

EAST COAST

By

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INT. BANQUETING ROOM - NIGHT

A large crowd is gathered inside a well-lit and spacious banqueting room. About one hundred people sit at ROUND TABLES spread throughout the room enjoying their meals. They are all listening to a MAN speak on the stage in front of them.

MAN

All of us have had our fair share of struggles in life at one point or another. I know I certainly have...

The crowd laughs.

MAN (CONT'D)

We all have dreams and aspirations, but things get in our way. Kids, responsibilities, health... you name it. There is always something holding us back from truly living out our desires and fulfilling our dreams. One man had come to realize that this is something we all share. This deep longing for something greater. So he wrote a book about it... "Now or Never". And to his and everybody else's surprise, it became a hit. The best selling nonfiction book.

We see a man smiling in the crowd. He is JAMES HIBBERT (45), the man whom the speech is about. He has a receding hairline and less than average looks.

MAN (CONT'D)

Well, as a result, we are here to celebrate his undeniable achievement.

(MORE)

MAN (CONT'D)

Starting from scratch, he showed us through his own deeds what is possible, inspiring us all in the process... Here is the man of the hour, my dear friend, James Hibbert!

The crowd gives a thunderous applause as James humbly makes his way to the stage and takes the microphone from the man.

JAMES

First of all I want to thank everyone for coming out here tonight to celebrate this tremendous day, for me and all of my family. This is beyond my wildest dreams. When I started writing this book, I never imagined that it would go on to have such a huge impact and that it would be so well received. I am deeply honored and extremely grateful to everyone who has supported me along the way, starting with my beloved wife, Margaret.

He looks at his wife, MARGARET (41). She smiles in return.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Without her, none of this would have been possible... Everything I wrote in the book comes from my own experiences in life. My biggest wish is for other people to be inspired by it and use it to improve their own lives.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

To me, that would be the ultimate achievement and nothing would make me happier. Thank you everyone... Again, I want to say how grateful I am for you all being here tonight. I hope you enjoy the night. Thank you...

The crowd applauds as James walks off the stage and returns to his table.

INT. SAME - MOMENTS LATER

While enjoying dinner with his wife and several other individuals, a man dressed in a suit appears and pulls James aside. The man is a FILM PRODUCER. James excuses himself with a glass of wine in hand.

FILM PRODUCER

I really love your book...

JAMES

Thanks. I appreciate it...

James takes a sip from his glass.

FILM PRODUCER

You know I've been kicking around an idea for a movie for a while... I thought it would be terrific to base it on your story...

JAMES

Wow... I never thought I would make for a good movie character. But--

FILM PRODUCER

No, no. Trust me. It'll be great. With the momentum we have going, we can't miss this opportunity. People will love it.

JAMES

Well, I'll definitely think about
it.

FILM PRODUCER

Please do.

The film producer whips out a business card from his pocket
and hands it to James.

FILM PRODUCER (CONT'D)

Let me know whenever you decide,
and we'll get the ball rolling...

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

James sits behind a desk signing the books of the numerous
individuals waiting in line with his book in hand.

MONTAGE:

TV news segments talking about James' book as their voices
overlap.

FEMALE ANCHOR

James Hibbert's book "Now or
Never", a guide to self
improvement, has become the latest
sensation in the literary world...

MALE ANCHOR

"Now or Never", that is the title
of the recent bestselling book by
author James Hibbert, inspired by
his own life and struggles...

FEMALE ANCHOR (JAPANESE)

James Hibbert's "Now or Never" is
said to be the best nonfiction
book written in recent years...

FEMALE ANCHOR (FRENCH)

People are talking about the new self-help book "Now or Never" by James Hibbert...

James is a guest on a late night talk show. The HOST holds up his book to the audience.

HOST

This is the latest craze. "Now or Never". People are saying this book has actually changed their lives. Tell me, what inspired you to write such a phenomenal book?

JAMES

Well, I've always had the idea to write something like this, but I never really began to seriously consider it until...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MANSION - DAY

A modest mansion sits in the middle of a heavily wooded forest surrounded by beautiful maple trees. It is the only house in the area.

INT. MANSION - CONTINUOUS

James relaxes on the sofa of his spacious living room while Margaret, sitting on another sofa, sifts through papers.

