

# S SHAD



# UL WS II

SOULSHADOWS II:  
GRAVE MESSAGES

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FADE IN:

INT. THE ALCOVE

As we enter, the usual silence of the alcove is shattered by the incongruous CHIRPING of a cellular phone.

We search for the source -- left and right -- but the phone continues to twitter -- unseen -- incessantly.

TANIS (O.S.)  
What do you believe?

WIDER

Tanis whispers over our shoulder -- her voice caresses like a breeze -- and we turn to find her lurking behind us.

TANIS  
Some believe only what they be  
seein' with they own eyes...  
hearin' with they own ears.

Tanis steps to her display case and throws open the massive doors -- the hinges moan at her intrusion.

Then she plucks the ringing phone from a shelf within.

TANIS  
Seems the spirits demand to be  
heard tonight. What you think  
they might be sayin'?

She flips open the phone -- then winces as the tormented cries of the damned spew forth -- impossibly loud from such a small device.

Tanis snaps the phone closed -- regards it with contempt.

TANIS  
(to the phone)  
Hush, now. Tanis got no time for  
your silliness tonight.  
(to us)  
Tanis, she don't be understandin'  
such things...

She shakes her head and tosses the phone onto her table.

It lands spinning.

TANIS  
...why these days ain't nobody  
happy without an electric devil  
in they pocket.

ON THE PHONE

Slowly, the sleek casing of the spinning phone begins to stretch like thick taffy -- lengthwise at first -- then a little wider near the top...

TANIS (O.S.)

But can you be believin' the  
things you hear...trustin' your  
own ears...your own eyes...that  
they not be deceivin' you?

...the features of the spinning phone begin to fade as its twirling slows -- its smooth contours assuming a new texture -- and when it stops it has adopted a new form --

-- that of a rain-spattered coffin.

TANIS (V.O.)

And this tale...dailed in from  
the dark corners you hope you  
never see...it be called..."Grave  
Messages."

SUPER: GRAVE MESSAGES

And pulling back reveals...

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

It's drizzly and gray. A rectangle of MOURNERS sporting black umbrellas watch as a coffin lowers in their midst.

Name on the gravestone: WILLIAM KING.

ELLIOT STRAUB (20ish) stands out in the crowd. He's too manly to cry, yet there's something below the surface, possibly just a hurt little boy.

He squeezes the hand of CAMILLE KING (20ish) who, out of duty and love, sheds enough tears for both of them.

She takes a sad glance toward Elliot and he's heartbroken. He brings a tender thumb up under her eye and wipes away some of her tears.

The stalwart MRS. KING (50ish) looks like a mourning Russian peasant. Rather than crying she coldly stares at Elliot and Camille. Her face twists into a mask of disappointment and disgust.

Across the grave, FRANKLIN RICE (20ish) eyes the couple as well. He squints as he tightens his lips. Franklin might appear to have a bit more brawn than brain but what brain he has is definitely working overtime.

Elliot lowers his hand from Camille's face. They both watch the casket until the lines lowering it go slack.

Behind them MRS. STRAUB (50ish), oblivious to everything but the obvious, full of the moment, lets out a loud sob.

EXT. CEMETERY ROAD - LATER

The drizzle has stopped. The mourners have scattered, most are either in their cars or driving away.

Elliot and Camille saunter through the marble forest, hand and hand, lost in their reverie.

Someone calls Elliot's name.

Elliot, suddenly aware and curious, frowns as he sees the caller. He releases Camille's hand and puts his arm around her as if to guard her from what's to come.

ELLIOT

Hello Franklin.

Camille looks up.

Franklin leans against a monument. He eyes Camille.

Camille smiles at him, averts her gaze then frowns.

FRANKLIN

Camille. Just wanted to say how sorry I am about your brother.

CAMILLE

Thank you.

An uncomfortable moment of silence, Camille sidles up a bit closer to Elliot.

ELLIOT

I better get her home.

Franklin nods his understanding, but as they begin to step away...

FRANKLIN

I heard they buried him with his cell phone.

Elliot shoots a deadly look at Franklin, like he might lunge forward at any moment.

ELLIOT

This isn't the time.

Franklin holds his arms up in peace.

FRANKLIN

Woah! I just heard the rumor is all.

CAMILLE

It's alright. Franklin, it's not true.

FRANKLIN

But one of the morticians said...

ELLIOT

She said it's not true. So fuck off! Okay?

FRANKLIN

Alright! Alright. Jeeze.

Elliot pulls Camille protectively closer, then quickly escorts her away. He shoots a dirty look over his shoulder at Franklin.

Franklin seems worried.

INT./EXT. ELLIOT'S CAR

Full of fury, Elliot helps Camille into the passenger's seat. He slams the door. Camille winces.

