JACK
Richie.....you alright mate?

RICHARD
I'm good and yourself?

JACK
Just about living.

They chuckle. Jack's restless eyes fall upon a bottle of red
wine resting in Richard's hand and he snatches it.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD
Calm down. Just a little gift.

JACK
(drooling)
73 chateau neuf.

RICHARD
Is that what it is?

JACK
Reminds me of my uni days at
Oxford.

RICHARD
Well, I'm glad you approve.
(beat)
Are you going to let me in by any
chance?

EXT. BACKYARD GARDEN - SAME TIME

CAROLINE BAINES (42) and CYNTHIA GOLDING (45) sit across from each other at a table in the middle of a meticulous garden.

With their impeccable posture, glistening loafers, and bright polo cardigans snuggling around their necks- the term middle-upper class might as well have been invented for them.

They are in mid-conversation about gardening when Jack saunters in with Richard.

JACK
Look what the cat brought in.

CYNTHIA
The busiest man in Berkshire county.

RICHARD
(with affection)
Cynthia.....

CYNTHIA
(embracing Richard)
You look dashing.

RICHARD
Blame the job.

(CONTINUED)

CYNTHIA

Evidently. You really do look fabulous though, doesn't he Jack?

JACK

I told him that already.

Jack uncorks the wine bottle as Richard takes a seat at the table.

CAROLINE

(to Richard)

What took you so long?

RICHARD

My patient took longer than I had anticipated.

CYNTHIA

Carol, leave him alone. At least you have a husband who saves lives for a living.

Jack pours each of them a glass.

JACK

"Saves lives". The man's a dentist for Christ sake!

CYNTHIA

Yes, and do you know what the perfect smile can do for you? Life saving.

JACK

Nonsense. No offence Richard.

RICHARD

None taking.

Caroline reads the time on her watch.

CAROLINE

Oh no! Andrew's match starts in an hour.

JACK

You have plenty of time.

CAROLINE

Yes, but we have to be there well before hand.

(CONTINUED)

JACK

Ok-ok. Grab a glass everyone.

They obey and chink their glasses, followed by a chorus of cheers.

CAROLINE

Richard, where is the headmaster's wine?

RICHARD

Was I supposed to buy one for him?

CAROLINE

(rolls her eyes)

I reminded you about it this morning.

RICHARD

I'm sorry, we just have to get another one on our way.

CYNTHIA

Nonsense, I'm sure Jack can donate one from the cellar.

JACK

I have the perfect bottle. 76 Pinotage, it's South-African.

EXT. BRADFIELD COLLEGE, RUGBY PITCH - DAY

It's halfway through the second half of a pulsating rugby match. The score line reads '10-7' to Bradfield's FIRST 15.

Richard is at one end of the sideline watching his son, ANDREW (16), brace himself for a run on the left wing.

The boy is very quick and elusive--dodging tackles this way and that way and never holding on to the ball for too long.

Caroline keeps herself busy on the sideline by mingling with the headmaster MR. REGIS BROWN--a tall, pot-bellied old man with a stoic expression that lends him the aura of a disciplinarian.

Caroline seems to be distracting him from the ongoing match but he manages to remain affable.

The opposing team concedes a try and the home support erupts into applause. Even Caroline manages to feign attentiveness with a beautifully orchestrated cheer.

(CONTINUED)

A few plays later and the home team regains possession, they are in the ascendancy- sensing imminent victory.

Andrew catches a pass and sets off on one of his meandering runs- breaking desperate tackles with impressive ease.

Suddenly, he is tap-tackled by a deft touch and he lands awkwardly on his right hand.

A collective gasp reverberates amongst the home support- they fear the worst.

Richard and Caroline, the latter having just realized what has happened, look on with an almost disturbing gaze as players from both teams surround Andrew.

Andrew clutches his hand and grimaces in pain as the referee motions for a medic to come quickly.

Caroline can't bear to look. Richard approaches her and consoles her with a hug.

The medics help Andrew onto his feet and then off the pitch to a solemn chorus of applause.

INT. BRADFIELD CLINIC, WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Richard sits in an empty waiting room save for Caroline, who is pacing back and forth.

RICHARD

It's probably just a dislocation.

CAROLINE

"Just a dislocation"....

RICHARD

He'll be back playing in no time.

CAROLINE

The season will be over by then Richard. Then what?

RICHARD

There's always next season.

CAROLINE

There won't be any scouts next season.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD
He's too good for that. Talent
always attracts suitors, trust me.

CAROLINE
And what if he loses something?

RICHARD
Something.....?

CAROLINE
I don't know....he can't catch the
ball as well or tackle as
efficiently or-

RICHARD
Carol. Don't do this to yourself.

Caroline is about to respond when the forlorn image of
Andrew, right hand in a sling, comes into view.

Caroline moves closer to embrace him.

ANDREW
(wincing)
Mum!! be careful.

CAROLINE
(kissing him)
I'm so sorry.....

RICHARD
What did the doctor say?

ANDREW
Dislocation of the wrist. I'll be
out for 2, maybe 3 months.

CAROLINE
Oh honey! That's awful. Can you at
least write?

ANDREW
I don't think so.

RICHARD
Yes he can.

ANDREW
Dad I'm serious. I think it's best
if I stay home.

RICHARD

I don't think you know what's best
for yourself.

A cell phone rings--it's Caroline's. The caller id reads
"EMMA"- the final member of the Baines family

CAROLINE

(in a loud whisper)
It's Emma.

She answers it.

CAROLINE

Hey Emm, I'm so sorry but we had to
dash to the hospital. It's your
brother.

(beat)

Nothing too serious. A dislocated
wrist from rugby.

(beat)

I know, I was telling your father.

(beat)

Oh, that would be wonderful. See
you back home then.

(beat)

Love you too, bye.

Click.

RICHARD

Is she getting a lift home?

CAROLINE

Yes, with Martha.

(to ANDREW)

Did the doctor give you a note for
the pharmacy?

ANDREW

Yeah, I almost forgot.

Andrew takes out a piece of paper from his pocket and hands
it to his mum.

INT. BAINES'S RESIDENCE, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The Baines family are tucking into a delicious spread.

EMMA

Dad, are you really considering
letting Andy skip school tomorrow?

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD
Who told you that?

EMMA
(glancing at Andrew)
He did.

CAROLINE
I don't think it's a bad idea. I
mean after all.....he does need
some well earned rest.

ANDREW
Love you mum.

EMMA
(unconvinced)
Please. Give me 12 hours of
standing on a pitch over learning a
Bach solo any day. I'm the one who
needs the rest.

CAROLINE
Emma that's rude.

ANDREW
She's just jealous.

EMMA
I'm just saying. Music is a lot
more physically and mentally
strenuous than rugby.

ANDREW
You've obviously never played rugby
or any other sport for that matter.

CAROLINE
Well speaking about rest.....your
father did promise to take us on a
skiing trip this weekend.

The kids instantly stare at Richard in excitement.

RICHARD
I don't remember making any
promises.

EMMA
Dad.....

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD
Plus Andrew isn't in any position
to be skiing.

CAROLINE
I'm sure he wouldn't mind chilling
out in the alps.

Andrew nods his head in agreement.

RICHARD
Well, we'll have to see about that.

CAROLINE
Don't worry kids, dad or no dad,
we're taking that skiing trip.

The land line rings, saving Richard from having to respond
to that last comment. He opts to answer it.

HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Richard lets the phone ring once more before picking up.

RICHARD
Hello?

NO response is forthcoming save for MUFFLED BREATHING on the
other end of the line.

RICHARD
(puzzled)
Hello.....who is this?
(beat)
Hello.....?

Still no response. He hangs up and returns to the-

DINNING ROOM - SAME TIME

Caroline notices the bemused look on Richard's face.

CAROLINE
Who was it?

RICHARD
No one.

CAROLINE
What do you mean no one?

RICHARD

No one answered. I just heard something that sounded like..... labored breathing.

CAROLINE

(mystified)

Breathing.....?? That's odd. Did you call back?

RICHARD

No, probably just a wrong number.

Caroline nods her head.

CAROLINE

Well, I think it's time to clear up.

(rising to her feet)

Emma darling, would you give me a hand?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Richard and Andrew are half-awake while watching the highlights of a rugby game on the tele.

The land line rings and rings but neither of them move to answer it.

CAROLINE (O.S.)

Can one of you two get that please!!!??

RICHARD

Andrew, you heard your mother.

Andrew sighs before doing as he's told.

HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Andrew picks up the receiver.

ANDREW

Hello?

Again the ensuing response from the other end takes the form of muffled breathing.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Who is this?

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Hello....?

Caroline comes over.

 CAROLINE
Who is it?

 ANDREW
I don't know.

Caroline takes the phone from him.

 CAROLINE
 (sternly)
Excuse me, who is this?
 (beat)
Hello....?

Still nothing but the breathing. Richard comes over.

 RICHARD
Hang up.

Caroline does as she's told.

Richard attempts to redial the number but it's a private id.

 CAROLINE
Well that doesn't help.

 RICHARD
Maybe they can't hear us.

 CAROLINE
And the breathing?

Richard shrugs his shoulder in bemusement.

 CAROLINE
I'm going to finish up in the
kitchen. Get the kids to bed would
you....and make sure Emma really
puts away her violin.

Richard acquiesces but not before casting a quizzical look
at the phone.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Richard lies half-awake in bed. He glances over to Caroline's side of the bed where she snoozes like a child. He smiles and climbs out of bed.

BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Richard stands in front of a pile of cardboard boxes stacked on top of each other. He shifts them gently to one side revealing an inconspicuous steel door underneath.

He fishes out a set of keys from his pocket and unlocks the door.

Richard looks up at the ceiling a moment-something's caught his attention. It's nothing. He reassures himself with a slight nod of the head.

He pulls out a flashlight and illuminates a short flight of stairs leading into a squalid underground cellar.

CELLAR - MOMENTS LATER

Richard sits in front of two surveillance monitors barely illuminated by a flashlight dangling from the ceiling. He taps a few buttons on a small keyboard and the monitors roar to life.

The monitors display surveillance recordings of the past day activities such as Caroline baking a pie and tending to the back garden.

He switches to a camera in Andrew's room and rewinds the tape momentarily.

He freezes on an image of Andrew pulling out a magazine from underneath his bed. Richard zooms in on Andrew and watches-transfixed-as Andrew turns to a page depicting a naked pornographic model.

Andrew unzips his pants and begins masturbating.

Andrew works himself into a ferocious frenzy and from the orgasmic expression on his face- he is near the point of climax.

Suddenly, a short rap on the door startles him and he quickly makes himself descent, just in time, before Caroline walks into the room.

(CONTINUED)

Richard grins and switches to a camera surveying the hallway. He rewinds the tape until Caroline comes into view. He plays the tape and zooms in on Caroline who is talking on the phone.

Richard zeroes in on her face and notices that she's crying. He frowns in annoyance as he is unable to discern the source of her tears.

He stays on this image momentarily then turns off the monitors.

INT. CAR - DAY

Richard drops the kids off at school. He pauses briefly in front of the school gate and watches as Andrew's friends tease him about his injury.

INT. CORNER STORE - LATER

Richard scans the nutritional contents on the back of an energy drink. He is in full concentration mode until a voice behind him snaps his attention.

VOICE (O.S.)
Hello Richard.

Richard turns to look and by the bemused expression on his face-- he does not recognise ANNA LANGFORD.

Anna is frail, pale, middle-aged, and in an electric wheelchair. She also sports an odd tattoo of a LOCUST perched on a bean stalk on the side of her neck.

Richard, discreetly, glances at it.

RICHARD
I'm sorry, do I know you?

ANNA
They said you've changed a lot, and by the looks of things, they weren't joking.

RICHARD
"They"....?

ANNA
That's not important.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

Ok....

ANNA

(chuckling)

You really don't remember me.

RICHARD

I'm sorry....I'm usually good with faces but yours just doesn't register with me. Did we meet somewhere?

ANNA

Please, you make it sound like you're having an affair.

Richard is startled by this comment. He takes a sharp intake of breath.

RICHARD

I'm late for work.

ANNA

We should talk Richard.

RICHARD

(confused)

And what would that be about?

ANNA

What you did to me. I haven't forgotten you know. And I must say this little game your putting on is....well irritating.

RICHARD

I'm really late for work.

