

THE TRANSMISSION

by

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FADE IN:

INT. LULLEN RESIDENCE - GARAGE - DAY

Moths flutter around dusty shelves and vents.

On the coattails of insanity, BENNETT LULLEN, 50s, places a final car battery on his workbench, then catches his breath.

Tap, Tap. Tap, Tap.

It's coming from the closet.

LATER

Jumper cables connect each battery into a stacked power source. They're attached to a transformer and strands of multicolored wires, plugged into a VHF shortwave radio.

Included with these components, a makeshift syringe runs out of the radio to complete the device -- an imaginative method of torture.

Bennett wheels his CAPTIVE from the closet. The Captive has a burlap sack secured over his head, arms bound to the chair.

He slides the syringe into the back of The Captive's neck.

The Captive huffs the burlap sack in-and-out.

On the radio, Bennett flips a row of switches. A needle bounces to mid-gauge. He rotates its tuner dial through a series of squeals and static. Then, complete silence.

The captive appears subdued.

BENNETT

Can you hear me?

No response.

BENNETT

Tap twice if you hear my voice.

Tap. Tap.

BENNETT

Tap two more times if you're feeling any discomfort.

No response.

He flips another switch -- the needle shoots to full-gauge.

TAP. TAP.

BENNETT

Let's get started.

Bennett places three items on a table: a whistle, a hammer, and a heart-shaped music box.

BENNETT

You took my daughter away. I want her back.

He picks up the whistle and BLOWS it inches from The Captive.

BENNETT

Wake up!

No response.

BENNETT

Your lust for little girls has cost me everything. I've had a decade to find out that my child isn't the only one you've stolen.

Bennett picks up the hammer.

BENNETT

But they're certainly your last.

He drags the hammer's claw along the workbench before he raises it high.

BENNETT

Gayla. Where is she?

No response.

He SLAMS The Captive's head on the workbench and STRIKES the hammer against the it, over and over, all near misses.

BENNETT

Where is she?! Where is she?! Where is she?!

No response.

Bennett drops the hammer on the deck.

BENNETT

If I have to go through every tool in this place, you will answer me.

Bennett rests the music box in his palm. He ratchets its dial and places it next to The Captive. A creepy melody plays.

The Captive's head rolls, nauseated.

BENNETT

That's a good boy...

Vomit erupts and leaks from the burlap sack.

BENNETT

All the pain can go away...

The Captive jerks violently, struggles to shake loose.

DADDY

If you'd just tell me where she is!

SNAP. The melody ends.

The Captive's grayish REPTILIAN CLAW has broken free, its fist squeezed so tight it cracks and bleeds at the joints.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN OF ADAK - DAY

Surrounded by mountains and steep pine is the ghost town of Adak, a monochrome impression of the bypast Cold War.

Abandoned residences display the scars of a harsh Alaskan climate, elements brutal enough to expose their interiors with huge, gaping holes.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SIDE - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: Ten year earlier

On a mountain that's scenic view overlooks the town, GAYLA LULLEN, 8, ducks under a barbed-wire fence, and wanders to its snow-capped summit.

With each step she takes on the tundra, she barely avoids a bevy of hazards -- a junkyard of expended military ordinance.

A teddy bear dangles in her hand. Her hooded coat and pink boots are frayed and worn, yet she's still the most adorable girl to trudge this wilderness alone.

Her ashen eyes say she's not in control, rather, cast under a spell by the faint sound of an audible RADIO TRANSMISSION.

TRANSMISSION

Fourteen... Thirty-two... Quebec...

She arrives at a dish tower. Past it, a narrow cave.

TRANSMISSION

Six... Seventy-one... Charlie...

INT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

From the inside looking out, a silent and unseen *entity* observes Gayla by the dish tower.

BACK ON GAYLA

Gayla looks to the top of the tower.

TRANSMISSION

Fifty-three... Eight... Bravo...

She rotates her head toward the cave, dropping her teddy bear in the snow.

INT. LULLEN RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

BENNETT, 40s, has the build and the grizzled beard of a lumberjack, yet tenderly speaks into a rotary phone.

BENNETT

I miss you too, sweetheart. Only a few more jobs and we'll be on the first flight home.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SIDE - DAY

Gayla staggers toward the cave.

BENNETT (V.O.)

Gayla? She's in her room doing what she does best, drawing her mother.