He hurries to the driver's side but once inside the car...

ELLIOT

I can't believe that asshole, showing up here like that. Especially after... What does he think he's going to do, steal you back from...

CAMILLE

I'm not a possession.

He glances in Franklin's direction.

ELLIOT

Damn right, I should have punched him in the face, that would've...

A calm touch from Camille on his arm interrupts.

CAMILLE

Is that how you'd want Bill to remember you?

ELLIOT

But...

Elliot hangs his head.

ELLIOT

No.

CAMILLE

Then let's go, it's been a long day.

Elliot nods. He starts the engine.

INT. ELLIOT'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Elliot stares solemnly ahead as he drives. Camille watches him with compassion.

CAMILLE

I miss him too, Elliot.

Elliot snaps out of his trance.

CAMILLE

When they told me he was dead, I had this weird feeling. Like everyone got the message mixed up. Like it was me that actually died.

ELLIOT

(anger)

Don't say that!

Camille pouts.

Elliot reigns in his anger, then over-emotionally...

ELLIOT

He was my best friend, dammit!

He bangs his flat hand against the steering wheel. He glances at Camille.

A lone tear falls down her cheek. Elliot once again wipes it away with his thumb.

ELLIOT

It's enough that he's gone. I don't want to think about losing you too.

Camille smiles for the first time since we've met her.

A loud RINGTONE spoils the mood. Both of them jump at the noise. The car swerves.

Camille holds back a gasp.

ELLIOT

I thought I turned it off.

With one hand Elliot fumbles at his pocket as the car lurches. Camille panics, bats his hand away from his pocket.

CAMILLE  
I'll get it.

Elliot puts both hands on the wheel and adjusts course. He squirms and giggles as Camille fiddles around in his pants.

ELLIOT  
Hey, that tickles.

CAMILLE  
Watch the road.

Elliot sobers but still squirms. Camille plucks the cell phone from his pocket and presents her find.

CAMILLE  
I've got it!

ELLIOT  
Give it here.

Elliot reaches out for the phone but Camille snatches it away before he's even close.

CAMILLE  
Unh-unh. You drive.

She looks at the small screen and teases him.

CAMILLE  
Oh! One new message.

ELLIOT  
Camille! That's private!

CAMILLE  
From another girl, no doubt.

She fiddles with the buttons.

ELLIOT  
Of course not...not unless my  
mother...

Camille shoots a puzzled look at the phone.

CAMILLE  
How...?

Elliot, concerned, turns toward her.

ELLIOT  
What? Who sent it?

The car drifts. Camille fiddles with more buttons.

CAMILLE

Bill.

She lets that sink in.

CAMILLE

It says, "It's dark here, buddy.  
I can't see. Bring some light,  
would you?"

Elliot's eyes go wide.

CAMILLE

You don't think...

Elliot's eyes narrow.

ELLIOT

No. I don't! I think it's  
Franklin. Somehow he got a hold  
of your brother's phone and...

Camille looks up.

CAMILLE

Oh my god! Look out!

She stares straight out the windshield in horror. Elliot follows her gaze.

Outside a truck heads directly toward them. Its horn blares.

Elliot quickly turns the wheel.

BANG! Followed by the twisting, screeching metal sounds of Elliot's entire world crashing.

Elliot is thrown about the car then

BLACK

EXT. ROAD - LATER

Flashing amber lights wash Elliot's scratched and bloody face. His eyelids flutter but remain closed.

We pull back smoothly.

Elliot lies on the road, his unmoving body in a crumpled supine pose. A PARAMEDIC shouts as he runs toward him.

PARAMEDIC

There's one over here!

A group of EMERGENCY PERSONNEL examines the car. The driver's door is torn open. One COP peeks inside. Then he turns his head away in a dry retch.

We continue to pull back.

Another Paramedic rushes toward the group that surrounds Elliot. He carries a long board.

Truck and car tangle into a mess of metal at point zero. An EXTRICATOR seems perplexed by the puzzle. The disgusted Cop shouts excitedly at him over the roof but it's muffled by our distance.

COP

Someone's inside! Someone's...

Elliot's eyes open as they lift him. He struggles but restraints hold him tightly to the long board. Even though he's far away now, his shouts are still audible.

ELLIOT

Camille! Camille!

BLACK

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The room is dimly lit. Elliot lies in the hospital bed. His eyes flutter open. He seems unsure of his surroundings.

He calls out to Camille but there is no answer.

He attempts to sit up but a pain in his side causes him to lie back down.

ELLIOT

Hello! Anybody?

He waits for an answer but none comes.

He holds his side and groans loudly as he sits up once again. This time he succeeds.

He exits the bed and hobbles across the room to a door, which he opens.