MARGARET

This is from the mayor.

(reads)

"James, I want to congratulate you on your success. You have made a wonderful impact on our community..."

She tosses the paper aside and picks up another pile of paper.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

These are all the book deals...

She sets it aside and picks up another stack.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Movies...

Meanwhile, James gazes at Margaret. Something is on his mind.

JAMES

Maggie, what do you think about kids?

MARGARET

What about 'em?

JAMES

I mean, about having children...

MARGARET

I thought we already went through this. I can't have kids.

JAMES

Yeah, I know that. I'm talking about adopting kids. We have everything. Money, a beautiful house, success... all we need is kids.

MARGARET

I never really gave it much thought.

JAMES

I've always wanted to have kids.

MARGARET

If you want to adopt kids, that's your choice. Personally, I'm okay with not having kids.

JAMES

What if we open a boarding school? This way, we can be around kids. It will be like raising our own kids... without having to actually be their parents...

MARGARET

A boarding school? How exactly are we going to do that?

JAMES

It will be easy. We can get funding through the mayor. All we need to do is form a committee. We have what it takes... It will give our lives a new purpose. What do you say?

MARGARET

If that's what you want, I'm all for it.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

An office building with a sign which reads: "Board of Education".

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

James and his wife are in a meeting with the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR of the regional board of education. Laid in the middle of the table is a business plan for the project they are proposing, a private boarding school.

JAMES

We've already purchased the property.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Okay... How many students are we talking about?

JAMES

A hundred students at most. It's a non-profit. We've already secured funding from a number of organizations. Everything is in place and I think we're all ready to go.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

And have you hired faculty members?

JAMES

We're in the process of doing that. We're also going through all the curriculums that we will be offering.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Sounds like you have a plan. I will give you the paperwork that needs to be filled out and I will send a representative to the campus for inspection. After that, you should be all set.

JAMES

Terrific. It's a lot less complicated than I thought.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Yeah, there's really not much to it... By the way, I really loved your book.

JAMES

Thanks. You know, this is just the next step in our journey. After the success we've had with our book...

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Well, I certainly wish you well.

JAMES

Thanks for all the help.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

James and his wife drive through a long and isolated road in the woods.

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

They arrive at a large building, a boarding school campus. The place is empty and no one is around. They exit their cars and walk to the building.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

They do a walking tour of the building. They look at the RECEPTION DESK behind a glass window, the LOUNGE AREA with COUCHES, a PING-PONG TABLE, a POOL TABLE, a PINBALL MACHINE, a PIANO. They walk past the restrooms and into the kitchen. They go past the lobby area where there are three classrooms, each with a white board and rows of chairs with desks.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - STAIRS/ HALLWAYS - CONTINUOUS

They walk up the stairs, where there are two hallways. One leading to the boys dorm rooms and the other the girls'.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - OFFICE - DAY

A YOUNG MAN sits before James for a job interview.

JAMES

How would you handle a disruptive student?

YOUNG MAN

I will use the proper classroom management guidelines in order to correct the student's behavior, so it won't become repetitive.

CUT TO:

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - OFFICE - DAY

A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN sits in front of James for a job interview.

JAMES

How do you cultivate positive relationships with your students?

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN

When I was a teacher in my previous job, there was a kid who was going through the loss of a parent. I really made him feel at home, like I was a part of his family...

CUT TO:

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - OFFICE - DAY

A YOUNG WOMAN sits in front of James for a job interview.

JAMES

How will you deal with kids with learning disabilities?

YOUNG WOMAN

I will work with parents and use the appropriate resource personnel in order to meet the individual

needs of any child, whether
disabled or otherwise...

James shakes the hand of the young woman.

JAMES

Congratulations. You are
officially a member of our team.

CUT TO:

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - OFFICE - DAY

James shakes the hand of the middle-aged woman.

JAMES

Congratulations...

CUT TO:

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - OFFICE - DAY

James shakes the hand of the young man.

JAMES

Congratulations...

INT. MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

James and Margaret snuggle in bed, happy and excited.

MARGARET

So, how many enrollments so far?

JAMES

I believe about fifty kids. There
will be more, of course.

MARGARET

I'm so proud of you...

