

BLUEPRINTS

by
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EXT. ELEVATED SUBWAY TRACKS - CONTINUOUS

The empty tracks of an elevated subway appear almost peaceful in the morning -- Two parallel lines that meet somewhere in the distant city.

A red-winged BLACKBIRD perches on a crosstie, pecking at larvae... Suddenly the bird spins its head, adjusts its BLACK eyes. It looks almost human --

We hear the high-pitched SQUEAL of a rollicking train --

The bird's eyes tweak to the noise --

LOUDER...

LOUDER...

LOUDER...

ECU BIRD'S PUPIL

WE SEE the -8- train in the curved reflection of the bird's eye... BARRELING CLOSER...

ANGLE

The monstrous steel box on rails BLASTS by--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

The train's SHADOW rips across the wall, darkening bits and pieces of the room; flasks, microscopes, mathematical and chemistry charts... The classroom is a laboratory.

A bunch of SEVENTH-GRADERS stand agape, hearts beating away, watching their teacher...

BILL DUARTE (O.S.)

We have known for a long time that caterpillars can learn and remember things when they are caterpillars --

BILL DUARTE, 40s, collared shirt and tie, no jacket; uses a sharp pointed scalpel to slice a vertical opening in a chrysalis --

BILL DUARTE (cont'd)

...and adult butterflies can do the same when they are butterflies.

The students shuffle uncomfortably closer --

BILL DUARTE (cont'd)
 However, because of metamorphosis,
 we were not sure if an adult
 butterfly could remember things it
 learned as a caterpillar --

ANGLE ON

Young WILLIAM DUARTE, 11, awkward, shy, remaining in the background...

BILL DUARTE (O.S.) (cont'd)
 One day, the caterpillar stops
 eating, hangs upside down from a
 twig or leaf and molts into a shiny
 chrysalis --

ANGLE ON CHRYSALIS

A wet goo oozes out of the chrysalis...

BILL DUARTE (cont'd)
 ...Within its protective casing,
 the caterpillar radically
 transforms its body, eventually
 emerging as...

Like a crafty magician, Bill misdirects the students view by tapping the scalpel on the table while his other hand dips beneath --

ANGLE UNDER TABLE

Bill twists a small glass jar with holes in the lid, releasing a Monarch Butterfly...

ANGLE WIDE

With its yellow and black stripes and bright orange wings, the Monarch flaps to freedom.

Enthralled and happy, the kids chase the winged aphid across the classroom...

Bill looks into the face of his son, William, unmoved, alone...

BILL DUARTE (cont'd)
 (sings playfully)
*Don't be concerned -- It will not
 harm you... It's only me pursuing
 somethin' I'm not sure of...*
 (MORE)

BILL DUARTE (cont'd)
 (smiles at his son)
 Go 'on Will...

William strolls the aisle. He stops at the window; the butterfly is flapping, whirling and hovering beside it -- The boy looks at his father.

BILL DUARTE (cont'd)
 (continues singing)
*...Across my dreams with nets of
 wonder...*

William opens the window --

EXT. SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

The butterfly emerges...

CAMERA PULLS BACK...

BILL DUARTE (O.S.)
*...I chase the bright elusive
 butterfly of love...*

...Establishing the school, L-train... and the BOY in the window.

EXT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - DAY

A handful of PARENTS watch teen WRESTLERS from the bleachers.

Off to the side, two practice mats are tied to a recessed steel rope ring bolted in the gymnasium floor.

William mimes a 'take-down' move. Bill stands over his son; he is the team's coach.

BILL
 That's okay... Do it again.

William's body nervously shifts from side to side, pulling at the mat.

BILL (cont'd)
 All right, that was a little better.

William looks around...

BILL (cont'd)
 What're ya doing?! Pay attention here... Grab my neck --

William places his hand on the nape of his father's neck.

BILL (cont'd)
Go on, push me. Use the strength
in your legs, not your arms.

William is going through the moves without effort.

BILL (cont'd)
C'mon, Will... Try!

William slurs his words; he has the crackling voice of a hormonal adolescent.

WILLIAM
Dad, you're embarrassing me.

BILL
Embarrassing you? You're
embarrassing me -- Try harder!

SHOT TIGHTENS on William; tear blooms -- Bill grows incensed.

BILL (cont'd)
Are you crying?!

WILLIAM
No...

BILL
Are you CRYING?!

WILLIAM
No!

William wipes his eyes and tries the move again.
Unsuccessful, he backs off to the edge of the mat --

WILLIAM (cont'd)
I suck at this...

BILL
(anger growing)
You don't suck. You're scared--

WILLIAM
I'm not scared.

BILL
So you don't try--

WILLIAM

I suck!
 (gestures with his chin to
 the other kids)
 And they know it...

BILL

Then try, try again. Make strong
 spirit.

William drops his hands, gives up.

Bill's eyes turn cold. He clutches one hand in the other,
 tightly, veins going flat and blood draining from his
 knuckles, then storms off the mat in a huff...

Suddenly the train THUNDERCLAPS around him, WINDOW-RATTLING,
 HORN BLASTING--

The clock on the wall CLICKS ONE SECOND...

WILLIAM

Dad!

Bill turns sharply...

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MORNING

A checkerboard backsplash, a tin range, a clock on a wall;
 CLICKS...

WILLIAM (O.S.) (cont'd)

Ma...

Sleepy strands of hair wisp across JESSICA DUARTE'S eyes as
 she prepares breakfast for her son.

JESSICA

Don't ma me -- I want you to clean
 your room, right after breakfast...

Jessica is an attractive woman with deep, soulful eyes. She
 taps a spoon filled with hot oatmeal into his bowl --

JESSICA (cont'd)

...Pick up those video games and
 dirty clothes that are supposed to
 be in the hamper.

WILLIAM

I'm gonna do it.

JESSICA
 ...Before I come home.

WILLIAM
 I'm gonna do it...

BILL (O.S.)
 Yeah...

William turns to find his father, BILL DUARTE, 40s, standing at the doorway sporting a bright, toothy grin.

BILL (cont'd)
 ...You're gonna, gonna, gonna --
 you don't do nothing...

WILLIAM
 Dad... I'm telling ya, she's
 crackalackin.'

BILL
 What's that?

WILLIAM
 Lacking crack. Where's your stash?

Bill chuckles.

JESSICA
 (to Bill)
 Hey... not funny.
 (to William)
 And you, don't call me 'she.' I'm
 your mother.

Bill kisses his wife and gives his son a playful pinch on the ear as he crosses to the counter --

BILL
 Listen to your mother.

William nods.

JESSICA
 Tell him to come right home after
 school and do his chores.

Bill pours himself a coffee then moves to the window --

A red-winged blackbird perches on the ledge.

BILL
 What about practice...?

ANGLE WINDOWPANE

There are smudged fingerprints on the windowpane, lots of them.

BILL (cont'd)
...He has practice this morning.

We see his eyes in the reflections of the fingerprints.

Jessica turns to her son.

JESSICA
Go ahead. Tell him.

William peers up at his father with a guilty expression.

BILL
Tell me what, Will?

William remains silent.

JESSICA
He doesn't want to wrestle anymore.

BILL
You want to quit?

William gives him a tentative look.

The bird at the window flaps its wings --

BILL (cont'd)
Why?

WILLIAM
I told you.

BILL
No, you didn't.

WILLIAM
I hate sports... I suck at them.

BILL
You don't suck. And if you quit before you give yourself a chance, you make weak spirit -- Nothing worse than that. Am I right?

William nods reluctantly.

JESSICA
Let's not use the word 'quit.'

BILL
That's right, cause there ain't no
quitters in this tribe.

Bill gives his son a spirited smile then places a bent elbow
on the table.

BILL (cont'd)
Come get some --

A beat, then William gives a big smile and takes hold of his
father's hand. The two begin to arm wrestle.

BILL (cont'd)
That's the spirit.

WILLIAM
Come on with that weak shit.

JESSICA
Mouth.

BILL
It looks like 'wonder dad' is gonna
take it...

It's a standoff; Bill is putting on a good show -- William
uses both his hands -- He likes the game...

BILL (cont'd)
You've got just as much right as
anyone else to do whatever you want
to do.

Bill peers at his son --

BILL (cont'd)
Don't put anyone before yourself --
Don't be afraid of anything.

WILLIAM
I won't.

Jessie joins in, helping her son -- Bill smiles...

BILL
Oh no, opposition from the left...

We hear the ROAR of the train. Bill turns towards the window
-- The bird flaps its wings incessantly...

SMASH CUT TO

INT. TRAIN CAR - MORNING

Bill is jolted awake. His eyes sharpen under a receding hairline -- He looks ten years older.

CONDUCTOR (O.S.)
Last stop. Two, forty-second, "The Bronx."

The cabin car is crowded with PEOPLE.

Bill looks at his watch.

INSERT WRISTWATCH

It reads 8:00 am.

The second-hand moves one position--

He looks up...

WHAT HE SEES

A small GIRL (10) wearing a plaid coat and bright red scarf, with fluttering butterflies, is gripping a leather notebook. She keeps as still as a kitten and eyes him amused.

Bill stands to make his way out of the car, inching through the elbows and shoves, and just making it onto the platform before the doors slide shut behind him --

EXT. PLATFORM - DAY

Bill heads for the exit point.

The tail of the train slithers into the subway tunnel and disappears.

EXT. UNION HALL - MARBLE HILL, BRONX - MORNING

In an industrial district along the docks of the Hudson River, two hundred PEOPLE are camped in front of the closed doors of a massive brick warehouse.

They're standing in line, sitting on beach chairs, nestled in sleeping bags and watching movies on smartphones.

A sign on the building reads:

UNITED BROTHERHOOD OF CARPENTERS AND JOINERS "LOCAL 803"

Bill is moving through the crowd.

A sturdy, powerful MAN in his early-sixties comes up behind him, smiling.

MAN
Whadda ya lookin' so lost about?

Bill smiles upon seeing him.

BILL
...Uncle Pete.

They hug.

PETE
Ready to get those hands dirty?

When Bill sees all the people standing in line, he becomes anxious.

PETE (cont'd)
We ain't gotta wait in line. We'll
be in and out in three seconds...
C'mon, there's someone who wants to
meet ya.

Pete puts his arm around Bill as they hustle into the building.

INT. UNION HALL - MORNING

The vast, empty hall is set up with rows of tables. Cans of #2 pencils and stacks of applications sit on each one.

The men approach JACK McLAUGHLIN, 40s, who is sitting at a desk arranging rolled-up blueprints. Jack sees Pete and Bill and smiles.

JACK
(to Pete)
...This the man you been bragging
about?

Pete turns to Bill.

PETE
This is Jack, the rep for our
local.

Bill offers Jack a handshake.

BILL

Bill Duarte. Nice to meet you.

Jack weighs Bill up with his look. Bill stares back at him; he doesn't like being scrutinized.

JACK

I know who you are. My kid went to your school. You were one hell of a coach...

Bill has no reply.

PETE

(to Jack)

Hell of a teacher, too.

BILL

(feigns a smile)

Yeah, well, not anymore.

JACK

I know all about it. I was there that day. My heart goes out to you.

BILL

Thanks, Jack.

Jack nervously unrolls a blueprint and shows it to Bill.

JACK

Bill, we've got a renovation job, a big one, at your school.

Bill turns to Pete, surprised. It is clear from the drawings on the blueprint that the building has been vacant for a while.

BILL

They closed down the school?

JACK

You didn't know?

Pete turns to Bill --

PETE

...Happened when you were -- away...

(off Bill's quiet look)

We won't start there now; we've got a high rise to finish first--

(MORE)

PETE (cont'd)

(Beat)

Can you handle going back there?

Bill meets his look directly -- then nods.