CORRIDOR

Fluorescent lights flicker on and off as Elliot shuffles down the hall. Odd, there's no one else around.

He seems uneasy. His eyes dart back and forth looking for anything familiar.

Then, in the distance, at the end of the corridor, Franklin leans against the wall. His attention is set on his cell phone. He presses some buttons.

Elliot's lips tighten.

ELLIOT  
 (to himself)  
 Son of a bitch!  
 (to Franklin)  
 What the hell are you doing here?

Franklin looks up and smiles. He presses one final button on his phone.

A loud familiar RINGTONE catches Elliot's attention. He looks down at his hand where his cell phone has appeared.

Elliot raises the phone to eye level and reads the small screen: YOU HAVE 1 NEW MESSAGE(S).

He presses a button on the phone, looks at his inbox. At the top of the queue there is a message from BILL.

Elliot glances suspiciously over the top of his phone. Franklin has disappeared.

ELLIOT  
 What the hell?

Back to his phone. He presses another button. The message displays: IM WAITING FOR YOU BUDDY. Elliot's eyes widen.

BLEEP. The noise catches Elliot's attention. BLEEP. He breathes quickly. BLEEP. He follows the sound to a door labeled ICU. BLEEP. He presses his ear against the door. BLEEP. He opens it.

ICU

Only one bed is occupied, and the occupant is a bandaged-up Camille. All of the machinery in the room seems to be attached to her by various wires and tubes as if she were the heart of some insane Rube Goldberg invention.

An EKG next to her bed quietly BLEEPS a constant song.

Elliot rushes to Camille's side. He takes her hand, lowers his head both to hide his tears and his shame.

ELLIOT  
 I'm so sorry.

A quiet moment.

BILL (O.S.)  
I've found Camille! And is she  
ever angry with you.

Elliot's head snaps toward the voice. The impact of what he sees pushes him backwards.

Standing at the foot of the bed is Bill. He is dressed in a suit jacket, shirt and tie but no pants. His skin is whitish green.

ELLIOT  
Bill! You can't be here. You're  
dead.

Bill smiles evilly.

BILL  
I'm waiting for you, Buddy.

The ICU spins.

A familiar RINGTONE plays.

ROOM - DAY

Elliot awakes with a gasp. He winces as he turns on his side to grab his phone. The RINGTONE stops.

He stares at the small screen on his phone: YOU HAVE 1 NEW MESSAGE(S).

Elliot presses some buttons.

Then the message: SOUNDS LIKE CAMILLE IS CALLING. ILL TRY AND FIND HER.

Elliot reels back. He grits his teeth as he hefts his legs over to the side of the bed.

His room door opens. Mrs. Straub's eyes go wide as she enters. She rushes to his side.

MRS. STRAUB  
Easy, honey. You have a  
fractured rib. It could have been  
a lot worse but...

ELLIOT  
Mom. -- Where's Camille?

MRS. STRAUB  
Just lie back down, honey.

ELLIOT  
I want to see Camille!

MRS. STRAUB

(sigh)

Honey, Camille's in no condition to see you.

ELLIOT

Why? What's wrong with her?

Mrs. Straub seems nervous.

MRS. STRAUB

She in a coma.

ELLIOT

A..?

Elliot stops. The fight drained from him. Mrs. Straub smooths his hair.

MRS. STRAUB

Now honey, it was an accident. It is not your fault.

ELLIOT

I know because it's Franklin's fault!

MRS. STRAUB

Franklin? Little Frankie Rice?

ELLIOT

He messaged me while we were driving home. That's what caused me to lose...

MRS. STRAUB

Honey, you know your not supposed to use your phone in the car.

ELLIOT

So it is my fault.

MRS. STRAUB

I didn't say that.

ELLIOT

I'm telling you Mom, Franklin's dangerous.

MRS. STRAUB

I just don't see how...

Elliot thrusts his phone at Mrs. Straub. She takes it cautiously. She stares at it with confusion.

MRS. STRAUB  
"Sounds like Camille calling.  
I'll try and find her." It  
doesn't make any sense.

ELLIOT  
Look who sent it.

MRS. STRAUB  
Bill. Bill? Oh, honey. Someone's  
playing a horrible prank on you.

ELLIOT  
Yes. Franklin.

MRS. STRAUB  
Franklin's as bent out of shape  
about this as you are. And he's  
such a sweet boy. He asked how  
you were, he's very concerned.

ELLIOT  
You talked to Franklin?

MRS. STRAUB  
Just a few minutes ago.

ELLIOT  
He's here?

MRS. STRAUB  
He came to see Camille. He was...

ELLIOT  
They let Franklin visit Camille?!

Elliot's fight is back. He holds his side and takes a deep  
breath then hops off the bed.

