SHUTDOWN

Written by

Mahyar Rasi
INT. MEGAMART - DAY

LIGHTS flicker on aisle after aisle, department after department.


Stairs. Long, shiny floors you can serve food on. Everything is perfect. Flawless.

Daytime STAFF in sleeveless shirts and khakis gets ready for early customers. Unlock the door via keypad, open it, revealing an enormous, empty parking lot.

EXT. MEGAMART - LATER

The parking lot choked with cars. CUSTOMERS entering and leaving.

ZACHARY MASTERS, 29 years of age, a lean, mean fighting machine, walks tall onto the premises.

He has the physique of a Greek god, without the six-pack and biceps though.

Always keeps his hair short, clean and trimmed.

INT. MEGAMART - LATER

Zachary browses a shelf. He can’t stop eye-balling that incredible VISION standing a few feet away. Big, blue eyes, flowing red hair, the face of an angel, mini skirt.

And those legs. Holy mother of god. ELIZABETH MORGAN, 26.

Love-struck, Zachary admires her from head to toe.

SUDDENLY their eyes meet.

ZACHARY
Hey.

ELIZABETH
Hey.

ZACHARY
Are you reading the nutrition label?

ELIZABETH
Aha.

(CONTINUED)
ZACHARY

Why?

ELIZABETH
I’m watching my weight.

ZACHARY
Well, if you don’t mind my saying so, I think you look perfect.

ELIZABETH
Thank you.

ZACHARY
(offers hand)
I’m Zach. Zach Masterson.

ELIZABETH
(shakes his hand)
Elizabeth Morgan.

ZACHARY
Morgan? Funny, the manager’s name is Morgan.

ELIZABETH
I know. He’s my dad.

ZACHARY
Oh. Nice. What do you do?

ELIZABETH
I’m a receptionist at a small bed-and-breakfast.

ZACHARY
Wait. You’re Sarah Morgan’s sister?

ELIZABETH
You know her?

ZACHARY
We work together every night.

ELIZABETH
You work here?

ZACHARY
For three months now. It’s just a temporary thing. I won’t be here forever. I’m gonna be a sniper. Stocking shelves for a living, that’s pretty pathetic. Oops. Sorry.
CONTINUED: (2)

ELIZABETH
That’s okay. It was nice meeting you.
Take care.

ZACHARY
You, too.

She leaves the aisle.

INT. ATTIC - WULFINGTON RESIDENCE - DAY

ROBERT WULFINGTON enters, hits the LIGHT.

He’s 20, scrawny, looking troubled and withdrawn.

His eyes delirious, twisted, windows to a dark, battered soul hearing the call of kingdom come.

He takes a double-barrel shotgun from an old chest. Leaves a handwritten LETTER on its lid before SHOOTING himself in the mouth.

EXT. GAS STATION STORE - NIGHT

A rusty, beat-up truck pulls up to a pump.

SUPERIMPOSE: EIGHT YEARS LATER

DAN TAGGART, 47, unshaved, double chin, exits the truck.

INT. GAS STATION STORE

Dan grabs what he needs, pays and walks out.

EXT. FARM HOUSE

Dan’s truck SHAKES and RATTLES onto the property. A one-story house with a barn and enclosures for cattle.

LATER

Dan stands outside smoking. He drops the cigar and kills it with his foot. Turns to leave when he hears a RUSTLING in the crop field. Lingers on for a brief moment, listens, then goes back into the house.

INT. FARM HOUSE KITCHEN

Dan grabs a beer out of the fridge, takes a gulp and leaves it on the counter.
LIVING ROOM
He turns on the TV. The SOUND of breaking glass.

KITCHEN
The draft whips the door open. Dan locks it. Gathers the destroyed remnants of the beer bottle off the floor.

OUTSIDE
A SHADY FIGURE smashes the electrical panel box behind the house with an axe.

BACK IN THE KITCHEN
Power goes out. Dan LIGHTS a lantern.

HALLWAY
He lights his way towards the office. Behind him a large, cat-like CREATURE with a long tail darts into another room on the opposite side of the hall.

LIVING ROOM
He picks up the phone. It’s dead.

KITCHEN
He opens the door. A THUD.

HALLWAY
He enters a studio-size room and is met with a GROWLING.

Backs out of the room, never taking his eyes off the creature. His leg is snatched from under him as he runs for the kitchen.

He drops with his hands thrown forward.

The lantern flies out into the kitchen, SHATTERS on the pool of beer, sparks a FIRE.

Dan screams, struggles to break free from the monster’s deadly grip. Kicks it in the snout. Regains his leg.

Scrambles to crawl out. Stands.
KITCHEN

Dan slips on the beer pool. Falls. Squeezes himself into a corner, trapped.

Reaches up behind him for the kettle, brings it down hard on the predator. It draws back squealing, creates a small window of opportunity for Dan who moves out as fast as his feet can carry him.

Behind him the FIRE in the kitchen grows larger, building up a wall of separation and blocking off access to the rest of the house.

LIVING ROOM

In his panic-haste Dan bumps into everything in his path, keeps falling down, knocking things over and throwing himself out of a window.

EXT. FARM HOUSE

While his house burns down Dan lifts his face off the ground and stares into the JAWS OF HELL.

His terror-filled eyes GLISTEN in the FIREFLIGHT, reflecting the mighty FANGS of the LEVIATHAN, followed by a ROAR.

INT. ZACHARY’S BED ROOM - DAY

Eyes SNAP open. Zachary awakes. Brushes away the strands of hair from Elizabeth’s face who is still asleep.

KITCHEN

Zachary knocks back a glass of milk, grabs his keys and walks out the door.

EXT. SHOOTING RANGE - LATER

Zachary skeet shoots, BLOWING flying clay disks out of the sky with a shotgun. His cell RINGS, he answers.

ZACHARY
Hello? Hey, mom. No, I haven’t forgotten about today. I’m out the door as we speak. I’ll be there in ten minutes. All right. Bye.

EXT. MASTERSON RESIDENCE - LATER

Zachary rolls up in front of the house, HONKS.
Out-comes OLIVIA MASTERSOHN, 50, black hair, green eyes.

She looks half her age, with a bitching body that fills out her jeans in all the right places.

EXT. ROAD

Zachary’s car drives across town.

SUPER: Jefferson County, 90 miles outside of De Moines, Iowa.

I/E. ZACHARY’S CAR (MOVING)

Zachary, Olivia talk.

OLIVIA
It’s so nice of you to give me a lift. I wouldn’t have asked, but my car’s in the shop.

ZACHARY
Don’t mention it.

OLIVIA
So, tell me, what have you been doing lately? Did you finally meet a girl? Are you dating?

ZACHARY
Mom, I already have a girlfriend. Remember Liz?

OLIVIA
Listen, before I forget, I need to get my car back from the shop tomorrow. Can you take me there?

ZACHARY
Sure, mom.

OLIVIA
Thank you, dear.

EXT. MEGAMART PARKING LOT

The lot is full. Zachary drives in a circle.

MOMENTS LATER

He and his mother walk past a pet shop displaying newborn PUPPIES behind the glass.

(CONTINUED)
OLIVIA
Will you look at these? They’re so cute.

ZACHARY
I think dogs are overrated. All they do is eat and procreate. They sit on your sofa and drool all over your pillow. It’s disgusting.

OLIVIA
That’s not true. What about police dogs, they use them to search for drugs and bombs? One time I was reading about these people who were buried beneath an avalanche and almost died if it weren’t for dogs and their keen sense of smell.

ZACHARY
Well, I happen to know about this guy in Europe who was attacked by a German Shepard that was supposed to protect him.

OLIVIA
It’s okay, dear. I’m your mother, you don’t have to pretend with me.

ZACHARY
What are you talking about?

(FLASHBACK) - BACKYARD - DAY

Seven-year-old Zachary jumps over a neighbors fence to retrieve his ball and gets chased off into a corner by a chained ROTTWEILER.

BACK TO PRESENT

ZACHARY
I had a bad experience once. That doesn’t mean I’m afraid of dogs. I just don’t trust them.

OLIVIA
You don’t trust anybody.

ZACHARY
Can you blame me? Watch the news.

INT. MEGAMART

PEOPLE wait in long lines, squeeze themselves through overcrowded aisles. Food items fly off the shelves.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

FOOT TRAFFIC comes in and out of the elevator. Zachary, Olivia stroll in.

SHOPPERS present their receipts to the security guard before he lets them through the door. TOM BUTLER, 60.

    ZACHARY
    What’s up, man?

    TOM
    Hey, buddy.

MOMENTS LATER

Zachary pushes the shopping cart. Olivia fills it.

    ZACHARY
    Can you grab that for me?

    OLIVIA
    I wish you would come home. I always have food in the house.

    ZACHARY
    I’m thirty years old, I’m not moving in with my mother.

    OLIVIA
    I’m just saying, life’s not the same anymore since you moved out. First I lose your father and then you. I’m old and live alone in an empty house.

    ZACHARY
    You’re not old.

    OLIVIA
    Oh, please.

They turn into the next aisle. SARAH MORGAN, 27, brunette, with a body to die for, uses a handheld device to scan the barcode on shelved merchandise.

    SARAH
    Zach. How’s it going?

    ZACHARY
    Can’t complain.

    OLIVIA
    I’m gonna leave you two alone. Obviously you have something important to discuss.

(Continued)
Olivia pushes past Sarah with the cart, inconspicuously mouths to Zachary the words: “She is gorgeous.”

Then she tilts her head sideways at her. Zachary waves at his mother to leave.

SARAH
You okay?

ZACHARY
Yeah. Just a fly buzzing in my face, that’s all.

A CUSTOMER accidentally bumps into Sarah as they pass by.

SARAH
Welcome to National Geographic. Mother nature’s on a war path and everyone’s acting like it’s the end of the world. Pushing and tugging and fighting each other over a loaf of bread. It’s like the final hours of the Roman empire.

ZACHARY
Are we in a mood today.

SARAH
I’m sorry. This morning Frank and I had a fight and, uh, anyway, it’s a long story. How’s Liz?

ZACHARY
She’s worried about you.

SARAH
She’s still pissed that I’m engagement to Frank.

ZACHARY
Perhaps. But it’s much more important to her that you’re happy. It’s the only reason she hasn’t told the cops about Frank’s little enterprise yet.

SARAH
On the other hand, if my dad gets wind of this, he will personally drop him off at the sheriff’s office and I will never hear the end of it.

(CONTINUED)
ZACHARY
You know, it’s too bad we’re not working together anymore. The boys and I miss you.

SARAH
You can thank my fiance for that. He’s the one who forced me to switch departments because he couldn’t stand sleeping by himself. What a baby.

Approaching them is TRAVIS MORGAN, 63, slick, grey hair, red tie, name tag.

TRAVIS
Zach. How’s my favorite employee? Don’t forget to pick up your paycheck on your way out.

ZACHARY
Morning, sir.

TRAVIS
Call me Travis. I insist.

SARAH
Oh, yeah? I don’t see you extend the same courtesy to Frank. Why?

TRAVIS (to Zachary)
Just like her mother. Always asking questions she already knows the answers to. You, me, skeet shooting, next week. Call me.

ZACHARY
You got it.

RESTROOM HALLWAY
Zachary turns into the corridor and sees a PAINT CREW at work. One of them takes the men’s room door off its hinges as Zachary wanders in.

I/E. ZACHARY’S CAR (MOVING)

OLIVIA
So what did you two talk about?

ZACHARY
You don’t know?

(CONTINUED)
OLIVIA
No. That’s why I’m asking you.

ZACHARY
You mean you weren’t eavesdropping from the next aisle?

OLIVIA
She’s perfect for you, Zach. You should ask her out.

ZACHARY
Mom, listen, I’m gonna stop by my place first to drop these bags off, is that okay?

OLIVIA
Of course, dear.

EXT. ZACHARY’S APARTMENT BUILDING
Zachary fills a parking space.

ZACHARY
You wanna come in and say “Hi” to Liz?

OLIVIA
I prefer to sit here, thank you.

Zachary carries the grocery bags into the second floor unit.

INT. ZACHARY’S KITCHEN
Zachary empties the bags. Elizabeth enters, dressed and ready for work.