JACK

Good. Now, let's take care of this business.

Jack re-rolls the blueprint and places it with the others.

EXT. UNION HALL - DAY

The front doors open and the hopeful APPLICANTS rush in. There's minor chaos in the way they immediately begin to fill out the forms.

Bill comes out of the hall, holding his new union book. Pete is next to him.

PETE

There's two hundred guys and gals, and only fifty applications...

Bill looks over the crowd.

PETE (cont'd)

Out of them maybe twenty-five will get jobs -- Maybe.

BILL

You know I appreciate it, but...

Bill looks at his uncle.

BILL (cont'd)

Nobody's gonna be busting my balls, right?

PETE

Look at you, fresh on the job and already you're makin' rules.

Pete gives Bill a friendly slap on the back.

UNCLE PETE

You made it. You're 803.

Bill smiles. They arrive at Pete's car, and he opens the door.

UNCLE PETE (cont'd)

Get in. I'll give you a ride...

BILL
No, no... Thanks...

UNCLE PETE
C'mon, we can shoot the shit a little -- We gotta pick up your tool belt... I haven't seen you in a long time...

BILL
...Thanks for everything, Uncle Pete. Jessie's waiting. She appreciates this too. Really.

UNCLE PETE
You okay?

BILL
Yeah. I'm good. Thanks for everything.

UNCLE PETE
You said that.

BILL
I'll see you tomorrow...

Bill walks off.

PETE
All right, then...

Pete casts him a wary glance as he sinks into his car.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A sharp white cloud of steam from a crosswalk manhole cover gusts momentarily then reveals Bill from behind as he enters the intersection.

No traffic.

Bill heads down a quiet, eerie street.

The tracks of the elevated train loom above him.

An old WINO with long silver hair under a baseball cap sleeps with arms folded in front of a neighborhood pub.

A neon sign atop the pub reads: "SONNY'S."

WINO
(without looking up)
You gotta cigarette, sonny?

Bill is startled...

The wino looks up. Bill gets a glimpse at cracked lips around dirty yellow teeth -- but his eyes hide under the cap.

BILL
I don't.

WINO
How 'bout a mother -- you got one of those? Maybe she can come down here and jerk me off...
(beat)
You know, a little hand action!

Bill senses the madness in the man and immediately moves away from him.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

He steps through the courtyard of a massive housing project.

The tenement buildings are littered with graffiti of eerie mountains, dense grass and ornate renderings of half-hidden oxen.

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

Bill comes to the front of the old school. It's beat-up and abandoned -- overgrown wild plants usurp the property behind the iron gate. He looks up -- A cluster of scaffolding leans against the bricks...

Suddenly a small, hooded FIGURE shuffles across a cracked window, inside the school --

Bill staggers back -- The image is gone... the window is bare... His searching eyes fall upon a thick CHAIN bolted securely around the entrance gate.

A moment more, then he shuffles off.

EXT. ELEVATED SUBWAY PLATFORM - DAY

Bill is one of a few passengers waiting on the platform.

He hears the burst of high-speed METAL GRINDING against METAL and looks up --

ECU - BILL'S PUPIL

We see the train's designation number -8- on the curved reflection of Bill's eye.

ANGLE PLATFORM

The train thunders into the station.

Bill's weary eyes reflect on the dark, flickering windows.

The train stops.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - DAY

Once inside, Bill collapses onto one of the few remaining seats -- He leans back and closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELEVATED SUBWAY TRACKS - DAY

The train BLASTS by us, rattling the earth --

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A two-story colonial sits comfortably behind its neatly manicured lawn and white wooden fence.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Jessica walks in holding a bag of groceries. Her once attractive face is thin and drawn and her soulful eyes have dulled.

Bill is sitting at the table, staring out of the window.

JESSICA

Hey.

He gives her a weak smile.

JESSICA (cont'd)

I called earlier -- you weren't here...

Bill
I fell asleep on the train and got
off at the wrong stop... Can you
believe that?

Jessica stops what she's doing to look at her husband. She offers him a serious expression -- then tries to smile.

JESSICA
How'd it go?

BILL
Great...

He gets up and shows her his new union book.

Bill (cont'd)
We're in.

Jessica's face lights up -- and for a moment she looks like her old self.

JESSICA
That's wonderful, Bill. When do
you start?

BILL
Tomorrow.

JESSICA
Really...?

Bill smiles and moves closer -- his body presses gently against her. But the movement comes off as awkward, and she inadvertently nudges away from him.

JESSICA (cont'd)
(after a pause)
Sorry.

BILL
It's all right.

Jessica moves to the counter and pulls a shiny new lunch box from the grocery bag.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
...I'm not sending you to work with
some crumple old paper bag.

BILL
I went by the school today.

She gives him a despairing look then turns away and continues to empty the bag.

JESSICA

You promised you weren't going to go there.

BILL

They closed it down... It looks like nobody's been there for years.

Jessica doesn't answer.

BILL (cont'd)

You knew that, didn't you?

She turns and glares back at him.

JESSICA

Yes -- and so did you!

Bill has no reply. After a beat Jessica softens --

JESSICA (cont'd)

I love you, Billy.

She bends forward and kisses him. As their lips meet, she whispers softly...

JESSICA (cont'd)

...We all do.

She spots two white tablets in a small dosing cup on the countertop.

JESSICA (cont'd)

You didn't take your meds.

As she reaches for the cup, Bill sees the ANGRY RED SCARS across her wrists.

BILL

Yeah... later.

He moves out of the room. She follows him with her gaze...

INT. STAIRCASE - DAY

Bill climbs the stairs to the second level.

INT. HALL - DAY

He heads down the hall and passes a door -- then pauses a moment, and turns back in front of it.

INT. WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - DAY

The door cracks open, and Bill peeks in.

The room is spotless, like a shrine unchanged by time -- Computer game magazines and comic books are stacked carefully on top of each other. A neatly made bed sits undisturbed in the middle of the room.

Bill comes in. He notices a somber imprint of a picture frame on the wall -- but no picture.

He sits on the bed and looks towards the closet --

A small, black, vinyl raincoat is hanging by its hood on the back of the door.

Suddenly...

VOICE (O.S.)

Billy...!

Bill whips his head around --

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. PSYCHIATRIC WARD, ROOM H - DAY

GENRO, an imposing figure with deep penetrating eyes, sits behind an iron desk. His barreled chest and broad shoulders fill out every inch of the tweed jacket he's wearing.

Freshly sharpened #2 pencils and a leather-bound notebook lay flat in a black briefcase on his desk.

GENRO (CONT'D)

...You must answer when I speak to you.

Bill is lying on the floor. His hair is long and disheveled, and he's unshaven.

GENRO (cont'd)

Don't you want to go home?

BILL

This is my home.

GENRO

Is that what you think? That
you're going to spend the rest of
your life here?

Bill sits up, leans against an unmade cot.

BILL

Yes.

GENRO

Why?

Bill looks at the bars covering the room's only window.

BILL

You know why.

A faint HARMONIC RING whistles through a crack in the window.

Genro opens his leather-bound notebook and holds it over the
edge of the table.

INSERT NOTEBOOK

At the top of the page is the word "BLUEPRINTS." Under that
is the number -8- with six dots around it.

ANGLE WIDE

GENRO

What does this mean?

BILLY

Mean?

GENRO

If you're trying to annoy me,
that's one thing. But please don't
insult my intelligence. You wrote
it. What does it mean?

BILLY

I didn't write that--

Bill gets a glimpse of a GUARD outside of the iron-plated
door, his long, silver hair stroking the back of his neck as
he passes a steel mesh window on the door.

GENRO

It's difficult to have a
conversation without your
cooperation.

BILL
Is that what this is?

Genro leans back in his chair. There is an astuteness about him, a deadpan menace and searching intelligence.

GENRO
Do you think if you leave here,
you'll see William again?

Bill gets up and goes to the sink -- He turns on the faucet and methodically pumps cold water on his face.

BILL
My son is dead.

GENRO
You think that by feeling guilty,
you're honest, Bill. But all
you're really doing is pushing away
what you don't want to face.

Bill stays focused on his bloodshot eyes... his anger slowly brewing...

BILL
And what's that?

GENRO
The blueprints, you're son's death,
the clock... click, click, click --
Trains -- All of it -- damn
cliches.

BILL
Cliches?

GENRO
What about Little Red Riding Hood?

BILL
Who?

GENRO
The girl on the train?

Bill is disgusted by the reflections he sees in the mirror; his and Genro.

GENRO (cont'd)
You're unoriginal, Billy.

Bill turns sideways to look at him.

GENRO (cont'd)
 ...Red scarf, butterflies. Don't
 you see what is happening?

BILL
 No.

GENRO
 You were a science professor--

BILL
 Teacher.

GENRO
 ...instructing students on
 metamorphosis. Is that what you
 think is happening? You're
 becoming something?

Bill peers at the small dosing cup filled with meds on
 Genro's desk.

GENRO (cont'd)
 What are you becoming?

Bill's voice shrinks to a whisper...

BILL
 What am I becoming?

GENRO
 The girl on the train, she was
 holding something -- What was it?

BILL
 (shaking his head)
 I never told you about her.

GENRO
 You've been diagnosed with acute
 psychosis -- The ECT treatments
 prescribed for you are among the
 safest and most effective--

BILL
 Are those my meds?

GENRO
 Yes.

BILL
 Give them to me.

GENRO

Take them.

Bill steps towards him, menacingly.

BILL

A notebook.

GENRO

What?

BILL

The kid on the train -- she was holding a notebook.

Genro picks up his leather-bound notebook.

GENRO

Like this?

Bill moves closer, baring his teeth...

BILL

Just like that.

GENRO

You're bereaving, Bill -- But not for your son--

BILL

Open it!

GENRO

William is not dead.

BILL

YOU'RE LYING!

Billy springs at him! And suddenly, a sharp pain shoots through his back, stabbing his like a knife!

SMASH CUT

ECU - A BLACKBIRD FLAPS ITS THIN TATTERED WINGS... SCREAMING OVER...

SMASH CUT

EXT. BUILDING SITE - 10TH FLOOR - MORNING

Wobbly balanced wheels SQUEALING very close to the edge of the roof...

INT. LONG CORRIDOR - HOSPITAL - DAY

Wheels rolling, SQUEALING...

Bill is strapped to a gurney in full-body seizure, shaking wildly.

INT. ECT WARD - HOSPITAL - DAY

He is wheeled into the tiny room, delirious with pain -- Clouded images whirl around him at a frantic pace.

The DOCTOR is a fuzzy blur.

SMASH CUT

ECU - WINGS FLAPPING INCESSANTLY...

SMASH CUT

INT. ECT WARD - HOSPITAL - BACK TO SCENE

The doctor presses a firm hand over Bill's shoulder as he bores a rubber mouth-plate into his mouth. An ORDERLY and NURSE place sensors on Bill's chest and head and connect it to an EEG.

Bill's body spasms and jerks...

The nurse wraps a blood pressure cuff around his arm and shoves a "pulse oximeter" on his little finger, while the orderly presses an oxygen mask over his nose.

Bill bites down on the plate as the first injection of electroconvulsive (ECT) therapy is administered... His eyes roll in the back of his head, fluttering...

INT. TRAIN - MORNING

Bill is jolted awake --

He looks around the train.

The PASSENGERS appear as shadows in pulsating light.

He sees the same little girl with the plaid coat and red, butterfly scarf, smiling at him. She leans closer to him, gripping her vintage notebook.

BILL
Are you lost?

She doesn't answer --

The train speeds out of a tunnel -- pools of sunlight filter through the windows -- giving the girl an angelic glow. But the rest of the passengers are dark and shadowy.

Bill's voice quivers with uncertainty.

Bill (cont'd)
Who are you?