James and Margaret kiss and cuddle.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - LOBBY - DAY

Kids and their parents are lined up at the front desk as they register to become members of the boarding school. A RECEPTIONIST speaks with one of the parents.

RECEPTIONIST

We offer some of the best curriculums. Science, technology, engineering, art, maths, project-based learning, athletics, music... Also, culinary...

Other kids, the ones who have already enrolled, are relaxing in the lounge area. Some play tennis, while others play pool.

One of the kids playing pool is ISAAC KNOBEL (14). He is outgoing and most kids gravitate toward him.

He strikes a cue ball with an object ball and the object ball goes into a pocket. His FRIEND is impressed.

FRIEND

Whoa, you're really good.

ISAAC

The funny thing is, I've never played pool before.

FRIEND

Really?

ISAAC

Yeah. This is my first time.

He strikes a cue ball and once again the object ball goes into a pocket. He gives his friend the stick.

ISAAC

Here, you try.

His friend strikes a cue ball, but fails to hit an object ball.

FRIEND

Dang, I suck!

ISAAC

You'll get better after a while...

EXT. CITY ROADSIDE - DAY

A car is riddled with bullets. Inside is a dead man who has been shot to death, slumped over in the driver's seat. Yellow police tape and forensic examiners surround the area collecting evidence and taking photos of the crime scene. A man, DETECTIVE COLBY TRUITT (58), approaches the scene and begins to examine the victim's body, as well as the bullet holes on the car. He speaks with his COLLEAGUE, a younger man.

DETECTIVE COLBY

It looks like a drive-by... Do we have any information on his identity?

COLLEAGUE

Nothing.

DETECTIVE COLBY

That's odd...

He takes a closer look at the bullet hole in the man's head.

DETECTIVE COLBY (CONT'D)

Definitely a .22.

He looks at the tire tracks leading to the car's final resting place.

DETECTIVE COLBY (CONT'D)

He was swerving a bit.

He peers inside of the car and sees a cell phone laying on the passenger seat.

DETECTIVE COLBY (CONT'D)

He must've been calling for
help...

After putting on a pair of gloves, he goes to the other side of the car, opens the door and retrieves the cell phone. He puts it inside of an evidence bag.

He approaches ANOTHER COLLEAGUE who is speaking with several witnesses.

DETECTIVE COLBY

There's something funny about this
case.

ANOTHER COLLEAGUE

It's looking like we might have a
mob hit on our hands.

Detective Colby looks at his other colleague, intrigued.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

James is having a meeting with his staff, around six individuals.

JAMES

We want the utmost for our
students. One thing I want to
emphasize is that this is not a
school. This is a family home.
Here, we are all equal. Nobody is
better than anyone. There is no
status or class. We are all here
to learn and enjoy our time in the
process. This is a low-stress
environment, for our kids and our
staff. When I opened this
institution, I did so with the
intention of improving the lives
of others, not for any kind of

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

benefit of my own. This is why we are a nonprofit organization. Of course that doesn't mean hard work will not be rewarded. I expect the best from all of you and I know that you will do well. If there are any questions or anything on your mind, this is a good time to let me know. We will begin our first sessions next week, so we want to make sure we are absolutely prepared... Let's rock and roll!

James begins to clap and the rest of the group claps along.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

James is out in the woods hunting. He focuses on a deer with his scope and shoots, killing the deer.

EXT. MANSION - LATER

Margaret watches as James gleefully skins the deer and cuts the meat into smaller pieces, tossing them in a bowl. His hands and clothes are bloody.

INT. MANSION - DINING AREA - LATER NIGHT

James enthusiastically sprinkles salt and pepper on the cooked meat and begins eating. He offers his wife some, but she refuses. In front of her is a bowl of salad.

MARGARET

I'm okay. I'm having salad.

He gives her a strange look.

JAMES

Don't tell me you're vegan now.

MARGARET

No... I just prefer not to eat deer.

JAMES

(chuckles)

Well, it's the best kind of meat. I can tell you that...

His wife smiles and takes a bite of her salad.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Kids are in a classroom silently doing schoolwork. In front of them is a young FEMALE TEACHER, the same one whom James had hired. She walks around the classroom attentively checking on the students. One of them is Isaac. He looks up at her and smiles. She smiles in return.