Coming closer, she steps on a land-mine wedged in the snow.

TRANSMISSION

Ten... Nine... Eight...

She doesn't budge an inch, and doesn't realize why.

TRANSMISSION
*Seven... Six... Five...
 Four... Three...*

The cave beckons her, rapid movements within.

TRANSMISSION
Two... One.

Gayla steps off the land-mine toward the cave, her trance broken.

EERIE WHISPER
 Gayla.

It's coming from the cave.

Gayla steps closer.

EERIE WHISPER
 You've lost your teddy bear.

GAYLA
 Do you have Mr. Tickles?

EERIE WHISPER
 Yes, Mr. Tickles and I are having a tea party inside with all of his new friends. Do you want to join us for some tea?

She stops in front the cave.

AT THE CAVE

Gayla peeks inside the mouth of the cave, but doesn't enter.

GAYLA
 Are you in here?

EERIE WHISPER
 Yes. Come in and play with us. The tea is splendid.

She appears more hesitant now.

GAYLA
 But it's dark and scary in there.

Within a micro second, two pairs of REPTILIAN ARMS, stretched far beyond their reach, snatch Gayla inside of the cave.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Bennett paces back-and-forth holding the rotary phone.

BENNETT

You want to talk to Gayla? Hold on,
let me get her.

He sets the phone down, and walks out of sight.

Outside of the window, a pair of GRAY ENTITIES escort Gayla past the house, hand in hand.

INT. GAYLA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bennett opens the door -- Gayla's on the floor coloring a picture with crayons.

BENNETT

Gayla, your mother is on the phone.

Gayla runs out of her room.

Before leaving, he notices the picture. It ain't mommy.

INT. GAYLA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Gayla lays in her bed wearing pajamas. On her night stand is an open music box, heart-shaped with a family portrait.

Bennett enters with two bowls of ice cream.

BENNETT

Chocolate or vanilla?

GAYLA

Vanilla please.

He hands her a bowl.

BENNETT

Good choice. I don't have any
chocolate.

She sits up to scarf it down.

BENNETT

Where's Mr. Tickles?

GAYLA

He ran away.

BENNETT

Ran away? He was your best friend.

GAYLA

Mr. Tickles hates the way I kiss
the other teddy bears.

Her response confounds him. Young girls don't talk like that.

Concerned, he shows her the picture she drew earlier:

Gayla, Mr. Tickles, and two spindly ALIEN LIFEFORMS throw a tea party from inside of a cave. At the mouth of the cave, and easily overlooked, is the dish tower.

BENNETT

Why did you draw this?

Gayla's eyes begin to water, she tugs her shirt toward her feet.

GAYLA

Do you still love me, Daddy?

BENNETT

Of course I love you. Did someone
hurt you?

Tears break and stream down her cheeks.

GAYLA

Yes.

He embraces Gayla.

BENNETT

Everything's going to be okay.

GAYLA

Fourteen. Thirty-two. Quebec.

Bennett withdraws from their hug, ghastly gazing into her empty eyes.

GAYLA

Six. Seventy-one. Charlie.

BENNETT

Gayla?

GAYLA

Die Existenz und die Steigerung
unserer Rasse und Nation, den
Unterhalt ihrer Kinder und der
Reinheit seines Blutes.

He's blown away by whatever she just spoke.

GAYLA

Die Freiheit und Unabhängigkeit des
Vaterlandes und der Nation die
Fähigkeit, um die Mission ernannt,
um es vom Schöpfer des Universums
zu erfüllen.

Then in the slightest, it becomes recognizable.

BENNETT

Are you speaking... German?

As Gayla continues to speak in tongues, Bennett winds up the heart-shaped music box. A playful, yet creepy MELODY chimes.

BENNETT

Stay put, I'm calling the doctor.

KITCHEN

The chiming melody trumps whatever Bennett is saying on the telephone, but one thing's for sure -- he's panicked.

GAYLA'S ROOM

The music box keeps petaling. Gayla tucks herself under the covers, shaken.

Her bedroom window displays pitch black. The bitter chill beats against it, seeking the warmth of bedsheets in where Gayla cowers.

Until...

An ENTITY glides to the window. Its haunting features are uncertain at its most, disturbing by its least.