ELIZABETH
Where have you been?

ZACHARY
Running errands with my mom. She’s waiting in the car.

Elizabeth waves at Olivia from the door.

ELIZABETH
Hi, Mrs. Masterson.

Olivia ignores her.
ELIZABETH (CONT’D)
Is she still mad about that DUI thing? I wish I hadn’t gone to that party you dragged me off to. You were much more drunk than I was. I’m not touching alcohol again. How did she find out about it, anyway?

Elizabeth makes coffee.

ZACHARY
Because I told her.

ELIZABETH
What did you do that for?

ZACHARY
I tell her everything. She’s my mother.

ELIZABETH
God, she’s so judgemental. Not to mention emotional.

ZACHARY
I know. She insists on calling me every day because hearing my voice puts her mind at ease. What can I do, she’s my mother? She’s very attached to me. I forgot to tell you, I ran into Sarah today. She and Frank had a fight again.

ELIZABETH
What else is new?

ZACHARY
And then your dad showed up.

ELIZABETH
Oh oh.

ZACHARY
That’s right.

ELIZABETH
What did you expect? You know how much my dad likes you. You’re like a son to him.

ZACHARY
I know, but he doesn’t have to rub it in her face all the time that he prefers me over Frank.
EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

LAW ENFORCEMENT and FIRE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL move in and out of a secured perimeter set up around a blanketed VICTIM.

SHERIFF MIKE RAWLEY, 43, shaved head, goatee, arrives in his patrol car. He walks and talks like a wrestler.

His booming voice and commanding presence are his trademarks.

RANDALL GARTH, 35, a simple country lad with boyish looks and displaced teeth gossips with another DEPUTY.

DEPUTY
Here comes the boss. Mr. big-time war hero.

GARTH
War hero?

DEPUTY
Two Purple Hearts, the Medal of Honor. He served under General Schwarzkopf during Desert Storm. When he got home he found out his pregnant wife had died in a car crash.

Rawley uncovers the corpse. Garth walks up behind him.

GARTH
Judging from the wounds I think it’s safe to say we’re dealing with a series. How many is that, four?

RAWLEY
Five. (rises)
I wonder how the fire got started.

Rawley looks up at the MONITORING SYSTEM on top of a pole.

RAWLEY (CONT’D)
Can we get the tape for that camera?

GARTH
That’s gonna be a problem.

RAWLEY
Why?

(CONTINUED)
GARTH
Our computers aren’t exactly up-to-date.
We haven’t had a system upgrade since the
eighties. So unless these people have a
way of accessing the content of their own
video surveillance we’ll never be able to
see what’s on it.

RAWLEY
Then find someone who will. I need to
see that tape.

GARTH
We’ll catch him. Let’s wait and see what
the forensic report shows.

INT. ZACHARY’S BED ROOM – NIGHT
Zachary awakes to the BUZZING of his alarm clock. Slams the
snooze button to shut it up.

LIVING ROOM
Elizabeth watches TV and rubs her ankle. Zachary enters, kis ses her.

ZACHARY
Hey, babe. What’s happening?

ELIZABETH
It’s that time of the year again. A
storm knocked out the power grid in two
neighboring towns. We’re about to get
pounded. Storm’s heading this way.

ZACHARY
What’s with your foot?

ELIZABETH
I twisted my ankle the other day. It
still hurts.

KITCHEN
Zachary drinks from a milk carton.

LIVING ROOM
He returns and puts socks on.

ELIZABETH
Jesus.
ZACHARY
What?

ELIZABETH
Some sicko has been going around killing farmers. Police found another one this morning. They keep finding them, half-eaten corpses gutted like fish, heads cut off.

ZACHARY
Sounds like some kind of animal.

ELIZABETH
According to the sheriff’s office the livestock was untouched. What kind of animal preys exclusively on humans?

ZACHARY
I don’t know. I’d love to stay and chat, but I’m late for work. I think I’ll take the bus and walk the rest of the way. Save money on gas.

HALLWAY
Zachary ties his shoes by the door. Elizabeth approaches.

ELIZABETH
I wish you would quit this job of yours. You work all night and sleep during the day. We don’t do anything together anymore.

ZACHARY
I can’t quit my job, are you crazy?

ELIZABETH
Go find another one. A normal job with normal hours.

He kisses her, exits.

EXT. SIDEWALK - LATER
Rawley’s car slows next to Zachary as he walks down the street.

RAWLEY
Need a ride?

ZACHARY
Mikey. What’s going on, bro?

(CONTINUED)
Good to see you, my friend. Where you headed?

I gotta catch the last bus downtown. My shift starts in twenty minutes.

I can get you there in five. Jump in.

How long have you worked here?

Too long. My problem is I’m not ambitious enough, never was. If dad could see me right now he would be so disappointed.

You know, he was the one who suggested I run for sheriff. To me he wasn’t just my partner. He was my friend. The night I won the election we lost him to cancer. I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to dig up the past. All I wanna say is, you gotta make a change, create opportunity for yourself. You don’t wanna be here forever. A dead-end job like this can kill a man’s soul.

It’s funny you should say that. Some guy actually took his own life after working here. I shouldn’t even be talking about this?

About what? It’s okay, you can tell me.

Years ago we had this kid working with us on our team. Real sensitive, no self-confidence whatsoever. He complained to the manager that he was being mentally abused on the job. Next thing I know, the manager tells me he read the boy’s name in the obituaries.

(CONTINUED)
RAWLEY
And he thinks that’s directly related to--

ZACHARY
The guys were a little rough on him, made fun of him all the time.

RAWLEY
You, too?

ZACHARY
Not my style. In fact, I was the only one he got along with. My boss was pretty freaked though.

RAWLEY
Why’s that?

ZACHARY
He said he received a suicide letter from that kid making him and everyone on the night crew responsible. And get this: The letter looked like it was xeroxed, which means the original’s still out there.

RAWLEY
He still keeps the copy?

ZACHARY
He’s a dick, not stupid. He never told anybody because of possible, legal ramifications.

RAWLEY
Then why did he tell you?

ZACHARY
I live with his daughter. This stays between you and me, you gotta promise me that.

RAWLEY
Don’t worry.

ZACHARY
I’m serious, Mikey, you can’t tell anyone, it will destroy my relationship with this guy. He will never trust me again.

RAWLEY
You have my word.
ZACHARY
(checks phone)
Holy shit, I gotta run. Thanks for the ride.

RAWLEY
Tell your mom I said “Hi”.

INT. MEGAMART

Zachary enters, nods at Tom, clocks in. Sarah mans the register.

The janitor, NIKOLAI ALEKSANDR BOGDANOVICH, 53, thick eyebrows, mustache, runs a floor polisher.

Zachary is stopped in his tracks by ‘MANI’ A’AMAKUALE, 35, a native of Hawaii, six-foot-three, massive physique, arms like tree trunks.

MANI
You’re late.

ZACHARY
You’re enormous. What do you want, Mani, I’m not in the mood?

MANI
Get your ass on the floor. We have a big load coming in. You’re still here. You got something to say?

ZACHARY
Just back off, all right?

Zachary walks.

MANI
Suck-up.

Zachary stops for a moment, then moves on.

MOMENTS LATER

Zachary joins the rest of the CREW as it uses box cutters to break down large pallets of plastic-wrapped merchandise.

RICO ALVAREZ, 35, tattoos everywhere.

DENNIS PARKER, 22, African American, glasses.

SCOTT VOGEL, 25, lean, Bruce Lee T-shirt.
ANDREW COSTAS, 42, Mediterranean complexion.
LAMAR WILLIAMS, 45, T-shirt, wrangler jeans.

Zachary, Dennis unwrap one of the pallets together.

ZACHARY
Hey, man. What’s happening? You look like hell.

DENNIS
I’m tired. I hate this fucking job. Night is day, day is night. I can’t take it.

ZACHARY
You’re leaving us, right?

DENNIS
Two weeks. Two weeks and then I’m gone. Soon all this will be just a bad dream.

ZACHARY
What do you do after this?

DENNIS
I’m going to college. That’s the only reason I took this job, to save money for tuition.

Mani drives a fork-lift truck out of the loading dock to the sales floor, drops off another load.

RICO
Come one, ladies! Step it up, step it up! We have a schedule to keep! These pallets have to be broken down and stock-ready by midnight! Move it!

Rico disappears between aisles.

SCOTT
What’s gotten into Rico? He’s been acting like a real jerk lately.

ANDREW
Rico? Management’s breathing down his neck for being too soft on the workers.

ZACHARY
lifts, pushes, hauls boxes, blocks Mani’s path. Mani HITS the brakes.
CONTINUED:

MANI
Out of the way, kid.

ZACHARY
One second.

MANI
(honks)
Come on, let’s go. I’m on a schedule here.

ZACHARY
Can you shut up for just two seconds and let us do our job?!

Mani HONKS. Zachary steps aside.

ZACHARY (CONT’D)
Fine! Go! Just go already! Please! Get the hell out of my sight!

MANI
(drives)
Suck-up.

Zachary tears open a pack of hot dog buns, grabs a piece, CHASES after Mani. Jumps on the truck mid-drive, swings into the cockpit, SHOVES the bun into his mouth.

ZACHARY
You like that?! You like that, huh?! You fat fuck!

Mani drives with one hand, fights Zachary off with the other.

The truck is out of control and CRASHES into a pyramid of breakable merchandise. Zachary and Mani wrestle each other out of the cockpit. Mani gets his giant belly pummeled.

MANI
You fight like a girl!

ZACHARY
At least I’m not fat!

MANI
At least I don’t kiss ass!

ZACHARY
Shut up!

MANI
Ass kisser!

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

ZACHARY
Shut up!

MANI
Ass kisser!

RICO
(return)
Hey! Hey! Hey! Knock this shit off!

Rico pulls Zachary off the big guy kicking and screaming.

Mani rises. Rico puts himself between them.

RICO (CONT’D)
All right, that’s enough! Stop it, you two!

Zachary BOLTS for Mani. Rico blocks him.

RICO (CONT’D)
Back off! I mean it! Jesus! We don’t have time for this bullshit! Now, you two are aware that you’re putting me in a very difficult situation. My ass is on the line. I’m responsible for this whole operation. If we’re not done by seven, we’re screwed, all of us.

MANI
All except Mr. Buttkiss over here. Everyone knows he’s the manger’s favorite because he’s banging his daughter. He doesn’t have to worry about losing his job and not being able to pay his rent.

(to Rico)
I would keep on his good side, if I were you. You might end up calling him ‘Sir’ one day.

RICO
Are you finished? Good. Now beat it! Back to work! And get a mop!

Zachary walks away. Scott casually tags along and chats him up.

SCOTT
You know, next time he gives you trouble just come to me. I’ll teach you a few self-defense techniques you can use to show him who’s the boss.
LATER

Zachary stands on a crate stocking shelves. The aisle littered with cardboard boxes.

RICO
(from walkie-talkie)
All right, guys, it’s lunch time. Quit what you’re doing and take a thirty minute break.

EXT. MEGAMART - LATER

The crew uses porch furniture to sit, eat, smoke and play cards.

LAMAR
This is it. Tonight’s the night, I can feel it. I’m gonna kick all your motherfuckers’ asses and get my money back.

MANI
If anyone’s kicking ass it’s Scott. You gotta watch out for this guy, he’s a brown belt.

SCOTT
Okay, first of all, I’m a green belt. Second of all, Karate isn’t about kicking asses. It’s about self-discipline and restraint. “Avoid conflict whenever possible”, that’s the first thing they teach you at the Dojo. Why fight if you can run away?

ANDREW
(to Lamar)
What you need is a lesson in fiscal responsibility, my friend. I’d rather you lose your money to us than giving it to that S&M skank you go to.

LAMAR
It’s just a hobby. For your information, I do spend my money responsibly.

ANDREW
When was the last time you went? What did she do to you? Did she whip you? Humiliate you? Stick a cucumber up your ass?

(CONTINUED)
Everyone laughs, except Lamar.

LAMAR
That was funnier the first time.

MANI
Whoa. Guys.

All heads turn.

