

AWAKE

by
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OVER BLACK, the various sounds of television commercials, show intros, dialogue being spoken by actors, infomercials, reality shows, etc. The channel surfing stops and pauses on a local news report:

TV VOICE

A police officer was found dead last night in an alley way of Berkshire & Plane Street. Initial reports indicate that he was a lone gunman. No evidence was found at the scene of the crime. Police are still investigating, more at eleven.

CUT TO: A MAN'S picture fills up the TELEVISION SCREEN. He seems to be in his mid-twenties, hair buzzed, a thin mustache circulating around his lips and chin, joining his sideburns. He's in uniform.

He smiles; a warm, pleasant smile. It gives us an impression of his personality; friendly. One that may say he's a family man or a beloved local community hero or a good friend to his fellow officers at the police station.

A SUBTITLE READS: "OFFICER NEIL MacGUFF".

The picture is quickly replaced by another of the networks sponsor's. The NEWS' jingle FADES OUT as the logo is then again replaced by its commercial. The SCREEN goes black as the television is turned off.

ECU on A PAIR OF EYES. Dilated brown pupils, staring back at us. They're full of fear, sadness and guilt. A BEAT as they take an effect on us, making us feel his panic and culpability.

1 INT. LIVING ROOM. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. NIGHT

A bleak, dark living room with an austere and dreary feeling and tone. A silhouette of a FIGURE, back to us, sits at a couch, facing the television, their identity unknown to us. ANOTHER BEAT.

The FIGURE leans over, burying their face into their hands, only to further their anonymous identity. Then, WEEPING, a soft cry, almost silent, fills the room.

CUT TO BLACK: MAIN TITLE "AWAKE". TEXT: "THE NEXT DAY". TEXT
FADES OUT, FADE IN:

2 INT. BEDROOM. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. MORNING.

SUNLIGHT. Direct sunlight, FILLING THE SCREEN, a hazy, dreamlike whiteness. A CAMERA PULL BACK reveals curtains, parted in the middle, creating a thin slant of radiating sunlight.

A SLOW, SWIFT CAMERA DROP to the ground divulges a GUN, laying about, discarded. A PAN again discloses a BED, inhabited by a MALE TEENAGER, slumbering. The slant of sunlight strikes down the middle, METAPHORICALLY "cutting it in two".

A CU of his facial features; eyes closed, nostrils flared as he breathes in and out silently. A CU of RED NEON NUMERALS; an alarm clock. It beeps quietly at first, building to a crescendo. A HAND comes crashing down on the "SNOOZE" BUTTON.

MICHAEL, an artfully bedraggled burnout kid, 16, awakens and exits his bed, drained. He sighs as he reaches for his BEDROOM DOOR HANDLE, ready to exit, when, he notices the GUN.

Discarding his thought of exiting, he WALKS over to the object of interest SLOWLY. Picking up the gun, he examines it, as the events of last night quickly flashes through his mind.

3 INT/EXT. UNKNOWN. NIGHT

A hand holding a gun, the one Michael found on the floor of his room. The hand belongs to an UNKNOWN PERSON, but they hold in such a way, making it seem as though their gesturing to hand it to someone.

UNKNOWN PERSON

If you wanna be a part of us, you gotta be
well protected.

Michael's HAND comes into FRAME, taking hold of the gun. The two come out of frame. Michael stares intensely at it, extremely careful as he begins turning it over again and again, examining it.

4 INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. SAME/PRESENT

A KNOCK on his closed bedroom door jeers Michael back into the present. A rhythmic knock to indicate who's on the other side of the door. Michael glances at the gun, acting quickly to hide it.

MICHAEL
(still keen on finding
a hiding place)

Who is it?

A female voice sounds on the other side. It's becomes obvious it's Michael's mother.

MICHAEL'S MOTHER
It's me. I heard you walking from
downstairs and figured it was best to hand
you a load of laundry now.

CAMERA SHOT UNDER MICHAEL'S BED: Michael carefully places the gun under there, then fixes the sheets back into place. His mother knocks again on the door. Michael rushes over quickly.

Michael's cell phone rings, alarming him of a new text message. Michael quickly skims it: "Meet me at the park down on Lincoln Ave. - IAN". Michael nods and puts the phone down back on his nightstand.

5 INT. HALLWAY. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. MORNING.

MICHAEL'S MOTHER, RENEE, (late 20s) stand with a laundry basket stacked high with an assortment of clothing. She resembles that of a typical teenager's mother; quiet, kept out of the way. She shifts her weight on right foot to her left to right, waiting.

Michael opens up. She smiles, a look on her face of suspicion. She nears him, trying to catch peeks into his room.

RENEE
What where you doing in there that took so
goddamn long?

MICHAEL

(groggy voice)
Nothing mom, I was just tired.

A BEAT. Awkward, yet needed.

RENEE
(denying her suspicions)
Well, here's your laundry. Figured you might need since your probably gonna be outside most of the day.
(pause, under her breath)
Like you always do.

MICHAEL
Yeah, I was just gonna go meet IAN at the park in a little.