BENNETT

drops the receiver, rushes to --

GAYLA'S ROOM

She's gone. So is the heart-shaped box. The only evidence that remains is the drawing of her mysterious kidnappers.

Bennett stands in a convergence of his worst nightmares, and now, the first flight home is gonna have to wait.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

EXT. DISH TOWER - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: Present day

Equipped with a harness and toolbelt, Bennett climbs a ladder to the top of the dish tower.

He removes an electric panel from its mast, reaches for some pliers. He snips a few cords and rewires them.

An eagle soars overhead. Instead of revering it, he digs in his toolbelt for a bottle of pills, scarfs them down.

As he inserts the panel and fastens it, something grabs his attention, enough for a second look -- a cave.

He climbs down the ladder, and just stares at it, curious.

SAMMY (O.S.)

Lullen! Are we back online?

Approaching him in a hard hat is SAMMY, 50s, the boss.

BENNETT

Everything is reconfigured.

SAMMY

You're an electrical genius, ya stool-pigeoned bastard! Wha'cha lookin' at?

The two men stare at the cave together.

BENNETT

That cave. Ever notice it?

SAMMY

Now that you mention it, no, I haven't.

He senses Bennett's anxiety.

SAMMY
You alright, partner?

BENNETT
Yeah.

Sammy pats Bennett on his back.

SAMMY
I've been divorced twice, Lullen.
Some folks say there's a plenty
fish in the sea, but I ain't never
caught no fish that eats caribou.

Pussyfooting through the snow, Sammy walks away. Bennett keeps staring at the cave.

INT. LULLEN RESIDENCE - GAYLA'S ROOM - DAY

The room is exactly how it was when his daughter left it.

Bennett unrolls the picture Gayla drew that day. He examines it. Revelation washes over him. He's never noticed it before:

At the mouth of the cave, and easily overlooked, is the dish tower.

He looks up. Determined.

INT. CAVE - DAY

Bennett enters the cave with a flashlight. He shines it on a slab, the heart-shaped music box sits on it.

He advances through a narrow tunnel.

The light reveals a teddy bear, torn and unstuffed, sprawled on the ground.

A sequence of TAPPING from ahead. Flashing the light to it, a shadow scurries across.

Bennett turns the corner. What he discovers next is only shown by the horror in his eyes and a shortness of breath.

EXT. ADAK ROAD - DAY

By a dirt road, a mammoth caribou trots across a snowy clearing, leaving huge footprints next to its shadow.

An engine REVS...

VHROOM! A rusty Jeep blazes through, spewing out a trail of gravel and frost. The caribou flees from the noise.

IN THE JEEP

Bennett drives like a maniac, a teeth-grinding madman, jerking the wheel from one sharp turn to the next.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

The Jeep skids to a halt in a parking lot littered with garbage and tipped grocery carts. Bennett hops out and runs inside.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Out of breath, Bennett acknowledges FRANKLIN, 60s, who deals himself solitaire behind the counter.

BENNETT

Franklin.

FRANKLIN

Hey there, Bennett. Can I help ya find sumthin'?

BENNETT

Car batteries. Lots of them.

Franklin looks way too excited.

EXT. REAR OF JEEP - DAY

Bennett loads dozens of car batteries.

INT. LULLEN RESIDENCE - GARAGE - DAY

The Captive's grayish reptilian claw has broken free, its fist squeezed so tight it cracks and bleeds at the joints.

The VHF radio crackles:

GAYLA (V.O.)

Daddy?

Bennett darts to the radio and tunes it.

BENNETT

Gayla?

GAYLA (V.O.)

It hurts.

BENNETT

Tell me where they're keeping you
so I can help you. They'll never
hurt you ever again. I'm promise.

GAYLA (V.O.)

(barely audible)

Please make the noise stop.

The transmission shifts to static. He tunes it meticulously,
not to miss her frequency.

BENNETT

Gayla, please say something!

GAYLA (V.O.)

I'm here, Daddy.

BENNETT

Where baby? Where are you?!

Tap. Tap.

Bennett glances over his shoulder at The Captive, confused.

Tap. Tap.

He staggers to The Captive, and removes her burlap sack.

Bennett can't believe his eyes or ears, every detail so
horridly breathtaking.

GAYLA (V.O.)

*My friends ran away when you found
me in the cave. They said they hate
the way I kiss the others.*

FADE OUT.