MANI (CONT’D)
Here comes trouble.

A PONTIAC FIREBIRD with flames airbrushed across its sides ROARS onto the parking lot, tires SMOKING, SCREECHING to a stop in front of the store.

ALL CREW MEMBERS
(synchronized)
Sarah Morgan’s prince charming.

FRANK AYALA, 28, gangly looking fellow, jewelry around his neck and wrists, sticks his head out the car.

FRANK
Sarah! Sarah! Sarah!

The crew looks on as Sarah marches out to confront Frank who storms out of his car and slams the door.

SARAH AND FRANK

SARAH
What?! What?! What is it?! What do you want?!

FRANK
What are you doing here?

SARAH
I work here.

FRANK
You were supposed to be getting home hours ago. What’s going on?

SARAH
Nothing’s going on. One of the cashiers called in sick and I’m filling in.

FRANK
What kind of person stays sick for three weeks?

(CONTINUED)
SARAH
People get sick. And I’m starting to get sick of you and your damn jealousy!

FRANK
At least I’m faithful.

SARAH
What do you mean?

FRANK
You know exactly what I mean. Who is he? I wanna know who he is and I wanna know right now!

SARAH
What?

FRANK
You heard me. Who is he? What’s his name?

SARAH
Do you hear yourself? You’re delusional.

FRANK
I have the right to know.

SARAH
Go home, Frank.

Sarah marches back into the store.

FRANK
I will go home, but I’m watching you!

SARAH
Fine!

FRANK
You can’t fool me, Sarah! Nobody can fool me!

Frank fires up the Pontiac and races off.

ZACHARY AND HIS CREW

RICO
Okay, ladies. Show’s over. We have a job to finish.
INT. MEGAMART

Mani hooks up one of the cash register pagers to a boom box, plays it.

MOMENTS LATER

Mani stocks shelves while dancing to the song “NEVER” by the 1985 rock band HEART.

The MUSIC shakes the room, ECHOES through every aisle and corridor, draws laughter from other crew members.

EXT. HORIZON - DAY

The sun rises.

INT. RAWLEY’S APARTMENT

The phone RATTLES him awake. He picks up.

RAWLEY
Yeah? What? Where?

EXT. FARM - LATER

It’s the crack of dawn and light MIST hovers in the air.

Garth, the other DEPUTIES and the CORONERS descend on the crime scene.

Rawley, having barely rubbed the sleep out of his eyes, is coming through to see the poor BASTARD who has been chewed-up and is now worm food.

GARTH
That makes it six.

INT. ZACHARY’S KITCHEN

He opens the fridge, shakes the milk carton.

ZACHARY
I’m going to the store, I’ll be right back!

EXT. MEGAMART PARKING LOT

Zachary arrives.
INT. MEGAMART

From twenty yards away, while filling a basket, he witnesses Mani barge out of Travis’s office in anger and slam the door.

MANAGER’S OFFICE

Zachary knocks, enters.

    TRAVIS
    Zach. Just the man I’m looking for, come on in. Good news--

    ZACHARY
    Were you just talking to Mani, he seemed upset? What happened?

Travis plays the surveillance TAPE that shows Zachary and Mani brawl on the floor next to the forklift truck before Rico breaks it off.

    TRAVIS
    I’m not blaming you. I know it’s not you, it’s him. He’s a bully.

    ZACHARY
    What did you do?

    TRAVIS
    I told him that if he wants to keep his job he better pull his shit together and stop pushing your buttons.

    ZACHARY
    And what did he say?

    TRAVIS
    He blabbed something about favoritism, called me an asshole and quit his job.

    ZACHARY
    You fired him?

    TRAVIS
    I didn’t fire him. He quit. Trust me, it’s better this way. We can’t have people like that working in here. Plus I don’t like his attitude.

    ZACHARY
    Neither do I, but we need him. He works hard and he gets the job done. I think you should re-hire him.

(Continued)
TRAVIS
Re-hire him? Am I missing something, I thought you’d be happy?

ZACHARY
I’m not. Please, hire him.

TRAVIS
I can’t.

ZACHARY
Yes, you can. Pick up the phone right now, say you’ll give him another chance.

TRAVIS
Forget it. I gotta do what’s best for my employees.

ZACHARY
The only reason he’s been picking on me is because he thinks I’m getting preferential treatment. He’s not a bully, he’s jealous. Letting him go will only prove his point.

TRAVIS
Sorry. I’m the manager and my decision is final.

ZACHARY
Please. I’m asking you as a friend because that’s what friends do, they compromise for the good of each other and, if necessary, everyone else. Friends return favors and keep each other’s secrets.

TRAVIS
Are you blackmailing me?

Zachary holds out the phone towards him. Travis takes it.

ZACHARY
(leaves)
And don’t mention my name. I was never here, we never spoke.

EXT. MEGAMART PARKING LOT

Zachary walks to his car, answers his cell.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ZACHARY
Yeah?  Hey, mom.  I’m fine.  I sound worried?  Well...

INT. SHERIFF’S OFFICE – LATER
Rawley stares out of the window.  Garth knocks, enters.

GARTH
Lab results came back.  Forensic analysis revealed traces of animal DNA on the tissue we found at the crime scene.  What do you got?

RAWLEY
I was going through some old newspapers yesterday.  Eight years ago one of the animals in the local zoo disappeared from its enclosure.  The director of the zoo at the time said it was an inside job and pressed charges against the man he believed was responsible.  I forgot what his name was.

INT. LAW FIRM OFFICE – LATER
Rawley sits across the desk from IRA STONE, 53, shirt and tie, suspenders, cowboy boots.

His ass is fatter than the chair he is sitting in and his bushy beard hides the fact that he doesn’t have a chin.

STONE
Clarence Wulfington.  Yeah, I remember him.  The charges were never filed.  Now, my client did suspect Mr. Wulfington of theft, but he never actually had a shred of evidence to back up his claim.  No evidence, no criminal record.  Parents died when he was young.  He and his brothers spent most of their lives in foster homes.

RAWLEY
Brothers?

STONE
Yeah, four of them.

RAWLEY
(leaves)
Thank you for your cooperation, counselor.
STONE

Any time.

INT. SHERIFF’S OFFICE - LATER

Rawley stares at a computer monitor from behind the shoulder of a female DEPUTY while she runs a name search through the database. She scrolls down the list of mailing addresses, highlights the name ‘Wulfington’.

RAWLEY

Stop. That’s him.

EXT. ROAD - LATER

Rawley drives up a gravelly road, stops at the address he found in the computer. He steps out and views an empty, grassy field that has the outline of a house.

KID

They bulldozed it.

Rawley turns and sees a twelve-year-old KID on a bicycle.

RAWLEY

Do you know the man that lived in that house?

KID

Clarence Wulfington. He lives in a home now.

RAWLEY

A home?

INT. NURSING HOME - LATER

From the hallway Rawley peeks through a square window into a room where an old MAN sits in a wheelchair.

CLARENCE WULFINGTON SENIOR, 75, unresponsive to his environment like a vegetable.

The DIRECTOR of the nursing home, 50’s, suit and tie, speaks to Rawley.

DIRECTOR

I’m afraid he won’t be able to help you, sheriff. He hasn’t talked to anyone in eight years. His mind isn’t what it used to be.

(CONTINUED)
RAWLEY
Did you say eight years?

DIRECTOR
Yeah. He had just lost his little boy to suicide. It was more than he could bear.

INT. MEGAMART - NIGHT
Zachary enters, clocks in. His eyes wander around the room as he seeks out his crew, whips out his box cutter and gets to work. Occasionally turns back to see the double doors of the loading dock.

Finally, RUMBLING out of those doors in his forklift truck, is Mani. Zachary hides his relief.

INT. BAR - DAY
The place is packed. Rawley sits at a booth studying the PROFILES and PERSONAL INFORMATION of all six VICTIMS. Garth approaches with a large envelope.

GARTH
I’ve been looking all over for you.

RAWLEY
What’s this?

GARTH
Pictures taken from the surveillance camera at the farmhouse.

Garth opens the envelope containing several IMAGES showing Dan’s pre-fire FARMHOUSE with a VAN parked in its vicinity and a CLOSE-UP of the LICENSE PLATE.

GARTH (CONT’D)
We used the number to track the owner of the vehicle.

Rawley reacts with anticipation.

GARTH (CONT’D)
Dead end. Car was reported stolen weeks ago.

Rawley returns his attention to the profiles. Sees something that stuns him and he focuses on it intently with eyes of discovery.

GARTH (CONT’D)
What is it?
INT. MEGAMART - LATER

At the door Travis is surrounded by CONTRACTORS with whom he glances over the BLUEPRINT to the supermarket’s layout, the technicality of its locking mechanism, exits etc.

Under Tom’s supervision, a TECHNICIAN towers over them from atop a ladder splicing wires. Rawley extends a hand to Travis.

    RAWLEY
    Travis Morgan?
    (shakes his hand)
    Sheriff Rawley. You got a minute?

    TRAVIS
    I’ll be right with you.

    TOM
    (shakes Rawley’s hand)
    Tom Butler. Nice to meet you.

    RAWLEY
    Likewise.

    TOM
    I used to be on the force. Twenty-five years. This is what I do now.

    RAWLEY
    What’s going on here?

    TOM
    We’re installing a new security system for the store.

    RAWLEY
    Looks like you’re out of a job.

    TOM
    Actually, what it does has less to do with safety and more to do with risk management. See, when the store’s abandoned in case of a natural disaster like Katrina this baby seals off the building airtight to protect it from looters. They don’t care about you and me, they care about all the stuff that’s in here. It won’t become fully operational till next week. We’re gonna be closed for a day or two starting on Monday, so we can test it.
LATER

Travis and Rawley take a walk.

TRAVIS
So what can I do for you, sheriff?

RAWLEY
We’re investigating a series of homicides that took place outside of town. I’m assuming you know about the serial killings?

TRAVIS
Only what I read in the papers.

RAWLEY
We have reason to believe the victims might have known each other. Their employment history shows prior affiliation with Megamart dating back to 04. (gives him list) These are their names. Do you recognize any of them?

TRAVIS
No. I’m sorry.

RAWLEY
Are you sure?

TRAVIS
We are the largest employer in town. We got hundreds of people on payroll at this location alone. I couldn’t possibly remember every single employee that has come and gone in the last eight years.

RAWLEY
(retrieves list)
Call my office if you have any information.

TRAVIS
Will do.

INT. LIBRARY - LATER

Rawley approaches the RECEPTIONIST.

(Continued)
RECEPTIONIST
Good afternoon, sheriff. How can I be of service?

RAWLEY
I’d like to sign up for a library card.

INT. SHERIFF’S OFFICE - LATER
Rawley hauls a book-filled cardboard box on his desk, starts emptying it.

EXT. TRAVIS’S HOUSE - NIGHT
Houses on either side of the street, mostly inhabited by families and retirees. Large front and back yards.

Travis pulls into his driveway, empties the jam-packed mailbox.

INT. TRAVIS’S OFFICE
He checks the messages on the phone.

VOICE MAIL
You have no new messages.

He sits at his desk, looking through the stack of envelopes. Written on one of them with a thick magic marker in capital letters is the word: “MURDERER”. Travis opens it.

PALES at the sight of its content that leaves him with a haunted stare.

INT. ZACHARY’S LIVING ROOM - LATER
Zachary, Elizabeth slumped in front of the TV. The storm rages outside, slamming a tree top against the window.

ZACHARY
A hundred channels and nothing on. What time is it?

ELIZABETH
10:16.

ZACHARY
Crap!

He jumps off the couch.

(CONTINUED)
EXT. MEGAMART - LATER

Elizabeth steers in front of the store.

ELIZABETH
Here we are. Have a safe night.

ZACHARY
Thanks.

They kiss. She watches him go into the store, drives.

INT. MEGAMART - LATER

Zachary and his crew break down the pallets. Mani operates the forklift truck.

Frank peeks out from behind a magazine he pretends to read, eye-balls Sarah the whole time while she performs her job.

ENTRANCE GATE

MRS. KOVALCHEK, 75, grey hair, conservatively dressed, shakes her umbrella by the door while holding on to her POODLE’s leash. MATILDA. She yanks the leash to pull the dog inside.