RENEE
Ok, just be back before dark.

MICHAEL
Mom.

RENEE
(handing Michael the laundry)
Fine, here.

MICHAEL
(closes door)
Thanks.

6 INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM. SAME.

Michael sets the laundry down on his bed. He slowly goes to the floor and retrieves the gun. Looking it over, he decides to disregard it and places it in one of the dressers.

He grabs a shirt and pants and gets dressed. He grabs his cell phone and hat from the nightstand and makes his way for the bathroom, but before he exits fully he takes one last glance at his dresser, containing the gun. A BEAT, then Michael leaves.

FADE OUT TO WHITE. BLACK TEXT: "FOUR DAYS EARLIER". TEXT FADES OUT, FADE IN FROM WHITE:

7 EXT. PARK. DAY.

A BENCH overlooking a HILL. Michael sits next to another teenager, male, older, a deceitfully disheveled guy of conniving looks. An ominous figure, one you don't want to get caught up with. IAN, 16, and Michael face forward, admiring the view.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

Meeting Ian at the park was a daily thing. It was actually by far the milestone of my day.

MICHAEL

(to IAN, facing the view)

It's hot as hell today. This heat is getting to much for me. I think I'm gonna go up to the lake one day, just to cool off.

A BEAT, as the sun radiates more heat. Michael's POV: a butterfly floats past, landing on one of the flowers below them. He stares at this, then looks at Ian. Ian's entranced with the activity below.

IAN

(not interested)

Cool...did you see MERCEDES down at Trenton Road? Man, she looks fine as hell.

(beat)

Hey, did you do that summer reading thing yet. Man, that crap is required and I didn't even read one goddamn book.

MICHAEL

No thanks, I'm not into the academics as much as you are.

IAN

Hey, I'm not into it. It just adds stress to your life, and stress just makes things harder.

MICHAEL

No dip, Sherlock.

They share a LAUGH. A CELLPHONE sounds. Ian REACTS. He grabs it from his pocket, looking over a text message. He gets up then faces Michael, putting his cell phone back into his pocket and grabbing his string backpack.

Ian walks OUT OF FRAME, leaving Michael alone. Michael's POV: the park below is full of life. A nearby pool is crowded with many people on a hot summer day like this. Michael gets up and walks OUT OF FRAME.

8 EXT. REDHILL DRIVE. DAY/SAME.

Michael walks down the sidewalk, looking around at the scenery. The city; a street crowded with zooming cars, buildings rising high up, people minding their business, walking about.

He takes a seat a BUS STOP, waiting for a ride home. He stuffs his hands into his pockets, looking around. He looks down at his shoes, eyeing them. Bottoms caked in mud and grass, smudges here and there...

He hears a sound. A faint cry. He seems unsure of it, wondering if he's actually hearing it. Or maybe it was the wind. Playing it off, he hears it again. Michael gets up and investigates the origin of noise. Looking around, it seems no one notices, or even care for that matter.

9 EXT. ALLEY WAY. SAME.

A TEENAGE FEMALE is pressed up against the wall of the alley. She's in fear, but doesn't want to show it. Three older TEENAGE MALES surround her, staring back at her with angry but interested faces.

FEMALE

What do you want from me, CARLOS? I broke up with you!

CARLOS

What do I want? You know what I want, ARABELLA. You're mine, don't you forget that, *chica*.

ARABELLA

Get away from me, Carlos, you're eighteen, held back two years, no job, a record, and no sense of treating a lady right. Don't make me get my brother.

Carlos slaps her. Michael comes from around the corner and finds the scene; Arabella (14) is huddled over, holding her left cheek in pain. Michael nears Carlos in rage.

CARLOS

What do you want?

MICHAEL

Get the hell away from her!

CARLOS

Why? Whatcha gonna do, cracker?

Michael punches Carlos which causes a reaction in the group. They begin to gang up on Michael who backs up toward the wall but ready to throw another punch...

A GUN cocks. A hurt Arabella begins to rise from the ground, pointing her gun at Carlos. Carlos and the others are taken a step aback. She eases toward them, getting closer.

ARABELLA

I told you to leave me alone. Now, go!

Carlos and the other two teenagers run out of the alley way.

CARLOS

(distant)

I still love you, Arabella. We're not through, 'Bella.

The girl sighs. She gathers her things and puts the gun back into her small purse. She gets up and begins to walk away. Michael, intrigued, follows her.

MICHAEL

Hey, wait, I just want to say -

ARABELLA

(pissed off)

- thanks? Why did you even come and help me in the first place? What did you think I was, some kind of damsel in distress?

MICHAEL

No, it's just that -

ARABELLA

- I can take care of myself, thank you very much.

MICHAEL

It didn't look that way when he slapped you.

A BEAT. Arabella rolls her eyes and turns around the corner. Michael continues to follow her.

MICHAEL

Listen.

ARABELLA

(turning around)

What?

MICHAEL

You don't have to pretend to be tougher than you really are.

(pause)

You know that guy'll keep coming back no matter what, right?