A kid walks into the classroom. He is WALTON COTTINGHAM (14), visually impaired. Everyone in the classroom looks up at him, including Isaac. The teacher welcomes him warmly and guides him to a chair. He accidentally bumps into a table and some students snicker.

FEMALE TEACHER

Kids, we have a new student. His name is Walton. Everybody say hi to Walton.

Everyone says hi to Walton. Walton smiles. A STUDENT makes an offhand remark out loud.

STUDENT

Shouldn't he be in special ed?

FEMALE TEACHER

Ron, that's not very nice.

ISAAC

Yeah, Ron. Shut your mouth.

FEMALE TEACHER

Isaac, while I appreciate the help, I will handle it by myself. Okay?

Walton turns in the direction of Isaac with a look of gratitude. Isaac notices and smiles.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - LOBBY - DAY

Isaac and his friends are in the lounge area playing pool. Isaac notices Walton wandering about, struggling to see where he is going. He accidentally BUMPS into a BIG KID. The big kid shoves him.

BIG KID

Hey, buddy. Watch where you're going! Oh, I forgot. You can't!

The big kid bursts out laughing, along with other kids around him. Isaac sees this and comes to Walton's aid.

ISAAC

Hey, leave him alone!

BIG KID

What are you gonna do?

ISAAC

I'll tell the principal.

BIG KID

You're going to rat on me?! Go rat on me.

ISAAC

Go pick on someone your own size. He's disabled. What if you were disabled?

BIG KID

Yeah, well... I'm not.

The big kid grabs a pool stick and pretends he is blind by using it as a white cane.

BIG KID

(mocking)

Look at me. I'm blind. I can't see.

Kids burst out laughing.

ISAAC

(to Walton)

Forget him.

Isaac grabs Walton and takes him to the sofas, where he sits down with him.

A pretty girl, ANNABELLE CONRAD (14), sees Isaac's kind gesture from a distance. He notices her and does a double take, surprised she's looking at him.

INT. SEASIDE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

James and Margaret are enjoying seafood and wine. The ocean waves crashing on the shore can be seen outside the window.

JAMES

Can it get any better than this?

MARGARET

It really can't. You know what would be even better?

JAMES

What?

MARGARET

If we went on a cruise.

JAMES

You know, I've been thinking about that. We have to do it.

MARGARET

I've never been on a cruise
before.

JAMES

Neither have I...

Margaret looks out the window. It is now almost pitch black
outside.

MARGARET

Oh, gosh. It's getting dark.

A WAITER comes with the bill. James takes out his wallet
and looks inside with alarm.

JAMES

Oh, damn!

MARGARET

What's the matter?

JAMES

I left my debit card at home.

He looks up at Margaret.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You don't have cash on you?

MARGARET

No, I don't...

JAMES

What about your card?

MARGARET

I don't have a debit card.

JAMES

Oh, yeah. That's right.

James thinks for a moment.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I'm gonna make a quick run to the house. You stay here. Tell them about the situation if they ask.

James leaves the table and walks out of the restaurant. The waiter sees James exiting and approaches Margaret. Somewhat embarrassed, she tries to signal to the waiter that James will return. Finally, she tells him.

MARGARET

He'll come back. He forgot his card.

The waiter reluctantly accepts her explanation and leaves.

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - NIGHT

A person's GLOVED HAND unlocks a door and enters a building. It's the back door of the boarding school.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - STAIRS/ HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The person walks up the stairs and into the hallway leading to the girls' dorm rooms. The gloved hand gently pushes a door open.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A GIRL sleeping on the lower bunk of a bunk bed is awakened. She clears her eyes and notices the door is opened. Afraid and curious, she slowly walks to the door.

GIRL

Hello...?

Just as she is about to close the door, a hand REACHES IN and GRABS her, muffling her mouth before she could scream.

INT. SEASIDE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Margaret is impatiently waiting for James' return, occasionally checking her watch. James finally enters the restaurant with a debit card in hand. By now, the

restaurant is almost closed and they are the last ones left.

MARGARET

That was long.

JAMES

Yeah. I had to stop for gas.

MARGARET

(surprised)

I thought I filled the tank yesterday.