She locks eyes on his --

GIRL
You have three seconds.

BILL
Three seconds?

GIRL
To find the blueprints...

A chill runs up Bill's spine.

GIRL (cont'd)
...And break the circle!

Her small, thin and reedy voice hangs in the air -- Suddenly her eyes dart behind Bill --

Bill turns his head... following the path of her gaze --

A small, hooded figure in a black vinyl raincoat sits on the far side of the car...

BILL
(gasping)
Will...

The hooded figure looks up slowly -- It's shark black eyes glare out at him with demonic intensity.

DISSOLVE TO:

A BLACK SKY WITHOUT A SINGLE STAR

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bill is sitting on the edge of the bed, staring out the window...

Jessica touches his shoulder.

JESSICA

What is it?

BILL

There's not a single star in the sky -- Not one...

JESSICA

They're there -- You just can't see them.

BILL

Huh?

JESSICA

We live close to the city -- it's not dark enough.

BILL

That's right. That's it... There is an explanation -- We just can't see them...

Bill looks at her.

BILL (cont'd)

We're not alone.

JESSICA

(half-smile)

What're you talking about?

BILL

The night before the accident, we were having dinner -- William put up his hands together and whispered... like he was praying -- Do you remember?

Jessica shakes her head, 'no.'.

BILL (cont'd)

How could you not remember that? We're not praying people.

JESSICA

I don't remember--

He turns away, looks out the window.

BILL

You were a good mother, Jess --
There never was a mother better
than you.

JESSICA

You're were good too.

BILL

No. I was shit.

JESSICA

Bill--

BILL

Of all the things I regret... I
regret that most.

JESSICA

What?

BILL

Not hearing what he said, what he
prayed for... It drives me crazy --
(turns back to her)
If I were only a few seconds
faster...

Beneath her soft mask, Jessica's expression hardens. It's barely perceptible, but Bill sees it.

BILL (cont'd)

I know what's important now.

Bill pauses. She peers inquisitively into her eyes.

JESSICA

What's important now?

BILL

To pay attention -- to understand
your feelings and situation.
Everyone's. I thought we had to be
happy but that's not true anymore.
It was true when Will was alive.
But nothing that was true then is
true now.

JESSICA

You don't think we should be happy?

BILL
 (smiles)
 I'm going to die.

JESSICA
 That's so awful. Don't say things
 like that.

BILL
 I'm going to die in the next few
 days, or hours, or less.

He watches her absorb his words.

BILL (cont'd)
 It's okay. It makes me feel free
 in a way I've never known -- like I
 can fly.

JESSICA
 You don't know what's important.
 You never did, and you still don't.
 What do you want me to say, Bill?
 I want you out of my life?
 (off his look)
 I don't. That I don't want you
 near me? That I wish you were dead
 instead of Will... It was an
 accident -- It wasn't your fault.
 I forgive you. Enough is enough...
 How much more...!
 (a tiny half sob gurgles
 from her throat)
 When's it going to be enough?

Bill walks to the door, rests his head on the frame.

BILL
 ...I'm becoming stronger -- So are
 you.

JESSICA
 Am I?

He walks out.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Pulsating light from an unseen source is flickering in the
 stairwell--

CAMERA IS POV

Bill moves towards the light... descending the steps...

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The living room is conspicuously sparse, devoid of photographs or anything that might remind them of their unsettling past --

Bill sees the source of the flickering light -- The TV in on. The sound is off.

He slinks towards the old television console...

Suddenly he feels pressure like a hand on the back of his neck -- He whips his head around...

His new tool belt and a RED HARD-HAT sit on the dining room table. Behind it is a tall wooden grandfather clock with its hands hidden in shadow.

Bill goes to the clock. Beneath the stained glass door hangs a copper pendulum attached to a long wire. It is stone still.

He grabs the side of the clock, tilting it just high enough to slip his foot underneath and slide out a hidden DVD.

He picks up the disk and goes to the TV --

The copper pendulum begins to sway back and forth...

Bill ejects the DVD that's in the player and places the new one in -- then jams the play button.

An old, scratchy image of a toddler fills the frame.

Bill sinks onto the couch, watching...

INSERT TV

We see a thick leg bouncing the child higher and higher, causing the boy to laugh. A gently, fist enters the frame and playfully tugs the child's ear, causing the boy to laugh louder, whole-heartedly.

ANGLE BILL

He becomes absorbed in the image.

LONG DISSOLVE

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - MORNING

A fifty story shell of a building with concrete slab floors, steel columns and no walls -- just a cable running around the perimeter of each level as a safety railing.

Orange spray paint and watermarks are everywhere.

EXT. BUILDING - ELEVATOR - MORNING

Four CARPENTERS wait impatiently for the freight elevator.

SALLY BOY -- a handsome man in his thirties, shouts at the freight operator.

SALLY BOY
Hey scumbag, send it down!

The freight OPERATOR gives Sally Boy the finger, which makes him even angrier. Suddenly a smile steals across Sally Boy's face when he sees his brother Bill Duarte walking onto the site.

SALLY BOY (cont'd)
You made it!
(to the freight operator)
Fuck with me now that my big
brother's here!

The brothers hug.

SALLY BOY (cont'd)
(sarcastically)
Nice, first day and already a
journeyman. It took me four years
to make full book. No thanks to
Uncle Pete.

BILL
And you still couldn't carry my
tool-belt.

Sally Boy laughs as the freight operator finally arrives with the elevator.

SALLY BOY
(towards the operator)
Fuckin' guy... The plumbers
probably greased him to get their
shit up first.

The carpenters grumble and give the freight operator dirty looks as they enter the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR - MORNING

Bill looks down at the shiny new lunch pail in his hand. The name "Bill Duarte" is written over the white tape with a little 'heart' pasted on next to it.

Sally Boy smiles at his brother.

As the elevator rises past the eighth floor, Bill sees a man leaning over a makeshift worktable, observing blueprints. He has silver hair under a RED HARD-HAT.

Bill tries to get a better look, but the elevator rises -- cutting off his view.

EXT. 10TH FLOOR - MORNING

The carpenters arrive just in time to hear the foreman's WHISTLE.

Uncle Pete is already on the job.

SALLY BOY
Hey Uncle Pete, look who I found.

UNCLE PETE
What'd ya get held up by that
cocksucker on the elevator?

Sally Boy nods and pats Bill on the back then heads off.

We hear the sound of screw guns starting like the revving of a hundred car engines.

Bill looks around the site.

The carpenters are screwing up sheetrock, cutting metal studs, the hustle and bustle of the carpenter's life.

An APPRENTICE is running around with a pencil and pad taking the morning coffee orders.

Uncle Pete turns to Bill.

UNCLE PETE (cont'd)
Take that A-frame over there and go
get me a ten-foot board of five-
eighths fire halt. They're stacked
up by the air-vents.

Bill nods and grabs a large wooden frame and rolls it over to the sheetrock. He picks up a slab and leans it on the frame.

ECU - WOBBLY BALANCED WHEELS ROLLING...

ANGLE WIDE

As Bill wheels it back, we notice he's very close to the edge of the building. His gruff eyes stare through a portal in the skeletal structure, searching for the man with the red hard-hat... He stops and looks over the building --

EXT. STREET BELOW - BILL'S POV

There's no one on the ground.

EXT. 10TH FLOOR - BACK TO SCENE

Suddenly Bill begins to hear a faint HARMONIC RING. He turns and sees the men working. They seem as distant as the ground below.

A cold wind sweeps across the back of Bill's neck. His hands tighten around the sheetrock. He looks up --

The sun is hard and burns his eyes.

A serene feeling of euphoria overcomes him. He releases the sheetrock...

...and JUMPS!

EXT. BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Cold wind WISPS against Bill's face as he plummets towards the street ten stories down --

CUT TO BLACK

OVER BLACK

BILL (V.O.)

...I expect I might as well begin by telling you about Mrs. Piggie-Wiggle, so whenever I mention her, you will not interrupt and ask...

INT. PSYCHIATRIC WARD, ROOM H - DAY

Wind chimes in from a crack in the window, creating a faint harmonic RING. Genro is seated behind his iron desk.

GENRO
Who is Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle?

Bill is sitting on the floor, leaning against the cot. His eyes held straight, staring blankly at the window.

BILL
It's a book. That's the first line.

GENRO
I know the book. I didn't know that was the first line.

BILL
He'd read it to me, lift me on his lap, tug my ear, gently, and read.

GENRO
How old were you?

BILL
A baby.

GENRO
You remember?

BILL
We have tape.

GENRO
Your father was a construction worker--

Bill sees the silver-haired guard stream past the mesh-window, outside the room.

BILL
There was a fire.

GENRO
Fire?

BILL
I let it breathe on me -- I wanted to feel it...

ECU BILL'S PUPIL

We see Genro in the curved reflection of Bill's eye.

BILL (cont'd)
...every nuance of his pain.

ANGLE WIDE

Genro looks at his notebook, then back at Bill --

GENRO
Says here he went into the backyard-

BILL
Were you there?

GENRO
You were at the window. You heard
a gunshot.

BILL
No. I smelt flesh burning, and
then... whispers --

GENRO
Whispers? Was someone else with
you?

BILL
I have a brother.

GENRO
He was there?

Bill presses his lips together, shakes his head...

GENRO (cont'd)
Who then?

BILL
You.

GENRO
Me?

BILL
(pauses imperceptibly,
thinking...)
Your voice. I know it...
(remembering...)
But when I turned to look --

Genro is sitting fixed in the chair, rooted to the spot, like
a tree... Only his fingers are moving, click-clacking on the
desk.

BILL (cont'd)
...Gone

GENRO
You've become very good at
deception, Billy.

BILL
Don't call me that.

GENRO
Call you what?

BILL
Billy. It's a kid's name. My
name's Bill. Use it.

GENRO
Okay. Bill. Let's just say you're
mixed-up. That's understandable.
You've been hearing my voice a lot
lately. But you do realize now
that what you're saying is
impossible?

Bill stares at him. Genro leans back in his chair, dabbed in
starlight, slanting down from the window.

BILL
...There are dead stars that still
shine because their light is
trapped in time.

GENRO
Is that a science thing?

BILL
Yes.

GENRO
Where do you stand in this light,
which does not technically exist?

Bill is drained of all authority. He looks foolish and
confused.

GENRO (cont'd)
Do you believe in a Creator, Bill?
Something greater than yourself?

BILL
Do you?

GENRO
Yes.

Bill is looking at him, a flat stare, distant, without a point of contact.

BILL
...All roads lead there.

GENRO
Where?

BILL
La-La Land. No answers.

GENRO
There are answers, simple, but they demand you to be sane, and you're not used to that yet.

The guard passes the steel-mesh window again, stealing Bill's attention.

BILL
Why is he guarding me? I thought I'm here of my own accord?

GENRO
You are.

BILL
Then I can leave?

GENRO
Yes.

BILL
When?

GENRO
Anytime. Now... if you like.

A small white terror of disbelief flickers in Bill's eyes. He leaps off his cot, pointing at Genro -- but says nothing.

GENRO (cont'd)
I like what you're doing.

BILL
What's that?

GENRO
Taking control. Asking questions. It's a good sign.

Bill steps away from him and moves towards the door. He glares out the mesh window... doesn't see anyone. He looks down at the door handle --

GENRO (cont'd)
It's open.

Bill grabs the handle -- twists it, the door CREAKS open...

GENRO (cont'd)
Go on...

Bill takes a step...

GENRO (cont'd)
Have courage. You can do it,
Billy.

Bill SLAMS the door, spins around --

BILL
DON'T CALL ME BILLY!

He struts back to his cot.

BILL (cont'd)
If I go out there, you'll hit me
with another dose of the crazy.
I'm not an idiot --

GENRO
No. You're insincere. And that's
worse.