Arabella thinks this over. She sighs again, crossing her arms in front of her chest and staring back into Michael's eyes.

MICHAEL

Come on, let me buy you a slice or something.

ARABELLA

(silent for a while)

Okay.

10 INT. PIZZA PARLOR. DOWNING AVE. LATER.

MICHAEL

(the 20th time he has said it)

Are you sure you're okay?

Michael sits opposite Arabella in a table near the window of a pizza place. The store's owner, VINNY (late 20s) enter from the backroom, coming up closer to the two. He smiles as he see his most valued customer.

VINNY

Ah, Michael, how's my number one customer doing?

MICHAEL

Alright, Vinny, how's Diane and the kids?

VINNY

A blessing as usual.

(looks over at Arabella)

Ah, and who is this beauty?

ARABELLA

My name's Arabella.

VINNY

Nice to meet you, Arabella.

(kisses hand)

Wonderful name, Arabella.

ARABELLA

(blushes)

Thank you.

Vinny takes out his NOTEPAD and a PEN.

VINNY

What can I get you guys?

MICHAEL

A small cheese pizza, 6-cut. And me, a Sierra Mist.

(gestures toward Arabella)

ARABELLA

Oh, um, just a water.

Vinny writes this down and enter the backroom. Michael takes a glance at Arabella who looks down at her placemat. She seems as though she's studying it. It's a placemat featuring the fifty states of America, a layout of the country. She points down at the state HAWAII, looking up at Michael.

ARABELLA

You know, I've always wanted to go to Hawaii. I heard it's beautiful, you know the water, the people, blah, blah, blah.

MICHAEL

Yeah, me too, but my family's on a super tight budget or something like that...if you call an alcoholic mom and teenage boy a family then, yeah, what the hell.

The two share a small LAUGH.

ARABELLA

You know, you're not like most guys I know.

MICHAEL

How's that?

ARABELLA

You know, guys being pigs and saying whatever they want without the decency of being an actual gentlemen.

MICHAEL

Well, that's because they don't know how to treat a girl right.

Vinny comes out from the backroom with drinks and the pizza. While Michael takes sip of his soda, Arabella stares at him, delivering a small smile before taking a sip of water and her first bite of pizza.

11 INT. BASEMENT. TAVON'S HOUSE. LATER

A dark room, with scarce light, but none artificial. Bits of light darts through windows covered with vines. A red light is turned on, the room bathed in an eerie red.

A FIGURE, back to us, sits in a chair, head covered with black sack. A hand grabs the top and pulls it off.

REVEAL: a scared MALE TEENAGER, fear written all over his face. A piece of duct tape is taped over his mouth.

An ominous FIGURE looms over him. A GUN COCKS and is brought up to the teenager's forehead. He shakes his head no, squirming, praying inside his head, mumbling.

FIGURE

You didn't pay on time.

The teenager squirms with all his might.

FIGURE

And for that you must be punished.

He mumbles, screaming. We can make out what he tries to say, "No, please, God, no!" A deafening GUNSHOT sounds.

The chair falls to the left, the teenager silent, laying there. Dead.

FIGURE

Clean this mess up!

Two masked FIGURES take hold of the body. A gold necklace falls out of it's pocket, unnoticed. SLOW-MOTION: It falls to the ground. A cross stands out of the small pile of gold. The red light is turned off, queuing the SCREEN to go BLACK.

SUBTITLE: "THE NEXT DAY". TEXT FADES OUT. FADE IN:

12 INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. MORNING.

A quick MONTAGE: Michael sleeping, the alarm clock ringing, pressing the snooze button, grabbing clothes, getting dressed, brushing teeth, brushing hair, writing a note and leaving it on his bed, making his bed up, and out the DOOR.

13 A CITY -WIDE VIEW. THE CITY'S ABUNDANCE OF LIFE. HIGHWAYS, ROADS, BUILDINGS, TIME LAPSES, etc.

14 EXT. CITY. DAY

Michael takes Arabella "city scouting". They view the city, going places, sitting in the grass, picnicking, going to see a movie, walking into and out of restaurants, sitting near the river, watching the boats, having fun. They smile and laugh, keep close together.

This only further the idea of their romantic interest in each other.

15 EXT. TERRIER DRIVE. NIGHT.

Michael walks Arabella home. The street is quiet, porch lights on. It's a quite suburban area, houses similar, sprinklers on, windows glittering with light from the inside.

ARABELLA

Oh, that's my house, the one on the corner.

MICHAEL

Cool. You know I never really thought of you living out here.

ARABELLA

I know, it seems like that.

MICHAEL

So, are your parents home.

ARABELLA

(pause)

I don't live with my parents.

An awkward BEAT, again needed.

ARABELLA

I live with my foster brother, TAVON. He's eighteen, almost nineteen, which kinda pretty much makes him my legal guardian. But we're like brother and sister, you know, the real deal, genetics. But at the same time, we're not...

They arrive to the house, a well-kept, neatly organized house.

MICHAEL
(begins to leave)
Well, this is where I depart.

ARABELLA
(grabs his shoulder)
Wait, I want you to meet my brother.