MRS. STRAUB  
Whoa! Where do you think you're  
going, mister?

ELLIOT  
To see Camille. She's in danger.

MRS. STRAUB  
The doctor's are doing what they  
can.

ELLIOT  
From Franklin!

Elliot hobbles away. He grabs his phone from Mrs. Straub  
and is out of the room before she can react. Exasperated,  
she follows him into the

## CORRIDOR

It's not deserted or dimly lit like it was in his dream.

Elliot has a mission and Mrs. Straub isn't far behind. The corridor's inhabitants curiously watch as they pass.

MRS. STRAUB  
Honey, Misses King doesn't want  
you anywhere near Camille.

ELLIOT  
That bitch.

MRS. STRAUB  
Elliot! She's just upset. And she  
has every right to be.

ELLIOT  
She never liked me.

MRS. STRAUB  
You put her daughter in a coma! --  
Accidentally, of course.

ELLIOT  
Franklin put her in that coma!  
And she let him see her.

They pass a nurses station. Mrs. Straub makes apologetic motions at the nurses. One wary nurse picks up a phone.

Elliot turns right and disappears.

MRS. STRAUB  
Honey, this isn't a good idea.  
Wouldn't you...

Mrs. Straub turns right too, into

## ANOTHER CORRIDOR

Nearly the same as the last. Mrs. Straub gains on Elliot.

MRS. STRAUB  
... rather be back in your nice  
warm room.

Then that familiar RINGTONE again. Elliot stops and works at his phone's buttons. Mrs. Straub gets her chance to catch up.

MRS. STRAUB  
Another message? What's it say?  
Who's it from?

Elliot hands her the phone and quickly heads down the hall.

MRS. STRAUB  
Elliot! Wait!

Mrs. Straub reads the message as she follows Elliot, but then she stops. On the small screen: IVE FOUND CAMILLE! AND IS SHE EVER ANGRY WITH YOU.

She calls out to Elliot.

MRS. STRAUB  
Elliot! It's a prank. It doesn't mean anything.

But Elliot is gone.

ANOTHER CORRIDOR

Seated, against the wall, toward the middle of the corridor is the formidable Mrs. King. She notices Elliot. She stands. She stashes something into her sweater pocket.

Elliot stops. His expression indicates he might turn tail, but he steels himself and heads bravely toward Mrs. King.

With a dour look, she doesn't wait for him to arrive.

MRS. KING  
What do you want?

ELLIOT  
To see Camille.

MRS. KING  
That is not going to happen. So you might as well just turn around and leave.

They're as close as they're going to get now.

ELLIOT  
But you let Franklin see her.

MRS. KING  
That -- is not your business.

ELLIOT  
Where's he anyway? I thought he was here.

MRS. KING  
He went home. No reason to stay. But that is also not your business.

ELLIOT

Did Franklin say something? Is that why you won't let me see Camille?

MRS. KING

No, it's quite simple. I don't trust you.

ELLIOT

Franklin's a liar. He's jealous, vindictive and dangerous. He wants Camille back and he'll stop at nothing to...

MRS. KING

At least when he is with my children I don't have to worry about them turning up dead.

ELLIOT

Franklin's responsible for what happened to Camille, Misses King. Not me.

MRS. KING

That seems unlikely since you were the one driving.

ELLIOT

He's been sending me disturbing messages...

Mrs. King pffts.

ELLIOT

...from Bill!

She gives Elliot some interest. Elliot conspires.

ELLIOT

I'm beginning to suspect that maybe Bill's death wasn't an accident. Maybe Bill threatened to expose Franklin for the liar he is, so Franklin killed him.

MRS. KING

Oh! Really?

ELLIOT

Franklin got a hold of Bill's phone somehow. What better time than when Bill died.

MRS. KING

But that's impossible. Bill was buried with his cell phone.

Elliot's mouth opens in shock.

MRS. KING  
So, unless Franklin did some  
quick digging, I don't see...

ELLIOT  
Then he got it some other way.  
However he did it, Misses King,  
I'm certain Franklin is sending  
those messages.

Another pfft.

MRS. KING  
Go home, Elliot.

ELLIOT  
You have to believe me.  
Franklin's to blame and I'm going  
to prove...

She looks past him and nods.

A big strong ORDERLY grabs Elliot from behind. Elliot  
struggles to break free.

ELLIOT  
No! Stop! Please, Let me see  
Camille!

Mrs. Straub watches, worried.

MRS. STRAUB  
Careful! He's my son.

A DOCTOR appears. He inserts a needle into Elliot's  
quivering arm.

ELLIOT  
What are you doing? Stop!

DOCTOR  
That should calm you.

Elliot tears his arm away and reaches out toward Mrs. King.