Richard briskly walks over to the counter. He pays for his energy drink and exits the store--pretending not to notice Anna's piercing gaze.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY

Richard is in the process of pulling out a decayed tooth from an old man's mouth. He's perspiring at an usual rate and his hands are visibly unsteady.

Richard finally yanks the tooth out and the old man lets out an agonising shriek. Flora quickly tends to his pain by massaging his jaw.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD
(embarrassed)
I'm so sorry sir. Are you ok?

The old man mutters something underneath his breath- he's still reeling from the pain.

RICHARD
(to FLORA)
Why don't you finish up here.

Flora peers at him- concerned.

FLORA
Yeah, of course.

Richard takes off his latex gloves and tosses them into a bin.

He exits the room.

INT. RICHARD'S OFFICE - LATER

A SILVER-FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH of Caroline, Emma, and Andrew rests on a desk. Behind it, Richard sits pensively.

A gentle knock on the door.

RICHARD
Yes, come in.

Flora walks in.

FLORA
Is everything alright?

RICHARD
When did this knocking business start?

FLORA
I don't know Richard. I thought you might need some space.

RICHARD
I'm fine.

FLORA
We can't all be perfect you know.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD
Who's next on the list?

FLORA
A miss Anna Langford.

RICHARD
Start prepping her, I'll be there
in a minute.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Richard walks into the room and as soon as his eyes fall upon the image of Anna being helped onto the examining chair-he freezes in his tracks.

ANNA
Hello doctor....

Richard doesn't respond until Flora shoots him a hard-lined look.

RICHARD
H-hello.

Richard opens his file and skims through Anna's information.

ANNA
It's been a while since I got my
teeth examined.

Richard nods his head. He's trying desperately not to seem flustered but Flora senses an awkward tension between them-regardless of the subtlety.

FLORA
How long has it been?

ANNA
Too long. Far too long.

RICHARD
So, it says here you're considering
the JK veneers treatment.

Anna smiles broadly- like a Cheshire cat - revealing a perfect set of 'British teeth'.

ANNA
About time isn't it?

Richard glances at Flora- hoping that she'd reply instead of him. Flora says nothing.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD
(stalling)
W-Well....let's ummm...let's take a
closer look.

Richard performs a quick dental examination, making sure
throughout to avoid eye contact with Anna.

RICHARD
Well I have to say your teeth are
in great condition.

ANNA
"Great"....?

RICHARD
Healthy condition. You don't need
the JK veneers. I would suggest
something less invasive,
say...lumineers.

Anna ponders his suggestion.

RICHARD
It's up to you.

ANNA
It is isn't it?
(beat)
Let's try the lumineers.

RICHARD
I'll call the pharmacy and make
sure we have one in stock.

ANNA
Good. Thank you.

INT. RICHARD'S OFFICE - LATER

A tall and wiry BLACK MAN wheels Anna towards a vehicle.
Richard watches them from behind the office window. The
black man dons a black leather jacket and black leather
trousers. He looks like trouble.

The office intercom SQUAWKS- it startles Richard.

SARAH
Richard--

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

Yes...

SARAH

Kenneth Long is on the phone for you.

RICHARD

Ok, put him through.

A beat, as Sarah transfers the call.

KENNETH

Richie....how goes it?

RICHARD

Not too bad. Yourself?

KENNETH

Oh fine-fine. Umm....I just wanted to confirm you'll be in Edinburgh this weekend.

RICHARD

(straining)

Umm....of course-of course. I'll be there.

KENNETH

I know how much you resent these kind of events but we would really appreciate it if you could come down, say a few words. Maybe even a few more words about the new products. How does that sound?

RICHARD

A few words...?

KENNETH

I mean nothing too grand. Just a few words. We could really use the wisdom of an experienced dentist like yourself.

RICHARD

(in a sarcastic tone)

Well, how can I say no to that?

KENNETH

I'll take that as a yes then.
Thanks Richard.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD
No worries.

INT. BAINES'S RESIDENCE, FRONT STALL WAY - NIGHT

Richard arrives home- utterly exhausted. He hangs his jacket on a coat stand and grabs a stack of mail scattered on a nearby table.

He quickly looks through them but none are for him- this irritates him slightly.

A roar of laughter, emanating from the living room, startles him. He rolls his eyes and mutters an audible '*shit*' evidently he isn't the biggest fan of whomever is laughing.

Caroline steps out from the kitchen with a tray of refreshments and approaches Richard.

He acknowledges her with a smile--making sure to remove any facial vestiges of annoyance.

CAROLINE
What time do you call this?

RICHARD
I left you a message, I had to work late.

CAROLINE
And I called your office, and they said you'd call back, which you never did.

RICHARD
I'm sorry, it was a tough day.

He pecks her on the cheek.

RICHARD
How was your day?

CAROLINE
Just fine. Have you seen my father?

RICHARD
Oh! He's here.

CAROLINE
Yes, and we've been waiting for you to eat.

Richard gently takes the tray from her hands.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

Well how about I help you with this
and you can get supper ready.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Richard walks into the living room and sets the tray down on
the coffee table.

MITCHELL or MITCH as he's known around town has a great
rapport with Andrew and Emma and it shows. They are so
transfixed by his funny anecdotes that they barely even
notice that Richard has just walked into the room.

RICHARD

Hi Mitch.

MITCH

Richard.
(shaking his hand)
How are you?

RICHARD

I'm very well thank you. And
yourself?

MITCH

Over the moon. I can't complain.

RICHARD

Carol mentioned you were admitted
recently....?

MITCH

Yes I was actually. I picked up an
ankle injury during one of my
afternoon jogs. Really hurt myself.

RICHARD

Wow, still jogging...?

MITCH

As long as you're healthy, I don't
see why not.

RICHARD

and the ankle?

MITCH

Fully recovered.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

I'm glad to hear that. We were all very worried.

MITCH

Oh please. Don't worry about me, I can take care of myself. How are things down at the clinic?

RICHARD

Fine....fine. Same old really.

(beat)

Did you see what your grandson did to his shoulder?

MITCH

Yes I have. I'm just surprised it's the first injury he's ever picked up. Back in my days--

ANDREW

Oh God!! Not this story again.

MITCH

No I'm serious. Back in my days, rugby was much more violent. Players would get injured literally every match. You were only as good as your injuries.

ANDREW

That makes no sense. The best players avoid injuries.

CAROLINE (O.S.)

Suppers ready.

RICHARD

Andrew, Emma, table. Right now.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Caroline passes around a second helping of classic English pudding.

MITCH

Carol dear, your pudding never fails to remind me of your mother.

Caroline is visibly touched by this comment.

(CONTINUED)

EMMA
(to Mitch)
What was grandma like?

MITCH
She was exactly like your mother.
No difference at all.

Caroline's eyes are now moist. She changes the subject in order to avoid crying.

CAROLINE
Emma, tell your granddad about the concert.

EMMA
Oh that. Well. There's this huge student classical concert at the opera house in London in a couple of weeks. More importantly, there's a violin solo and it's either going to be me or this other girl playing it. So...I'm really excited and nervous about that.

MITCH
So what's her number?

EMMA
Whose number?

MITCH
This other girl. I'll just give her a quick ring and tell her to kindly do the right thing and sit this one out.

CAROLINE
Dad. Stop it.

They all laugh.

ANDREW
I doubt you could even reach her, she probably doesn't even have a phone. She's a bit of a loner.

EMMA
No she's not, she's a really nice girl actually. She's just not popular that's all.

CAROLINE

Andrew, you shouldn't call people names.

RICHARD

I almost forgot to mention. I'm off to Edinburgh this weekend for a dental conference. Apparently, I'm just the right man to say a few words about products I've never seen before in my life.

CAROLINE

And there was I thinking you'd change your mind about the skiing trip.

RICHARD

I told you, I'm too busy.

CAROLINE

Dad. You should take us instead. You know you hardly spend time with your grand kids.

MITCH

That doesn't sound like a bad idea.

ANDREW

Yesssss.

MITCH

But, I'd prefer it if Richard joined us.

CAROLINE

Didn't you just hear him?

MITCH

I mean I'd rather wait. So we can go as a whole family.

The doorbell rings.

Caroline casts an inquisitive look at Richard.

CAROLINE

Who could that be at this time?

The bell rings again. Richard answers it.

FRONT STALL WAY - SAME TIME

(CONTINUED)

Richard peers through a peeping hole on the front door but sees nothing at the other end. He looks bemused.

CAROLINE (O.S.)
Who is it Richard?

He is about to respond when CRACK!! the sound of shattered glass accompanied soon after by cries of *look out!!* erupts from the dining room.

Richard rushes back into the room.

DINING ROOM - SAME TIME

He screeches to a halt at the sight of the carnage in front of him: a broken window and a dinner table littered with pieces of broken glass.

Caroline and the children are crouched underneath the table while Mitch looks around for something.

Richard locates the object before he does.

It's a large rock resting behind a damaged piece of furniture.

MITCH
Richard, check the window.

Richard gazes out through the hole in the window, making sure the coast is clear before helping Caroline and the kids out from underneath the table.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mitch is keeping the kids busy while Richard and Caroline talk to JOHN COLTS--a Thames Valley Police Constable. He jots down some notes as Caroline narrates the frightful events.

CAROLINE
Mitch just yelled "everyone down"
and thank God we listened because
the next second there was glass
every where.

JOHN
And Richard, you answered the door
bell?

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD
Yes I did.

JOHN
And you saw no one?

RICHARD
No one.

CAROLINE
John, we've been getting strange
calls lately.

JOHN
How so?

CAROLINE
Well, whoever calls refuses to
respond. The only thing we hear
from the other end is just...very
labored breathing. So someone has
to be on the other end.

JOHN
That is very odd. Did you recognize
the number?

RICHARD
No, it was a private number.

John flicks his note pad closed.

JOHN
Well, I'll tell you this much.
We've never had anything like this
before. So my best guess is...a
bunch of idle teenagers. Maybe yobs
from Newbury.

RICHARD
Teenagers?

JOHN
It's a possibility.
(beat)
Is there anything else?

Caroline and Richard exchange blank looks.

RICHARD
That's everything.

JOHN

I thought as much. We'll see what we can do with this information and I'll get back to you as soon as we have something. In the mean time, I would suggest you stay calm and try and keep this incident contained. We don't want the whole neighbourhood worried.

RICHARD

Of course.

CAROLINE

Thanks John.

Caroline hugs John.

JOHN

You're welcome. I'll see myself out. Bye Andrew, bye Emma, bye Mitch.

They all wave goodbye at John as he walks out of the front door.

CAROLINE

Dad, I think you should really stay here tonight.

MITCH

Nonsense. I'll leave soon.

CAROLINE

Dad, please.

RICHARD

Mitch, maybe you should stay.

MITCH

Are you sure?

RICHARD

Yeah, of course.

MITCH

Ok.

CAROLINE

Andrew, Emma, get ready to pack it up. You have a busy day tomorrow.

INT. RICHARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Richard is sifting through some paper work on his desk when Sarah walks in with some tea and biscuits.

RICHARD

Thank you.

Richard stirs his tea and takes a sip.

SARAH

How are you holding up?

RICHARD

I'm fine.

SARAH

How about Carol and the kids?

RICHARD

Their ok...a bit shaken up naturally, but they'll live.

SARAH

That's good.

RICHARD

And I'm sorry we had to call John at such an inopportune time.

SARAH

Don't be silly. He is the bloody police after all.

Richard chuckles.

RICHARD

I'm going to be away for the rest of the afternoon. It's Andrew's first check up with the doctor since his injury.

SARAH

Oh! Would you like me to reschedule Mrs. Appelgate then?

RICHARD

Yes please. Thank you.

INT. HOSPITAL CLINIC, WAITING ROOM - DAY

Richard glances over at Andrew, who vacantly thumbs through a SPORTS MAGAZINE. He pauses to catch up on the latest exploits of THE LONDON IRISH. A nurse calls out from the reception

NURSE
Andrew Baines?

Richard and Andrew rise to their feet. As they walk towards the nurse, Richard notices the black man from the parking lot waiting in a queue at the hospital pharmacy.

ANDREW
Dad, what's wrong?

Richard doesn't respond. He simply stares at the black man as the latter moves closer to the front of the queue.

RICHARD
Go on without me, I have to speak to someone.

ANDREW
(concerned)
Ok....