MICHAEL
Oh, I can't, I have to be at home by -

ARABELLA
Please, it'll just be a sec.
(pause)

Michael nods, Arabella smiles. She grabs his hand and leads him up the steps. The two enter the house, locking the door behind them.

16 INT. TAVON'S ROOM. TAVON'S HOUSE. SAME.

An ghastly room, clutter strewn about, rap music playing loudly in the background, a huge master bed in dead center, a television displaying a basketball videogame.

A game system stands beneath it, a fan blowing near a MALE YOUNG ADULT (18) named TAVON. He holds a controller, random pressing buttons, moving the joystick.

17 INT. HALLWAY. SAME.

Arabella pulls Michael up the stairs, fast approaching her brother's room. She smiles at him while occasionally glancing every few seconds. She takes him down the hall and to a door.

Arabella KNOCKS.

18 INT. TAVON'S ROOM. SAME.

He pauses his videogame, sighs and proceeds to the door. He opens up. Arabella and Michael come onto SCREEN as he sees them. He chews a piece of GUM.

TAVON

Who the hell is this?

ARABELLA

This is Michael.

TAVON

(puts up hand)

What did I tell you about bringing people into my house without my knowing.

ARABELLA

(smile fading)

What? I can't believe you're acting like this.

TAVON

(mad)

Acting like what, please do explain. I have these rules Arabella, you don't listen.

MICHAEL

(sarcastically)

Well, I'm sorry if I offended you-

Tavon pushes Michael. Michael REACTS.

TAVON

Now you gonna use sarcasm on me. Nigga, please, do you even know me?

MICHAEL

Does that mean you have to push me?!?

TAVON

(reaches toward back pocket)

Oh, now you're questioning me?!?

ARABELLA

(yells)

TAVON, STOP!

Silence. Tavon and Michael stare evilly into each other's eyes. Arabella moves her view of one to the other. The two boys breath heavily, glaring. Michael rolls his eyes and faces Arabella.

MICHAEL
(turning around)

I gotta go.

ARABELLA
(rushing)

No, Michael, wait.

19 INT. MAIN HALL. SAME.

Michael reaches for the door handle. Arabella closely follows behind him, reaching to grab his shoulder and prevent him from leaving. She grabs a hold and turns Michael around.

ARABELLA
My brother, he's bipolar. Sometimes he's fine, sometimes he just pure evil. I'm sorry.

MICHAEL
(hurriedly)
Okay, but I still gotta go.

Michael opens the door, walks through and closes it behind him. Arabella stands there, alone. She walks in a small circle in the center of the room slowly, running her hands through her hair. She goes back up the stairs.

20 INT. LIVING ROOM. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Michael silently opens the front door. The lights are off, and we can't get a direct view of this happening. He silently closes it behind him, and takes a few steps in, hanging up his light jacket on a stand.

FLICK! The lights are on. Renee stands at a light switch in her pajamas, an angry face piercing through Michael. She winces (as though in pain) at him, grogginess clearly seen in her face. Michael's guilt is filling him up.

RENEE
What time did I say to be back, what time do I always say?

MICHAEL

Ten, but-

RENEE

What time is it now?

MICHAEL

(glances at a digital clock)

2:30 AM.

RENEE

(two words to make any boy REACT)

Upstairs. Now!

21 INT. TAVON'S ROOM. SAME.

Arabella paces back and forth between Tavon and the television. Tavon strains his neck to get a clear view of the screen but she does it quickly, in a way making it seem as though it's on purpose.

TAVON

Well, how was I suppose to know. Did Jesus know he could walk on water?

ARABELLA

You don't get it. He saved me.

Tavon looks at his foster sister with doubt. He pauses his game, putting down his controller and wiping his forehead, covered with sweat from the amount of heat in the bedroom. Arabella faces him.

ARABELLA

Listen, on my way here, I ran into Carlos, my ex-boyfriend and these two other guys. They pushed me into an alley and assaulted me. If Michael never shown up, they could have beaten me up and raped me.

(Tavon looks at her in disbelief)

And not one person would do one god-damn thing. If Michael never came...

TAVON

(who's heard enough)

Ok, I don't want to hear anymore of this!
Just...get out my way, I can't see anything!

ARABELLA
(annoyed)

Oh, now you don't want to hear anymore of
it, huh? Well you know what? That's the
truth and sometimes the truth hurts!

Arabella, finished, leaves the room, slamming the door. A
defeated Tavon sighs, turns off the console and sighs. He
reaches over to a desk lamp on a nightstand, the only source
of light in the room, and turns it off.

SCREEN GOES BLACK. TEXT: "FIVE DAYS LATER". TEXT FADES OUT,
FADE IN:

22 EXT. PARK. EVENING.

The same bench, the same two people. Michael sits apart from
Ian, who's looking at his cell phone. Probably another text
message from Ray, his friend in college. They seem like two
people who don't know each other. Like always.

IAN
(excited)

Hey, man, I gotta tell you something. I got
a scholarship to the Bard High School Early
College thing. It's some dumb school for
the freaking gifted or something.