Bill mutters under his breath. Genro closes the notebook.

GENRO (cont'd)
I didn't hear you--

BILL
Do you bring that notebook home
when you go to your wife and kids
at night?

GENRO
Daughter.

BILL
Huh?

GENRO
No wife.

Bill feels a silence descend in Genro, an absence unrelated to his temperament.

BILL

Do you?

GENRO

This book goes where I go.

BILL

Then how could I have marked it?

Bill turns sharply, glowering at him.

BILL (cont'd)

You're gonna tell me something...
And you're gonna tell me now.

GENRO

If there's something to tell you
that I haven't already said -- Why
would I say it now?

BILL

Because if you don't, I'll kill
you...

Genro looks back unafraid.

BILL (cont'd)

I kill ya dead.

GENRO

Okay, Bill, I do have something to
say -- But you've heard it, many
times.

(off Bill's searching
look)

When you can't understand what's
happening -- when you're completely
perplexed as to what going on -- it
would only seem natural to
reference a place that's unknown.

BILL

Is that what this is? The unknown?
Am I dead?

GENRO

You caught a flash--

BILL

A what?

GENRO

...A fleeting glimpse -- The girl
on the train, the red hard-hat --
The blueprints... It's like seeing
from the corner of your eye -- but
when you turn to look, it's gone...
And, now you can't quite put a
finger on it. Can you?

BILL

(shaking his head...)
You're lying.

GENRO

I'm not.

BILL

I got the job with my uncle after I
left here. That's when I saw the
girl.

GENRO

No--

BILL

After my son's death, I came here;
then I was released... With
Jessie... She forgave me -- They
all did. Now I'm back here. Why?!

GENRO

You've never left here, Bill.

Bill's face registers shock. Silence... He touches his
bathrobe as if realizing at this very moment what he's
wearing.

BILL

...I never told you these things.

GENRO

When you damage or lose some aspect
of your personality, your
unconscious is capable of reaching
out.

BILL

Whaddaya mean?

GENRO

I mean the brain is made up of
cells, like all the body's organs.

(MORE)

GENRO (cont'd)

It's not technically capable of producing the phenomenon of thought. Yet miraculously, it does.

(beat)

You're a science man -- How do you explain that?

BILL

We all think. There's nothing strange about it.

GENRO

...Except that we're going beyond our capabilities. Nobody has a problem with this, because we see it all the time. It's when we take the 'next step' that people begin to resist.

BILL

Next step?

GENRO

Your subconscious is projecting something. Your mind has given you these blueprints. So you've conjured up a life as a construction worker. In a lot of ways, it makes perfect sense.

BILL

What do you mean, conjured?

GENRO

You're not a carpenter -- Your father was.

BILL

...What am I?

GENRO

Lost... and reaching out. These blueprints must be the solution.

BILL

Then they're here? In this room?

GENRO

They can be anywhere.

BILL

Don't do that.

GENRO

Do what?

BILL

Make like you're gonna give me something then take it away. Don't lie to me!

GENRO

I'm not. You're creating an opportunity for yourself that you don't even know exists.

Genro flips through his notebook until he comes to the one with six dots circling a number '8' and the word "Blueprints" written on top of it.

GENRO (cont'd)

These things happen all the time -- in dreams, hypnosis, states of semi-consciousness... therapy.

BILL

...Shock therapy?

GENRO

Yes, of course. Find the blueprints, and you'll discover what's happening to your son.

BILL

...Happening?

GENRO

William's not dead -- You know that -- But he is dying...

Bill turns away; eyelids drooping, twitching... only the bottom rim of his iris is showing.

GENRO (cont'd)

Don't RELENT!

ECU BILL'S PUPIL

His eyelids fluttering...

Genro's voice shrinks to a hoarse whisper...

GENRO (cont'd)

You can save him...

ANGLE WIDE

Bill's eyes roll into the back into his head -- He's going into a full seizure. His body spasms and jerks --

GENRO (cont'd)

NOW!

A sharp pain shoots through Bill's back, stabbing him like a knife! He SHRIEKS and drops, slumping towards the ground --

CUT TO

INT. ECT WARD - HOSPITAL - DAY

Wobbly balanced wheels rolling and SQUEALING...

Bill is wheeled into the tiny room, delirious with pain -- Clouded images whirl around him at a frantic pace.

The DOCTOR is a fuzzy blur; eyes, nose, forehead, chin, dropping in and out of focus. He presses a firm hand over Bill's shoulder as he bores a rubber mouth-plate into his mouth.

An ORDERLY and NURSE hold him down --

Bill's eyes roll into the back into his head, fluttering... as an injection of electroconvulsive (ECT) therapy is administered... He wiggles and bites down on the plate as the next dose is injected -- and then Bill goes still.

FLASHBACK - INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - MORNING

The train's SHADOW rips across the wall, HORN BLASTING, catching bits and pieces of the gym; A handful of PARENTS on bleachers, the clock on the wall, two practice mats tied to a recessed STEEL RING bolted in the gymnasium floor.

Bill stands over his son with growing frustration.

BILL

C'mon Will... Do it again.

The boy's body nervously shifts from side to side, pulling at the mat.

BILL (cont'd)

All right, that was a little better.

William whispers in his father's ear.

WILLIAM
Dad, you're embarrassing me.

BILL
Embarrassing you? You're
embarrassing me!

SHOT TIGHTENS on William; tear blooms -- Bill grows incensed.

BILL (cont'd)
Are you crying?!

WILLIAM
No...

BILL
Are you CRYING?!

WILLIAM
No!

William wipes his eyes and tries the move again.
Unsuccessful, he backs off to the edge of the mat --

WILLIAM (cont'd)
I suck at this...

BILL
You don't suck. You're scared--

WILLIAM
I'm not scared.

BILL
...So you don't try--

WILLIAM
I suck!
(gestures with his chin to
the other kids)
And they know it...

BILL
Then try, try again. Make strong
spirit.

William drops his hands, gives up.

Bill's eyes turn cold. He clutches one hand in the other,
tightly, veins going flat and blood draining from his
knuckles.

Suddenly the train THUNDERCLAPS around them -- The clock on
the wall CLICKS ONE SECOND...

Bill storms off the mat...

WILLIAM

Dad!

Bill turns sharply...

WHAT HE SEES

William is recklessly throwing his body from side to side, trying the move again...

The clock on the wall clicks a second time...

As William continues moving more and more out of control, his weight causes the mat to slide, lifting the STEEL RING into a dangerous upright position.

With a sudden lurch, William jams his foot between the mat and the floor and begins to fall towards the jutting STEEL RING.

A spectrum of emotion sweeps across Bill's face, gripping him like shortness of breath --

The clock CLICKS three, four, five seconds...

Bill leaps --

PUSH IN TO REVEAL

William's head cradled in his father's arms. The inertia of Bill's body weight has caused the boy to hit the steel ring at an angle that has severed his neck-bone from his spine.

The clock CLICKS away...

William is DEAD.

Bill squeezes him in his arms and HOWLS like a wounded animal -- as the sound of the train THUNDERCLAPS around him...

Its ominous shadow races off the wall --

SMASH CUT TO

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - BOTTOM OF BUILDING - MORNING

CRASH! The sheetrock BREAKS against the concrete.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - 10TH FLOOR - MORNING

The men look over at Bill, who has just dropped the slab off of the building.

Uncle Pete and Sally Boy hurry over to him.

UNCLE PETE (CONT'D)
You all right?

Bill nods to himself, taking it all in, remembering where he is.

SALLY BOY
What happened?

Bill shakes his head...

Bill
I got a little dizzy. It slipped.

UNCLE PETE
Dizzy?

Uncle Pete looks around at some of the plumbers.

UNCLE PETE (cont'd)
All right, which one of you miserable bastards bumped him?!

The guys laugh. Sally Boy looks around. The FOREMAN storms over to Bill.

FOREMAN
Hey, what the fuck's wrong with you?! You could have killed someone...!

Pete gets in the foreman's face.

UNCLE PETE
Easy... Shit falls every day.

FOREMAN
You know how much that sheetrock weighs?!

UNCLE PETE
A lot more than you. Now get out of my face before you get dropped, you skinny prick.

The foreman gets more heated --

The apprentice comes back with a large Styrofoam-lined milk crate full of coffees...

FOREMAN

Where's my tea?

APPRENTICE

Oh shit.

FOREMAN

You fuckin' numb nut -- you forgot my tea!

The foreman reaches for something to throw... The apprentice drops the crate and hits the ground running as the foreman picks up a nail gun and starts firing nails at his feet, just missing him --

Sally Boy giggles. Pete chuckles and slaps Bill on the shoulder.

UNCLE PETE

See -- All we do is laugh. You'll be all right. Go back to work.

Pete walks away.

Bill smiles weakly, hiding his concern.

SALLY BOY (PRE-LAP)

Let's have a drink --

EXT. SONNY'S PUB - DUSK

An empty chair sits in front of the neighborhood bar. Bill and Sally Boy stop before a red neon sign that reads: "SONNY'S."

SALLY BOY

...Looks like you need one.

Music throbs and blots coming from inside the bar.

BILL

Na, I'm still on the meds.

SALLY BOY

What're ya talking about? It's your first day--

BILL

Hey Sal, when I dropped the sheetrock this morning--

SALLY BOY
Don't worry about that.

BILL
...How long was I standing there?

Sally boy looks bemused.

BILL (cont'd)
A minute, ten minutes... an hour?

SALLY BOY
I dunno, Bill. I wasn't watching.
I'd say more like a minute.
(beat)
Listen to that... "Smashing
Pumpkins." Come on, have a club
soda at least.

A blackbird has perched on a wire above them, its wings flapping wildly. The sound is loud and insistent.

BILL
I gotta get home. Jessie's
waiting.

SALLY BOY
Jessie's inside.

BILL
(stunned)
She's here...

Bill steps towards the pub window and peeks through --

INT. SONNY'S - CONTINUOUS

Bodies are packed tight in a wash of rotating light and cigarette smoke. Jessica is dancing alone in the pack.

Bill and Sally Boy enter. Music devours the air around them, emanating from an old jukebox. Charming Irish hand-painted murals line the walls

UNCLE PETE (O.S.)
Bill! Over here.

Uncle Pete is sitting at the far end of the bar, waving at Bill, calling to him over the music.

UNCLE PETE (cont'd)
Bill! I have to talk to you.

Bill follows Sally Boy along a solid oak bar, passing a dartboard and retro video games; receiving pats on the back, shares handshakes with fellow carpenters, all the while watching his wife...

Jessie seems to be moving against the music, slowly, sultry as the tempo shrinks and revs. Her face lights up when she spots Bill -- motioning him to join her... Bill doesn't engage; he moves through the strobe light, leans in, next to his uncle.

BILL

I hope you're not drinking? Aunt Teresa will kill you...

UNCLE PETE

Is she here?

Bill smiles. Sally Boy cuts onto the floor and 'bumps' with some big, fat, WOMAN. In an adjacent room, with standing tables, Bill gets a glimpse of three MEN sitting; their backs are to him; one of the men has thick, silvery hair --

UNCLE PETE (cont'd)

Na. I'm just tippin' a few -- It's good to see you out and about.

BILL

It's good to see you too, uncle Pete. I know you and Sal went to bat for me on this job.

UNCLE PETE

Are you happy?

Bill studies him, looks and nods.

UNCLE PETE (cont'd)

You know the happiest I've ever been?

BILL

What's the happiest you've ever been?

Pete looks at him and spills into laughter. Bill's not sure what is so funny but finds himself laughing as well.

UNCLE PETE

The day my old man gave me that puke-green Delta 88.