Andrew tromps off while Richard waits for the black man to attend to his pharmaceutical needs. Once the black man collects a medical package, Richard follows him to the car park.

EXT. CAR PARK/FREEWAY - SAME TIME

The black man lights a cigarette and climbs into a black corolla. Richard calmly trails him in his car--making sure always to keep one car length away from him.

INT. RICHARD'S CAR - LATER

Richard manages to remain inconspicuous as he trails the black man into a quiet neighborhood.

The black man slows down and pulls into the driveway of a small cottage.

Richard drives past him and parks his car at a distance that enables him to watch the black man discreetly.

(CONTINUED)

The black man exits his car and approaches the front door of the cottage. A small, frail old woman opens the door as soon as he knocks on it.

The black man says something to her that Richard can't make out, then hands her the package from the pharmacy. The old woman takes it and reenters the house.

The black man takes out a cigarette and lights it. He takes a long hard drag and glances out toward the street-

Richard ducks down in the driver seat, trying to see without being seen.

The black man raises HIS ARMS and STRETCHES-

Richard slinks even lower in the seat.

The corolla backs out of the driveway and heads down the road, passing Richard's apparently empty car.

Richard resurfaces from the floor of the car looking completely relieved.

EXT/INT. COTTAGE, FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Richard raps lightly on the front door. Two knocks later and the old woman answers the door.

OLD WOMAN
(sharp and alert)
Yes, can I help you?

RICHARD
I'm sorry to disturb you but I was wondering if by any chance you had a young woman living here with you?

OLD WOMAN
(protective)
Yes there is, she's my tenant. What is it you want with her?

RICHARD
I need to speak to her please. It's rather important.

OLD WOMAN
She isn't here.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

Well, do you know where I can reach her? Perhaps at her work place.

OLD WOMAN

I'm sorry but I don't know.

RICHARD

Ok, do you mind passing on a message for me?

OLD WOMAN

What message?

RICHARD

That she needs to be more careful.

OLD WOMAN

I'll tell her.

RICHARD

Thank you and again I'm sorry for having disturbed you.

The old woman frowns as she steps back inside and slams the door.

Richard's cell phone rings. He reads the caller id- it's Andrew. Richard picks up.

RICHARD

Andrew I'm so sorry. I'm on my way right now. How is the shoulder?

(beat)

Good. I'll be with you soon.

INT. BRADFIELD COLLEGE, MUSIC DEPARTMENT - DAY

Emma is playing J.S. Bach's Sonata for violin solo. Her eyes are closed, rendering the sheet music in front of her redundant.

The music is absolutely mellifluous--almost perfect.

The piece ends and a short off-screen applause commences. Emma turns around and sees Anna applauding.

Anna looks genuinely astounded by the prodigious talent before her.

(CONTINUED)

EMMA

Thank you.

Anna moves closer to Emma by pushing a lever on her arm-rest.

ANNA

That was stupendous.

EMMA

Wow! That's very kind of you to say.

ANNA

The crescendo at the end, c'etait magnifique.

EMMA

Thank you.

ANNA

(putting out a hand)

I'm Anna.

They both shake hands.

EMMA

Emma. Nice to meet you.

ANNA

Likewise.

EMMA

Do you play?

ANNA

I wish. I used to play the piano, but I never had the passion for it so I quit. I'm sure you'd agree that without passion....music is soulless.

EMMA

I would actually.

ANNA

I'm assuming you don't get many visitors wandering into your practice sessions uninvited.

EMMA

No, but I don't mind. I appreciate a captive audience.

(CONTINUED)

Anna smiles. She looks around- marveling at the vast array of musical instruments on display

ANNA

I can see why my sister was so keen on sending her kids to Bradfield. It's quite a set up you have here.

EMMA

Yeah...but just between me and you, this is as good as it gets.

Anna chuckles.

ANNA

You're secret safe with me. You know...you look very familiar.

EMMA

Really?

ANNA

Very much so. You wouldn't happen to be related to a...Frank Daniels now would you?

EMMA

No, I'm sorry. Anyways they're only so many faces in the world, I guess were bound to resemble someone at some point.

ANNA

I guess so.
(beat)
Do you mind playing something else?

EMMA

(sarcastically)
Do I mind?

Emma turns to a page in her music sheet and after a brief scan of its contents; she shuts her eyes and serenades Anna in classical bliss.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Richard is fast forwarding through scenes of the last 24hrs, he stops and rewinds the tape on the image of Caroline on the phone. He zooms in on Caroline's face and freezes the tape.

(CONTINUED)

He runs his fingers down the monitor--as though attempting to feel Caroline through the screen.

He puts on a set of headphones and plays the tape.

CAROLINE

(on the phone)

I don't even know him anymore. It's not the same man I married.

(beat)

Dad, he's changed so much.

(beat)

I feel like such a fraud around him. Having to pretend like I'm still in love with him.

(beat)

It's killing me...it really is dad. I can't live in this house any longer-

(beat)

I know...the kids would be devastated.

Richard pauses the tape and takes off his headphones- he's heard enough.

INT. EDINBURGH, HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Richard is at the reception making some last minute adjustments to his reservation. When:

KENNETH (O.S.)

Richie....

Richard smiles thinly, anticipating the identity, before turning around.

RICHARD

Ken.

They shake hands.

KENNETH

How goes it mate?

RICHARD

Not too bad actually. I like this venue.

KENNETH

It's a lot better isn't it?

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

I suppose we have you to thank for that, being the chairman and all.

KENNETH

Well, a few others and myself do deserve a bit of credit. We did say right from the very start if we're going to demand for a larger membership fee, then we had better use some of it on these annual conferences. It's only fair.

RICHARD

I couldn't agree more.

KENNETH

You know everyone is really excited to hear what you have to say tomorrow.

RICHARD

(sarcastically)

Is that a fact?

KENNETH

I'm serious Richie. You're one of the highlights, up there with the complementary crab cakes and new prosthetic dentures.

RICHARD

That's some company.

Kenneth laughs acerbically- he's a real chipmunk of a man.

Richard glances at a clock hanging on a wall.

RICHARD

I have to make a call, do you mind?

KENNETH

Of course not, go ahead. But make sure you join us at the bar later, there are a few people I'd like to introduce you to. You'll love 'em.

Richard nods his head half-heartedly. He walks over to the payphone area and calls Caroline on his cell.

CAROLINE

Hello?

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

Hey, it's me. I'm sorry that I had to leave so early.

CAROLINE

No, it's fine. How is it coming along?

RICHARD

Good, if Kenneth is anything to go by.

CAROLINE

You mentioned you had to say a few words....

RICHARD

Yeah, nothing too grand. I guess they want a countryside perspective or something like that.

CAROLINE

That sounds wonderful.

An awkward pause ensues. Then-

RICHARD

Carol....is there something you're not telling me?

CAROLINE

I'm sorry?

RICHARD

I have this odd feeling there's something not quite right between the two of us.

CAROLINE

And when did you start feeling this way?

RICHARD

Lately I guess.

CAROLINE

I'm sorry Richard, but I can't help you there.

RICHARD

Are you sure?

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE

Listen Richard, if there's
Something you want to say to me,
just say it. Don't patronize me.

A short pensive moment.

RICHARD

I'm sorry.

CAROLINE

Me too. Look, I have to go....I'll
talk to you later.

RICHARD

Wait-

She's already hung up. Richard hangs up, closes his eyes,
and steels himself. He looks utterly defeated.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Richard watches a power-point presentation of some new
dental technology from the back row. Everyone, except
Richard, seems rapt with attention.

The presentation reaches a new chord of tedium and Richard
reacts by moving restlessly in his chair.

He can't take it anymore and he exits the room as quietly as
possible.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Richard is urinating when he notices the black man, from his
peripheral view, emerging from a bathroom stall. Richard
quickly faces forward, trying to remain calm, but he can't
help but keep glancing towards the black man's direction.

The black man washes up at the sink and struts past Richard-
seemingly incognizant of the latter's presence. Richard
hastily follows him out the door.

HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Richard follows the black man for a couple of meters and
just as he's about to say something the black man stops
unexpectedly and turns around slowly to face him.

The black man grins at Richard- a cold, menacing grin.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD
(sternly)
Stop it.

BLACK MAN
Excuse me.....?

RICHARD
I know it's you and that woman who
came to my house the other night,
and I want it to stop--now!

BLACK MAN
(chuckles)
She was right about you. You don't
take responsibilities.

RICHARD
Just stop whatever it is you're
trying to prove.

BLACK MAN
Or else what?

A pause, as Richard searches for a deliberate response.

RICHARD
Please, just stop it.

The black man nods his head in disbelief, as though
disappointed by the lack of venom in that last response.

BLACK MAN
She was right about you.

And with that, the black man saunters away. Richard watches
him, with a weird mixture of fear and relief, as he exits
the hotel.

INT. RICHARD'S SUITE - NIGHT

Richard is at his computer trying desperately to come up
with a 'few words' for day 2 of the dental conference.

By the looks of things, he's suffering from a mild case of
writers block or perhaps it is simply a case of being
distracted by the events of the last few days.

He composes a sentence and after reading it to himself, he
deletes it.

The hotel phone rings. Richard reluctantly answers it.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

Hello?

VOICE

Scot's tavern across the road. Be there in ten.

RICHARD

(confused)

What.....who is this?

The caller has already hung up. Richard angrily hangs up and grabs his coat.

INT. SCOT'S TAVERN - LATER

Richard walks into a busy pub, he surveys the premises looking for the anonymous caller.

Anna waves at him from a table at the corner. Richard shoots her an angry look and marches over to her table.

This behavior merely amuses Anna as she chuckles.

ANNA

Now now Richard, no need for that kind of attitude. Please, sit down.

Richard takes a seat--his eyes never leave Anna's for one second.

ANNA

Can I interest you in anything? Their scotch is really good for some strange reason.

Richard doesn't respond.

ANNA

Well it's your loss. How's your family Richard? Are they well?

RICHARD

Stop it.

ANNA

Stop what Richard?

RICHARD

Stop playing games with my life.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA

Jesus Richard! You should hear yourself sometimes.

RICHARD

The anonymous phone calls, the broken window...you could have really done some damage.

ANNA

But Richard, I'm innocent.

RICHARD

What do you want?

Anna glances over Richard's shoulder and smiles at the black man who has just strode into the bar. She motions towards him to join their table.

The black man comes over and takes a seat next to Richard. They barely acknowledge each other.

ANNA

You two have already met right?
(to Richard)
You even followed him at one point
I hear.

RICHARD

I asked you a question.

ANNA

Oh.
(to the black man)
He was just asking me what it is we wanted.

BLACK MAN

And what did you say?

ANNA

I didn't have the time to respond.
You distracted me.

The black man turns to face Richard

BLACK MAN

(stoically)
We want twelve million pounds!

A brief silence ensues as Anna, Richard, and the black man each exchange unflinching looks.

Anna cracks up, the black man laughs as well.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA

Blackmail? God no. We're not that pathetic, plus it's too easy.

RICHARD

(frustrated)

Then what is it?

ANNA

Can you at least stop pretending that you don't know me? Do me that little favor Richard.

Richard has had enough. He moves to stand but the black man sits him back down with a firm hand on his shoulder.

ANNA

(coldly)

I'm not finished with you.

Richard's fists are clenched now. He looks like a man trying desperately to stop himself from doing something violent.

ANNA

Does your wife know?

Richard doesn't respond; he merely looks away in annoyance.

ANNA

Look at me Richard.

Richard refuses to do so.

ANNA

(raising her voice)

Look at me!!

Richard reluctantly obeys.

ANNA

How do you live with yourself knowing what you did to me? All those lies you told the police...how do you do it? Does it ever haunt you? Do you ever think about the consequences? Am I even the only one?

RICHARD

What do you want?

She leans over the table and snarls in a shrill and unforgiving voice:

(CONTINUED)

ANNA

I want to destroy your life like
you did mine, and then some.

Richard considers the threat a moment.

RICHARD

If you come near my family again,
I'll go to the police and trust me,
you'll be put away for life.

ANNA

Oh I'm very aware of what you're
capable of.

And with that, Richard rises to his feet. The black man
moves out of his way-allowing Richard, this time, to leave.

INT. BAINES'S RESIDENCE, RICHARD'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Richard is helping Andrew with his math homework. He looks
surprisingly calm and collected considering the unnerving
events that just took place the previous night.

The front doorbell rings and after the second ring, someone
answers it.