ELLIOT  
Misses King, please, you know I  
love Camille. You know I wouldn't  
do anything to harm her. Please.  
I beg you. Let me see her before  
they take me away. Tell them  
you'll let me see her. Please!

MRS. KING  
I've already told you Elliot,  
that is not going to happen.  
(MORE)

MRS. KING (CONT'D)  
You can not see Camille. Camille  
is dead.

She turns and walks away.

Elliot stares forward with a stunned expression. Mrs.  
Straub stands behind him, her mouth covered in shock.

And the world fades away...

BILL (V.O.)  
I've found Camille! And is she  
ever angry with you.

Then a familiar RINGTONE.

INT. ELLIOT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Elliot lies in bed. At the sound of his RINGTONE, his eyes  
snap open. His breathing quick, he glances around and  
smiles at the familiar surroundings.

Relief, it was only a dream.

He sits up and lets out a yelp. Disappointed, he grabs his  
side.

ELLIOT  
Shit!

He reaches for his cell phone off the bed stand and in the  
process notices a photo of Camille sitting behind it. He  
stops for a moment to gaze at her.

Then he looks at the small screen on his phone: YOU HAVE 1  
NEW MESSAGE(S).

He hits a few buttons. The message: IM WAITING FOR YOU  
BUDDY.

Thin-lipped Elliot lowers the phone. He shakes his head.

ELLIOT  
Fucking Franklin.  
(to Camille's photo)  
I've got to find that phone.

He winces as he gets out of bed.

HALLWAY

Fully dressed, Elliot tip-toes down a dimly lit hallway,  
past a slightly open door. He stops. He leans toward the  
door and listens to faint snoring.

Satisfied, Elliot continues on his way.

## ENTRY WAY

Elliot stealthily approaches the front door. He grabs a set of keys off of a hook on the wall. They jangle.

He silences them with his other hand. Then he listens.

Not a sound.

## EXT. STRAUB RESIDENCE

Elliot loads a shovel and a pickaxe into the back of a car. Then he walks around to the driver's side and gets in.

The car rolls backward down the driveway without benefit of the engine or headlights. It hits the street and it comes to life. The car zooms off.

## INT. CAR

Elliot drives down the quiet suburban street. In contrast heavy metal music blares from the car's stereo. Elliot's pumped up, he hits the steering wheel hard with his flat hand.

A fence runs along one side of the street. Elliot pulls over to the side of the road and parks near the fence.

He turns off the ignition. The loud music stops.

That familiar RINGTONE again. Elliot stares at his phone which sits on the seat next to him. He grabs it, presses some buttons. On the screen: IM RIGHT BEHIND YOU.

He turns to look at the back seat. But nothing is there.

With a growl, Elliot opens the car door.

## EXT. OUTSIDE THE CEMETERY

Elliot unloads the pickaxe and shovel from the back of the car and carries them as he walks to the cemetery gate.

He examines the gate for a moment, gives it a shake. It isn't going to open.

He searches for another way in. He shakes his head.

That familiar RINGTONE again. Elliot jumps. He drops the pickaxe and shovel, they clang loudly. He jumps again.

He angrily tears his phone from his pocket then presses a few buttons.

On the small screen: DONT GIVE UP SO EASILY! YOUVE ALMOST FOUND ME.

Elliot stares toward the gate for a moment. He grabs the shovel and throws it over. It clangs as it hits the ground.

Elliot nods. He throws over the pickaxe.

A deep breath then he runs quickly toward the gate. He leaps. He grabs hold near the top.

He winces, holds his position for a moment while the pain subsides, then he proceeds to climb.

EXT. CEMETERY

Light spills out from Bill's exhumed grave. A fully loaded shovel appears above the rim then it drops its cargo on a nearby mound. The shovel heads back into the grave and the sound of scooped dirt is heard.

Elliot's confused. He lowers the shovel quietly to the ground, but he holds the pickaxe at the ready.

He sneaks up on the grave. He peers in. He sees Franklin digging. Something's not right.

ELLIOT

What the hell are you doing here?

Franklin screams. His shovel flies out of his hands as he turns and loses his balance. He falls backward to the floor of the grave. He gazes up at Elliot.

FRANKLIN

You scared the shit out of me. I could of had a heart attack!

ELLIOT

That would have been gentler than what I have planned for you.

Elliot slaps the handle of the pickaxe and smiles.

Franklin scrambles nervously away. He sits against the far side of the grave, out of Elliot's reach.

FRANKLIN

Whoa! What's going on?

ELLIOT

You killed Camille.

FRANKLIN

I what?! Camille's dead?

Franklin seems confused.

ELLIOT  
Like you don't know.

FRANKLIN  
You're lying...