(off Bill's look)

(MORE)

UNCLE PETE (cont'd)
 That car had balls -- First thing I
 did was drive up to the White
 Castle -- Boy, I liked that
 hamburger sandwich...
 (licks his lips)
 That vehicle changed my life. I
 went from a three-block radius to
 wherever I wanted to go...

BILL
 And what was that, a five-block
 radius?

UNCLE PETE
 I'm givin' ya gold, and ya wanna
 break my chops.
 (eyes Jessie)
 That's one hell of a lady--

Bill turns to look --

Jessie is spinning; her movements are free and unrestrained,
 the pulsating strobe and smokey ambiance mar her figure,
 giving her a strange, almost fiendish appearance.

Bill starts towards her... Uncle Pete takes his wrist,
 drawing Bill back to him.

UNCLE PETE (cont'd)
 This was before your ol 'man fucked
 it up...

Pete looks around the bar, then inches in closer to Bill,
 upper body only, old stubbed head and pale eyes.

UNCLE PETE (cont'd)
 My big brother crashed that baby
 into the curve on Midland -- You
 know it?
 (off Bill's slow nod)
 Boom... right into the pole. I
 know you heard about the beating he
 took for that one...
 (shakes his head)
 Your grandfather whacked him so
 hard; he broke his own hand...

Bill tries to smile, but it comes off as a grimace, pained
 and unconvincing.

UNCLE PETE (cont'd)
 Son-of-a-bitch was drinking the
 home-made... You know, the guinea
 red...

Pete holds up his glass of red wine.

Bill looks at the mirror behind the bar, sees the reflection of the MEN sitting at a table -- They appear to be closer than before. Bill hears the WHISPERING like a silhouette, dark, and hardly audible--

UNCLE PETE (cont'd)

Your grandmother pulled the cross down from over the bed and tells him, "Drunks can't sleep under God..."

BILL

What...

UNCLE PETE

So the motherfucker picks up a twelve gauge and aims it at her -- right between her eyes... I kid you not. I was shittin' my pants... You never knew terror until you looked into your grandfather's eyes. But your father got up in front of the ol 'lady, using his body as a shield...

Bill feels a strange arrhythmia in his chest, a flutter like WINGS FLAPPING... He spins around...

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

ANGLE UNDER TABLE

The Monarch Butterfly spins, whirls, and FLAPS its translucent wings... locked inside the glass jar...

INT. SONNY'S PUB - BACK TO SCENE

Jessie is spinning faster now, whirling... a MAN approaches... Bill cannot see his face, just long, silver hair flowing to his shoulder -- Bill looks back at the table.

The men are still there -- all three of them --

UNCLE PETE

And then he said it--

Pete's thick workman's hand skims over Bill's wrist, gripping him tightly.

UNCLE PETE (cont'd)
...And that was it. The ol' man
puts the gun down and walks out of
the room...

BILL
What did you say?

UNCLE PETE
Your father had a set, let me tell
ya...

BILL
I know. But what did he say?

UNCLE PETE
What?

BILL
You said... "someone will die
tonight."

UNCLE PETE
What're you talking about?

BILL
Who's gonna die, Pete?

UNCLE PETE
I didn't say that. I said--

BILL
What?!

UNCLE PETE
...I know he was tough on you --
But he loved you...

Bill looks back over his shoulder...

Jessica is heading out the door behind the silver-haired man--

UNCLE PETE (cont'd)
He shouldn't have did what he
did... But you have to forgive him.

Suddenly... Something dark and wing-like flaps behind Jessie -
- She glances at Bill; a terrified plea for help, just before
her head snaps back... and she is sucked violently out the
door.

Bill gasps and tears after her!

EXT. SONNY'S - TWILIGHT

Bill runs into the street, looks left, right... at every building and car... No Jessica. He hears wing-like flapping and looks up --

There are now hundreds of birds on the wire.

Jessica comes out of the bar in a tizzy.

JESSICA

Bill, where the hell you going?

Bill stares at her as if he has seen a ghost.

BILL

Jess...

JESSICA

Come back inside.

Bill nods. Jessica heads back into the bar. As Bill moves to join her, the birds lift-off... and the horrible flapping intensifies --

The swarm hovers over him, FLAPPING, WHIRLING, SPINNING...

Bill takes a few more steps, and suddenly there is a distinct PATTERNING of feet running --

Birds descend; some landing, some hovering; a black swarm over asphalt --

GENRO (V.O.)

...like seeing from the corner of your eye...

Billy catches a fleeting glimpse of a small, hooded figure in a black vinyl raincoat --

GENRO (V.O.)

...But when you turn to look, it's gone...

The small figure turns the corner --

GENRO (V.O.)

And, now you can't quite put my finger on it --

Bill takes off full tilt...

EXT. COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

Bill turns a corner; hears PATTERNING FEET running... Spots the tiny figure, briefly, darting into an arched alleyway -- Bill races after it --

He reaches the alley, gasping for breath. It is dark inside.

Suddenly a RED GLOW...

Then a cigarette is flung out onto the pavement -- Followed by three FIGURES wrapped in throwaway sweaters. Bill sees them clustered in the alleyway. The leader steps forward, smoking in the dimness.

LEADER
Hiya, coach.

They're not derelicts -- they are TEENAGERS.

BILL
I know you kids?

Wind comes gusting off the pavement, stirring the air.

LEADER
(menacingly)
Don't be concerned...

They creep closer... side, front, and back of Bill.

LEADER (cont'd)
...It will not harm you.

Bill looks at the leader. His eyes are unrevealing, faint, gray, remote -- They tighten their stance, creating a human lock around Bill.

BILL
I don't wanna hurt you boys...

Behind the leader, a wall, graffitied with ornate renderings of half-hidden oxen...

LEADER
...It's only me...

BILL
You?

LEADER
...Pursuing somethin' I'm not sure
of... Across my dreams--

The leader slips his hand under his jacket. Bill moves fast, seizes his wrist, and jams the back of his elbow. The leader buckles as Bill locks him up in a perfect 'arm-drag.'

The other two lunge! Bill side-steps, and rams his knee into the leader's spinal cord, sending him crashing to the pavement. The leader drops his weapon! It's not a knife -- it is a SPRAY PAINT CAN.

Bill picks up the spray can --

The others freeze in place.

Bill hears GIGGLING, it's ominous and not from them. He looks up, into the alley --

LEADER (O.S.) (cont'd)
If you continue--

Bill whips his head around. The leader is still down, on his knees, he raises his arms like bird wings...

LEADER (cont'd)
...It will destroy you!

Bill sends the spray can rolling on the ground.

The young thugs dash for it --

Bill bolts into the alley...

INT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

He charges over concrete, trying to avoid broken glass and abandoned cars in the dark alley...

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Bill runs out of the alley and finds himself on the other side, a rocky cliff overlooking the city before him -- His eyebrows lower in a scowl.

The hooded figure is nowhere in sight. But the old school and the elevated subway are plain to see.

He treads down a tricky dirt path; the screaming wind whispers in his ears.

EXT. BOTTOM OF HILL - NIGHT

Bill crosses over grass and gravel and spits out on a path. He hastens his pace, double-timing it to the old school -- Now under construction.

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - NIGHT

Bill comes to the gate.

The BRIGHT, SILVERY LIGHT of the -8- train thunders above him on its elevated tracks, casting pulsating light on the school.

Bill looks up at the school window --

WHAT HE SEES

The HOODED FIGURE -- Its small palms pressed up against the shattered school windowpane, reaching...

Bill's eyes jerk from the window to the thick steel chain around the gate -- *steel rings locking him out.*

Bill shakes the gate -- It sways and rattles, but the lock holds steady, so he climbs over -- and sprints over the graveled path to the entryway.

The door is bolted and locked from the inside.

Bill scoops a cinder block off the site and HEAVES it at the tempered glass -- setting off an ALARM! He finishes the job, KICKING IN the glass -- and enters the school.

INT. SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

The heavy gym doors creak open as Bill pushes through.

He tries the lights. They don't work. But there is enough blue skylight coming through the window to reveal the shattered clock on the gymnasium wall -- its hands missing.

Off the ALARM, a siren WAILS softly.

Bill makes his way to the window.

The hooded figure is gone, but Bill sees small FINGERPRINTS smeared on the windowpane, along with his distorted reflection... He backs away from the window, and his foot gets stuck under a torn, mildewed mat --

His face goes pale, and his eyes tear up as he glowers at the rusty STEEL RING under the mat --

Bill whips his foot from under the mat and stumbles into a carpenter's table, sending the building's blueprints floating to the ground.

He sinks to his knees and begins to rifle through the blueprints -- with the siren wailing louder...

Bill spots a blueprint of an apartment building --

FLASH CUT

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

A smooth stucco wall surrounds the complex where one building seems to be leaning to one side -- *like the Tower of Pisa*.

INT. GYMNASIUM - BACK TO SCENE

Before Bill can fully grasp what he's looking at... He spots an old, discolored document out of place among the newer ones -- and reaches for it --

INSERT BLUEPRINT

It looks like a maze or a net -- At its center is a small square with something written, but scribbled over. The siren grows louder...

ANGLE WIDE

Bill shoves the document under his jacket -- and heads out of the gym.

EXT. SCHOOL - NIGHT

Bill crawls through the hole in the glass and runs out onto the graveled path...

He climbs over the gate and removes the blueprint from under his jacket, holding it up under a street lamp -- He still can't make out what's written under the scribbling.

Police SIRENS are racing towards the school.

Bill spots the FLASHING RED CHERRY TOP spinning towards him --

Blinded by the oncoming squad car, he holds the blueprint up in front of his face. The headlights shine through -- revealing what's under the scribbling...

SIX DOTS CIRCLED THE NUMBER 8!

The squad car SHRIEKS an unearthly chord as it breaks and SKIDS...

Billy lets out a strangled SCREAM on IMPACT!

CUT TO BLACK:

Absolute silence.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL THE SHINY BLACK PUPIL OF AN EYE

The eye is frozen in place.

PULL BACK FURTHER

INT. LIVING ROOM - HOUSE - DUSK

Bill is sitting in an armchair, staring pensively. A pool of gold light slants in from an unseen window behind him. A cigarette is burning between his fingers.

BILL
I forgive myself...

Jessica enters the room and sits on the lip of the chair. She's as lovely and beautiful as the first time we saw her.

JESSICA
For what?

BILL
(breaking his thoughts)
Huh?

Ashes from his cigarette fall onto his jacket.

JESSICA
You've been sitting here for an hour. Are you all right?

Bill's eyes circle the room, looking, searching... as if he's a stranger in his own life.

JESSICA (cont'd)
What do you forgive yourself for?

BILL

...I dunno.

JESSICA

The doctor said this might happen once in a while.

Bill

What?

JESSICA

You know, zombie out... once you started the treatments.

(beat)

When did you start smoking -- again?

Bill suddenly becomes aware of the cigarette in his hand.

BILL

...I haven't been sleeping well.

She gives him a look somewhere between concern and a smile.

JESSICA

Is that why you've been dozing off on the train?

Bill stubs out the cigarette and reaches for another. She playfully slaps it out of his hand.

JESSICA (cont'd)

Stop that.

...then slides into the chair, putting her arms around him.

Bill looks at her wrists -- there isn't a mark on them.

Jessica caresses his face. Her hand moves along the nape of his neck and across his shoulder -- She kisses him... short pecking kisses, then longer, more tender ones.

Bill is becoming more euphoric with each passing moment.

BILL

It's wonderful...

JESSICA

What is?

BILL

Now... Right now --

Suddenly the lights go out in the kitchen. A RED GLOW appears in the darkness -- then disappears just as quickly.

Bill jumps to his feet, nearly knocking Jessie over.

BILL (cont'd)

Did you see that?! Something just flashed in the kitchen.