MICHAEL
(smiling)

Oh, so you're not into academics, huh?
Well, that's good for you, I think. I
guess...

IAN

Yeah, it came in the mail. My parents went
crazy! They was all like, "Oh, Ian, I'm so
proud of you!" and all that crap.

Michael lets out a SMALL LAUGH. Ian gets another text message,
flinches, grabs his stringed backpack and looks over Michael.

He salutes as a sort of goodbye. Michael "salutes" back and Ian leaves FRAME.

23 EXT. WINDHILL DRIVE. LATER.

Michael walks down a slow street, lifeless, people inside their houses doing et cetera. His eyes follow the birds above. Michael (FULL MOTION) walks in a SLOW MOTION background. He proceeds OUT OF FRAME. (SCENE IS MUTED).

A black car, windows tinted, pulls up to him (SLOW MOTION). A FIGURE wearing a SKI MASK gets out and grabs Michael (FULL MOTION, SKIPPED BACK A FEW FRAMES, "STROBBY") puts a BLACK SACK over his head and drags him back into the car. They DRIVE OFF.

24 INT. TAVON'S BASEMENT. TAVON'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Michael sits in a chair, the sack still over his head. He's tied up, a piece of duck tape over his mouth. He's out cold, unconscious.

HE'S COMING TO IT..

He looks around, terrified. Tavon ENTERS, holding something behind his back. He has devious smile on his face, staring at Michael.

TAVON

(nearing him)

You saved my sister from Carlos Mencia, age 18, lives down on Montraile Street... deceased.

(beat)

Thank you. And for you help, you live. But not just living. You're recruited.

He removes the sack and peels off the tape. He takes out the object from behind his back...a GUN. He takes Michael's hand who stares at Tavon in horror and down at his hand. His POV; what we saw earlier:

A hand holding a gun, the one Michael found on the floor of his room. The hand belongs to Tavon, but he holds it in such a way as though he's gesturing to hand it to someone.

TAVON

If you wanna be a part of us, you gotta be well protected.

Michael's HAND comes into FRAME, taking hold of the gun. The two come out of frame. Michael stares intensely at it, extremely careful as he begins turning it over again and again, examining it.

BUT, HIS VISION IS BLURRY, HIS POV FADING OUT. A BLACK SCREEN AND ALL IS SILENT..

TEXT FADES IN: "NEXT DAY". TEXT FADES OUT, FADE IN:

25 EXT. DUMPSTER. DAY.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

That night, I had the gun under my pillow. I don't know, it's just something about the feel of holding it, the cold metal against your soft skin, the thought of anyone's life ending because of what you have in the palm of your hand. It's scary, but it makes me feel powerful. It's freaking me out.

Michael holds the gun in his hand, stroking it lightly, looking as though he's obsessed with it, as though it's precious to him, his precious item, his most cherish thing he owns. He tilts his head slowly.

26 EXT. AROUND THE CORNER. SAME

Officer Neil MacGuff, in uniform, is an officer on duty, perolling the streets, on watch.

NEIL

I'm so happy right now. You don't know the half of it. My kid, DIMITRI, she's two years old today. I can't wait to get off of patroll and celebrate her birthday. I have the perfect gift upstairs in the closet-

26 INT. HOUSE. YESTERDAY.

Neil, inside the closet, is on a step ladder, placing a wrapped gift on the top shelf.

27 EXT. AROUND THE CORNER. SAME.

Neil turns around and goes down an alley way, looking down at shoes. POV: step by step, step by step, step by step. He's smiling. He looks up and -

-the smile disappears.

NEIL

Hey! What are you doing with that gun!

Michael looks up from it, scared. He glances at the officer and back down at the gun, his breathing growing faster and faster. He doesn't know what to do..

Michael brings the GUN up and COCKS it. His finger's near the trigger. The officer puts his hands up, thinking he can reason with the kid.

NEIL

Hey, hey, hey, kid, don't do anything stupid, something you'll regret.

MICHAEL

(standing his ground, his finger nearing the trigger)

NEIL

Hey, kid, um, what's your name? Huh, I'm not gonna do anything, I promise, ok. My name is Neil MacGuff. I have a wife named VERONICA and a two-year-old daughter named Dimitri. Ok, today's her birthday. Ok, ok, ok, what's your backstory.

MICHAEL

(finger on trigger, his voice shaky and croaky)
My name is Michael Renner and-

BAM!

A GUNSHOT, deafening, SOUNDS. Michael DROPS the GUN. He's shaken at what he's done. The police officer's body lies on the ground, surround by a growing pool of maroon liquid.

Michael GULPS, whimpers, grabs the GUN and makes a RUN for it. He RUNS OFFSCREEN, a WIDE SHOT illustrating the story. A BEAT.

CUT TO BLACK. "THE NEXT DAY". FADE IN:

TV VOICE

A police officer was found dead last night in an alley way of Berkshire & Plane Street. Initial reports indicate that he was a lone gunman. No evidence was found at the scene of the crime. Police are still investigating, more at eleven.