The dog SNARLS and BARKS, directing its aggression at the thick vegetation lining the parking spaces.

MRS. KOVALCHEK
What’s the matter with you? Stop it right now. Get in here.

She enters. Her dog shakes itself dry.

RICO

stocks shelves when the old lady wanders through his aisle.

RICO
Mrs. Kovalchek, how many times did I ask you not to bring that dog in here? These floors have been waxed.

MRS. KOVALCHEK
She’s a service dog! You have no right to keep us out!
CONTINUED:

    RICO
    (whispers)
    Service dog, my ass.

I/E. ZACHARY’S CAR (MOVING)

The car slows.

    ELIZABETH
    What the?

She pulls over. The engine dies. Her multiple attempts to turn it back on fail. She slams the steering wheel, exits.

INT. SHERIFF’S OFFICE - LATER

Outside the office the DISPATCH UNIT responds to calls.

Rawley at his desk covered with crime scene PHOTOS and a stack of books.

The content of the book under his nose is a detailed and graphic compilation of the bite force and size of a large variety of WILD ANIMALS, mostly carnivores.

He compares them to the WOUND CLOSE-UPS in the autopsy morgue photos in order to find a match. A DISPATCHER enters.

    DISPATCHER
    Sheriff. We just got a 911 call from someone who wanted to report a break-in. He was yelling your name and then I lost him.

INT. MEGAMART - LATER

Rico locks the entrance gate via keypad on the wall.

LOADING DOCK

Rico crushes cardboard boxes. Lamar pops in.

    LAMAR
    Rico. We have a situation.

MAIN AISLE

Sarah and Frank at each other’s throats. Tom and the other guys act as a buffer zone.
CONTINUED:

SARAH
I can’t take this anymore! This is not how a relationship is supposed to be! You can’t follow me around like this!

FRANK
I am the fiance and I have the right to check on my girl if I think she’s being dishonest! That’s what a fiance does!

SARAH
But you don’t own me, Frank! Nobody owns me! I’m an independent woman and I don’t like to be controlled! You’re suffocating me!

Rico and Lamar arrive.

RICO
What’s going on here?!

FRANK
I’ll tell you what’s going on! My fiance is cheating on me!

SARAH
Yes. Yes. You’re right. I cheat. I admit it. I’m a slut and I like to fuck all day long because I got nothing better to do than fuck! Fuck! Fuck!

LIGHTS OUT. SIRENS SCREAM.

TOM
The door!

Tom, Rico run.

ENTRANCE GATE
A heavy metal door drops down out of a slot, over the entrance gate, and slams shut before they reach it.

SERVICE ENTRANCE
A second metal door drops.

LOADING DOCK
A third door comes down, GRINDS and WHIRS to a halt halfway to the floor.
ENTRANCE GATE

The sirens stop. The crew assembles.

ZACHARY
What’s going on, Tom?

TOM
They scheduled a series of integrity tests for when the store’s closed on Monday. No one’s supposed to be here when this happens.

LATER

Tom returns from the far interior of the store.

TOM
Okay, here’s the situation. So far the only things that haven’t been affected by the system failure are the elevator and the air conditioning. They have their own power source.

RICO
That’s practical.

SCOTT
Hey, Lamar. Guess what, I’m giving you the bird.

LAMAR
Shove it.

SCOTT
My ass or yours? You would love that, wouldn’t you?

ANDREW
What about the service entrance?

TOM
Both the service entrance and the loading dock have the same locking mechanism as the front door. Seven feet thick, solid steel designed to withstand a bazooka.

ANDREW
In other words, we’re marooned here. Great.

MANI
Now what?

(CONTINUED)
I'll tell you now what. I'm going on strike. They don't pay me enough to work my ass off in the dark.

Amen.

Now, everybody stay calm. Power will be restored in no time, I'm sure.

Anyone seen Dennis?

Hey, guys. I think someone peed on the floor.

I think I know who that someone is. Mrs. Kovalchek's precious, little flea bag. I'll talk to her.

I also brought these.

Dennis steps on a pool of urine before including himself to the group.

That's good thinking, Dennis. That's why you're going to college.

Thank you.

All right, everybody. I need you to clear this area immediately. Move away from the door. Move it, people.

Dennis hands out flashlights and batteries.

All obey. Tom kneels. With his flashlight he closely examines a long TRAIL of MUDDY PAW PRINTS that starts at the door and leads into the interior.

Tom and the crew wait in the main aisle.
ANDREW
We should call 911.

Zachary shuts his cell phone, pockets it.

ZACHARY
I tried. I know someone in law enforcement, but I’m not getting a signal. I can’t even text-message my folks.

All check their phones, except Rico.

MANI
Yesterday’s public service announcement was saying that cellular service might be temporarily suspended due to severe weather.

RICO
I didn’t bring my phone. It’s against policy.

LAMAR
What are you talking about?

RICO
They don’t want us to use our phones while on duty. It can cause distraction.

LAMAR
You’re the only one I know who takes this shit seriously. Look what happened.

RICO
I’m the only one who gives a shit about rules.

TOM
(walks off)
I’m going to the john. Everybody stay put.

INSIDE ZACHARY’S POCKET
His cell-phone screen reads: MESSAGE SENT

EXT. ZACHARY’S CAR - ROADSIDE - LATER

Olivia pulls up in her car next to Elizabeth, rolls down the window.
OLIVIA
Do you need help?

ELIZABETH
Hi. My car broke down. You wouldn’t, by any chance, have a-- Mrs. Masterson?

OLIVIA
Oh. It’s you.

ELIZABETH
What are you doing here?

OLIVIA
I might ask you the same thing.

ELIZABETH
I drove Zach to the supermarket. He was late for work.

OLIVIA
What a coincidence. I was just on my way to the store to thank him for driving me around all week.

(shows tupperware)
I made him his favorite dish.

ELIZABETH
How do you wanna do that, they’re closed?

OLIVIA
I can give it to him at the door. This isn’t my first time.

Elizabeth reads the MESSAGE on her phone: CALL 911. Zach.

OLIVIA (CONT’D)
What’s going on?

INT. MEGAMART - LATER

FRANK
Can someone, please, get me a flashlight?

SARAH
Go get it yourself. We’re closed and your ass is not supposed be here, anyway.

FRANK
You’re out of your element, woman, using the words ‘ass’ and ‘closed’ in the same sentence.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SARAH
You know what, Frank? Fuck you! I’ve had it! We’re finished!

She walks away. He follows.

FRANK
Hey! Get back here!

DENNIS
Well, at least we don’t have to worry about food.

MEN’S ROOM

Tom puts down the flashlight, unzips his pants. The door CREAKS open.

TOM
Hello? Rico?

The BEAST ferociously seizes his leg and he tumbles forward. Hits his head against the urinal, dies on impact from a broken neck.

SALES FLOOR

Frank pursues Sarah to the deli.

FRANK
Don’t walk away from me when I’m talking to you! I mean it!

SARAH
Stay the hell away from me!

FRANK
You’re being ridiculous!

SARAH
Stop following me!

Frank tries to establish eye-contact by force.

FRANK
Will you listen to me for one second!

She shakes off his hold. He grabs her by the shoulders.

FRANK (CONT’D)
I’m talking to you, bitch! What the hell’s the matter with you?!
SARAH
I got nothing to say to you! It’s over, you hear me?! It’s over!

FRANK
It’s over when I say it’s over!

SARAH
Get your hands off me! Let me go! Let me go!

A struggle ensues.

MAIN AISLE
The other crew members listen to MUSIC BLASTING out of the boom box.

DELI
Sarah and Frank brawl on. Frank trips and gets pushed against a shelf.

FRANK
Are you out of your fucking mind?!

He freezes. Sarah backs up.

SARAH
Frank?

Frank’s skull cracks open. BLOOD streams down his face. He keels over. Sarah is in tears, covers her mouth in shock and bewilderment.

SARAH (CONT’D)
Frank. Oh, my god, oh, my god.

She looks up. A pair of GLOWING EYES stares at her from the top shelf. The beast GROWLS. Sarah walks backwards very slowly, eyes on the man eater. And then RUNS.

MAIN AISLE
Lamar opens a cookie box.

RICO
(to Mani)
Turn the music down!

MANI
What?!

(CONTINUED)
RICO
Turn the music down!

Mani obeys.

RICO (CONT’D)
(to Lamar)
You’re not supposed to open that. Put it back. Put it back.

LAMAR
Too late. It’s open. Will you relax? The cameras are down. No one can see us.

RICO
We’re technically still on the clock. We do have a responsibility.

LAMAR
I’m just trying to make the best out of a bad situation.

Each Andrew, Dennis and Mani steal a shelved snack.

RICO
By all means, help yourself.

MANI
Nikolai. Catch.

Mani throws him a bag. Nikolai nods. Dennis offers a bite to Zachary who shakes his head. Lamar stuffs his face.

RICO
You know you’re stealing, right?

LAMAR
It’s not stealing if it’s an emergency.

RICO
There is no fucking emergency. No one’s dying.

Mani turns the MUSIC on. Sarah BURSTS into their midst, panic-stricken, gasps.

SARAH
He’s dead! It killed him!

RICO
What?!
SARAH
Frank! It killed Frank!

RICO
What?!
(to Mani)
Turn the damn thing off!

Mani complies.

RICO (CONT’D)
What did you say?

SARAH
Frank is dead!

The beast TORPEDOES Rico from the side. Everybody JUMPS.

LAMAR
Fuck!

The beast MAULS Rico’s face.

LAMAR (CONT’D)
Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!

ANDREW
Move your asses!

All run frantically in the same direction.

DELI
Zachary slips over an expanse of blood, falls. He lifts his head next to his FLASHLIGHT that points at Frank’s FACE.

ANDREW
Is that prince charming?

DENNIS
What’s left of him.

Sarah calls them from the deli kitchen door.

SARAH
Over here! Come one, get in!

All enter and slam the door shut.

DELI KITCHEN - LATER

The crew discusses the situation.

(CONTINUED)
DENNIS
I can’t believe this is happening. This is fucked up.

LAMAR
We lost a good man. Rico was a good man.

DENNIS
Two weeks. Two weeks till college and now I’m gonna die.

ANDREW
What was that thing?

LAMAR
Not vegetarian, that’s for sure.

SARAH
Now what? What’s the plan?

DENNIS
I say we stay right here. Once the storm has settled we can call for help.

SARAH
That can take hours. What if I have to use the bathroom? What if we end up spending the night together? Right here in this room? Let’s face it, our chances of being rescued are less than squat.

LAMAR
Sarah’s right. People know we’re closed, they’re not gonna show up, not in this downpour. We’re on our own.

MANI
What happened to Tom, by the way? He never came back from the john.

LAMAR
He’s right. I completely forgot about him.

ANDREW
(into walkie-talkie)
Tom. Tom, this is Andy, do you copy, over? Tom. Come on, Tom, talk to me. Tom.

DENNIS
This is not a good sign.

(CONTINUED)
Zachary reaches for the door knob. He can barely bring himself to touch it without breaking a sweat followed by shortness of breath and obvious agony.

LAMAR
Hey, hey, hey, what the hell do you think you’re doing?

ZACHARY
I need to get out of here. I gotta find Tom.

LAMAR
No, you don’t. Shut the door.

ZACHARY
Aren’t you even curious to know what might have happened to him?

LAMAR
Not really. Door, please.

Zachary is about to step out.

LAMAR (CONT’D)
Didn’t you hear what I just said?! For the third time, close the door!

ZACHARY
You can close it after I’m gone! For all we know, Tom may still be alive. He doesn’t answer his radio, so naturally everyone assumes he’s dead.

LAMAR
Because he is!

ZACHARY
We don’t know that!

LAMAR
Yes, we do! Stop being a hero and listen to what I say!

ZACHARY
I’m not taking orders from you! You’re not my boss! Don’t fucking patronize me! I don’t need your permission or your help for that matter! I’m gonna do this and I don’t give a flying fuck what you say!

(CONTINUED)
SARAH
Wait. I’m coming with you. The five of you can stay here and suck each other’s balls. Oh, that’s right, you don’t have any. Not you, Nikolai, I wasn’t talking about you.