JESSICA

He's such a pain in the butt with that camera. You never should've bought it for him.

William pops his head in and out of the kitchen, laughing and pointing the tiny, digital camera at them.

WILLIAM

Smile! You're on Willy cam.

JESSICA

(smiling)
Knock it off.

Bill stares at his son in awe and disbelief.

William disappears behind the wall, laughing.

WILLIAM (O.S.)

Mom! I'm starving like Marvin...

JESSICA

Come on, your son's hungry.

Jessie places her arm around Bill's hip as they walk into the kitchen together.

INT. KITCHEN - DUSK

William is sitting at his place at the table when Bill and Jessica enter.

The warm glow of the setting sun filters through the kitchen window. The table is set for three.

Bill peers at a small dosing cup filled with meds on the counter.

William puts his hands together in prayer and whispers inaudibly... Bill watches him.

BILL
Is that a prayer? What are you
praying for?

When William is finished he leans towards his mother --

WILLIAM
(whispering)
Did you tell him?

BILL
Tell me what?

William looks up at his father with a guilty expression.

BILL (cont'd)
Tell me what, Will?

WILLIAM
I want to quit the league.

BILL
The wrestling league?

William nods timidly.

Bill is overcome with joy.

Bill (cont'd)
(smiles)
Go ahead.

WILLIAM
Really?

BILL
Is that what you were praying for?

William shakes his head. Bill can no longer contain himself. He rubs his hands over William's shoulders and head and kisses him, playfully tugging his ear, growing more delighted with each passing moment.

William giggles.

WILLIAM
...Dad, you're embarrassing me.

Bill laughs.

Jessica smiles happily --

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

A black starless sky.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

We hear a faint harmonic RING.

Bill wakes with a start. He sits up, clutching his chest. He moves his head to the right, looking for the source of the ring but all he can see is a clock glowing red on the nightstand --

The numbers change; progression of time.

In the dark Bill tries to make out the walls, the dresser in the corner.

Jessica stirs.

JESSICA

(groggy)

You okay?

He reaches for the lamp.

JESSICA (cont'd)

Don't.

He mumbles something.

JESSICA (cont'd)

Are you dreaming?

BILL

I was.

JESSICA

About what?

BILL

I don't know. Someone else.

JESSICA

What's that mean?

BILL

Someone... seeing through my eyes --
but not seeing me -- I mean you...
I mean... I don't know what the
hell I mean.

He rubs his forehead and eyes trying to get the lingering sensation out of his mind.

BILL (cont'd)
I dreamt I was institutionalized
for killing Will.

She snaps on the light.

JESSICA
I don't like that dream.

Bill hears the harmonic RING again, not so faint this time.

BILL
You hear that?

JESSICA
Yeah, I hear it. I hear it every
day --

She looks at the window -- sees a crack like a vein running through it. Wind chimes in through the crack creating a harmonic RING.

JESSICA (cont'd)
You can fix it tomorrow. Tell me
about the dream.

BILL
(after a pause)
Some quack keeps running me around
in circles...

JESSICA
Quack? Like a duck?

BILL
No. Like a doctor. But he's
really a jailer--

JESSICA
Who?

BILL
Trying to trap me -- like a bird in
a cage... Looking for blueprints...

JESSICA
Blueprints?

BILL
I've never had a dream like this
before, Jess.

(MORE)

BILL (cont'd)
 It's smarter than me...
 (off her look)
 I don't even know if I'm dreaming
 right now.

Jessica looks at the clock -- a little past midnight.

JESSICA
 I'll call Genro's service. Maybe
 they can prescribe something?

BILL
 Genro...?

JESSICA
 Yeah... your doctor.

BILL
 (panic in his eyes)
 What does he look like?

Concern grows across her face.

BILL (cont'd)
 What does he look like, Jess?!

JESSICA
 Bill, he's your doctor. You saw
 him today...

Bill stares back stunned and desperate--

JESSICA (cont'd)
 ...The DVD.

He jumps out of bed and tears out of the room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bill rushes into the living room and checks the DVD player,
 but the unit is empty. He rattles the cabinet next to it and
 shakes out the discs...

JESSICA (O.S.)
 ...It's under the clock.

Bill turns and sees Jessica coming down the steps --

JESSICA (cont'd)
 We didn't want William to see it.

Bill goes to the old grandfather clock and tilts it on its side. He uses his foot to slide the DVD out from beneath it, then moves back to the TV -- and shoves it into the player.

He turns it on --

Stands back...

Watches...

INSERT TV

We see a MAN in a tweed jacket is sitting behind an iron desk. His hands folded calmly before him -- But it's not the Genro we know.

BILL

Who is that?

JESSICA

What...

The doctor, on-screen, begins to speak.

DR. GENRO

During the procedure, there are a series of changes in brain waves...

The doctor moves his hands. His desk has a touch-screen interface. He fingers the keyboard, and a 3-D graphic of a human brain is holographically projected over the desk.

DR. GENRO (cont'd)

Resistance can lead to a higher chance of confusion and memory loss...

Pixilated brain cells expand and bind on the hologram --

DR. GENRO (cont'd)

Many of these memories may return -- although not always...

Colored flesh grows over the graphics...

DR. GENRO (cont'd)

Some patients have reported going weeks, even months before they regained their memory... Some never do.

ANGLE WIDE

Bill steps closer until his tortured eye fills the screen --

BILL
...Next step...

FLASHBACK - INT. LONG CORRIDOR - DAY

Bill is strapped to a gurney.

An ORDERLY and NURSE push him through the tunnel-like corridor.

INT. ECT WARD - DAY

He is wheeled into the tiny room, delirious with pain -- Clouded images whirl around him at a frantic pace.

The doctor drops in and out of focus; eyes, nose, forehead, ear... It's the doctor on the DVD. He bores a rubber mouth-plate into Bill's mouth.

Bill wiggles and squirms.

The nurse presses firmly on Bill's shoulders as he receives the first dose of ECT --

INT. LIVING ROOM - BACK TO SCENE

Bill stares at the TV, stunned --

On-screen, the hologram metamorphosizes into a somewhat familiar face.

INSERT TV

The 3-D graphic is changing in size and dimension -- There is no hair, but it is undeniably Bill's face.

The pixels form a pearl-like net around the face. Each pearl contains a reflection of all the others so that every pearl is interconnected.

ANGLE WIDE

Bill turns to Jessica.

BILL
The next step.

JESSICA
I don't understand.

BILL
 I'm becoming...
 (off her perplexed look,
 Bill shakes his head...)
 ...Nothing. Why have I been
 prescribed these treatments?

Bill looks at her -- She's scared to death.

JESSICA
 Maybe we should go to the emergency
 room? I think you're having a
 reaction.

BILL
 To what? I feel fine.

JESSICA
 No. You haven't been well. That's
 why you're on the meds.

BILL
 Bullshit. Nothing happened to
 William? Right?

JESSICA
 Of course not.

Bill backs away from her then tears up the steps up the
 stairs.

Jessica goes up after him.

INT. HOUSE - 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Bill rips down the hall to William's room. He swings open
 the door and peers at his son, sleeping peacefully.

Jessica grabs him at the door.

JESSICA
 What're you doing?

Bill closes his son's door --

BILL
 I have to see this doctor, Jess. I
 have to see Genro.

JESSICA
 You're not going to see him now --
 But we can go to the emergency?

BILL
No. I have to see him.

JESSICA
Can you wait until the morning?

BILL
(after a long pause)
Yeah. I can wait.

Bill smiles weakly, trying his best to reassure her.

JESSICA
I'll make an appointment first
thing.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BATHROOM - EARLY MORNING

Bill is in front of the bathroom mirror -- post-shower. He studies his face carefully.

A BOOM of rolling THUNDER cracks around him. It's raining hard outside.

He feels a hand on his shoulder -- Jessica appears in the mirror behind him. She's in a white robe.

JESSICA
Genro's office said he'll be in an
hour. You're the first one in.

BILL
Thanks Jess.

She caresses the side of his face --

JESSICA
You don't need to shave.

Jessica leans forward and kisses him.

JESSICA (cont'd)
Your face is as smooth as a baby's
butt...

She looks down at the antique, single-edged razor he's holding -- and gently removes it from his hand.

BILL
I thought I'd take the car today.

He turns to her.

BILL (cont'd)
Is that okay?

JESSICA
Of course. I've only got a few
calls today. I'll leave when you
get back -- Drop Will off... and be
careful; it's cats and dogs out
there.

Bill turns back to the mirror and watches Jessica leave.

CUT TO

ECU BILL'S EYE

We see CAR WIPER BLADES in the curved reflection of Bill's
eye.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

INT. CAR - MORNING

Bill is sitting in the car, staring out of the window. It's
raining hard. The wipers squeegee back and forth.

EXT. HOUSE - BILL'S POV - MORNING

He sees Jessica kiss William, then helps him on with a black
vinyl jacket.

INT. CAR

Bill squeezes his eyes shut -- and rolls his fist into a
ball.

When he opens his eyes, William is already in the car,
soaking wet and staring up at him.

WILLIAM
What's the matter?

Bill looks startled.

WILLIAM (cont'd)
You have a funny look.

Bill feigns a smile.

BILL
That's cause I'm funny looking,
just like you.

William returns the smile then reaches for his belt; as he does, Bill notices the chewed up skin around the boy's fingernails.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Put on your seatbelt.

Bill nods 'okay' and reaches for his belt.

EXT. CAR - MOVING

The rain is pouring down.

Bill hits the gas and brakes intermittently, causing the car to skid and go abruptly.

Cars BEEP their horns behind him.

One DRIVER flips him the finger.

WILLIAM (O.S.)
You drive like grandma.

INT. CAR - MOVING

Bill pays little attention. His mind seems somewhere else.

BILL
Hey.

WILLIAM
What?

BILL
Do you think I'm too hard on you?

William gives him a tentative look then shakes his head.

BILL (cont'd)
Then why is it so important that
you quit the team?

WILLIAM
You said I didn't have to wrestle.

BILL

You don't. You don't have to
anything you don't wanna do. It's
just--

WILLIAM

I hate sports... I suck at them!

BILL

You don't suck. You just don't
give yourself a shot.

Bill maneuvers the vehicle around a corner in cascading rain.

EXT. CAR - MOVING

He passes an intersection heading for a crossing where the
road meets the train tracks.

INT. CAR - MOVING

William begins to bite his nails.

BILL

I do suck. And the other guys hate
me because I'm the reason why we
lose.

Bill, growing flustered, pushes his son's hand away from his
mouth.

BILL (cont'd)

Stop that. You don't suck. You're
just scared -- So you don't try.

WILLIAM

I'm not scared.

BILL

You are scared. You're scared
right now. I just try to talk to
you and you start shaking. How do
you expect to do anything if you
have no confidence? If you don't
give yourself a chance!?

WILLIAM

You're the one who's scared!
That's why you eat pills.

BILL

Huh?

WILLIAM

Ma told me! You've got just as much right as anyone else to do whatever you want to do. Don't put anyone before yourself! Don't be afraid of anything. Don't give away your power!

WE SEE Bill in rearview mirror mouthing the words -- *Not William!*

BILL

...That's how you wind up a damn LOSER!

Bill stops mid-sentence, realizing...

BILL (cont'd)

I'm sorry, Will...

The boy looks straight ahead, avoiding Billy's gaze.

BILL (cont'd)

I don't know why I keep doing this...

WILLIAM

I know why.

Billy looks at him.

WILLIAM (cont'd)

Because anything I pray for never comes true.

Bill shakes his head.

BILL

No, Will... It's not you...

EXT. CAR - MOVING

The train is nearing on its tracks, heading for the intersection Bill is approaching.

INT. CAR - MOVING

BILL

It's me.

WILLIAM

Dad...