Moment's later, someone knocks on the door.

RICHARD

Yeah.....

CAROLINE (O.S.)

Richard, John's here.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Richard and Caroline stand yards away from each other as
they listen closely to John's update on the police
investigation into the other night.

JOHN

Well, like I told Caroline, I have
some really good news and
thankfully no bad news.

CAROLINE

Thank God for that.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

It was a bunch of school boy yobs who threw that rock. They hit the Grange's the other night.

CAROLINE

(riveted)

Oh my God!

JOHN

Yes, but fortunately one of them couldn't live with the overwhelming guilt of their actions. So this morning, he came down to the station and confessed. Even gave us information on the others whereabouts.

Caroline breathes a sigh of relief while Richard looks slightly baffled.

JOHN

We rounded up the rest of the group this afternoon except for one. The ring leader. He knew we were coming and made himself scarce. But we'll soon find him. I tell ya, kids nowadays uhh....

CAROLINE

Honestly. How about the phone calls? Were they also behind that?

JOHN

I'm afraid not. That one still remains a mystery, but we're working on it.

CAROLINE

Well regardless it's great news. I think I might sleep well for the first time since that night.

JOHN

Aww you poor thing. I'm just happy I can help.

RICHARD

Thanks John.

JOHN

No worries. Well, I best be leaving you two now.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE

Oh please, won't you stay for some tea?

JOHN

Thanks but I can't.

(to Richard)

You know how Sarah complains.

Richard manages a smile and nods his head in agreement. Caroline hugs John.

INT. RICHARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Richard is in the middle of a consultation with an elderly patient. He flips open a large dental portfolio that contains adverts for denture models.

Richard points to a particular model.

RICHARD

I always advise my patients to try this one. Primarily because of the comfort level and the pricing is, as you can see, not too bad either.

The patient looks impressed.

The intercom rings.

RICHARD

Excuse me.

Richard answers it.

RICHARD

I'm with a patient.

SARAH

Sorry Richard but your daughter called. It's about Mitch.

RICHARD

....Mitch? What did she say?

SARAH

He's in the E.R, she said it's bad Richard.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Caroline steps out from a hospital room holding a stack of sloppy kleenecks. She looks distraught.

RICHARD (O.S.)
How is he?

Caroline turns to see Richard, whose face spells a look of genuine concern.

CAROLINE
He's in a coma.

RICHARD
JESUS!! What happened?

CAROLINE
H-he was.....he....
(swallows her pain)
....he was run over by a car.

Richard looks away in anger--like a man seized by a sudden chest pain.

CAROLINE
He was just trying to cross the
road....
(sobbing)
Just trying to cross the road. Why
would anyone.....

Richard moves closer and consoles her. Caroline weeps in his arms.

A HYPERACTIVE DOOR BELL RINGS OVER-

INT/EXT. COTTAGE, FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

The old landlady, clad in pyjamas, answers the front door after the fifth ring. She doesn't seem surprised to find Richard standing on her front door at such an ungodly hour.

OLD WOMAN
(sharp and alert)
What now?

RICHARD
Where is she?

(CONTINUED)

OLD WOMAN
(Snapping)
Look young man, go home or I'll
call the police.

Richard cups his hands around his mouth.

RICHARD
(shouting)
WHERE ARE YOU?

OLD WOMAN
(matching his tone)
Young man I asked you to leave and
you had better do as your told or I
will call the police.

The old woman steps back inside and tries to slam the door,
but Richard catches it with his foot, and kicks it open even
wider.

OLD WOMAN
I'm calling the police.

As soon as the old woman starts to the living room, Anna
appears at the top of the stairway.

ANNA
Don't bother Margaret. He'll be
leaving soon, I promise you.
(beat)
Richard please, let's talk in my
room.

Richard briskly climbs the short flight of stairs and
follows Anna into her room.

INT. ANNA'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Anna reclines back in her wheelchair and smirks at Richard-
she's enjoying this.

RICHARD
You killed him.

ANNA
I beg your pardon?

RICHARD
Do you even realise what you've
done?

(CONTINUED)

ANNA

I'm afraid I don't know what you're talking about.

RICHARD

He has nothing to do with you and I. He's completely innocent.

ANNA

I was innocent to Richard, don't forget that.

Richard grabs Anna by the shirt and lifts her out of her wheelchair.

He shoves her hard to the floor.

Anna is hurt badly but she doesn't scream. She merely bares her teeth in a grimace and even manages, albeit grudgingly, to remount her wheelchair.

ANNA

You haven't changed much Richard.

Richard gives Anna one final menacing stare down, then storms out of the room.

INT. HOSPITAL, EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

Mitch's lifeless body rests on a hospital bed; Caroline and Richard are seated adjacent to it.

They both look utterly dejected.

CAROLINE

You know you don't have to be here.

RICHARD

I want to be here.

CAROLINE

I can do this on my own. You have patients to worry about.

RICHARD

Do you not want me here?

Caroline scoffs at this question.

CAROLINE

I don't want you to stay here for the wrong reasons.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

"The wrong reasons"?

CAROLINE

You two never got along. You practically told me you hated him.

RICHARD

I admit we had our differences, but I never once said anything remotely like that.

CAROLINE

I don't want to get into an argument with you. Especially under these circumstances.

RICHARD

I'm not trying to argue with you, I'm just-

CAROLINE

(cutting him off)

Please Richard, I can't do this right now.

Caroline tromps off into the bathroom.

Moment's later, Richard's cell phone rings. He answers it.

RICHARD

Hello?

(beat)

Yes this is he.

(beat)

Are you sure?

(beat)

Of course, I'm on my way.

Richard approaches the bathroom door.

RICHARD

Carol, I just got a call from the headman's secretary, they want us to come down as soon as possible. It's about Andrew.

INT. BRADFIELD COLLEGE, HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Caroline and Andrew sit pensively before an expansive office desk occupied by Regis.

Regis takes off his spectacles and massages his forehead lightly.

REGIS

There's been a recent family tragedy?

CAROLINE

Yes, my uh....my father was run over by a car a few days ago.

REGIS

(gasps)

Oh! That's terrible. How is he doing?

CAROLINE

He's in a coma. But the doctors say there's a good chance he might come around soon.

REGIS

My condolences.

CAROLINE

Thank you.

RICHARD

We appreciate it.

REGIS

Unfortunately, what I'm about to say won't assuage the wounds so to speak. Andrew is in very big trouble I'm afraid.

CAROLINE

What kind of trouble?

REGIS

Well this morning as I walked into my office, I was greeted by a brown envelope on my desk. The envelope contained photographs of Andrew smoking marijuana with a group of fellow students.

Caroline nodes her head in utter disbelief. Richard, for his part, is completely emotionless.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE

(incredulous)

That can't be. Andrew would never do that. We both spoke to him about drugs.

Regis pulls open a nearby drawer and removes a brown envelope from it. He opens it, takes out a stack of photographs, and hands them to Caroline.

Caroline scans the photographs with a look of visceral disdain. Richard doesn't even bother looking. He merely fixes his empty gaze on Regis.

Caroline has seen enough. She sets the photos back down on the desk.

REGIS

Now I'm sure you are aware of our strict drug policy here at Bradfield. We do not tolerate this kind of behaviour. Especially when it's violated by one of our star sportsmen.

CAROLINE

Andrew's a good student. He's never been in trouble before.

REGIS

Yes, he does have a clean record. And we took that into consideration before deciding on his punishment.

CAROLINE

Already....?

REGIS

I'm afraid so. Andrew is as of this moment, suspended until further notice. The disciplinary board will decide when to reinstate him.

CAROLINE

Is there nothing we can do?

REGIS

No. We can't make exceptions. Even for our best students.

(beat)

I will make sure he's kept on track in regards to his school work. We don't want him lagging behind when he returns.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE

....thank you.

REGIS

You're welcome. I always tell parents who find themselves in this situation to try and stay calm, and talk to their children. A little communication goes a long way.

CAROLINE

Thank you.

REGIS

Again, I hope your father makes a speedy recovery.

CAROLINE

Thank you.

Richard and Caroline both rise to their feet and after shaking hands with Regis, they exit the office.

HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Into a hallway where Andrew leans against a wall, his eyes cast down in shame. Caroline, incensed, marches straight past Andrew without even acknowledging his presence.

Richard casts a pitiful look at Andrew.

RICHARD

Get your things. We're leaving now.

ANDREW

Dad, I'm sorry.

RICHARD

I know.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

A MAN sits in a car parked in front of a desolate field, his face masked by a tattered hood save for his darting eyes that are visible through two carved out holes.

The air is filled with the faint, muffled sound of coughing emanating from the back seat.

Pull back to reveal: A HALF NAKED FEMALE FIGURE, bound and sporting the same hood over her face. She attempts to remove the hood with her hands but they are so tightly bound that she is unable to flex her fingers.

(CONTINUED)

The man places his hands on top of the steering wheel and squeezes intently.

SUDDENLY-

INT. BAINES'S RESIDENCE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Richard bolts up in bed, sweating. He looks around frantically as if searching for a misplaced item. He turns to his side and fortunately for him-- he hasn't woken up Caroline.

A DIALING TONE RINGS OVER BLACK.

THEN

CLICK. And A VOICE- 'Hello?'

INT. RICHARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Richard is on the phone with John. There's an uneasy tension about him as he fiddles with a pen.

RICHARD
Hi John, it's Richard.

JOHN
(surprised)
Richard.....

RICHARD
Yes, I hope you don't mind but I asked Sarah for your private number.

JOHN
Of course not. I hope everything is alright? I heard about Mitch, I'm dreadfully sorry.

RICHARD
Thanks John.

JOHN
How is Carol holding up?

RICHARD
She's devastated....but I think we'll pull through. The doctors are optimistic.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

Well I'm glad to hear that. And just so you know, we're doing our part here. Whoever did this will be caught. I promise you.

RICHARD

I appreciate it John.

(beat)

I need to ask for a favor.

JOHN

Of course, anything.

RICHARD

Are you at your desk?

JOHN

Yes.

RICHARD

Good. I need some information on the owner of this plate number. H, four, K, two, six, L. Can you run it through your system?

JOHN

I can try. Give me a second.

The sound of rapid tapping can be heard as John runs the plate number through the police database.

A few seconds later--

JOHN

I'm sorry Richard, but we don't have anything on that number.

RICHARD

That's a pity.

(beat)

Do you have access to another police database? Perhaps London metropolitan?

JOHN

Richard. You know I have to ask you-

RICHARD

(cutting him off)

I know. But I can't tell anyone....not now anyway.

(CONTINUED)

A brief silence ensues from John's end.

JOHN
I'll call you back.

RICHARD
Ok.

INT. RICHARD'S OFFICE - LATER

Richard's cell phone rings and he answers it immediately.

JOHN
What's your email?

RICHARD
R.Baines@hotmail.co.uk.

JOHN
I'm sending you everything on that
number you gave me.

RICHARD
Thanks John.

JOHN
I hope you know what you're doing.

RICHARD
I do. Thanks again.

Richard hangs up and turns on his computer. He logs on to his email account and clicks on the flashing new message from John in his inbox.

Once opened, he downloads an attached file despite being advised to do the opposite by his antivirus software.

A page pops up that contains a MUG SHOT of the BLACK MAN and his detailed criminal record.

Richard scans the document and his eyes soon come across a photograph of a tattoo on the black man's right shoulder blade. The tattoo depicts an enlarged locust feeding on a wheat plain- similar to the one he saw on Anna's neck.

A note printed beneath the photograph describes the tattoo as the official sign of a notorious south-east crime syndicate in London.

He is about to write down a home address under the heading of 'current status' when a rap on the door startles him.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD
(irritated)
Who is it?

CAROLINE (O.S.)
It's me Richard.

Richard looks even more startled now.

RICHARD
....come in.

He minimizes the page on his computer and stands up to greet his wife with a hug.

CAROLINE
Sorry to show up unannounced like this.

RICHARD
Don't apologise.

CAROLINE
Sarah told me you were taking a break.

RICHARD
Not really but please, sit down.

Caroline sits down.

RICHARD
Do you want anything?

CAROLINE
No I'm fine, thank you.
(beat)
You know....I haven't been here since Andrew was 11.

RICHARD
Wow! that long....?

CAROLINE
(looking around)
Yep. I've missed it.

RICHARD
Well it's missed you.