ELLIOT  
Why would I do that?

FRANKLIN  
Because of Camille. Because of  
Bill.

ELLIOT  
That why you're sending messages?

FRANKLIN  
You're getting messages?

ELLIOT  
No, the man in the fucking moon  
is getting messages. Who do you  
think?

FRANKLIN  
What do they say?

ELLIOT  
Stuff only you, I or Bill would  
know.

FRANKLIN  
I'm getting them too!

ELLIOT  
Yeah, right!

FRANKLIN  
Why the hell do you think I'm  
digging up Bill's grave?

ELLIOT  
To bury the evidence.

FRANKLIN  
Six feet under?

Franklin pulls his phone out of the jeans pocket. He  
presents it to Elliot.

FRANKLIN  
See for yourself. I'm just trying  
to find out what the hell is  
going on!

Elliot bends to grab the phone.

ELLIOT  
I can't reach it. Bring it  
closer.

FRANKLIN  
Drop the pickaxe.

Elliot thinks about it. No way.

ELLIOT  
Throw it.

Franklin does.

Elliot catches the phone. He looks at the small screen.  
He's not impressed.

ELLIOT  
You could have sent those to  
yourself.

FRANKLIN  
But I didn't.

ELLIOT  
You don't expect me to believe  
Bill's sending them.

FRANKLIN  
There's only one way to find out.

Franklin grabs the shovel.

Elliot scans the area. He eases his pickaxe to the ground.  
He seems a bit uneasy as he throws Franklin's phone back.

ELLIOT  
I'm not saying I believe you but  
okay.

FRANKLIN  
Okay? Okay, what?

ELLIOT  
Keep digging.

Franklin grumbles as he stands.

FRANKLIN  
And no offer to help?

ELLIOT  
Don't push it. I'll keep you  
company.

Franklin plunges the shovel into the ground.

FRANKLIN

I don't need your company.

ELLIOT

You're in a cemetery at night,  
digging up a dead guy that you  
believe you're getting messages  
from and you don't need my  
company?

Elliot scans the area again. A sudden shiver makes him tremble.

A COPSE OF TREES NEARBY

From inside the trees, the scene seems quiet. The faint outline of Elliot can be seen through the branches, light spills out from the grave below him.

The tree branches move. Is it the breeze?

BACK AT THE GRAVE

Franklin digs. Elliot seems glum. He throws a handful of dirt at Franklin.

FRANKLIN

Cut it out.

ELLIOT

You think Bill wants revenge or something?

FRANKLIN

I thought you didn't believe it was Bill.

ELLIOT

Say it is. Do you think he'd want revenge?

FRANKLIN

On you?

ELLIOT

I don't know. Me? You?

FRANKLIN

Why would he want revenge on me?

ELLIOT

You're right. Silly to even think about it. It's not Bill. -- But if it's not Bill and it's not you, that means someone else knows.

FRANKLIN

Maybe someone else was there?

ELLIOT

Not likely. But there's one more possibility.

FRANKLIN

What?

ELLIOT

You could have told someone. Who did you tell, Franklin?

FRANKLIN

Not to tell. I was too drunk to remember anything. Just like I told you.

ELLIOT

But you remember more than you're saying, don't you.

FRANKLIN

No.

ELLIOT

Then how did you know the messages were from that night.

Franklin stops digging. He holds the shovel tightly.

ELLIOT

What exactly do you remember, Franklin?

Franklin shakes his head.

FRANKLIN

I already told you.

Elliot leans toward him, threatening.

ELLIOT

Tell me again.

FRANKLIN

I still don't know why the hell you and Bill asked me along...

EXT. CAMPSITE - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

A couple of tents, an ax in a wood stump. Franklin drinks a beer in the warmth of the campfire.

FRANKLIN (V.O.)  
but I was determined to make the  
best of it.

Franklin winces. At the edge of the camp light Elliot and Bill argue.

ELLIOT  
You can't tell Camille about Amy!

FRANKLIN (V.O.)  
You and Bill were arguing about  
something...

BILL  
She's my sister!

FRANKLIN (V.O.)  
Firewood, I think. Who was going  
to go get more firewood?

ELLIOT  
She'll hate me! She'll run back  
to Franklin.

Elliot glances toward Franklin. Franklin waves back dumbly. Elliot grimaces.

Bill walks away and mutters under his breath.

BILL  
Maybe she'd be better off.

ELLIOT  
I heard that! -- Where the hell  
are you going? This isn't done.

FRANKLIN (V.O.)  
Bill went for the wood. Only he  
forgot to bring a flashlight,  
that was his mistake.

Bill walks beyond the light cast by the fire.

BILL (O.S.)  
It's dark here, buddy. I can't  
see. Bring some light, would you?