Bill turns to his son. William's eyes turn SHARK BLACK!

WILLIAM (cont'd)
Where are the BLUEPRINTS?

Bill's eyes grow wide!

EXT. RAIL CROSSING - CONTINUOUS

The crossbuck flashes red as gates come down --

INT. CAR - MOVING

Bill sees the monstrous steel box on rails barreling towards him -- Its designation number -8- grows BIGGER!

He SLAMS the brakes!!!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. PSYCHIATRIC WARD, ROOM H - DAY

Blue skylight shines in from the room's only window.

Bill sits up slowly, leaning in the cot.

Genro's briefcase is 'atop' the iron desk, but Genro is not there.

BILL
Where are you?

Bill is puzzled. He looks at his watch -- The hands are removed. He hears the harmonic RING coming from the cracked window.

Bill rises -- looks around...

BILL (cont'd)
You must answer when I speak to
you...

He catches his reflection in the mirror above the sink -- and notices long strands of SILVER HAIR hanging over his face. His pupils grow wide with fear and incomprehension.

He moves to Genro's desk and picks up the briefcase, opens it...

Inside are #2 pencils and Genro's leather-bound notebook, along with an old butane lighter, and hairspray (Aqua-net), right out of the 80s.

Bill grabs the notebook and spins through the pages -- they are all blank. He shows no surprise. There is something determined in his face; harsh and remorseless. He picks up a pencil and scribbles the number 8 on the middle of the page then marks six dots around it --

BILL (cont'd)

Happy?

He looks around the empty room void of memory and emotion. He steps into the ominous blue skylight slanting through from the window.

BILL (cont'd)

...Original enough for you?

Bill moves to the door and stares through the wire mesh.

BILL (cont'd)

Hey Guard! You there? Let me see your face.

He sees the guard's armchair, but no guard.

BILL (cont'd)

What's your name?

No answer.

BILL (cont'd)

You got a cigarette?

Silence.

BILL (cont'd)

How about a mother, you got one of those?! Maybe she can come in here and jerk me off -- You know, a little hand action!!

Bill backs away from the door. He grabs Genro's chair and hurls it across the room -- It hits the mirror above the sink, and the glass explodes, sending shards of mirror riffling across the floor.

He turns, expecting someone to burst through the door -- but no one comes in. He creeps back to the door... and peeks out the mesh window.

BILL (cont'd)

Hey...

(beat)

I had an accident... Can someone
help me...?

No answer.

Bill shuffles over the broken glass and picks up the chair,
placing it gently under the window.

He climbs atop the chair and grabs hold of the bars, then
wipes the dust off the glass with his fingers and looks
out... All he can see is a vast concrete wall encasing the
facility... and the cold, blue light from the sky above.

He stares at the sky through his fingerprints -- For some
reason, this distorted image brings a tear to his eye.

Bill steps off the chair and moves back to the cot -- sinking
onto it. He sees a large shard of broken mirror lying at his
feet.

BILL (cont'd)

...I did leave --

He picks up the mirror and looks into it -- His weary
reflection glares back at him.

BILL (cont'd)

...My son fell and broke his neck
on the rope ring... I was brought
here. No matter how many chances I
get, I do it again, and again... It
was me -- I killed him. I'm a
teacher... I'm a carpenter, a
husband -- I'm all these things,
but I'm not insincere...

He shakes his head, back and forth... simultaneously
sympathetic and repelled...

BILL (cont'd)

I don't know why they let me out of
here -- But they did... I got a job
with my uncle, now I'm back, locked
in this cocoon. And that is the
coldest torment --

Bill looks at Genro's chair, laying sharply in its side,
empty.

BILL (cont'd)

...No one else is out there...

His hand tightens around the sharp glass -- Blood emerges from the cracks between his fingers.

BILL (cont'd)

I was wrong to think I was going to spend to rest of my life here...

Shadows from the window bars rip across his face.

BILL (cont'd)

I'm going to be here a lot longer than that.

He grits his teeth with deadly purpose and presses the broken shard of mirror over his wrist -- His eyes sweep the room again -- Nothing. No sound, no words, no vision...

BILL (cont'd)

Nothing...

Bill digs the shard deep into his wrist... Blood flows freely from the open wound. He releases the shard and slumps slowly towards the ground. His face *becomes* blue and cold.

FADE TO BLACK:

LONG FADE IN:

INT. PSYCHIATRIC WARD, ROOM H - DAY

A chair sits vacant behind a stainless steel desk. Genro's unopened briefcase lays on top of it.

A MAN is lying on the floor. His hair is long and silver.

He leans up against the cot -- It's not Bill. It's a silver-haired man -- the man we've seen flashes of throughout, on the elevator, the construction site, Sonny's Pub...

The man glances at his wrist -- Not a mark on them...

He rises, looks around... spots his reflection in the broken mirror above the sink -- He stares at the long strands of SILVER HAIR hanging over his face and eyes.

The man moves to the desk and opens the briefcase; no pencils, no notebook, lighter, no hairspray; empty.

He gives the room one final look... and moves to the door...

He grabs the handle, and the door CREAKS open.

Bright blue light shines in from the outer room -- momentarily blinding him. He balances himself against the frame of the door as he adjusts his eyes to the light.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

The man passes the guard's chair outside his room and fumbles along the corridor. He's alone.

His bare feet slap against the cold, dusty tiles. Each step intensifies his weight giving the impression that the floor might collapse at any moment.

Bile-green walls form a twisted maze of doors and dust.

He comes to a plain door at the end of the hall and tries the handle.

It appears jammed.

He RAMS the door open with his shoulder, breaking through -- then takes the next step...

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

A cold fog rises in thick mists...

The man staggers out of the building and teeters onto the concrete path that surrounds it.

Then takes off running...

EXT. DARK STREET - NIGHT

The asphalt is shiny and wet. The apartments are empty of life -- no lights, TV's or radios, no sounds of people chattering, just dead silence.

The man is running through empty streets of what looks like a ghost town --

EXT. UNION HALL - NIGHT

He sees empty beach chairs and sleeping bags scattered about the outside of the union hall.

He runs inside.

INT. UNION HALL - NIGHT

It's deserted. The aisles and desks are vacant.

EXT. UNION HALL - NIGHT

He dashes out of the union hall.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The man is sweating profusely. He comes to Sonny's Pub...

INT. SONNY'S PUB - NIGHT

He bursts through the door, looks around, empty -- then dashes back out.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The man moves through the eerie courtyard where tenement buildings are littered with graffiti... and comes upon the construction site.

Except for the fog, nothing else is moving.

He stares at the dilapidated fence surrounding the site --

Suddenly... He freezes -- As if someone is watching him --

CAMERA ARCS AROUND HIM

Nothing, no one is there...

He takes off running again.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Vines crawl up the white picket fence and alongside the house, reaching like tentacles towards the blue sky.

The man moves past the picket fence and over the neatly manicured lawn.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

He enters the house --

MAN

...enuJ

The man's speech and movements are oddly stilted, echoing something otherworldly.

The old grandfather clock's hands are frozen at 8:00.

MAN (cont'd)

enuJ .emoh m'I

He moves to the clock. The pendulum is stone-still. He sinks to his knees and feels around under the clock. He stops suddenly -- a DVD.

He goes to the TV and shoves the DVD into the player then presses play.

Nothing. No static, no sound -- black fills the screen.

A cool wind sweeps across the back of his neck, and he whips his head around.

There is a RED HARD-HAT on the dining room table --

Suddenly an image appears on the TV screen.

SUPER 8 FOOTAGE

We see the back of a man with thick, silvery hair sitting on the edge of the bed, bouncing a two-year-old on his knee.

SILVER-HAIRED MAN (ON SCREEN)

June... come look! He loves it.

(to the boy)

I love you Billy boy.

The playfully tugs on the boy's ear.

ANGLE MAN

He sinks onto the couch, watching...

INSERT TV

Suddenly the image on the TV goes to static -- and a new one FADES UP...

It's the house, the very room he's sitting in. Spotless, like a showroom in a department store -- generic, without life. Camera is POV as if someone is walking towards a window...

ANGLE WIDE

The man looks at the room's only window.

He rises then steps slowly in the direction of the window...

MAN

...ereh uoy erA ?enuJ

He SLAPS his hands on the windowpane -- And the grandfather clock begins to CHIME -- It's pendulum SWINGS back and forth at incredible speed -- But its second hand is CLICKING in reverse.

MAN (cont'd)

ti naem t'ndid I ...yrros m'I --
 tuo emoc esaelp ybaB

He's speaking the words in reverse, the progression of sound is slow and ungraceful, but marked with a vigorous, uniform rhythm -- Suddenly a fleeting but distinctly human shape moves quickly behind him. He turns...

A shadowy reflection appears on the staircase wall with WINGS FLAPPING, then fades just as quickly --

The man rushes up the steps --

INT. HOUSE - 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

A window in the hall is open, and the wind blows back the curtains -- A vantage spot overlooking the train tracks below...

He stands perfectly still, a motionless figure against the background of the long dark hallway, his eyes riveted upon the vacant train tracks...

Suddenly a HAND creeps up his shoulder... and he spins around...

At the far end of the hall, behind a door, a pulsating light gleams.

CAMERA IS POV, as the man gropes along the hall towards the room --

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The bedroom is cluttered with the flotsam and jetsam of long married life; mauve drapes and pillow covers, king-size bed, and collectible dolls from the 80s.

The man notices a picture on the wall... and steps towards it.

INSERT PICTURE

It's a portrait of a beautiful young woman, slender and graceful, with smiling eyes, and two young boys, smirking.

CU

A tear blooms in the corner of his eye.

VOICE (V.O.)
Are you crying?!

ANGLE WIDE

He moves to the dresser and opens the top drawer.

Inside are a pack of cigarettes along with a butane lighter, and a can of Aqua-net hairspray. He picks up the items -- Then moves to the queen size bed.

He sits on the corner, staring pensively at the items -- a gleaming, pulsating light flashes in his eyes.

CAMERA PANS to the source of the light -- an out-of-date TV console.

The man hears a strange noise and looks around. It seems to be coming from a covered birdcage. He goes over to it and lifts the cover. A BLACKBIRD is flapping its wings, wildly ominous as if trying to get out. The sound, loud and insistent --

BOY (O.S.)
Are you crying?

The man turns to find his eleven-year-old son, BILLY standing in the doorway. It's young Bill Duarte, the older boy from the family portrait on the wall.

MAN
...yllib
(twisting the aerosol can
around in his hand)
rehtom ruoy s'erehW

BILLY
She left, dad. Don't you remember?

MAN
ereh gniod uoy er'tahW

BILLY

Don't cry--

The man looks at him eerily.

MAN

yob YlliB, oot uoy evol I

The man picks up the lighter, casually flicks it a few times, until he has a flame.

MAN (cont'd)

(long, solemn gaze)

Nogard eht nommus ot woh wonk uoy

BILLY

Dragon? What dragon?

MAN

Nogard!!

The man grabs the hairspray and sprays it above the flame, directly before his bulging eyes, he manages a nervous laugh, right before he turns the fire on himself...

BILLY

NOOO!!!

The man's silver-hair bursts into flames!

ECU PUPIL

We see the FIRE in the curved reflection of little Billy's eye.

ANGLE WIDE

The man's flesh creaks and cracks... The blackbird's wings FLAP and FLUTTER in terror behind him, rattling the cage --

Little Billy is frozen in place...

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

*A collision at Beach Road highway
crossing took two lives today in a
horrific crash...*

Little Billy turns his head towards the source of the sound and pulsating light --

INSERT TV

A still photograph of the little girl with her plaid coat and bright red, butterfly scarf appears on half of the screen.

On the other half of the screen is a news ANNOUNCER. The announcer's lips are moving...