ZACHARY
Don’t worry, he doesn’t speak English.

ANDREW
You know, that’s easy for you to say, missy. You don’t have a wife and two kids to feed.

SARAH
Whatever helps you sleep at night.

EXT. TRAVIS’S HOUSE - LATER

Rawley leaps out of his car, gun drawn. Notices signs of forced entry on the door. Opens it cautiously.

INT. TRAVIS’S HOUSE

He FLASHLIGHTS his way through, combs the premises.

OFFICE

He steps on the sheet of paper Travis was reading, scoops it up with a napkin, studies it. It’s Bobby’s suicide LETTER.

The words BULLY, MENTAL ABUSE and many other disturbing PHRASES, EXPRESSIONS, ACCUSATIONS JUMP OFF the page, revealing the writer’s desperate cry for help.

Rawley RECOGNIZES the victim’s NAMES, matches them against the ones on his list. They are identical.

INT. MEGAMART - LATER

Zachary, Sarah walk to the men’s room

SARAH
I think what you’re doing is very noble. I’m glad you’re with my sister. She’s a good judge of character.

ZACHARY
You’re not too bad yourself. I’m sorry for your loss, by the way.

(CONTINUED)
SARAH
Thank you.

MEN’S ROOM
Zachary, Sarah enter.

SARAH
What happened to the door?

ZACHARY
They painters were here last night and took it off.

SARAH
Tom.  Tom, are you there?

They slowly move past the stalls and faucets towards the far end of the room. See a LIGHT.

ZACHARY
What’s that?

They run towards the light.

SARAH
Tom?

They turn the corner where they find Tom’s cadaver face-down in his own blood. His FLASHLIGHT still on. Sarah covers her mouth in disgust. Zachary brings his wrist up to his nose.

ZACHARY
There’s nothing we can do here. Let’s go.

They hear NOISES. Their eyes dart to each other. They whisper.

SARAH
Shit!

MOMENTS LATER IN THE STALL

Zachary, Sarah hide with their feet above the floor and the flashlights off. Sarah covers his mouth. Zachary breathes hard through the nose, sweats, eyes shut.

They hear VOICES and notice MOVING LIGHTS through the bottom edge of the stall door. Sarah nudges it open a crack, peeks out.

(CONTINUED)
Zachary, Sarah exit the stall, scare the shit out of their co-workers. Box cutters drawn. Flashlights on each other.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Guys! Easy! It’s us!

LAMAR
Damn it, woman! I almost pissed my pants!

SARAH
Finally decided to do the right thing, huh, fellows? What happened to your wife and kids, Andy? I thought you had a family to feed.

ANDREW
I couldn’t possibly go back and show my face should anything happen to you and Zach. What would my family think of me?

LAMAR
I couldn’t go back and face his family.

SCOTT
(to Zachary)
What’s your problem? You’re drenched.

SARAH
He has a condition.

SCOTT
What, excessive sweating?

Dennis stands over Tom’s corpse.

DENNIS
No one deserves to die like this.

All gather around Dennis.

DENNIS (CONT’D)
We have a serious problem. Whatever did this, I have a feeling it ain’t over.

ZACHARY
We need a plan. This place wouldn’t have a gun section, would it?
LAMAR
Not since Columbine. Not even the guards have guns. Poor Tom. He didn’t stand a chance.

ZACHARY
There’s one possibility.
(to Andrew)
Andy. You’re a certified electrician, right?

ANDREW
Yeah.

ZACHARY
Didn’t you once tell me that you were paid to do some repair work on the emergency power generators in the sub-basement? Suppose we go there, do you think you’d be able to override the system manually and get it to reboot, thereby causing the doors to open?

LAMAR
Where’s the sub-basement?

ANDREW
About a mile and a half from here on the other side of the building.

LAMAR
Are you shitting me?

ANDREW
No.

SARAH
It’s worth a shot. If he can pull it off.

ANDREW
I don’t know. Maybe.

DENNIS
Maybe? You want us to walk a mile and a half in the dark like a moving buffet and risk our lives on a maybe?

LAMAR
You got a better idea?
EXT. TRAVIS’S HOUSE - LATER

Three black-and-white UNITS ROAR onto the scene. Garth and five other DEPUTIES are received by Rawley. Among them is the FEMALE COP who found Wulfington Senior’s address in the computer.

RAWLEY
Somebody inform C.S.I., tell them to get down here.

GARTH
Did you find the caller?

RAWLEY
No.

FEMALE DEPUTY
Sheriff. Remember that Wulfington guy? Before we lost power I ran his name through the computer again and did a more accurate search. Guess what I found?

She serves him a NAME and ADDRESS on a piece of paper.

RAWLEY
Clarence Wulfington Junior.

FEMALE DEPUTY
Same name, two different people.

RAWLEY
Randall. I’m leaving you in charge.

INT. MEGAMART - LATER

Zachary and the crew walk and whisper.

DENNIS
(to Andrew)
Are you sure this is the right way?

ANDREW
I think so.

DENNIS
Yes or no?

ANDREW
You just gonna have to trust me.

The SOUND of distant steps.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

ZACHARY
Someone’s coming.

They turn. Flashlights capture the FIGURE quick-stepping down the aisle towards them. Mrs. Kovalchek and Matilda.

RICO
Mrs. Kovalchek?

DENNIS
What is she doing here?

MRS. KOVALCHEK
Somebody help. We’re lost.

SARAH
Mrs. Kovalchek, the store’s closed. Why are you still here?

MRS. KOVALCHEK
We couldn’t find our way back. It was too dark. Why is it so dark?

The dog BARKS as if sensing danger.

MRS. KOVALCHEK (CONT’D)
Matilda, sit! Be quiet!

The leash slips from her grasp. The dog runs off.

MRS. KOVALCHEK (CONT’D)
Matilda! Matilda!

She runs after the dog.

SARAH
Mrs. Kovalchek, don’t go! Mrs. Kovalchek! Mrs. Kovalchek!

LAMAR
Wow. For an old lady she can really move.

SARAH
We have to do something. She will get herself killed.

LAMAR
Why do you care? She’s just an old lady, she’ll slow us down. We’re better off without her.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

SARAH
How can you say that?! She’s a person!
I’m going after her.

ZACHARY
No, you’re not. I’ll get the old lady.
The rest of you, keep moving.

SARAH
You don’t get to make that decision.
Let’s face it, my family won’t shed a
single tear for Frank, but if I don’t get
you out of here in one piece, my sister
will never let me forget it. I won’t
have your life on my conscience.
(kisses him)
Don’t wait for me.

EXT. MEGAMART PARKING LOT

Olivia, Elizabeth SPEED onto the parking lot. Gaze up at an
enormous steel plate where the entrance gate used to be.

OLIVIA
I don’t understand. Where’s the door?

ELIZABETH
What the hell?

INT. MEGAMART - LATER

Mrs. Kovalchek runs around searching.

MRS. KOVALCHEK
Matilda. Matilda, where are you?

Auxiliary SIREN LIGHTS FLASH the way for the old lady and
reveal Matilda backed into a corner, unusually quiet, and
obviously frightened. Mrs. Kovalchek bends.

MRS. KOVALCHEK (CONT’D)
There you are. Come here, girl, come.

Matilda stares past her, backs up.

MRS. KOVALCHEK (CONT’D)
Matilda. What has gotten into you?

Matilda watches her getting AMBUSHED and brutally hacked to
pieces by the beast.
ZACHARY AND HIS CREW

run their feet off.

LAMAR
That’s it for me. I quit this job. Or better yet, I’ll sue these bastards. Class-fucking-action lawsuit.

ANDREW
Count me in. My family could use the money.

DENNIS
I’m not so optimistic. Black folks never make it out of situations like this.

SARAH

arrives where Mrs. Kovalchek died, searching. The GLOW of her flashlight darts around in every direction.

SARAH

She turns and finds herself face to face with:

SARAH (CONT’D)
Scott.

He shoves his box cutter into her stomach. Covers her mouth so she can’t scream. Twists the blade.

Pulls it out and drives it back in.

Sarah clings to him while slowly sinking to the floor.

Scott stabs her a third time. Wipes the blade clean with her shirt, turns off her flashlight.

ZACHARY AND HIS CREW

stop. Andrew looks to his left and right, tries to decide which way to go. Everyone catches their breath.

LAMAR
Why the hell did we stop?

DENNIS
Please, don’t tell me you’re lost.

ANDREW
Just let me think for a second.

(CONTINUED)
Hey, how come there’s only six of us? Where’s Scott?

They look around, bathe Scott in overlapping beams of LIGHT.

Oh. You’re here.

Where did you expect me to be?

A GROWLING. They turn. It’s the beast. The boys run and scatter. Dennis, Nikolai sprint around in a circle without knowing it. Collide, fall down.

Jesus! Nikolai? For god’s sake, watch where you’re going. I almost got a heart attack.

Dennis turns his LIGHT on Nikolai’s shoulder before it SHATTERS between the monster’s jaws. Dennis wipes the blood off his glasses.

Scuttles away. Stops at Zachary’s feet. Absconds with him while Nikolai gets chopped up, run into the rest of the crew.

Zach! Dennis!

Don’t stop! Run!

Where’s Nikolai?!

Nikolai’s gone!

EXT. MEGAMART - LATER

Olivia follows Elizabeth who tries to find a way in.

I’m worried about Zach. Where did he go?

I don’t know.
OLIVIA
What do you mean, you don’t know? You
were the last person to see him. That’s
it, I’m calling the police.

ELIZABETH
You can’t call the police, the phones
aren’t working.

OLIVIA
(dials, hangs up)
The phone isn’t working.

She looks up. Elizabeth is gone.

LOADING DOCK
The opening between the floor and the bottom of the
dysfunctional metal door is large enough for a person to fit
through. Elizabeth goes in. Olivia arrives.

ELIZABETH
Are you coming?

Olivia enters. The door makes a mechanical, horrible
grinding SOUND and then slams shut completely.

EXT. SUBURBIA - LATER
Rawley parks outside a two-story house at the end of the
street.

DOOR
He RINGS the bell. MILES KENDRICK, 64, African American,
responds in his robe.

KENDRICK
Sheriff. It’s two o’clock in the
morning.

RAWLEY
I’m sorry to wake you, judge. It’s
important that I speak to you.

INT. KENDRICK’S HOUSE
The judge puts on his glasses. Rawley SHINES his flashlight
on the document Kendrick is about to validate.

(CONTINUED)
KENDRICK
You wake me up in the middle of the goddamn night to sign a search warrant, you better get me results.

RAWLEY
I have a positive lead that might just do that. Thanks, your honor.

Kendrick signs the warrant.

INT. MEGAMART - LATER

Mani slows and everyone with him.

MANI
Wait! Wait!

ZACHARY
What’s the matter?

MANI
I got chest pains. I need a break.

LAMAR
If you can’t keep up, just let him eat you. Don’t slow us down.

MANI
(coughs)
I can make it.

LAMAR
The way you were wolfing down those chips, I don’t think so.

Zachary looks in the direction they came from. His worry-stricken face does not go unnoticed by Andrew.

ANDREW
Zach. She’s not coming back.

LAMAR
Just what the hell went wrong?

MANI
I said I can make it!

LAMAR
Not you. That thing. Jaws on paws. What the hell’s it doing here?

(CONTINUED)
Continued:

Zachary
Tapping a new food source, I guess.

Elizabeth and Olivia
walk together.

Olivia
I can’t see anything, can you?

Elizabeth uses the glow of her phone to shed light on their environment and Rico’s face that makes them recoil in disgust. Elizabeth stops herself from vomiting.

Olivia (Cont’d)
What in God’s name?

Elizabeth takes Rico’s radio and flashlight.

Zachary and His Crew

Elizabeth
(from radio)
Hello?

Their attention is caught.

Intercutting Shots

Elizabeth fiddles with the tuner knobs.

Olivia
I don’t think you’re doing it right.

Elizabeth gives her a look that says “Back off”.

Elizabeth
(Into radio)
Hello? Is someone there?

Dennis
Who’s that?