CUT TO: A MAN'S picture fills up the TELEVISION SCREEN. He seems to be in his mid-twenties, hair buzzed, a thin mustache circulating around his lips and chin, joining his sideburns. He's in uniform.

He smiles; a warm, pleasant smile. It gives us an impression of his personality; friendly. One that may say he's a family man or a beloved local community hero or a good friend to his fellow officers at the police station.

A SUBTITLE READS: "OFFICER NEIL MacGUFF".

The picture is quickly replaced by another of the network's sponsor's. The NEWS' jingle FADES OUT as the logo is then again replaced by its commercial. The SCREEN goes black as the television is turned off.

ECU on A PAIR OF EYES. Dilated brown pupils, staring back at us. They're full of fear, sadness and guilt. A BEAT as they take an effect on us, making us feel his panic and culpability.

ESTABLISHING SHOT: Michael on the couch, covering his face with his hands. He begins to WEEP.

FADE OUT. "PRESENT DAY". FADE IN:

27 INT. RESTAURANT. DAY.

Arabella and Michael sit opposite each other at a decorated restaurant table, Arabella looking over a menu, Michael, seated, staring out the window. The sun's beginning to set.

ARABELLA

(searching for the right words to say)
I'm really enjoying this date, Mike. I never really been to this restaurant. I think it's new or something like that.

MICHAEL

It's not really so much of a date.

ARABELLA

(looking up from her menu)
Huh? What do you mean, "Not so much of a date"?

A WAITER serves them, Arabella's eyes still keen on Michael's. (MUTED) They order. The waiter grabs their menus and leaves, coming OUT OF FRAME.

MICHAEL

So, I heard their shrimp is good.

ARABELLA

No, no, no, don't change the subject.

MICHAEL

What subject?

ARABELLA

MICHAEL!

(pause)

You know what I'm talking about.

Michael gets up from his seat. He slams down his dining utensils, a clattering sound. This causes some dirty looks from customers around them.

MICHAEL

I just can't take it anymore!

Michael leaves FRAME, storming out of the resteraunt. Arabella grabs her small purse and her hat, and quickly follows him.

28 EXT. RESTAURANT. SAME.

Michael's walking away. Arabella grabs his shoulder, turning him around.

MICHAEL

Listen, Arabella...I'm dumping you.

ARABELLA

What? Why? I thought you were different.

MICHAEL

I killed a man...

(silence)

On his daughter's birthday.

A BEAT. Michael turns around and walks away for the last time, leaving Arabella alone. (THE COLOR PICTURE THEN TURNS B&W.) A DRAMATIC MOMENT.

CROSSFADE:

28 EXT. LAKE. DAY.

A DUTCH ANGLE: The property's sign; CLOSE-UP, foreground OUT OF FOCUS. Then, the approaching sound of an automobile.

A car drives down a slope, leading to a cabin in the greenery and lake far out, sparkling. A DEFEATED MICHAEL climbs out of the car, making his way for the lake.

MICHAEL (V.O)

It's funny how, sometimes, you'll say you're doing something in the future, and in the grand scheme of things, it never happens.

(MICHAEL goes into the water, slowly)

I was born to a single mother. Shortly after my mom announced her pregnancy, my dad left. I geuss he couldn't take responsibility. I guess they'll eventually

find evidence to who'd done killed the man.
I got rid of the gun yesterday.

28 EXT. BRIDGE. YESTERDAY.

Michael stands at the railing, holding the gun secretly in his hand. It's deserted. He throws the gun. A CU of it landing in the WATER.

29 EXT. LANDING. PRESENT.

Michael exit's the lake, coming to a boardwalk. He sits of the ground, watching an approaching sunset. He holds out his hands, stretching, Lilly pads crowding against the wood.

He indistinctively grabs one of the flowers, looking it over, then throwing it out into the lake. He begins to cry, bring him down to the wood, curling up into a ball, as FLASHES shows the BEFORE EVENTS THROUGHOUT.

30 INT. TAVON'S BASEMENT. SAME.

A fuming Tavon stands amongst a group of gang members. A smiling Arabella stands in the baackground. Tavon paces back and forth.

TAVON

This fool, named Michael Renner, or something like that, played with a gun and shot a police officer.

(the group snorts)

It's the main story on the local news and it may lead to the discovery to our gang. You must find Michael, and either, a, bring him to justice or, b, kill him off. I think you know which one will best work.

Tavon turns to Arabella. They both SMILE. The members head out in a line, followed by the two foster siblings. His arm over her shoulder, they turn off the red light, leaving a dark, dank room before them.

31 EXT. LAKE. SAME.

OVERHEAD SHOT: Michael swims in the lake. He slowly, almost unnoticed, GOES UNDER. A WIDER SHOT reveals more scenery. A silent shot. The sun's bouncing off the water, making it shimmer and sparkle. Michael's suicide It overcomes the shot, making the screen a hazy white and we gradually-

FADE OUT. CROSSFADE INTO:

31-32 EXT. GRAVEYARD. DAY.