Elliot walks toward the tent in angry silence.

A frog's croak breaks the silence. Bill mocks.

BILL (O.S.)  
Sounds like Camille is calling.  
I'll try and find her.

FRANKLIN (V.O.)  
You and I stayed at camp.

Franklin watches, fully aware.

BILL (O.S.)  
I've found Camille! And is she  
ever angry with you.

Elliot snatches a flashlight from just inside the tent. He  
stares into the darkness, thin-lipped.

BILL (O.S.)  
I'm waiting for you, buddy.

Elliot strides toward the edge of the of light. He grabs  
the handaxe from its resting place in a tree trunk before  
he plunges into the darkness.

The flashlight creates a circle of light before him.

ELLIOT  
Where the hell are you?

BILL (O.S.)  
I'm right behind you.

Elliot spins but Bill isn't there.

ELLIOT  
I'm not laughing, Bill.

BILL (O.S.)  
Don't give up so easily! You've  
almost found me.

FRANKLIN (V.O.)  
I must have passed out because I  
don't remember anything else.

Elliot waves the light around frantically. Woods ahead. He  
runs into them.

Franklin watches as light spills from the woods in  
fractured rays.

ELLIOT (O.S.)  
I can't let you tell Camille!

A loud scream and Franklin's eyes open in alarm. He  
stretches himself a bit to try can catch a peek.

All he sees is the fractured light. It seems to be moving  
toward him.

Franklin hurries to his tent.

BACK TO SCENE

Elliot leans over the side of the grave.

ELLIOT  
That's all you remember?

Franklin glances over his shoulder at Elliot.

FRANKLIN  
That's it!

Then he fakes a smile. Elliot regards him skeptically.

INT. TENT - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Franklin watches through a small opening in his tent flap.

Elliot returns to camp covered in blood. He stops. He looks toward Franklin's tent.

Franklin pulls away from the opening, into the shadows.

BACK TO SCENE

Franklin's smile falters.

FRANKLIN  
The next thing I remember is us  
searching for him in the morning.  
Finding him at the bottom of that  
ravine, all torn up and...

Franklin shivers, then he slams the shovel into the ground,  
THUNK!

FRANKLIN  
I think I've hit it.

Franklin kneels. He scrapes away the dirt from the top of the coffin. Elliot's watches closely, a successful change of subject.

FRANKLIN  
Grab that crowbar from my  
backpack, will you? I'm going to  
need it.

Elliot hurries to a backpack that lies nearby on the ground. As he lifts it, a cell phone drops out.

He picks up the phone and stares at it. Then he nods. Thin-lipped, he glances back over his shoulder at the grave.

ELLIOT  
So you think we'll find Bill's  
cell phone inside?

Elliot presses some buttons. He's sending a message.

FRANKLIN (O.S.)  
Don't know. Hurry up with that  
crowbar...

ELLIOT  
I don't think it's in here...

FRANKLIN (O.S.)  
Then bring me the backpack...

ELLIOT  
Wait! I've found it.

Elliot presses one final button. Then he sticks the phone  
in his pocket.

FRANKLIN (O.S.)  
Great, I want to get the hell out  
of...

Franklin's phone RINGS.

FRANKLIN  
Shit!

Franklin rips the phone from his pocket and stares at it  
perplexed.

FRANKLIN  
Another message from Bill.

Elliot lifts the pickaxe.

ELLIOT  
What's it say?

FRANKLIN  
"Your number's been disconnected,  
Franklin Straub."

Franklin looks up.

FRANKLIN  
What the hell?

The pickaxe comes down against Franklin's head but glances  
off. It knocks Franklin back and to the bottom of the  
grave.

Franklin lies face up, a bloody gash diagonally down his  
forehead. He's doesn't move.

Elliot drops the pickaxe on the side of the grave. He holds  
his injured side and breathes quickly as he scans the  
cemetery. He's alone.

He glances over at the mound of dirt. He grabs his shovel  
off the ground and starts filling in the grave.

## A COPSE OF TREES NEARBY

From inside the trees, the faint outline of Elliot filling the grave can be seen through the branches. A hand moves to the foreground and the tree branches part.

Mrs. King exits the copse of trees.

## BACK AT THE GRAVE

Elliot shovels.

MRS. KING (O.S.)  
Just what is going on here?

Elliot crouches at sound of her voice. He looks down toward Franklin. Think, Elliot.

ELLIOT  
Misses King! I'm so glad you're here. It was just like I said. Franklin killed Bill then he stole his phone.

Mrs. King stands grave side and stares into it's depths.

MRS. KING  
My god! What have you done?

ELLIOT  
He tried to kill me. I had no choice...

MRS. KING  
I should believe you?