Zachary untucks his radio.

Elizabeth
(Into radio)
Someone talk to me, please. I’m looking for Zachary Masterson.

Olivia speaks loudly into the radio.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

OLIVIA
He’s my son!

Elizabeth pushes her away.

ELIZABETH
Shht!

ZACHARY
Liz?

ELIZABETH
Zach? Is that you?

ZACHARY
Yes. Yes, it’s me.

ELIZABETH
Oh, my god, am I relieved to hear your voice. Are you all right? Where are you?

ZACHARY
Whose radio are you calling from? And how did you get into the building?

ELIZABETH
We couldn’t find the door, so we came in through--

Bad reception causes a recurring static NOISE.

ZACHARY
What? I can’t hear you. Say it again.

ELIZABETH
Zach, can you hear me?

ZACHARY
Liz. Do not move! Stay where you are! I’m coming to get you!

ELIZABETH
What?

ZACHARY
Did you hear me?!

ELIZABETH
I’m losing you. Zach.
ZACHARY
Stay right there! I will find you! I’m coming for you!

He turns off the radio.

LAMAR
Was that your girlfriend?

ZACHARY
Yeah.

LAMAR
You’re not going back there, are you?

ZACHARY
I’m the only chance she’s got. This may be the last time we see each other, so don’t do anything stupid like following me. I mean it. Stick to the plan.

DENNIS
Wait a second. We’re not going? His girlfriend has found a way into the slaughterhouse. We ought to track her down and ask her how she did it. She can get us out of here.

ZACHARY
And get butchered in the process. We wouldn’t last two minutes. We don’t even know her exact location, she could be anywhere. I’m not risking five lives to save one.

LAMAR
What about your life?

ZACHARY
I have a moral obligation. She means something to me.

Zachary, Lamar shake hands.

DENNIS
Good luck.

ANDREW
Go with god.
INT. SHERIFF’S OFFICE - LATER

Rawley helps himself to the gun rack, arms himself with a shotgun and enough ammunition to start a war and rolls out.

EXT. ROAD

Rawley’s car EXPLODES into high gear along the road cutting through the countryside.

INT. MEGAMART - LATER

Zachary runs, gasping, searching.

Nabs a water bottle. Drinks it half-empty.

Spills the rest over his head. Tosses the bottle. Stops when the flashlight dims.

ZACHARY

Come on.

(smacks it)

Not now. Please.

He stares at the light until it dies. Focuses on a distant GLIMMER. It’s constant. It gets bigger, brighter and more intense as it draws closer. It’s Elizabeth with a flashlight.

ELIZABETH

Zach? Thank god, I found you.

She embraces him and is pushed out of the way by Olivia who holds him tight and smothers him with kisses.

OLIVIA

Step aside.

ZACHARY

Mom?

OLIVIA

My baby. Thank god for bringing you back to me. I’ve been worried sick. Is everything okay?

ZACHARY

Yeah, I’m fine.

OLIVIA

Are you sure? Let me see your face.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ZACHARY
I’m okay, mom.
(looks at poodle)
I see you met Matilda.

OLIVIA
Isn’t she adorable? I didn’t have the heart to leave her all by herself.

ZACHARY
How did you get in here?

OLIVIA
We slipped in through the back.

ZACHARY
Through the back? You mean--

OLIVIA
Not anymore.

ELIZABETH
I got your message. We couldn’t call 911, so we came here to find you. Now, would you mind telling us what’s been going on in here? We just saw a dead guy who looked like something out of Silence on the Lambs.

EXT. WULFINGTON RESIDENCE - LATER
Rawley arrives.
PORCH
He opens the screen door, knocks.

RAWLEY
Sheriff’s department, open the door! We have a search warrant for these premises!
(knocks)
Open the door, please!

He tests the knob. The door is unlocked.

INT. WULFINGTON RESIDENCE
He enters fast, waves his shotgun-mounted FLASHLIGHT around.
Searches and secures every room.
INT. MEGAMART - LATER

Zachary and the broads CLASH with the other guys mid-run, jump.

LAMAR
Zach! You made it.

ZACHARY
Hey, Lamar.

INT. WULFINGTON RESIDENCE STUDY ROOM - LATER

Rawley enters, walks through. Shelved books everywhere. A stack of them on a desk. He opens the one on top and flips through it.

Quickly glances over entire sections in the book that are either HIGHLIGHTED, UNDERLINED or CIRCLED and coupled with eighteenth-century IMAGERY.

Each depicts a WOLF of different size and shape ripping apart CIVILIANS in the country. On the next page the top margin reads:

THE BEAST OF GEVAUDAN

The text underneath it comes with more artistic CONCEPTIONS of the mid-seventeen-hundreds, illustrating the BEAST, a WOLF, preying on its VICTIMS.

Another IMAGE shows a pair of HUNTERS facing off with the BEAST.

A third DRAWING captures the BEAST dead and stuffed while being displayed at the court of the French king. Rawley reads a paragraph.

RAWLEY
"Between 1764 and 1767 over two-hundred people fell victim to a blood-thirsty creature that terrorized the farming communities of south-central France. According to eye-witness reports the large, wolf-like animal targeted mostly humans while the cattle remained unharmed..."

LIVING ROOM

Small ANIMALS in cages and the stuffed HEADS of much larger specimens mounted on the wall. Explosive devices, mechanical and electronic components. Rawley noses around.

(CONTINUED)
Sees the entire wall plastered with NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS.

Studies them from one end of the wall to the other. Narrows his gaze on four headlines:

“ZOOKEEPER FIRED FOR ANIMAL ABUSE”.

“PREDATOR CUB ABDUCTED FROM ZOO. SUSPECT REMAINS AT LARGE”.

“MADMAN ON THE LOOSE”.

“MIDWEST TOWN SHAKEN BY GRUESOME MURDERS”.

Surveillance PHOTOGRAPHS of Zachary and his entire CREW, including Sarah and Travis taken at different locations.

One of those locations are the front doors of MEGAMART.

Its BLUE PLAN unfolded on a table. A UNIFORM lies crumbled on a sofa.

(FLASHBACK) INT. MEGAMART - DAY

Travis discusses the same BLUE PLAN with the contractors.

The TECHNICIAN on the ladder wears the same UNIFORM.

BACK TO PRESENT

Another NEWSPAPER CUTOUT bears the name C. WULFINGTON under the zookeeper’s grainy, black-and-white PHOTOGRAPH.

EXT. WULFINGTON RESIDENCE

Rawley’s phone accidentally falls out of his pocket as he fumbles for his keys. He picks it up and reads Zachary’s TEXT MESSAGE: PLEASE HELP US. ZACH.

INT. MEGAMART - LATER

Zachary and the others walk together.

 OLIVIA
(to Zachary)
I can’t think of a single animal that’s capable of what you’re telling me. It’s not natural. Speaking of which, whose poodle is this?

 ZACHARY
Mrs. Kovalchek’s.
OLIVIA
Who’s Mrs. Kovalchek?

ZACHARY
Mrs. Kovalchek is dead.

Lamar stops to chug from his flask, splits it with the boys and Elizabeth.

DENNIS
Don’t mind if I do.

Elizabeth draws a look of disapproval from Olivia.

ELIZABETH
Problem?

OLIVIA
No. No problem.

ELIZABETH
What?

OLIVIA
I wasn’t saying anything.

Olivia mutters with discontent.

ELIZABETH
What was that?

OLIVIA
Nothing.

ELIZABETH
If you got something to say, say it.

OLIVIA
All right. I was just thinking that someone with your predisposition should exercise more self-control.

ELIZABETH
Predisposition?

Olivia hints at the flask with her eyes.

ELIZABETH (CONT’D)
I’m thirsty.

OLIVIA
(to Zachary)
She’s so in denial.
ELIZABETH
Oh, come on!

ZACHARY
Keep your voice down!

OLIVIA
You see? This is what I get when I’m trying to help.

ELIZABETH
I don’t need help.

OLIVIA
Stop lying! You can fool yourself, you can fool him, but you can’t fool me!

ZACHARY
Mom, be quiet!

OLIVIA
No, damn it, I won’t be quiet! I held my tongue long enough, but this is it! She’s a drinker! She’s an angry drinker! You should’ve seen how she talked to me.

With his eyes Zachary follows the path of the AIR SHAFT above them that stretches on in multiple directions.

He pulls Dennis aside to have a private and quiet conversation.

OLIVIA (CONT’D)
I feel sorry for the next breathalyzer that scores a date with foul mouth over here. That’s right. I remember. Dewey.

ELIZABETH
That was one time!

OLIVIA
Do yourself a favor. Seek help. Find a support group, let them put you on the right track. You’ll thank me later.

ELIZABETH
I am not an alcoholic!

OLIVIA
Oh, dear.

Dennis scales a towering shelf with the flashlight in his mouth.
CONTINUED: (3)

SCOTT
What the hell are you doing? What’s he doing?

Dennis unscrews one of the vent grilles with a coin.

SHAFT INTERIOR
He sticks his head in, points the flashlight both ways.

SALES FLOOR
Dennis dismounts the shelf.

ELIZABETH
And?

ZACHARY
I believe I just solved our problem. There’s a reason why the air conditioning is on emergency power. (to Dennis)
You can explain it better.

DENNIS
When you think about it, it’s actually quiet obvious. See, temperature impacts the rate of chemical reaction in food, especially frozen food which is stored at zero degrees or less to slow down the chemical reaction--

MANI
Cut the crap, wise ass!

DENNIS
It’s simple physics. In order to maintain optimal room temperature the ventilation shaft traps hot air in winter and leads it OUT of the building in the summer. Get it?

ZACHARY
So if we all get into that shaft it will take us all the way to the surface.

LAMAR
Sweet freedom.

ZACHARY
Let’s do it. For safety reasons I suggest we send one person ahead with a radio.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
When he says it’s okay the others will follow. Any volunteers? Women and fat people excluded. Please, don’t raise your hands at once.

MANI
I think you should do it. What’s the matter, junior? Scared? Get your ass up there.

OLIVIA
His ass is staying right here. Zach is claustrophobic. He wasn’t gonna say anything because he’s too much of a man to admit that he has a serious medical condition. We’re more than happy to stay behind and wait for the rescue team.

ZACHARY
We?

OLIVIA
I am not leaving your side.

ZACHARY
Mom--

ELIZABETH
Neither am I.

ZACHARY
Liz--

ELIZABETH
I’m not going if she’s not going.

ANDREW
All right, then. Since no one’s volunteering.

Andrew puts gloves on.

LAMAR

ANDREW
That’s right. I’m the man of the house, motherfucker. I do stuff like this all the time. Out of my way.

Andrew ascends the shelf. Olivia takes Mani aside.
OLIVIA
    Can I talk to you for a second, please?

SHAFT INTERIOR

Andrew crams himself through.

ANDREW
    (into radio)
    Okay. I’m in.

ZACHARY
    (from radio)
    Roger that.

He inches forward on all four. Turns a corner and triggers a small, homemade MOTION DETECTOR.

AT THE FAR END OF THE SHAFT

The TIMER on a C-4 PLASTIC EXPLOSIVE initiates a THREE MINUTE countdown.

SALES FLOOR

ZACHARY
    (into radio)
    How’s it going up there?

SHAFT INTERIOR

Andrew stops for a moment to wipe sweat off his face with his shirt.

ANDREW
    (into radio)
    It’s hot.

END OF SHAFT

The timer approaches zero. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1...

A red LIGHT BLINKS and BEEPS, and then BOOM!

A powerful BLAST funnels a hurricane of FIRE through the entire ventilation tunnel network.

SALES FLOOR

SCOTT
    What the fuck was that?

(CONTINUED)
They turn and see the oncoming WAVE of the explosion from afar.

It rips through the shaft compartments systematically from the inside out, creating a blanket of FIRE that rapidly spreads across the ceiling.

LAMAR
We have to get Andy!

ZACHARY
Lamar, no!

SHAFT INTERIOR
Andrew screams before being consumed by the HELL FIRE.

SALES FLOOR
Lamar manages to get halfway up the shelf. The overwhelming shock wave of the DETONATION knocks him back down, setting off the SPRINKLERS.