ANNOUNCER (cont'd)
*...as they tried to avoid the
 oncoming train...*

The image of the little girl fades off the screen, and another one appears... It's a dated photograph of GENRO with his arms around the little girl.

ANNOUNCER (cont'd)
*Father and daughter were killed
 instantly. Traffic is advised to
 peer southeast at the Railroad
 Bridge parallel to...*

Little Billy's eyes remain glued on the pulsating vision of Genro. The announcer's voice becomes inaudible, INDECIPHERABLE WHISPERS under flapping wings and crackling fire...

Suddenly, a GUNSHOT!

SMASH CUT TO

INT. PSYCHIATRIC WARD, ROOM H - DAY

Bill SLAMS his palms into the room's only window, cracking it, leaving blood, murmuring...

BILL
*...Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray
 for us sinners, now and at the hour
 of our death--*

GENRO
 Amen.

Genro's reflection glares back at him through his smeared fingerprints on the windowpane.

BILL
...I'm not afraid.

GENRO
 Good. Because fearlessness is what
 is needed now.

BILL
 He shot himself. I watched from
 the window -- There was no fire.

GENRO
There is a fire -- and it's burning
still. Pledge allegiance to the
pain.

BILL
Pain doesn't matter--

GENRO
Never did.

BILL
I didn't stop it...

GENRO
How could you?

BILL
I found a safe place -- The TV. So
I didn't look out the window -- I
looked at you --

GENRO
Then and now -- But's it's no
longer safe--

Bill turns to look at him--

GENRO (cont'd)
No! There's nothing to see. Just
BURN!

Bill's eyes flick back to the window --

GENRO (cont'd)
With all your heart and with all
your sincerity -- With every pore
you have... BURN!

Bill sees the soft blue hue of the sky cooling Genro's heated
reflection, illuminating the windowpane.

GENRO (cont'd)
No, I want FIRE!!

SMASH CUT

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NOW!

The clock on the wall CLICKS one position...

GENRO (V.O.)
Let all limitations burst asunder!

Bill whips his head around--

GENRO
It's one thing to live around an
experience -- a reference or
analogy. But I want to detail the
hellish thing. Anything else would
be a betrayal of your pain -- and
mine! BURN!!!

CUT TO

INT. PSYCHIATRIC WARD, ROOM H - BACK TO SCENE

Tears form in Bill's eyes...

BILL
You're a monster!

GENRO
Your old shit cannot hold you any
longer -- I don't want memory. I
emotion. Give me FIRE!

Bill's body begins to vibrate, heat and friction, faster and
faster.

GENRO (cont'd)
Burn!

Bill's flesh creaks and cracks, BLAZING from the inside...

SMASH CUT

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - NOW!

Little William jams his foot between the mat and the floor
and begins to fall...

INT. PSYCHIATRIC WARD, ROOM H - BACK TO SCENE

Bill old flesh is melting away, digesting itself... releasing
goo...

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

...A vertical slice cuts into the chrysalis -- wet goo oozes out...

INSERT

WE SEE the protein-rich soup fueling the rapid cell division; translucent wings, antennae, legs, eyes of a pupa...

INT. PSYCHIATRIC WARD, ROOM H - BACK TO SCENE

Bill's tissues are burning in an amorphous mess, tormented images of his father, son, and burning self... passing through the other, blending, fusing, burning, metamorphosing into... SCREAMS of pain and furry...

GENRO

SHOW ME!

SMASH CUT

FLASHBACK - INT. HOUSE - HALL - NIGHT

Pulsating light peeks through a chink in a door at the end of the hall. Little Billy gropes along the wall.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Little Billy watches his father hold the treasured portrait of his family in his trembling hands.

CUT TO:

INT. PSYCHIATRIC WARD - BACK TO SCENE

The fire is raging... The pain is unbearable! Clouds of smoke darken the room... until...

GENRO

There are no secrets, no dualities!
When you see the blueprints, the
blueprints shall be revealed to
you!

...From the smoke, the contour of a leg appears...

SMASH CUT

FLASHBACK - INT. CAR - MOVING

It's raining hard.

Bill sees the terrified look he caused in his son's eyes.

GENRO (V.O.)
For all the pain you have caused
others --

CUT TO:

INT. PSYCHIATRIC WARD - BACK TO SCENE

A figure steps out of the smoke into the soft blue hue emanating through the window...

BILL
I ask forgiveness.

A new reflection appears within the ripples of Bill's smeared fingerprints; translucent eyes, face... It's Bill's face -- but, a strange transformation has occurred... He wipes his eyes, and they become like lasers; focused, unwavering, peering into the fingerprints...

GENRO
For all the pain others have caused
you --

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Little Billy's face presses up against the windowpane --

WHAT HE SEES:

The silver-haired man drops to the ground -- The gun still in his hand. A piece of brain on a tree. Deep black coagulated blood forming a puddle under his torso.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC WARD - BACK TO SCENE

Stars burn like crystals through Bill's smeared fingerprints... He begins to breath slow and steady. He stares at the cobalt blue fingerprints...

BILL
...I forgive them.

Genro's reflection peers back at him --

GENRO
For all the pain you have caused
yourself...

Bill reaches out and touches the windowpane, it wobbles, like water and appears to stick to his fingertips...

SLOW DISSOLVE
TO

FLASHBACK - INT. LIVING ROOM - HOUSE - DUSK

Bill is sitting in an armchair, staring pensively. A pool of golden light slants in from an unseen window behind him. His eyes circle the room, looking, searching...

BILL
I forgive myself.

CUT TO:

INT. PSYCHIATRIC WARD - BACK TO SCENE

More of Bill's smeared fingerprints appear on the windowpane, illuminating brilliant blue skylight in his eyes --

CUT TO

INT. KITCHEN - NOW

Jessica bends forward and kisses Bill. As their lips meet, she whispers...

JESSICA
I love you, Billy...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PSYCHIATRIC WARD - BACK TO SCENE

Bill stares in amazement, emotionally captive -- at his fingerprints... Hundreds of them, maybe thousands... bathed in brilliant blue skylight -- all over the windowpane...

Genro reflection seems to be dissolving in his own radiant light.

GENRO

We all do...

Bill's pain subsides... He looks at his hands and his eyes well up... as he stares unblinkingly at the spectacle of BLUE starlight pulsating through his fingerprints...

BILL

Blueprints...

(turns to Genro)

...I found them.

Bill sees Genro's fading image in the smeared reflection of his Bill's fingerprints --

GENRO

No. That's just an idea.

BILL

Don't leave...

GENRO

Move past all thoughts and ideas...

The cobalt skylight shines through his fingerprints creating a soft hue that illuminates his face into crystal realization...

BILL

It's...

There is rapture in his face, fierce elation...

BILL (cont'd)

...just...

He turns to Genro, but he is gone.

BILL (cont'd)

...ME!

All that is left is the red, butterfly scarf...

BILL (cont'd)

It's just me.

Bill reaches for the scarf...

FLASHBACK - EXT. BUILDING - 10TH FLOOR - MORNING

Wobbly balanced wheels are rolling very close to the edge of the roof.

TILT-UP to reveal Little Billy rolling the A-frame. His small, gruff eyes stare through a portal in the skeletal structure, searching for his father...

He SLIPS, tilting over the edge...

INT. PSYCHIATRIC WARD - BACK TO SCENE

Bill's arm is extending... pushing forward, reaching... The little girl's voice ringing in her ears --

GIRL (V.O.)
You have three seconds.

FLASHBACK - EXT. BUILDING - 10TH FLOOR - MORNING

CU - ARM REACHING...

ANGLE WIDE

The silver-haired man takes hold of Little Billy --

The sheetrock tumbles over the building... and CRASHES against the concrete.

Little Billy looks up his father, who has a safe, tight grip on him.

ECU LITTLE BILLY'S EYES

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - RIGHT NOW!

ECU BILL'S PUPIL

We see William falling in the curved reflection of Bill's eye...

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

A spectrum of emotion sweeps across Bill's face, gripping him like shortness of breath --

CAMERA WHIPS across the stands, revealing flashes of Jessie, Sally Boy, and uncle Pete -- Then FREEZES on the clock --

The clock CLICKS one position...

Bill leaps!

PUSH IN TO REVEAL

Bill HITS mats...

The clock CLICKS again...

The inertia of Bill's bodyweight causes his BACK to slam hard against the steel ring -- William's cradled head in his arms. All meaning is exhausted until nothing is left in him but cathartic silence...

William opens his eyes.

The clock CLICKS a third time --

WILLIAM
Dad... Are you okay?

A wave of William's hand gets nothing from Bill's trance-like gaze.

WILLIAM (cont'd)
Dad...

William SNAPS his fingers, and suddenly a sharp pain explodes in Bill's lower back. But the image of his son safe and unharmed overwhelms him, he barely grimaces.

BILL
Yeah. I'm okay.

Bill embraces his son with all his might.

BILL (cont'd)
We both are.

The train's shadow rolls off the wall behind him --

EXT. STREET - DAY

A sharp white cloud of steam from a crosswalk manhole cover gusts, then reveals Bill from behind as he crosses the street.

Regular traffic; cars move to and fro along the road --

Bill walks alongside the way.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - LATE DAY

Bill heads into the yard, observing CHILDREN doing ordinary things, stickball, hide-and-seeK, running, hopscotch.

He passes the graffiti on the wall. A smile beams... and he fills with bliss, the oxen are no longer hidden.

BILL
(murmurs)
Olly olly oxen free...

A few of the kids suspend what they're doing to look at him, transfixed in his radiant glow. Smiles bloom as he shuffles past -- the tracks of the elevated train loom above.

Bill picks up a discarded stickball bat and uses it as a walking stick.

EXT. TRUSS BRIDGE - SUNSET

Bill moseys along a truss bridge and looks out at a pier.

A sailboat with a long mast floats into a low-lying cloud.

He observes the details: its benches and oarlocks, its bright blue color, the sail fluttering --

A tear blooms in his eye. He keeps walking...

EXT. RAIL CROSSING - EVENING

Bill comes to a railroad crossing and stops at the intersection where the road meets the train tracks.

The crossbucks go down, and Bill can hear the high-pitched SQUEAL of a rollicking train moving closer.

He leans forward...

The train's destination number -8- grows bigger as the train gets nearer.

Bill tilts his head... and...

ECU EYES

... the number 8 turns on its side, "∞" in the curved reflection of Bill's eye --

ANGLE

Then the ditch lights come on, dead ahead, blinding bright, flaring with a CRACK and WHOOSH... The intersection is soaked with light, the evening abruptly alive... PEOPLE crisscrossing the street, speaking into smartphones, TEAMSTERS unloading equipment from long trucks... and then Bill sees it --

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - BILL'S POV

A tall apartment building, built on a hill, looks like it is leaning on one side -- like the Tower of Pisa.

The train SWELLS and passes.

The crossbucks go up --

Bill walks on...

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - EVENING

Bill walks past the gate and up the path to the entrance of the leaning building. He places the walking stick on the smooth stucco wall and enters...

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

Bill drifts through the apartment as if on a cloud, observing details of his modestly decorated life; the flotsam and jetsam of a sweet family; decorations, photographs, a Flat Screen TV, and an old grandfather clock --

Bill steps into the kitchen, leans against the doorframe. The room is dark and lonely. No one is there.

LONG DISSOLVE TO

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Jessica at the stove in her oversized robe with her wiggly, little bottom... and William is standing next to her, holding his dish by his forehead like a monk offering up a begging bowl.

Jessica taps a spoon filled with hot oatmeal into William's bowl --

William turns and sees Bill leaning in the doorway -- From the look on Bill's face, there is no telling how long he's been there, watching.

William cracks a smile -- It's a simple smile, but within it,
the world shines.

-END-