OPTIONAL; Archival footage: a police officer's funeral; low resolution, grainy, Irish bagpipe music playing in the background. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fc-uYJfVZv4&feature=related>.

32 EXT. LAKE. LATER.

Michael exit's the lake, step by step. He trudges through the mud laid on the bottom. He's walking, A CU TRACK on his legs. He's suddenly walking on land, passing a BENCH, through grass. A slow, short CAMERA DROP to his feet, bare, still walking, as he-

33 EXT. SCHOOLYARD. LATER.

-walks down a sidewalk (THE SAME SHOT; A SHOT OF HIS SHOES, WALKING). He's covered up; a hoodie, hands in the pockets, jeans, etc., especially on a searing day like this. He turns a corner and enters a playground.

A YOUNGER KID (12) in a hoodie, arms inside an unbarred stops him, a look of trepidation and incensiveness upon his face. Michael continues to walk, stops in his tracks. He looks up at the kid, an insipid face. Poker-faced. His eyes are RED.

KID

(despondency in his voice)

I'm sorry.

Naive to Michael, the small boy brings up a GUN. Michael's vacant face REACTS, a flabbergasted look taking over. He breathes in and out extremely leisurely; he brings both his hands up. A FLASH shows Neil, in the same position in the previous event.

Michael's POV: The small boy cross fades into himself holding the gun, scared. Michael's serene now. He knows what to do. Arching one eyebrow, he tries to make conversation.

MICHAEL

Kid, you don't even want to do that. The guilt sticks with you for the rest of your life. Trust me. I've been through this before. The paranoia of suicide and all that just eats you alive. I've done it. Just, please.

(STILL SHOT, KEEP ON) The boy closes his eyes. **BANG!** He opens his eyes, sees the mess then runs away. He disappears in the OUT OF FOCUS B.G. Michael's heart rate is heard. A SHOT of his stunned face, his heart is beating fast, then becoming slower and slower until it stops almost abruptly and Michael's eyes close.

34 INT. ARABELLA'S ROOM. LATER.

Arabella, weary, lays in her bed, a medium-sized mattress covered with frilly covers; much younger for her age and conventional liking. Pillows guarded by stuffed animals, Arabella penetrating a line down the middle. She sighs, a soft, irritable sigh.

FOOTSTEPS are heard outside her bedroom door. She gets up and walks over to door, silently, carrying a stuffed teddy bear in her arms through the dimlighting. A CU: She presses her left ear against the cold wood. Muffled voices become clear and comprehensive.

35 EXT. ARABELLA'S ROOM/HALLWAY. SAME.

Tavon and TYSON, 14, a reclusive gang member but reliable on, stand apart from each other in a hallway leading up from the stairs, standing in front of Arabella's room. They speak in hushed tones, but still strident enough for Arabella to hear.

TYSON

(what Arabella hears)

The boy, LEWIS, I think?...He completed the task...in the playground of Grant Elementary...in the stomach...the guy died like that..

36 INT. ARABELLA'S ROOM. SAME.

Arabella's in alarm. Had Michael's death been the subject their small conversation? She hugs her teddy bear tighter, fighting back tears. She falls to the ground, can't holding it any longer. She cries.

ARABELLA
(through tears)

...Michael...

FADE OUT:

The sound of photo taken; the press creates a high pitched creaking, irregular. A typewriter's notes is being irregularly struck. Four notes are struck. A photo lands in complete darkness. A photo of Tavon, a toddler. Another, of him growing older, a kid, another of his high school graduation from a school for the Gifted. A small ripped piece of paper falls onto the last photo, the notes struck reading, in bold letters: "LIAR". The pile fades out into more darkness.

FADE IN:

37 INT. TAVON'S ROOM. LATER.

Tavon lies on his bed, playing his videogame. He stares absentmindedly at the television screen. A cell phone RINGS. He ignores it, continue playing. He's now staring furiously at the VDT. A sluggish PUSH IN as his VO sounds:

TAVON (V.O.)

I wasn't always this badass bipolar kid who lived down the street.

(beat)

I used to go to some school for really smart kids. I understood trigonometry very well, calculus the best, man, I even amazed my mother who was a valedictorian. In middle school I was always picked on by the older kids. They thought they were big dogs. I lived with my mom until some thugs broke in, mom acted and they killed her. And when I finished that Gifted high

school, I left the educational system. I was seventeen, almost eighteen. I was practically an adult. They never found who did it.

Tavon turns off the console and turns the settings back to cable. It's a childish sitcom. He immediately turns it to the sports channel. The program goes off and on comes a commercial. He growls and changes it, flipping through random things.

TAVON

(continued)

That's the thing about the police these days. The government's corrupt, but not that much. They just don't care about little cases like these anymore. Nor when did they ever? I found Arabella on the street after I'd become this big gang leader of SADK. She was abandoned by her father who'd committed underage incest. I felt her pain. She felt mine. We became siblings. But not genetically.

He pauses on a new report, grabbing his cell phone and looking over his missed call from earlier. A female news reporter is shown in the B.G., a V.O. of the news.