Caroline manages a smile.

CAROLINE
Sarah is so lovely. I'm sure
everyone loves her warmth.

RICHARD
Yeah, I don't know what I'd do
without her.

CAROLINE
I can imagine.

RICHARD
How's dad?

CAROLINE
Still in the coma.

RICHARD
What did the doctors say?

CAROLINE
Nothing they haven't already said
before. "Be strong, hang in there,
he could wake up when you least
expect it".

RICHARD
You should listen to them.

CAROLINE
I wish I had the strength....I
wish.....

Caroline looks at Richard with eyes wrought with sorrow and without warning she is overcome. She lurches forward, burying her face in her hands.

The sobs come unrestrained, violently, like a sudden tidal wave. Richard looks away, unable to watch as his wife unravels right before him.

CAROLINE
I-I don't know what I'd do if he
di...

The office intercom squawks, prompting Caroline to wipe away her tears.

SARAH
Richard, Mr Greenbalt just arrived.

RICHARD
Ok. Thanks.

Caroline moves to stand.

RICHARD
You don't have to go. He can wait.

CAROLINE
No please, go ahead. I'm fine.

RICHARD
I can make him-

CAROLINE
Richard please, I'm fine.

RICHARD
Are you sure?

She smiles at him and nods her head to quell his concerns.

She exits the office. Richard sighs and casts a look at his computer.

INT. BAINES'S RESIDENCE, DINNER TABLE - NIGHT

The Baines family sit down to a quiet and sullen dinner of mediocre looking Spaghetti alla bolognese.

Andrew has barely touched his food. He looks at Richard and then at Caroline, and after what seems like forever murmurs--

ANDREW
Can I be excused?

CAROLINE
No.

Andrew sulks like a petulant teenager.

Emma, on the other hand, looks like she's itching to say something. She puts down her cutlery and clears her throat audibly.

CAROLINE
What's the matter Emma?

EMMA
I have something to say that might cheer us up.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE

I would certainly like to hear that.

EMMA

Remember that student opera thing I told you guys about? Well....I got the violin solo.

Caroline smiles in subdued excitement--she's trying her best to be supportive.

CAROLINE

Congrats Emma, I'm so proud of you.

RICHARD

Well done. Good job.

EMMA

Thanks.

CAROLINE

I think this calls for some champagne. Richard, do you mind?

DINNER TABLE - MOMENTS LATER

Richard uncorks a bottle of champagne.

Andrew's face lights up as Richard pours a little bit of champagne into his glass.

Richard serves the rest of the family, then raises his glass to make a toast.

CAROLINE

Maybe Andrew should make the toast.

Andrew frowns a little before taking his cue.

ANDREW

A toast to Emma, for her hard work and perseverance. A toast, that I may follow in her footsteps. And a toast to grandpa, for renewed health.

Everyone joins in in a chorus of cheers, then the toast is capped off with the obligatory chinking of glasses.

Caroline smiles at Richard and he reciprocates the gesture.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

The HOODED MAN from the earlier scene drags the HOODED GIRL by her legs across the muddy grounds of a field.

He drags her amidst her muffled cries and then halts--slamming her legs hard to the ground.

The girl rolls around in a frenzy.

The man reaches down and grabs her hands. He holds them steady as he takes off her hood to reveal the bloodied and bruised face of a YOUNGER LOOKING ANNA.

Her face spells a look of profound trepidation as the man pulls out a knife and dangles it at a precarious distance from her face.

Anna tries to remain still despite her entire body trembling with fright.

The man places the knife underneath the gag over her mouth and in one quick swoosh! He cuts it in half.

He lets go of her hands and Anna begins coughing violently--as though accursed by an asthma attack.

A FIRM KNOCK AND--

INT. LONDON HOTEL SUITE, BATHROOM SINK - NIGHT

Richard, dressed in a sharp black tuxedo, snaps out of his nightmare.

CAROLINE (O.S.)
Richard, what's taking you so long?
we're going to be late.

Richard stares at himself in the mirror as though scrutinizing his appearance.

CAROLINE (O.S.)
Richard....?

RICHARD
Sorry, I'll be out in a second.

Richard turns on the tap and splashes some water on his face. He dries his face and turns to leave but turns back when a bloodstain on his white windsor shirt catches his attention.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

Shit!!

A blood rivulet leaks from his nose. He wipes it off and stops the nosebleed quickly with the aid of some kleenexs.

CAROLINE (O.S.)

(angry)

Richard!!!

RICHARD

I'm almost done.

CAROLINE (O.S.)

What are you even doing?

RICHARD

Have some patience ok.

He quickly untucks his shirt and grabs a face towel and a bar of soap. He turns on the tap and shifts the lever towards the red marker that signals hot water.

He lets the water run for a bit and dampens the face towel. He rubs some soap on the towel and then scrubs off the bloodstain at a feverish pace.

The blood disappears soon enough but leaves behind a noticeable water stain. He winces.

RICHARD

Shit.

Richard takes off his jacket and steps back into the room where Caroline, looking incandescent in a long black dress, throws up her hands in bewilderment.

CAROLINE

What is going on?

RICHARD

(pointing at the stain)

I have to change.

He walks over to a drawer and pulls out a new shirt.

ANDREW

Good thing you came with an extra.

CAROLINE

Andrew, help your father change.
I'll call a taxi.

(CONTINUED)

Andrew assists his father by holding his jacket as Richard quickly puts on his new shirt.

Caroline hangs up the hotel land line.

CAROLINE
Are we done? There's a cab waiting
for us downstairs.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Caroline's cell phone rings as they walk towards an elevator. Caroline picks up.

CAROLINE
Hello?
(beat)
Linda, how are you?
(beat)
Emma....? You mean she's not with
you?

The three of them freeze on that last question.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
I don't understand. I thought she
and Sarah had planned to go
together. Is she not picking up her
phone?
(beat)
Umm...well we're actually on our
way there right now. She probably
just went along with the main
group. I'll try calling her myself.
(beat)
Thanks Linda.

Caroline hangs up and immediately rings Emma.

They all wait apprehensively as the dialing tone goes unanswered.

Caroline leaves a voice mail.

CAROLINE
Emma darling, this is your mother.
Sarah's mum just called to tell us
you weren't with them. What's going
on? I thought the plan was to get a
lift with them? Please call me or
your father back. We are really
worried. Please call us as soon as
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE (cont'd)
 you get this message. I love
 you....bye.

She hangs up and looks at Richard and Andrew for some much
 needed reassurance.

RICHARD
 She must have gone with the main
 group.

CAROLINE
 It's so unlike her though, to not
 call before changing plans.....

RICHARD
 I'm sure she's there. She has to be
 there.

INT. LONDON OPERA HOUSE, LOBBY - NIGHT

Richard, Andrew, and Caroline are sat pensively in a busy
 reception area.

A stout brunette in bifocals steps out from an elevator and
 immediately looks towards their direction.

ANDREW
 Mum, that's her--Miss Dyer.

Caroline waves at her and MISS LINDSAY DYER briskly walks
 over.

LINDSAY
 Mrs. Baines?

CAROLINE
 Please call me Carol.
 (gestures towards Richard)
 My husband Richard.

They shake hands.

LINDSAY
 Very nice to meet you. I don't
 suppose Emma is grabbing something
 from the car?

The blood drains from Caroline's face.

Richard and Andrew appear largely unshaken- but we can
 discern their genuine concern.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE

Oh God! We were hoping she came with you.

LINDSAY

With me? I don't understand. She was given permission to travel with a friend.

CAROLINE

Yes, that was the plan. But I got a call from her friend's mum as we were leaving the hotel, asking if we knew where she was.

LINDSAY

That's strange. I tried calling her several times, she never picked up.

CAROLINE

We can't reach her either. It's so unlike her.

LINDSAY

When was the last time you spoke to her?

CAROLINE

Right before she left this morning. Why?

LINDSAY

I don't know....did she seem different? A little upset maybe?

CAROLINE

No, the complete opposite. I've never seen her so excited.

(to Richard)

You dropped her off at school, she looked her normal self right?

RICHARD

Yes, very much so. Extremely happy for obvious reasons.

CAROLINE

Maybe her band mates might know something. Do you mind asking?

LINDSAY

I already did. They don't know anything.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE
Please, ask again.

LINDSAY
Ok, I'll call my assistant
upstairs. She's with the students
rehearsing.

Lindsay walks over to the concierge and asks for a room number to be dialed. They do as requested and hand her a receiver.

Caroline, Richard, and Andrew all watch with an almost disturbing gaze as Lindsay inquires about Emma's whereabouts.

Moments later, Lindsay nodes her head in despair.

Caroline looks away--tears now beginning to cascade down her cheek.

INT. BAINES'S HOTEL SUITE - LATER

Caroline is sat at the dressing table while Andrew and Richard pace back and forth. There's a palpable sense of apprehension in the air as Caroline fiddles with a photograph of Emma.

A knock on the door, Richard answers it.

Andrew walks over to his mother.

ANDREW
Mum, do you want anything?

CAROLINE
No, thank you.

Richard comes back in with two police officers: Detective Chief Inspector NATHAN STROUT and Chief Inspector TOM LONGDEN.

STROUT
Good evening, I'm detective Strout,
this is inspector Longden.

CAROLINE
Carol.

They exchange handshakes.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Please tell me you have some good news.

STROUT

I'm afraid not. But all our officers have been notified, including Thames Valley police. If she's out there, we'll find her. The important thing is to stay calm and to avoid thinking about the worst.

CAROLINE

Which is?

STROUT

.....abduction.

Caroline fights back a tear.

LONGDEN

If that's the case we should be contacted at the very latest in three days.

STROUT

I just have a few questions for the both of you if you don't mind?

Caroline and Richard nod their assent.

STROUT

Good. First off, has Emma ever done anything like this before?

CAROLINE

What? Gone missing?

STROUT

No. But you mentioned it was highly unusual for her to change plans without letting you two know. Has she been distant lately, at home or at school?

CAROLINE

No. Not that we know of anyway.

STROUT

So you're not sure?

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

Emma's been the same. Forever smiling and looking forward to perform today.

STROUT

So there's no chance she might have.....ran away?

CAROLINE

Emma's a happy girl, a great student. Hard working, diligent, always home early, never a cause for complaint. I don't see why she would do anything like that.

STROUT

Sometimes the motives are very unclear.

CAROLINE

Even if, why today of all days? Tonight was practically the culmination of a life's long ambition. Why would she suddenly sacrifice that?

STROUT

True. But as I said sometimes these things aren't as clear cut as they seem.

(beat)

What do you do for a living madam?

CAROLINE

I'm a....I stay at home.

STROUT

(to Richard)

And you sir?

RICHARD

I'm a dentist.

STROUT

Ok, I'm just asking because some occupations come with special hazards such as enemies. You wouldn't happen to know anyone that might want to harm your daughter in order to get to you? That applies to your personal lives as well?

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE

God no!

Caroline looks at Richard.

RICHARD

Same here.

STROUT

Well that's enough of the questions for now. I'm going to station an officer right outside your door for tonight.

CAROLINE

Thank you.

STROUT

You're welcome. You might also be contacted tonight. Make sure the officer is in here before answering and put the phone on speaker, so he can monitor the conversation.

The officers turn to leave.

CAROLINE

What if no one calls us tonight? Is there a deadline for these things?

STROUT

Well like inspector Longden said, we can only go by previous cases which indicate that families are usually contacted within the first two days of a reported abduction. But, like I said, it's best we try to remain as calm as possible.

CAROLINE

Thank you.

STROUT

You're welcome.

Richard escorts the officers out the door.

HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Richard follows them out onto the hallway.

RICHARD

When you asked us if we had any
err.....enemies. I didn't want to
say anything because it might have
uhh....might have upset my wife
even further.

STROUT

I understand.

RICHARD

In fact, I don't know if I can
really label it as an enemy but
ehh.....well there's this woman
who's been bothering me lately.
She's been showing up at my
practice.....

STROUT

A stalker....?

RICHARD

You could say that.

STROUT

Do you know her?

RICHARD

No. Don't even know her name. But
she claims the opposite.....insists
that we had some kind of a history
together. The way she tells the
stories....I think she's a lunatic.
I could see her pulling off
something this daring.

STROUT

Do you know where we can find her?

RICHARD

I have her Bradfield address.

He takes out a scrap of paper from his shirt and hands it to
Strout.