A heavy OBJECT shakes loose, falls and whacks Scott unconscious.

ZACHARY
Go! Go, go, go, go!

Mani heaves Scott over his shoulder. The others grab Lamar and clear out of there.

MOMENTS LATER
Elizabeth twists her ankle while running. She braces against the wall, limps. Zachary looks over his shoulder twice before realizing she’s gone.

ZACHARY
Where’s Liz?

He turns back. Elizabeth sits, massages her ankle. Zachary arrives.

ZACHARY (CONT’D)
Liz.

ELIZABETH
I’m okay.

Zachary starts down the aisle. Elizabeth clutches her ankle.

(CONTINUED)
Looks up, squints. BEAST at twelve o’clock, ROARING and HURTLING towards her. She screams.

ZACHARY

Elizabeth!

The second she’s about to die the distant SCREECH of a whistle abruptly slows the beast.

It growls, drools blood, bears its teeth just inches away from Elizabeth’s face. She cries, whimpers.

The whistle RESOUNDS. The beast turns tail and whooshes into the darkness. The sprinklers stop. Elizabeth sobs in Zachary’s arms.

ZACHARY (CONT’D)

It’s okay. It’s okay. It’s over. He’s gone.

DENNIS

What just happened here?

LAMAR

Isn’t that obvious? We’re being hunted.

ZACHARY

Someone’s using us for pawns in his own sick, little game of chess. The whistle was his way of saying “Hi”. He’s coming for us. He’s the wolf and we’re the sheep.

OLIVIA

My god. What do we do?

ZACHARY

We stop him. First we level the playing field, then we hunt his ass down and ghost him. If we don’t make a stand now, we risk losing everyone.

DENNIS

What do you mean by “Level the playing field”?

MOMENTS LATER

They force-open the elevator door on the second floor.

RAFFLE PRIZE DISPLAY

Mani puts Scott in the backseat of a car.
GROUND FLOOR ELEVATOR

Zachary opens it. Places a log with a string tied to it between the doors, presses the “Door Close” button.

Enters, opens the ceiling trap door.

ZACHARY
We’ll set the first two traps down by that gateway. If that doesn’t work, we’ll lure it in here, jerk back the stopper, the doors close and lock it in.

DENNIS
But that still leaves us with the problem of getting the hunter to its prey. What do we use for bait?

MANI
Just what do you think, Einstein?

ZACHARY
One of us will take position inside the elevator and then escape through the trap door once the animal’s past the threshold.

LAMAR
Let’s get this shit over with.

LATER

A SERIES OF SHOTS: The TEAM goes to war.

MOVES FAST to ATTACK, PILLAGE, EMPLOY every TOOL and MERCHANDISE at its disposal to booby-trap the place strategically from floor to ceiling.

BANGING, HAMMERING and SAWING away.

Everyone is HAULING, PUSHING, CUTTING, TEARING, STRETCHING, PULLING, ASSEMBLING and LIFTING using nothing but muscle, sweat and steely determination.

Mani MIMES and makes the SOUND of a whiplash to Lamar with a bendable, steel string. Lamar is not amused.

LATER

Dennis walks by himself, whistles.

(CONTINUED)
Here, kitty, kitty. Oh, god, please don’t let me die. Here, kitty, kitty.

He whistles. Catches the beast in his LIGHT, runs.

Here, kitty, kitty. Oh, god, please don’t let me die. Here, kitty, kitty.

It’s coming! It’s coming! Get ready, people!

The Others
hide with their lights off, waiting. Dennis passes through the gateway and over a wire.

The beast dogs him and trips the wire, but nothing happens.

ZACHARY
Shit! It didn’t work.

Dennis stops and goes back for his dropped wallet.

Don’t do that, moron!

With the wallet back in his possession Dennis turns to run when he loses footing inside a self-made rope net.

It SNAPS closed around the carnivore and BLASTS off ceilingward. Dennis hangs upside down, screams.

Frees himself with the box cutter, falls. The beast goes wild, TRASHING, ROARING, tearing through the net into freedom.

Zachary pulls Dennis out of the danger zone.

Waives his hands at the animal to draw its attention away from Dennis.

Hey! Hey! Over here!

ELEVATOR

Pressed flat against its side is Lamar. He sees Zachary run in his direction, hounded.

Last chance to get this right! Don’t fuck it up!
He stops a few feet away from the elevator. Nervously and frightfully stares back and forth between jaws on paws and the two-thousand pound, confined space of metal.

Promotes himself to go, occupies the lift. Waits until the last moment.

**ZACHARY (CONT’D)**

**Now!**

The beast ROCKETS forward and SLAMS into the elevator wall just a split second after Zachary hightails out of there through the trap door.

Lamar yanks the stopper out. The elevator shuts with the animal inside.

**LAMAR**

We got him! Whoo!

**ELEVATOR SHAFT**

Zachary pulls himself up by the wire ropes, exits through the doors on the second floor.

**GROUND FLOOR**

Zachary returns.

**ZACHARY**

Mom! Liz! Where are you?!

Elizabeth, Olivia come out of hiding.

**OLIVIA**

We’re here!

**ZACHARY**

Is everyone else okay?

All gather by the elevator.

**OLIVIA**

Is it contained?

**MANI**

Hey, how come he didn’t set off the first trap?

(continues)
LAMAR
Booby-traps can malfunction at times, especially those that are strung up inside a giant supermarket where they don’t belong.

ELIZABETH
What do we do now?

ZACHARY
Now we hunt.

Elizabeth tests her phone, dials repeatedly and frantically.

ZACHARY (CONT’D)
What are you doing? You can’t call anybody.

ELIZABETH
I have to at least try. Maybe I get lucky like you did, who the hell knows? For some reason I can’t stop thinking about my sister. I have a bad feeling, I don’t know why.

ZACHARY
Liz. Liz.

He blocks her phone keypad.

ZACHARY (CONT’D)
I need to tell you something.

With Olivia and Dennis watching, Zachary embraces her to whisper the bad news into her ear.

Dennis, Olivia look on as her face tightens with grief and her eyes tear up into silent crying. She sits, gives vent to her sorrow, laments. Dennis respectfully keeps his distance.

MANI
What’s going on?

DENNIS
She just found out her sister died. Sarah.

MANI
Sarah? The manager’s daughter?

Lamar throws back the flask, loans it to Mani. Olivia snatches it out of his hands, drinks. Lamar pukes blood. His intestines get yanked out through his back.

(CONTINUED)
Slither away on a titanium-fanged chain into the hands of CLARENCE WULFINGTON JUNIOR, 34, night vision goggles.

Those fangs come hurtling back and decapitate Dennis.

ZACHARY
Looks like we found him.

Matilda BARKS. Olivia hoists her into her arms.

ZACHARY (CONT’D)
Liz. Run as fast as you can, find a safe place to hide. You, too, mom. We can handle this guy.

ELIZABETH
Are you crazy?!

ZACHARY
It’s time we end this.

OLIVIA
I am not leaving you alone. I’ll die first.

ZACHARY
I said go!

ELIZABETH
Promise you’ll come back to me. I want your guarantee.

ZACHARY
You will see me again. Now go.

Elizabeth, Olivia take off. Clarence unravels his chain. Tries to hit Zachary and Mani with one swing.

Misses. Takes another swing. Misses. Whips the chain forward, smites Mani’s flashlight out of his hand.

Mani stoops to reclaim it. Clarence vanishes.

ZACHARY (CONT’D)
Where is he?

They spin in every direction to spotlight him.

Clarence FLASHES in and out of the dark repeatedly, throws them a hard punch one after the other. Mani touches his jaw.

MANI
Son of a bitch! I’m gonna kill him!
CONTINUED: (3)

ZACHARY

First you gotta find him.

MANI

Where did he go?

Clarence comes and goes, fists flying. He comes again.

Again and again. Cuts Mani across the back, brings him to his knees. Zachary takes a blow to the ribs, joins Mani on the floor.

ZACHARY

This is going well, wouldn’t you say?

With a flashlight between them Zachary sees Clarence’s REFLECTION in Mani’s eyes. Downs him with a reverse kick.

Attempts to strip him off his goggles.

Clarence knifes him in the leg.

Zachary shouts, rolls around in agony. Mani rises.

The tail of Wulfington’s chain hurls in his face and he plonks down, slumped against a display rack.

A pair of garden shears drops next to his feet.

Clarence turns to meet Mani’s onslaught with the shears.

Wields his chain, wraps it around the shears, breaks them apart with a single tug.

The chain boomerangs, bludgeons Mani down.

Zachary is about to pull out the knife. Clarence pushes it deeper into his leg. He screams. Mani runs off.

ELIZABETH, OLIVIA

Matilda scratches the door to the manager’s office, BARKS to draw attention to it.

Elizabeth reaches through the door window after SMASHING it, unlocks the door. They enter and find Travis on the floor. Gagged and severely beaten.

ELIZABETH

Dad?

(unties, ungages him)

What are you doing here?
TRAVIS
Son of a bitch kidnapped me.

OLIVIA
Who the hell is this guy?

TRAVIS
He’s the brother of someone who used to work for us. I would be dead by now if I hadn’t told him that I’m the only one who knows the combination to the vault where we keep all the cash for wire transfers. He said it would be a good opportunity to sweeten his revenge.

ELIZABETH
Sweeten his revenge? Revenge for what?

TRAVIS
There’s no time for explanations. You wanna go home? Follow me.

ZACHARY
gets dragged across the floor by Clarence who relieves him of the knife, lifts him to his feet against the wall, chokes him.

CLARENCE
Time to pray.

Zachary PEERS over Clarence’s shoulder before he does.

Strapped in the seat of his forklift truck Mani POWERS into action with a vengeance.

The HEADLIGHTS awaken with a blinding intensity, forcing Clarence to take off his goggles. Mani aims for him, lets out a warcry.

Clarence gets impaled by one of the forks and screwed against the wall, dead. Mani climbs out of the cockpit.

MANI
Checkmate.

He helps Zachary up.

ZACHARY
Thanks. I didn’t think you would come back.
MANI
I said I would kill him and I did.

ZACHARY
Let’s go find the others and tell them the good news.

(reads his face)
What?

MANI
Look. I know we’ve had our differences in the past, but tonight I realized something. I shouldn’t have picked on you. Your mom told me what you did for me. I never thought I would say this, but thank you. Oh, shit, I just remembered something.

ZACHARY
What?

MANI
I left Scott in the backseat of that car at the raffle display.

ZACHARY
Time to wake him up.

ELIZABETH, OLIVIA, TRAVIS
Matilda frees herself from Olivia’s control, runs off.

OLIVIA
Wait! Come back!

ELIZABETH
Forget about the dog. Come on, let’s go.

Travis leads them back into
THE LOADING DOCK

ELIZABETH
Dad. What are we doing here? This is a dead-end.

Travis gets his hands on a lever in the wall.

TRAVIS
Cover your ears.

He pulls down the lever and causes a very loud BLOW-OUT BANG pressure release that forces the door to spring open.

(CONTINUED)
OLIVIA
I can’t. I’m sorry. A mother doesn’t leave her child. You two go without me.
(takes out keys)
Here. Take my car. Go get help.

TRAVIS
Zach may be your son, but he’s my employee. Those are my men, not yours. I am responsible for their safety. You can take your own car, go to the police and tell them what happened and that’s the end of it.

ELIZABETH
Mrs. Masterson, please.

Elizabeth walks her out.

TRAVIS
(to Elizabeth)
Wait a second. Is your sister okay? I talked to her this morning, she was supposed to work tonight.

ELIZABETH
She’s fine. Zach told me she finished her shift and went home with Frank. Be careful.

Travis hustles back inside. Olivia catches Elizabeth staring at her as an instinctive response to the lie she dished out to Travis.

ELIZABETH (CONT’D)
No need to tell him now.

INT. MEGAMART RAFFLE DISPLAY - LATER

Zachary arrives with Mani, opens the car and finds an empty backseat.

ZACHARY
Where did he go?

TRAVIS
runs into an ambush. Armed with a deck-board torn from one of the pallets, Scott swings a knockout BLOW in Travis’s face.
CONTINUED:

Stabs him repeatedly in the throat. The heavy discharge of blood drenches Scott’s face and clothes.