TV VOICE

...the police officer Neil MacGuff found dead last week

(Neil's picture is once again ONSCREEN)
had his funeral earlier today, the same day the dead body of his murderer, Michael Renner,

(Michael's middle school yearbook photo)
was found in the playground of Grant Elementary on Elm St.

Tavon looks up from his cell phone, stunned. He looks over to the television screen. His mouth is open. He can't believe it. A tear strolls out of his right eye and slides down his cheek. His first tear in years...

CROSSFADE INTO:

38 INT. KITCHEN. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. SAME.

A grieved Renee washes dishes after a diner for one. She watches what she's doing. Soaking china in sudsy water, rubbing them with a soapy rag then dunking them into one of the sink barriers that holds clear tap water.

Looking out the window before her, she sees TWO SMALL BROTHERS (5-7) playing in their front yard; fighting with wooden swords, playing with plastic toys, etc. They laugh. They scream playfully. They're smiling. It's too much for her to handle. Tears begin to fall. She cries (MUTED) over her V.O.

RENEE (V.O.)

I was sixteen when I was pregnant with Michael. His father was nineteen, had dreams, thought me and the baby were weighing him down. And he left. It was just me and Michael. After the pain of labor, I vowed to not have another child. Michael was my heart and soul. Then I fell to drinking when he was eleven. I remember because it was the year Michael received the President's Award and skipped a grade, I think?

(sighs)

I always thought drinking would solve my problems.

FADE OUT:

RENEE (V.O., CONTINUED)

It turned out I was dead wrong.

39 EXT. BRIDGE. DAY.

Tavon and his four main gang members stand in a line. It's a deserted area, surrounded by greenery. They each have in their hands a GUN. They stare at theirs and each others. Tavon steps up from the rest. He takes one last look at his and throws.

CU of it landing in the water below. A POWERFUL MOMENT.

One by one, the others follow, CU of guns plopping into the water. A SUBTITLE FADES IN AS THIS OCCURS: "Of the 6,524,252,370 people in the world, 1,094,276,009 own a gun." A BEAT AS THE SUBTITLE FADES OUT. SUBTITLE FADES IN: "Minus six".

Four from the main members, one from Arabella and one from the boy, Lewis Lovell, age 12, lives down on Umbridge Ave. Mother, CAROL HARPER, Father, JONAS LOVELL. Six guns dismembered or forgotten at the bottom of a body of water.

40 EXT. RIVER. SAME.

Lewis Lovell holds the gun in his right hand. He glances at it and back at the body of the water. He decides to throw it and does so. A **PLUP!** sounds, as the gun hits the surface of the water, sinking.

41 EXT. STREET. LATER.

Empty. A composed Lewis rides his bicycle past us and gradually proceed down an empty street, inside our line of focus. He goes on, disappearing as he gets smaller. THE COLORED SCREEN TURNS B&W, as he goes on and on, then disappears.

FADE OUT.

42 A V.O. AUDIO corresponding with a VISUAL, MUSIC QUE:

INT. TAVON'S BEDROOM.

Tavon holds a certificate, rolled up and secured by a blue ribbon. He looks at the CAMERA, and smiles (A REPEATING OCCURANCE ONSCREEN WITH THE FOLLOWING ACTORS.)

TAVON

I graduated from college.

INT. ARABELLA'S BEDROOM.

Arabella holds a certificates, rolled up and secured by a red ribbon.

ARABELLA

I graduated from high school.

EXT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE.

Renee stands in front of her house, a MAN behind her, holding her close to him. She's pregnant, definitely showing.

RENEE

I married the man of my dreams and
conceived a boy. His name's Michael.

INT. LEWIS'S BEDROOM.

Lewis is doing homework, an open textbook before him, a few pieces of paper laid across before him, a freshly sharpen pencil in his hand.

LEWIS

I found a purpose.

EXT. PARK.

Ian sits at the same bench, a cell phone in one hand. He has a letter in one hand, his backpack in the other. He seems as though he feels fulfilled.

IAN

I found a calling.

END SHORT MONTAGE. CROSSFADE INTO:

43 INT. ARABELLA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

A defeated Arabella is asleep in her bed, no cover. An awake Michael has one arm over her hip, staring into the back of her head, his deep affection for her growing steadily. A TRACK.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

It's funny how, sometimes, you'll say
you're doing something in the future, and
in the grand scheme of things, it
eventually happens.

44 EXT. SIDEWALK. DAY.

CU of Arabella running her fingers through a neat row of various flowers. A MOVE UP reveals her smiling. She delivers a small laugh.

MUSIC QUE CONTINUES FROM NOW AND ON-

A BACK SHOT of her walking down the sidewalk.

Then, a partly transparent Michael walks down with her, joining her to the fullest until they begin to walk in step.

MICHAEL (V.O., CONTINUING)
Rules are broken. Rules are learn. But when
worse comes to worse-

PAN up to the SUN'S radiance, overcoming the SCREEN.

MICHAEL (V.O., CONTINUING)
-you have to let go.

FADE OUT TO WHITE. FADE OUT TO BLACK.

THE END