Strout takes a quick look at it and nodes his head.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

And please, try and keep this between us. It's probably not even anything.

STROUT

Will do.

Richard watches the officers as they leave.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - SAME TIME

Richard steps back into the room and shuts the door. He walks into the bedroom and sees Andrew gazing out the window.

RICHARD

Where's your mother?

ANDREW

In the loo.

RICHARD

I know this must be hard for you.

ANDREW

I'm fine.

RICHARD

Are you sure? You know you can talk to me right?

ANDREW

I know.
(beat)
I'm fine.

Richard approaches the bathroom door.

RICHARD

Carol.....?

CAROLINE

I need to be alone.

RICHARD

You really think that--

CAROLINE

(cutting him off)
Please.

Richard pulls back, sighs, then trudges over to Andrew's side.

INT. BAINES'S RESIDENCE, DINING TABLE - DAY

A bedraggled-looking Caroline sits with Andrew by the phone. A solicitor is here as well.

MONTAGE- of chaos and panic. London Metropolitan police are trying to set up shop. Tape recorders. Listening devices. Video cameras.

EXT. BACKYARD - SAME TIME

DCI Strout is updating Richard on his 'stalker' tip.

STROUT

Her name is Anna Langford. She moved out here to reacclimate herself with nature. Her words, not mine.

RICHARD

Did you search the house?

STROUT

We can't do that without a warrant. Plus she claims she's never seen or heard of your daughter and has never harassed you in any way shape or form.

RICHARD

(raising his voice)

I'm telling you she has. She tracked me down the other week at a conference in Edinburgh and threatened me.

STROUT

Why didn't you report it immediately?

RICHARD

I don't know. I told her I would go to the police if she didn't stop.

STROUT

And why didn't you?

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

I thought she would stop.

STROUT

I wish I could press the matter further but this woman is severely handicapped, literally.

RICHARD

She's working with someone, a black guy....he's always with her.

STROUT

I didn't see anyone. And even so, we would need more than belated accusations of harassment to obtain a search warrant.

The O.S. sound of a ringing phone erupts like a bomb exploding from the inside. Strout and Richard rush back into the house.

INT. DINING ROOM - SAME TIME

A technician answers. Everybody is on headsets, monitoring. Strout hands Caroline the receiver. Caroline takes a deep breath.

We hear the conversation.

CAROLINE

Hello?

CYNTHIA

Hello....is that you Carol?

A collective sigh of disappointment reverberates around the room.

Carol nods her head in annoyance. Strout signals to her to cut off the phone with a hand to his neck.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Carol are you there? Carol....

Without responding, Carol slams the phone down in frustration and storms off.

Everybody watches her leave- they understand.

INT. KITCHEN/BEDROOM - LATER

Richard applies finishing touches to a tuna sandwich. He grabs a bottle of water from the fridge and heads up the stairs with the food.

Richard walks into the master bedroom and parks the food on a table.

Caroline emerges from the bathroom dressed like she's about to go out.

RICHARD
Where are you going?

CAROLINE
I just got a call from the hospital. Dad's finally woken up.

RICHARD
(elated)
That's fantastic!

CAROLINE
It's not that great. He can't speak. But I thought I'd better give him some good news.

Caroline grabs her handbag and starts for the door.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
Sorry about the food. I don't have an appetite for anything at the moment.

RICHARD
I'll come with you.

CAROLINE
Don't be silly. Someone has to be here.

Caroline is putting up quite a brave face for the first time. She even manages to plant a kiss on Richards's lips before leaving.

Richard is visibly surprised.

RICHARD
(in a loud whisper)
Bye....

Richard gazes at the food he just brought in. He exhales audibly and settles down to eat it.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Andrew pats Richard on the shoulder in an attempt to rouse him from his nap.

ANDREW
Dad....Dad....wake up.

RICHARD
(half-awake)
What....?

ANDREW
The police!

Richard is fully awake now.

RICHARD
W-What?

ANDREW
The police, they found something.

DOWNSTAIRS: SAME TIME

Richard and Andrew make their way down the stairs.

At the bottom of the stairway, Caroline watches in bemusement as an officer holds up a minuscule wireless surveillance camera.

STROUT
(to Richard)
One of my men accidentally stumbled
on this.

Strout points at the camera in the officer's hand.

RICHARD
What is it?

STROUT
It's a wireless covert camera,
similar to the one we use in drug
busts. It fell out of a picture
frame in your daughter's bedroom.

Richard looks at Caroline, who has her hand firmly placed over her mouth in utter bewilderment.

STROUT
I've already asked your wife and
son and they both claim they don't
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STROUT (cont'd)
know anything about it. And I'm
assuming Emma doesn't either,
because this is pretty advanced
stuff. That leaves you, having
owned the house before-
(pointing at Caroline)
she moved in, did you install any
cameras without their knowledge.

RICHARD
(indignant)
No!! Of course not.

STROUT
Then perhaps it's safe to assume
that this might be the key to
finding your daughter.

Caroline looks away in horror.

STROUT
Have you had any break-in's
recently?

RICHARD
No. We've never had any.

STROUT
None that you noticed anyway.

ANDREW
Are we being watched?

STROUT
Only time will tell. I already
called in a team to conduct a
thorough sweep of the house. I have
a feeling there's plenty more where
that came from.

They react as two vehicles pull up outside. Chaos as the
front door opens. MEN IN SUITS, several POLICEMEN each armed
with high-tech covert camera detectors.

Strout barks out some orders, designating some policemen to
one area of the house and others to another.

MONTAGE: The thorough sweep for bugs commences.

INTERCUT WITH SCENES OF RICHARD, CAROLINE, AND ANDREW
WAITING APPREHENSIVELY IN THE LIVING ROOM.

(CONTINUED)

The cops carefully fan their detectors over everything including, family portraits, picture frames, smoke alarms, wardrobes, toilets, drawers, doorknobs, clocks, carpets, book cases, computers, plants, and their vases.

The red lights on the detectors flash non-stop as most of the enumerated items conceal an almost inconspicuous wireless camera.

Once a cop locates a camera, he carefully uproots it and puts it in a large cardboard box.

At the end of the tedious search, the box is more or less full.

LIVING ROOM - LATER

Caroline, Richard, and Andrew watch closely as the box is closed, sealed, and carried out of the house by two officers for inspection.

Strout strides purposefully over. He looks about as mystified as they do.

ANDREW

What are you going to do with them?

STROUT

We're going to check them for fingerprints, but that might be wishful thinking, I'm assuming anyone smart enough to carry out such an expansive installation process wasn't stupid enough to leave fingerprints. We're also running a product trace right now, maybe we find the seller and that'll lead us to whoever's behind this.

CAROLINE

Maybe.

STROUT

I'm afraid that's all we have. I've never seen anything like it before. It must have taken weeks, even months to set up and extensive surveillance system like this one, and right under your very noses.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE

Should we leave? I mean....are you sure you found everything?

STROUT

We checked everywhere possible and impossible to plant a camera of this size. But just to be on the safe side, we're going to install a 24 hour infrared tracking device around the house. It'll pick up any hidden camera signals.

EXT. BACK GARDEN - NIGHT

Richard is having a quiet smoke alone, pondering over the events that just took place.

CAROLINE (O.S.)

I didn't know you smoked?

RICHARD

Sorry.

He puts it out.

RICHARD (cont'd)

I quit right before we met.

CAROLINE

That's convenient. For me that is.

An awkward silence ensues.

Caroline moves closer to Richard as though about to tell him a secret.

CAROLINE

Richard, if there's something you want to tell me. Now's the time.

RICHARD

What?

CAROLINE

I know we've had our issues, but I've always respected you nonetheless. And I know you don't want anything bad to happen to her.

RICHARD

(shocked)

What?!! Carol come on....you can't really be-

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE
(angrily interrupts)
Please. Just tell me. I won't tell
them, I promise.

Richard looks her dead in the eye.

RICHARD
There is nothing to say. I had
nothing to do with that.
(beat)
How can you even suggest that I
would do anything to hurt Emma.

CAROLINE
That's the problem isn't it? Far
too much *suggesting* going on around
here.

Caroline trudges back into the house--the last few hours are
beginning to take their toll on her.

Richard gazes, desolately, at Strout as he converses with
some policemen in the kitchen.

He nods his head in dismay and briskly renters the house.

FRONT ENTERY WAY

Richard grabs his coat and exits the front door much to the
confusion of the onlooking policemen. Caroline, for her
part, doesn't even acknowledge his departure.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Richard punches in an address into his SatNav. A map
directing him towards the location appears. He studies it
and accelerates ahead.

INT. CAR- LATER

Richard is parked across the street from a decrepit council
estate. He gawks intently at the building then exits the
car.

EXT/INT. ESTATE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Richard approaches a door with a plaque that reads '133'. He pauses momentarily then peeks through a small window to his right. He sees nothing but darkness.

He looks to his sides, making sure the coast is clear, then presses his ear against the door- all is quiet on the western front.

He draws back, exhales, and feels the simple doorknob style. He reaches into his coat pocket and takes out a paper clip.

He straightens out the paper clip and pushes the pick into the hole in the knob.

One turn, two turns, and on the third turn; the door clicks open- he's obviously done this before.

He looks to his sides once more before stepping in.

He feels the sides of the wall- searching for a wall switch. He finds it and flicks it on to reveal an unremarkable apartment littered with beer bottles, ice buckets, and Chinese take out.

Richard winces from the foul stench.

He walks into a miniature kitchen and checks the fridge; as though expecting to find some incriminating evidence in there.

He makes his way down a short corridor and into a surprisingly capacious-

BEDROOM

He looks around- nothing catches his eye. He checks the wardrobe and the space underneath the bed--nothing there less dirty laundry.

Next, he checks the bathroom and pulls back the shower curtain revealing a tub in dire need of some cleaning.

(O.S.) SOUND OF SLUGGISH FOOTSTEPS EMERGE FROM THE BACKGROUND.

Richard turns around swiftly--he's left the lights on.

He races back to the living room and switches off the lights as the footsteps draw nearer and nearer until they pause in front of the door.

(CONTINUED)

O.S. sounds of keys clanging against metal as someone unlocks the door.

The lights come on revealing the BLACK MAN.

He squints intently, as though he's noticed something out of place. He nods his head- it's nothing.

He staggers towards the kitchen--he's intoxicated. He almost falls but manages to hold onto a nearby table.

He whacks his head violently and tries again.

This time, he makes it to the fridge and takes out a bottle of water, which he downs in one gulp. He tosses the bottle to the side and lets out an almighty belch.

BATHROOM

He staggers into the bathroom and urinates--it's a long one.

He flushes and as he starts to the sink, Richard emerges from behind the shower curtain and shoves him hard against the wall.

The black man goes in head first and collapses to the ground.

Richard circles his body.

The black man comes around. He feels the huge gash on his forehead and grimaces in pain.

RICHARD

Where is she?

The black man opens his mouth to speak but nothing comes out.

RICHARD

Where is she?

The black man looks like his about to pass out. Richard grabs him by the shirt and props him up against the damaged wall.

The black man spits in Richard's face.

Richard, unperturbed by the saliva cascading down his cheek, continues his interrogation.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

For the last time, where is my
daughter?

The black man grins and breaks into a raspy laugh. Richard shoves him into the bathtub.

Richard grabs the shower hose and wraps it around the black man's neck. The black man reaches up to try to get his hands under the strangling hose.

Richard brings pressure. His wrists whiten around the hose. The black man's legs writhe and stamp.

He moves clumsily from left to right, crabbing around the pivot-point of Richard's back arched against the wall.

The black man's flailing legs kick over several toiletries resting on the lip of the bathtub.

Blood creeps around the friction point where the hose bites the black man's throat. He spits out blood.

Richard feels with his thumb at the black man's neck and averts his own face. A yank of the chain ruptures the carotid artery.

It jets blood. The blood hits the bathroom wall, drumming hollowly. Richard lets go of the black man's body and stares at it with a look of visceral disdain.

He moves over to the sink and washes his hands and the streak of saliva off his face.

Richard turns his attention to the limp body of the black man and searches its pockets. He pulls out some random business cards and a wad of cash, which he discards in frustration.

He rolls the body over and removes a cell phone from the back pocket.

Richard quickly scans the caller id and stops at a number that reads 'LOCUST' in bold dark letters.

He dials the number and Anna answers immediately.