ELLIOT  
Camille would want you to. You know that.

Mrs. King seems thoughtful for a moment. She lifts the bloodied pickaxe from the ground and stares at it with disgust. She turns it over and holds it by its handle like a cane.

MRS. KING  
Alright then. For the moment let's say I will give you the benefit of the doubt. But I will need proof.

Elliot seems stumped, then he takes the phone from his pocket and hands it to her.

ELLIOT  
Here's the phone! It's has all the messages on it. Have a look.

Mrs. King glances at the phone display. .

MRS. KING

Good. And now you will fill the grave.

Elliot stares at her in awe. He shovels again.

ELLIOT

You know, Misses King, I had you figured all wrong.

MRS. KING

How is that?

ELLIOT

I thought you'd want to go directly to the police.

MRS. KING

What would they do? Would they bring back Bill? No. Franklin was a talkative young man and I will miss him. He didn't deserve his fate, but sometimes sacrifices must be made in order that justice may be served.

ELLIOT

Franklin deserved what he got, believe me.

MRS. KING

Belief, Elliot, is a mysterious thing. When someone believes, they will do most anything protect that belief. Like you for instance.

Elliot stared at her oddly.

MRS. KING

You believed that Franklin was sending those message.

ELLIOT

He was. I found the phone in his backpack.

Mrs. King laughs.

MRS. KING

I put the phone in Franklin's backpack.

Elliot turns. His shovel armed.

ELLIOT

You what?!

But he's too late. Mrs King swings the pickaxe and it connects. It plunges deep into Elliot's injured side.

Elliot screams out in pain, he drops the shovel then falls into Bill's grave.

He lies at the bottom of the grave on the edge of consciousness; the pickaxe protrudes from his side, next to him a half-buried Franklin.

Mrs. King stares over the edge.

MRS. KING

Like most beliefs yours had one flaw. You say you were Bill's closest friend, then you should have known that Bill never brought his cell phone with him when he went camping. He said there was no signal, that it was useless.

She throws Bill's phone down at him.

MRS. KING

I don't think you'll find it very useful where your going either.

She turns away.

Elliot stretches his fingers out to touch the phone as his eyes shut for their final time.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - MOMENT LATER

Mrs. King shovels dirt into the grave. A loud scream issues forth from the hole. Calmly, she sticks the shovel in the mound and looks over the edge.

A hand reaches out from the dirt. Franklin soon follows the hand. He sits up and moans.

Mrs. King shakes her head.

INT. HOSPITAL

It's a private room. Mrs. King sits next to a bed.

The occupant of the bed is bandaged quite thoroughly but we can tell who's underneath the bandages, Camille.

Mrs. King holds Camille's hand.

MRS. KING  
You have a special visitor today.

CAMILLE  
Elliot?

MRS. KING  
No, not Elliot. Someone even more  
special. Franklin!

Camille seems unenthusiastic. Franklin enters with a bandaged head and he shyly walks over to the bed, Camille smiles.

CAMILLE  
You have bandages just like me.

Franklin smiles too.

FRANKLIN  
I always said we had a lot in  
common.

CAMILLE  
What happened to you?

Franklin is about to speak. We hear an unfamiliar RINGTONE. Mrs. King seems perturbed. She grabs her purse.

MRS. KING  
Excuse me a moment.

She walks away from the bed, out of the room and into the

CORRIDOR

It's empty; one of the fluorescent lights flickers.

She reaches inside her purse and pulls out her cell phone. She presses a few buttons then she stares at the phone.

On the small screen the inbox shows a message from BILL. The message opens, it reads: IM RIGHT BEHIND YOU.

Mrs. King looks over her shoulder. Her eyes open wide. Her mouth forms the beginning of a scream.

The phone drops from her hand and clatters to the floor.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE PHONE

On the table -- oddly malevolent in its silence.

TANIS (O.S.)

Belief ain't always 'bout the  
things you can be seein'...

WIDER

Tanis idly spins the phone with her finger.

TANIS

...or hearin'...sometimes it  
ain't nothin' more than needin'  
to believe in somethin'...don't  
matter what it be. But all that  
seem silly to Tanis...

She pulls her finger away as the phone blinks to life.

TANIS

...when they greatest fear be  
that they phone might never be  
ringin'.

As if bidden, the phone rings once more.

Tanis looks pleased, as if she were expecting the call.

Then she looks up to us with a sly smile.

TANIS

...and Tanis...she believe that  
be for you...

She slides the phone towards us, across the table with a  
single, slim finger.

ON THE PHONE

As it chirps and chatters on the hard wood of the table.

TANIS (O.S.)

...only Tanis might not be  
answerin' that if she was you.

Tanis laughs.

And the phone continues to ring. And ring.

FADE OUT.