EXT. MEGAMART

Rawley finally shows up and steps out of his car before Olivia can start hers.

INT. MEGAMART RAFFLE DISPLAY

Zachary shuts the backseat door. Mani cries out in pain, grabs his own left arm.

    ZACHARY
    What’s with you?

Mani struggles to breathe, sweats, grits his teeth, falls down.

    ZACHARY (CONT’D)
    What?! What?! What the fuck’s going on?! No! No!

He tries to resuscitate him, pounds his chest.

    ZACHARY (CONT’D)
    Don’t fucking die on me now! Come on, man! Goddamn it! Fuck!

Mani passes away. Zachary gasps. Scott stands behind him.

    SCOTT
    Looks like his heart gave out. Ironic, isn’t it? You run your ass off all night, you try not to be eaten alive only to become victim of your own diet.

    ZACHARY
    (rises)
    Where the fuck have you been?

    SCOTT
    I must have bumped my head earlier. It completely knocked me out. When I woke up I started searching for you guys. What happened? Where is everybody?

    ZACHARY
    If you were searching for us, then why did you come back here?

(CONTINUED)
I got scared. I figured if I stay in the car, someone will come looking for me, eventually.

Blood TRICKLES from Scott’s arm and eye-brow. Zachary looks him up and down.

ZACHARY
What the hell happened to you?

SCOTT
Oh, this isn’t my blood. I ran into the manager just a minute ago. I sent him back to his daughter. He would’ve been very lonely without her.

ZACHARY
Sarah? What did you do to her?

SCOTT
What she deserved. You wouldn’t understand, you’re an only child.

ZACHARY
What are you talking about?

SCOTT
You don’t know what I’m talking about? You don’t know? Remember Bobby?

ZACHARY
Yes, I remember Bobby. We worked together.

SCOTT
He was also my brother. A good boy. And then he changed. Six months on the job turned him into a train wreck because his co-workers are degenerate lowlives that gang up on a weaker kid. The name calling, the mockery, the bullying. He couldn’t handle it, so you know what he did? He thought the only way to end his suffering was to stick a rifle in his mouth and blow his brains out.

ZACHARY
What happened to Bobby is tragic and I’m sorry for your loss, but it doesn’t justify you losing your mind and start killing people. It won’t bring your brother back.

(CONTINUED)
SCOTT
Of all the guys in this stinking joint you’re the worst because you stood by and did nothing when he needed a friend. You’re just as guilty as the rest of those animals.

ZACHARY
You’re the only animal left in this building. You will serve hard time for what you did, you spineless piece of shit.

SCOTT
Oh, I’m not a animal. I’m worse. I’m human.

Scott rams the curvature between his thumb and index finger into his throat. Zachary crumbles to his knees, chokes, wheezes, twists and turns on the floor, fights for air.

SCOTT (CONT’D)
I’m gonna level with you. I’m a black belt. I’ve been kicking ass since I was five.

Scott kicks and throws him around, clobbers him until he bleeds.

SCOTT (CONT’D)
I practically live at the Dojo, learning how to survive in extreme situations. But more importantly, how to effectively disable a man without killing him.

Scott unleashes more and more of his devastating skills on him, bathing the floor and his knuckles in Zachary’s blood.

Zachary crawls for his life, beaten black and green.

SCOTT (CONT’D)
You know, it’s really not polite to turn your back on someone when they’re talking.

Scott bombards his soft spots, catapults him around the room, smashing up surrounding merchandise.

I/E. RAWLEY’S CAR

Olivia, Elizabeth in the backseat. Rawley on the radio.

(CONTINUED)
DISPATCH
(from radio)
Roger that. Backup units underway. Stay safe.

Rawley hangs up.

OLIVIA
How can you send out a call if there’s no electricity?

RAWLEY
The station’s using its power reserves to sustain services. Not to worry, Mrs. Masterson. We’ll get your son back. Stay here.

He heads back to the store, pumps his shotgun.

INT. MEGAMART

Zachary takes a swing at Scott, bloodies his lip. Scott headbutts him to his knees, punches him hard across the face.

Drives his foot into him and sends him wallowing off to the elevator door.

SCOTT
By the time they break through that door you’ll be half-digested dog meat. No one will ever suspect me. Let’s get you ready for the coroner.

Scott kneels behind him, pulls him towards himself and into a headlock.

Zachary thrashes his feet about, pushes himself shittless as he fights against the stranglehold.

The elevator button appears in his peripheral vision, and he painstakingly reaches for it, barely brushes its surface with his fingertip.

He makes a quick sideways tilt, his finger slips off the touch-sensitive button and turns it ON.

The doors open right next to Scott. He is fucked. The beast EXPLODES out of the lift, tears him across the floor in a death-roll.

Zachary scrambles to his feet and staggers away. His violent CHOKING-COUGH drowned out by Scott’s nightmarish SCREAMS.
EXT. MEGAMART PARKING LOT

A GLOVED HAND knocks on the backseat window of Rawley’s car.

INT. MEGAMART

A SERIES OF SHOTS: Zachary gathers a bunch of flashlight headlamps. Puts batteries in them. Straps them together into a vest. Suits up.

Makes a spear by taping his box cutter to the end of a broom stick and runs with it.

LATER

He roams from aisle to aisle, spear jutting forward. He locates the creature while it FEASTS on Scott’s corpse, tearing flesh from bone.

ZACHARY

All right. It’s payback time.

He pokes it with the spear. It ignores him, wolfs down chunks of meat.

ZACHARY (CONT’D)

Come on!

He pokes it harder, causing it to release a pained cry, showing off its teeth and pawing at him.

ZACHARY (CONT’D)

Come on, you bastard! Let’s go!

He drives the spear into its face to provoke it.

ZACHARY (CONT’D)

Is that the best you can do?!

The spear gets lodged in its jaws. The tip snaps. Zachary runs and is chased by the monster. Rawley dead ahead.

His LIGHT swivels in Zachary’s face who deviates from his path just before the creature SPRINGS and catches a BULLET mid-air.

Rawley never drops his guard during his vain attempt to ID the CARCASS rendered unrecognizable by the gunshot.

He ejects the empty shell, turns on Zachary.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

RAWLEY
(lowers gun)
Zach.

ZACHARY
Hey, Mikey.

RAWLEY
You all right, kid?

ZACHARY
I’ve been better. What took you so long?

RAWLEY
I got distracted. Are you alone?

ZACHARY
Not by choice.

RAWLEY
I spoke to your mom. She’s waiting for you outside.

ZACHARY
How did you get in?

RAWLEY
Same way I’m getting out. Let’s move.

Garth arrives.

RAWLEY (CONT’D)
Randall.

GARTH
Sheriff. The two passengers in your car told me you would be here.

RAWLEY
Where’s the backup I asked for?

GARTH
They’re coming.

RAWLEY
I found him, Randall. I know who he is. This is not your average serial killer. It’s personal.
    (motions at Zachary)
He’s the one who got away.

GARTH
No, he didn’t.
CONTINUED: (2)

Garth SHOOTS Rawley in the head execution-style.

ZACHARY
What the fuck! Why did you do that?!

Garth CLUBS him down hard with his nightstick.

GARTH
Where is he?!

ZACHARY
What are you talking about?

GARTH
Clarence. Where is he?!

ZACHARY
Who the hell are you, anyway?

GARTH
I’m his brother.

ZACHARY
Not another one.

GARTH
He thought it would be so much more satisfying to get you all at once. Now tell me where he is.

ZACHARY
Fuck you!

Garth repeatedly BATTERS his wounded leg.

GARTH
You tell me where he is right now or I’m gonna break every bone in your body.

ZACHARY
He’s dead. We nailed his ass to the wall.

GARTH
Don’t play with me, boy. I’m in no mood for games.

Zachary keeps a straight face. Garth cocks his arm to strike. His chest BLOWS open and spins him violently to his demise, clears Zachary’s view on the SHOOTER. Sarah.

Barely supporting herself on one knee while using it as an arm rest to level the sheriff’s weapon.

(CONTINUED)
She drops it, applies pressure on her stab wound, hobbled, weakened. Zachary comes to her aid.

SARAH
Did you miss me?

ZACHARY
That doesn’t even begin to describe how I feel.

SARAH
You know, when I told you not to wait for me I didn’t actually expect you to leave me out there by myself.

ZACHARY
We were gonna send out a search party, but we ran out of people.

SARAH
I was just kidding.

ZACHARY
We gotta get you to a hospital. Put your arm around me.

She grabs on to him in SHOCK. Zachary holds her gaze from the moment she is RIPPED out of his arms and dragged off into the black oblivion at the end of a long, furry TAIL.

She screams, reaches out to him for help.

ZACHARY (CONT’D)
Sarah! NOOOOOOOOOOO!

Her cries quiet down into the distance. Zachary hangs his head, chokes up.

ZACHARY (CONT’D)
Jesus Christ. There’s two of them.

Collects additional ammo from Rawley’s belt and takes his shotgun. Follows the BLOOD TRAIL.

The animal ZIPS past his flank. He UNLOADS the gun in its direction. Misses each time. Aims high.

The target DASHES along a scaffold plank, outruns the impact of the bullets by a few inches. Zachary ceases pursuit when the gun goes CLICK.

In the midst of reloading the beast RE-APPEARS on the plank, leaps onto him, over his head and takes him down.
He doesn’t even bother getting up since the animal is only three feet away.

He CRAMS the last couple of cartridges into the magazine tube, RACKS the slide back and forth and FIRES.

The bullet goes through, but it’s not stopping it.

He keeps FIRING, wounding it, grazing it, anything but killing it.

ZACHARY (CONT’D)

Just fucking die already!

He gazes up at the DEAD-FALL hanging over their heads. Cuts it down with one SHOT.

A bunch of logs bundled together, spiked with sharp objects and five times the size of the target animal, drops straight down and CRUSHES it.

The ceiling LIGHTS SPARK alive throughout the store. Zachary lowers the gun to get a good look at the carcass.

A three-hundred pound BLACK PANTHER. Jaws hang open.

Head pierced by a spike. Zachary lies down, exhausted.

Matilda licks his face.

ZACHARY (CONT’D)

And I thought you were dangerous.

MOMENTS LATER

Zachary journeys back across the building. A tiny LIGHT BLINKING from inside Clarence’s suit gains his interest.

He takes it out. It’s a handheld remote switch.

FRONT ENTRANCE GATE

Zachary hits the switch. The steel door lifts open. He unlocks the entrance gate per keypad, exits.

OUTSIDE

He is caught in a sea of police HEADLIGHTS. Guns cocked and leveled.

VOICE

Freeze!

(CONTINUED)
Zachary throws his hands up. Another VOICE thunders out of a megaphone.

VOICE #2
Drop your weapon! Put your hands on top of your head! Do it now!

OLIVIA (O.S.)
No! Don’t shoot!

Olivia, Elizabeth break through the wall of law enforcement.

OLIVIA (CONT’D)
That’s my son!

Both women run into Zachary’s arms.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Dozens of PEOPLE attend. Zachary, Olivia and teary-eyed Elizabeth stand close to the pair of caskets belonging to Sarah and Travis. The PRIEST recites a prayer.

I/E. OLIVIA’S CAR (MOVING) - LATER

Olivia drives. Zachary in the passenger seat with Matilda licking his face. Elizabeth in the back.

ZACHARY
You know what? I’m thinking about switching careers. Maybe go back to school.

(to Elizabeth)
Spend more quality time with you. You, too, mom, I haven’t forgotten about you.

OLIVIA
You kids hungry? What are you gonna have for dinner?

ZACHARY
I don’t feel like eating right now.

OLIVIA
You don’t actually have to eat anything. I just wanna be close to you, especially in a time like this.

ZACHARY
Just me?
CONTINUED:

OLIVIA
I meant both of you. We’ll have dinner at my house. Like a family. What do you say?

ZACHARY
Liz?

ELIZABETH
I can go for that.

ZACHARY
Thanks, mom.

ELIZABETH
Thank you, Mrs. Masterson.

OLIVIA
Call me Olivia.

FADE OUT.