ANNA

Is there a problem?

Richard doesn't respond.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA
Are you there?

RICHARD
Where is she?

A brief pause ensues from Anna's line.

ANNA
What have you done Richard?

RICHARD
Where is she?

ANNA
What have you done?

RICHARD
Where is she?

Anna hangs up.

ENRAGED, Richard hurls the phone against the wall. The phone shatters on impact.

EXT. WASTELAND - LATER

Footbridge over railway sandwiched between freeway. Empty train blazes through. Dangerous, deserted downtown neighborhood. Looks more like "war torn Beirut", burnt out cars and trash.

EMOTIONLESS, Richard watches a small BONFIRE ablaze at a distance. A group of HOODED BLACK KIDS on bicycles ride menacingly around the growing flame.

The kids soon disperse leaving Richard and the dancing flame to taunt each other with their melancholy.

EXT. BRADFIELD PARK - DAY

The croaking of some dismal raven perforates the frigid air of an early morning.

Move in on a FEMALE FIGURE cowering underneath a slide. Her head mummified in tape leaving one ear exposed.

The figure shivers and unclenches her palm to reveal a broken piece of bridge from a violin.

INT. BAINES'S RESIDENCE, LIVING ROOM - LATER

A handful of policemen mill about the living room. Caroline and Andrew walk in with some refreshments: tea and biscuits to be exact. The policemen don't need a second invitation to help themselves.

The back door alarm sounds off momentarily- Richard has just walked in

KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Richard is rummaging through the fridge when Caroline tromps in with an empty tray.

She sets it down on a table and eyes Richard from top to bottom- she doesn't like what she sees.

CAROLINE

Where have you been all night?

Richard doesn't respond.

CAROLINE

I asked you a question.

Richard takes out a carton of orange juice and reads the expiration date. Caroline moves closer and grabs Richard by the arm.

Richard shoots her a stern look and Caroline immediately lets go of his arm. He slams the fridge door closed.

STROUT (O.S.)

Sorry to interrupt.

Strout comes into view. Caroline manages a thin smile to undercut the tension.

STROUT

We found her.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Emma hooked up. Tubes running in and out of her. And She's suddenly surrounded. Caroline, Andrew, Richard, and a Doctor all stand at the foot of the bed.

CAROLINE

(to doctor)

May I?

(CONTINUED)

She motions towards Emma.

DOCTOR
Of course.

Caroline moves closer and gently pulls back a long strand of hair resting on Emma's forehead. Emma's face is surprisingly unscathed.

CAROLINE
How long has she been like this?

DOCTOR
She fell unconscious in the ambulance about 2 hours ago. Most likely induced by hypothermia, she was out in the cold for a long time.

CAROLINE
Will she come around soon?

DOCTOR
She should. Fortunately, we haven't found any injuries. She came out pretty unscathed.

Caroline can't fight back the tears any longer and she starts sobbing. The doctor leaves. Andrew consoles his mum with a deep embrace and for the first time, he too sheds a few tears.

Richard, on the other hand, stands motionless as though paralyzed by the scene of family solidarity playing out before him.

He extends an arm but retracts it immediately--it's too soon, far too soon.

INT. BAINES'S RESIDENCE, KITCHEN - DAY

A hand shakes a few pills onto a saucer. Pull back to reveal Caroline as she reaches for a tumbler and fills it with tap water.

EMMA'S ROOM - MOMENT'S LATER

Caroline walks in on the unsettling image of Emma struggling to play her violin.

Emma drops the violin in frustration. Caroline picks it up and lays it gently on the bed. Like an infant.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE
Darling, don't rush it. It'll come
back.

Emma nods her head like a mute.

Caroline hands her the saucer. Emma doesn't even look at it,
she just stares into the empty space in front of her.

CAROLINE
Emma you have to try. If not the
food at least the medication.

Emma keeps staring aimlessly.

CAROLINE
Emma please?

Emma remains unmoved.

Caroline sighs and looks away--she's utterly deflated. She
leaves the medication for Emma. Like a zookeeper.

She exits the room and makes her way downstairs.

The doorbell rings.

FRONT ENTRY WAY - SAME TIME

Caroline opens the door to reveal DCI Strout.

STROUT
Hi Carol.

CAROLINE
Nathan.

STROUT
How are things?

CAROLINE
I should be overjoyed but....I sort
of feel worse.
(beat)
Does that make me a bad person?

STROUT
It's normal. I can't tell you how
many times I've heard that from
other parents. You have to be
patient.

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE
Is that even possible?

STROUT
What?

CAROLINE
Normality. Once it's taken from you
in such a traumatizing manner, can
it ever be regained?

STROUT
Some families pray about it.
Others....well, they hope. But you
have to talk about it, pretending
it never happened is seldom the
answer.

Caroline nods in concurrence.

EMMA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Strout and Caroline quietly walk in on Emma as she settles
down to take a nap. She frowns at the sight of them.

Caroline glances at the untouched saucer.

CAROLINE
Emma. I want you to meet detective
Strout. He was the man in charge of
finding you. He's also been a
really good friend.

Emma looks at him and then averts her gaze.

STROUT
Emma, I can't imagine what you must
be going through right now. No one
can, but sometimes talking about it
helps.

Strout moves closer to Emma and takes a knee.

STROUT
Can you tell me what happened?
Anything you can remember, perhaps
the people who took you?

Emma slumps her head like a child sulking at an unwanted
christmas gift.

Strout looks at Caroline as though trying to obtain
permission to continue. Caroline wipes away a tear.

(CONTINUED)

STROUT
Emma, you want these people to pay
for what they did right?

Emma maintains her obstinate posture.

STROUT
Well, you have to give us
something, anything.

His words fall upon deaf ears.

INT/EXT. FRONT ENTRY WAY - LATER

Caroline sees Strout out the front door.

CAROLINE
I'm sorry.

STROUT
Don't be. Honestly, I didn't really
expect her to be receptive. She's a
very brave girl nonetheless.

CAROLINE
I know.

STROUT
Take care Carol.

CAROLINE
You too.

Strout goes to leave, but turns back.

STROUT
Where's Richard?

CAROLINE
....I don't know.

Strout nods his head; he's not going to pry any further.

INT. DENTAL CLINIC, RICHARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Richard is at his desk diligently filing away some
documents. He looks a picture of complete serenity unlike
Caroline.

The office phone rings. He answers it.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH
Richard, there's an inspector
Burton from London Metropolitan on
the line for you.

RICHARD
(calmly)
Put him through.

Richard reclines in his leather chair.

A beat as the dour voice of Inspector FRANK BURTON emerges.

BURTON
Mr. Baines. I'm F--

RICHARD
(cutting him off)
I know who you are. You did a favor
for John....

FRANK
That is correct. I'll get straight
to the point then. Where were you
on Thursday night, march seventh?

RICHARD
At home.

FRANK
And that can be corroborated?

RICHARD
By my wife, yes.

FRANK
Mr. Baines, the young man about
whom you asked John for some
information was found dead in his
apartment this morning by his
parole officer.

RICHARD
Was that a question or a comment?

FRANK
Both.

RICHARD
Wasn't he gang affiliated?

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

Yes, but we have to cover all our corners on this one. And having expressed keen interest in him, you qualify as one of those corners.

RICHARD

Sorry, but it wasn't me.

FRANK

I never said it was you.

RICHARD

Oh. My mistake.

FRANK

What was the exact nature of your relationship with MR. WILLIAMS?

RICHARD

A friend of a friend.

FRANK

And who is this friend?

RICHARD

Anna Langford.

FRANK

Do you know where I can reach her?

RICHARD

Of course, I'm going to hers right now.

Richard hangs up the phone.

EXT/INT. COTTAGE - LATER

Richard approaches the front door of the cottage. He notices the door is slightly ajar and pushes it open.

Richard walks in and takes in the scene of domestic banality.

He strides to the bottom of the stairway and stares up a moment.

Richard marches up the steps and then into Anna's--

BEDROOM

(CONTINUED)

Where Anna sits in an almost catatonic state on her wheelchair. Blood rivulets dripping from two incisions on both her wrists.

Richard stares at the slit wrists, then perches down on the bed next to her.

Anna's eyes suddenly blink wide open. She cranes her head lethargically to the side and regards Richard.

Richard looks at her with a placid expression.

Anna pulls back her lips in a rictus of madness.

ANNA
(stammering)
J-Join....me.

Richard grimaces in an extraordinary contortion of wrenching pain and self-loathing.

INT. RICHARD'S CAR - DAY

The door opens and Richard climbs into the driver seat. He looks at the glove compartment and pauses a moment.

Richard snaps open the glove compartment and fishes out a pack of cigarette and a lighter. He takes out a cigarette and lights it.

A stream of smoke escapes the side of Richard's mouth. Another writhes through his nose in a sinuous movement.

Richard starts the car and flicks the rest of the cigarette out the window.

The car glides down the road, leaving behind the rather austere edifice of the cottage--its innocuous façade concealing a more sinister reality.

INT. BAINES'S RESIDENCE, EMMA'S BEDROOM - DAY

The haunting sound of Bach's sonata for violin solo punctuates the air as Emma makes love to her violin with an intimacy that conveys the horror of her abduction.

The piece culminates in a heart-wrenching crescendo and Emma, with a look of satisfaction, sets down her violin.

She frowns a little, as though disappointed. She always strives for perfection.

(CONTINUED)

BASEMENT - MOMENT'S LATER

Emma rips through the duct tape on a cardboard box revealing an old, haggard violin. Emma cracks a thin smile.

She takes out the violin and blows away the dust that envelops it.

Emma plucks away at its strings--she likes what she hears.

She grabs the violin and turns to leave, but turns back when her eyes dart across the pile of cardboard boxes stacked neatly on top of each other.

She pauses momentarily.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Caroline stands by the window. Behind her, Mitch lies motionless on a hospital bed. His condition somewhat stable although he still appears lifeless.

Caroline looks at her father with eyes strained from weeks of endless crying. She grabs a glass of half-empty orange juice from a tray table and settles down on a chair next to Mitch.

She takes a sip of the Oj and winces from the sour taste.

She sets the glass down on a table and moves closer to her father.

CAROLINE

Dad....can you hear me?

Mitch remains still.

CAROLINE

Blink if you can hear me?

A short hiatus, then Mitch's eyes blink open.

CAROLINE

(smiles)

Emma asked me about you the other day. It's the first time she's spoken unprovoked, even managed to tell me about a dream she had where you were her knight and shining amour.

(beat)

She loves you dad, she really does. We all do....she saw me crying the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE (cont'd)
 other day and assured me there was
 nothing to worry about--you would
 never go gentle...

Caroline takes Mitch's limp hand into hers and clutches it intently as if her life depended on it.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
 What would you do about Richard if
 you were me? I don't think I have
 it in me to confront him, what
 should I do dad?

PULL BACK to reveal a menacing looking MAN watching Caroline through the screen door with a frigid glare.

A tattoo of a LOCUST encircled by iridescent flames on his neck amplifies the amorphous marks that burden his face.

He places his hand on the door nob and creeps in.

EXT/INT. BAINES'S RESIDENCE, FRONT DOOR - DAY

Andrew shoots a peace sign to a friend as the latter reverses out of the driveway.

Andrew approaches the front door and lets himself in.

He walks over to the--

KITCHEN

Where he takes out a can of coke from the fridge and a bar of chocolate from the cupboard.

While munching on his snack, Andrew glances outside the kitchen window to the back garden--nothing catches his eyes.

He moves to the--

CORRIDOR

and pauses at the foot of the stairway. He looks up.

ANDREW
 (in a loud tone)
 MUM!! Are you here...? Is anyone
 here?

CAROLINE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Andrew walks into the room. He nods his head at its vacancy.

(CONTINUED)

He steps out of the room and approaches Emma's bedroom.

Andrew raps lightly on the door.

ANDREW

Emm's....you here?

Andrew opens the door and peeps his head in. Again, nothing meets his eyes.

He shuts the door and turns to leave when the stony image of Emma startles him.

ANDREW

For fuck sake Emm's, how long were you standing there?

EMMA

What are you doing in my room?

ANDREW

Nothing...I was just...you know, checking if you were in.

EMMA

Where's mum?

ANDREW

Don't know. She was supposed to pick me up from school, never showed up. She hasn't replied back to my texts either.

EMMA

She's probably still with granddad.

Andrew nods his head in agreement.

Emma turns around.

EMMA

I need you to follow me.

Andrew looks a tad bit concerned.

BASEMENT - MOMENT'S LATER

Emma and Andrew loom over the imposing cellar door.

ANDREW

What are we doing...? There's nothing behind that door.

(CONTINUED)

Emma reaches into her back pocket and pulls out a set of keys.

ANDREW

Emms...what are you doing?

EMMA

What does it look like?

ANDREW

How did you get those?

EMMA

It doesn't matter.

Emma is about to try one of the keys when Andrew interjects.

ANDREW

I don't know how you got those and I'm not sure I want to know either. But you're wasting your time, don't you remember?? Dad told us it was--

EMMA

(angrily interrupts)

I don't. I'd rather see for myself. You?

ANDREW

What are you trying to prove?

EMMA

....That I'm wrong about dad.

Emma squats down, selects a key at random and tries it to no avail. She tries another key--same result.

Frustration beginning to settle in now.

Andrew offers a helping hand by taking the keys off her. He studies them and inserts one into the key hole.

The door clicks open.

Andrew and Emma lean in and stare down into the darkness beneath them. The latter takes out her phone and shines a faint beam of light that illuminates the short flight of stairs.

Andrew does the same with his phone.

They both make their way down the stairs and into Richard's secret lair.

(CONTINUED)

Andrew reaches for the light bulb dangling above him and tugs it on.

Andrew and Emma exchange disquieting looks, prompted by the queer surveillance system that accosts them.

INT. PARKING LOT, STROUT'S CAR - DAY

Strout sees Richard through a haze of cigarette smoke stepping out of his car and walking into his private practice.

INT. BRADFIELD DENTAL CLINIC, RECEPTION - SAME TIME

Sarah looks up from behind the counter just as Richard walks straight past her.

SARAH

Richard there's a man waiting for
you in--

It's no use, Richard is out of earshot.

OFFICE - SAME TIME

Richard walks into his office. He stops abruptly as his eyes fall upon the image of Frank Burton rising to his feet.

FRANK

I hope you don't mind, but I took
the liberty of making myself
comfortable.

Richard regards him with a look of suppressed fury.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Our conversation ended so abruptly,
hence I thought I'd come down here
and continue where we left off.

Richard walks over to his chair and sits down slowly. He fixes a wolfish gaze on Frank.

FRANK

You mentioned you were going to pay
a visit to Miss. Langford...what
ever came of that?

Richard doesn't respond.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

Well I thought the name sounded a little familiar, so I went through my files. Apparently Anna has led quite a troubled life. She fell into a deep depression, from which she never recovered, after she was brutally raped. The perpetrator was never caught. She's been in and out of mental asylums for the past five years and it appears her illness often compels her to harass random men with hysterical allegations of her rape. During her final stint at the asylum, she developed a friendship with a fellow patient who was a presumed apostate of a crime syndicate in London called *Locust*. When they both got out, Anna was introduced to the gang's boss and was made an honorary member. Some say it was her intrepid character that sold her.

(beat)

Our mutual friend PAUL WILLIAMS was the patient whom befriended Anna and now, as you already know, he's dead. Strangled with a shower hose.

Frank runs a finger half-away across his neck.

If the effect of this story was to shock Richard--it hasn't worked.

FRANK

(leans forward)

I'm trying to help you help me. Langford is a loose canon and I'm willing to bet she had something to do with Mr. Williams's death. Now, if you could tell me your exact relationship with both of them, it could go a long way in helping both of us.

Richard remains silent.

Frank frowns in annoyance. He rises to his feet and turns to leave.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

I must warn you, your lack of
co-operation may force me to arrest
you as a murder suspect.

RICHARD

I'm not speaking until I have my
solicitor here with me.

Frank nods his head in the affirmative; he anticipated that
last retort.

INT. STROUT'S CAR - MOMENT'S LATER

Strout's eyes are fixed on the front entrance of the dental
clinic.

Frank soon exits the building and walks towards the parking
lot.

Strout's eyes narrow as a look of recognition flashes across
his face.

STROUT

(in a murmur)

Frank....

Strout takes out his phone and dials a number.

INT. BRADFIELD DENTAL CLINIC, RICHARD'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Richard watches Frank through the window as he approaches
his car.

Frank takes a call on his cell.

(O.S) The door creaks open.

Richard glances over his shoulder as Sarah shuts the door
behind her.

Sarah wears a deeply concerned expression on her face.

SARAH

Don't mean to interrupt, but we
have a backlog of patients to whom
you were supposed to have attended.

Richard takes a seat at his desk.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH (CONT'D)

I know there's something wrong and I can understand you not wanting to divulge details, but I won't let you sabotage what you have here by neglecting your patients.

A BEAT--

Richard looks at Sarah as though her reasoned appeal has finally knocked some sense into him.

RICHARD

Thanks, I really needed that. I'll be ready in a sec.

INT. PUB - NIGHT

Frank and Strout sit opposite each other in a busy pub.

STROUT

The entire house was rigged from top to bottom, took an entire team to sweep through it. And they all claimed they knew fuck all about it.

FRANK

JESUS!!

STROUT

God knows how long they were being watched for.

FRANK

Prints?

STROUT

Cleaner than a whistle. No product trace either. Looks like a professional job.

FRANK

But the girl wasn't hurt?

STROUT

Physically, no. Mentally....

Frank takes a sip of his pint and it soothes.

(CONTINUED)

STROUT (CONT'D)

So you really think he did it?

FRANK

Most of the evidence seems to point to that conclusion. But if he didn't, why the reticence? Why ask for the guy's details in the first place? And I have to tell you...he strikes me as a desperate man, cold as well. Didn't even seem remotely fazed when I told him about this disturbed woman who could have been collaborating with Williams to harass him.

STROUT

(recalling)

....Langford...?

FRANK

Anna Langford, yeah...he mentioned her?

Strout leans back in his chair.

INT. BAINES'S RESIDENCE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Andrew and Emma wait apprehensively as John rounds up a phone conversation.

John hangs up, looks at Andrew and Emma with an expression that requires no further elucidation.

JOHN

I'm sorry but we've searched the entire hospital, she simply isn't there.

ANDREW

How about granddad? Can't he--

JOHN

(politely interrupts)

No Andrew, it's little use. We just have to hope she wandered into some private place unknown to us.

John's words aren't doing much in the way of abating their concern.

(O.S) CAR TIRES GRUMBLE OVER GRAVEL.

(CONTINUED)

Emma and Andrew instantly respond by rushing towards the front door.

John stays back and heaves a hopeful sigh of relief.

He walks over to the sink and runs the tap. He cups his hands in a bowl and places his cuped hands underneath the running tap.

He slurps down a mouthful of water and sprinkles some water over his deeply creased forehead. He mops his forehead with the back of his hand.

The O.S sound of feet shuffling in.

John turns around and his face sobers up as he takes in the despairing image of Andrew, Emma, and Caroline being marshaled into the kitchen by a gunman we instantly recognize as the mysterious MAN spying on Caroline.

Before John can react, the MAN discharges two bullets into his belly--the suppressor on the barrel muzzling the gun blast.

John stares down at the blood that precipitates through his shirt. He casts a weak glance at the odious eyes of the MAN and doubles over.

Caroline attempts to rush towards him.

MAN

DON'T MOVE. Sit down, all of you.

Andrew, Caroline, and Emma reluctantly comply with his demands. They sit around the kitchen table--eyes fixed fearfully on John.

It's a painful scene to watch: John clawing forward at a lethargic pace, wheezing horridly for air. The MAN moving forward and stepping over John's body like the glide of water over ice.

The MAN grabs a chair and perches down at the head of the table--gun still leveled at the three of them.

He glances down at John crawling towards death...the wake of blood he's leaving behind.

Caroline can't take it any longer. She slams her fists on the table--

(CONTINUED)

CAROLINE

He's going to bleed to death....

Her defiant gesture merely triggers a smirk from the MAN.

John surrenders to his fate and...*WHOOOF*...life leaves his body in a tiny exhale.

Caroline and Emma look away in horror, while Andrew attempts to withstand the noxious glare of the MAN--he fails woefully.

EMMA

(in a petrified tone)

What do you want?

MAN

All in good time.

EXT/INT. COTTAGE- NIGHT

Frank and Strout approach the front door of the cottage. The door is still slightly ajar and they gently nudge it open.

They both draw their guns and walk in quietly.

STROUT

POLICE, IS ANYBODY HOME??

No response is forthcoming.

Strout takes the living room while Frank searches in the kitchen for signs of life.

Moments later, they both reconvene at the foot of the stairway empty-handed.

They make their way up the stairs. Two doors lie before them.

Strout takes one room while Frank takes the other.

ROOM

Frank walks in like a thief in the night into a scrupulously tidy bedroom.

He's about to move into the bathroom, when--

STROUT (O.S.)

In here.

BATHROOM

(CONTINUED)

Anna's body lies submerged in a bath of blood.

Frank walks in and is taken aback by the chilling image before him.

STROUT
(wincing from the sight)
That's her....

Frank nods his head in the affirmative.

INT. BRADFIELD DENTAL CLINIC, CAR PARK - NIGHT

Richard approaches his car in an empty lot. He notices the reflections of Strout and Frank on his car window.

Richard turns around in exasperation.

FRANK
Please tell me your lawyer's in the car waiting.

STROUT
I certainly hope so. What happened mr. Baines? Someone deal you such a bad hand you had to return the favor with a vengeance?

FRANK
Or were you just sick and tired with this little microcosm you fashioned for yourself you had to indulge in a bit of the old ultra violence?

STROUT
You know it's the thing with grisly murders, they get you theorizing.

FRANK
This would be a good time to speak, otherwise--

RICHARD
It's too late.

FRANK
For what?

RICHARD
Everything. Look, let me see my family first, then I'll tell you everything you need to know.

Frank and Strout exchange indulgent looks.

INT. STROUT'S CAR - NIGHT

Strout and Frank watch closely from the opposite street as Richard approaches the front door of his house and walks in.

They exchange nervous glances.

INT. BAINES'S RESIDENCE, FRONT STALL WAY - NIGHT

Richard wipes the soles of his shoes on the carpet and looks down the corridor, as if expecting someone to pop out from the corner.

He takes off his jacket and hangs it on the coat stand.

He walks down the corridor and into the--

KITCHEN

Where he is met by the arresting scene of fear and trembling.

Caroline, Emma, and Andrew take him in through a hue of suspicion.

The MAN levels his gun at Richard. He stands up and gestures for Richard to come forward and take his seat at the table.

Richard obeys and sits down.

They all direct their attention at the MAN.

MAN
(to Richard)
The truth.

Caroline, Emma, and Andrew exchange looks of utter bewilderment.

Richard somehow manages to remain emotionless.

With his gun firmly leveled at Richard, the MAN pulls out a tape recorder from his pocket and places it on the table. He presses down on the record button.

MAN
Now's your chance.

Richard, first, stares at the MAN then transfers his empty gaze to his mystified family languishing in suspense.

(CONTINUED)

Richard exhales audibly.

RICHARD

I did something hideous in the
past, now it's come back to haunt
me....us. I'm a monster-

INT/EXT. STROUT'S CAR - LATER

Frank and Strout still waiting, albeit restlessly.

FRANK

Why the delay?

Suddenly, the front door of the Baines's residence shoots
open and the MAN saunters out onto the front porch.

FRANK

I know that face.

With their guns drawn, Frank and Strout rush out of the car
and approach the MAN.

STROUT

ON THE GROUND NOW, make sure your
hands are visible.

The MAN acquiesces without a fight. Frank frisks him and
tosses away his gun.

Frank cuffs the MAN while Strout moves into the house.

INT. BAINES'S RESIDENCE, CORRIDOR - SAME TIME

Caroline, Andrew, and Emma walk past Strout in tearful
solidarity.

STROUT

Are you all alright?

They're out of the house before they can confirm on their
status.

Strout moves cautiously into the--

KITCHEN

Where he sees the trail of blood leaking from John's corpse
and Richard with his head slumped in shame.

Strout moves closer to the table and appraises the tape
recorder with a mystified look.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

The truth.

Strout sits down with a thump and plays the tape.

OVER BLACK

RICHARD (V.O.)

I'm a monster...I'm sick with
hate....self-loathing, concealing
my deformities....is the only way I
can function-

FADE OUT:

THE END