JAMES

Well... it wasn't enough.

The waiter appears at the table and James hands him the debit card. The waiter leaves to process the payment. James pulls out a crumpled dollar bill and a few coins from his pocket and leaves it on the table. The waiter comes back with the debit card and gives it back to James.

JAMES

Thank you very much.

WAITER

You're welcome. We're getting ready to close.

JAMES

Yeah. We're on our way.

James smiles at the waiter and he and Margaret walk out of the restaurant.

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - DAY

A police car is parked outside of the school.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

A POLICE OFFICER speaks with the NIGHT SUPERVISOR. She looks panicked and confused. He takes notes on a legal pad as she speaks.

POLICE OFFICER

Were there any signs the girl wanted to leave?

NIGHT SUPERVISOR

No. Not that I was aware. Last night she was acting very normal. This is really strange.

POLICE OFFICER

You didn't see anyone walk into the building?

NIGHT SUPERVISOR

I never saw anyone. I was away for about five minutes, because I had to use the restroom. Other than that, I never saw anybody enter or leave the building.

POLICE OFFICER

Are there any cameras in this building?

NIGHT SUPERVISOR

Not that I know of. I'll have to check with the owner.

POLICE OFFICER

Okay. Well, usually the staff have to be aware of these things.

NIGHT SUPERVISOR

I know. We're just starting out. We're just getting the hang of things...

POLICE OFFICER

And who's the owner?

NIGHT SUPERVISOR

James Hibbert.

The officer looks up at the night supervisor.

POLICE OFFICER

The writer?

NIGHT SUPERVISOR

Yeah. He wrote a best selling book. At least, that's what I'm told. I don't know. I personally haven't read it.

POLICE OFFICER

Okay, ma'am. Thanks for your time.

The officer concludes his interview and leaves.

At the lounge area, Isaac and Walton talk to each other about the incident. Annabelle joins the conversation.

ISAAC

It's Kathy...

WALTON

The girl who disappeared?

ISAAC

Yeah...

ANNABELLE

We used to be friends once, but we stopped.

ISAAC

How come?

ANNABELLE

Because she started a rumor about me saying that I really liked this guy, when I didn't...

ISAAC

(jokes)

Maybe you had something to do with her disappearance.

ANNABELLE

(chuckles)

Shut up.

WALTON

It's kind of odd that someone would just disappear.

ISAAC

She probably left. I mean who really wants to stay here? I know I'd leave if I had the chance. But, of course, my parents would kill me.

ANNABELLE

Same.

INT. DETECTIVE COLBY'S OFFICE - DAY

The phone rings and detective Colby answers. He listens patiently while processing the information. He quietly hangs up the phone and puts on his coat, preparing to leave his office.

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

A black SUV parks in front of the school and detective Colby, along with his younger colleague, exits the vehicle. They head straight toward the building and are met by a few police officers at the door. One of the police officers speaks to him.

POLICE OFFICER

A girl, 14. She was last seen last night. No signs of forced entry.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Have the parents been notified?

POLICE OFFICER

Yeah. I believe they're on their way.

Detective Colby looks around the campus while he contemplates what steps to take next.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Who owns this place?

POLICE OFFICER

...James Hibbert.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANSION - DAY

A police officer knocks on the door. James opens it, dressed in a bathrobe.

POLICE OFFICER

Hi. Are you James Hibbert?

JAMES

Yes. What can I do for you?

POLICE OFFICER

Are you the owner of the boarding school in Greenwich?

JAMES

Yes, I am. Why? Is something wrong?

POLICE OFFICER

I'm sorry to inform you, sir, but one of your students has gone missing.

James appears to be surprised and distraught.

JAMES

How did that happen?

POLICE OFFICER

Well, that's what we're trying to find out.

JAMES

That's terrible...

POLICE OFFICER

Right now, we're not suspecting any foul play. But we're not ruling anything out.

JAMES

Yeah. Do everything you can to bring that girl back.

The police officer is taken aback by James' statement.

POLICE OFFICER

How do you know it's a girl?

JAMES

I-- I just assumed. It's either gonna be a boy or a girl. And I've always wanted to have a girl.

James lets out a nervous laugh. The police officer looks at him for a while, somewhat suspicious.

POLICE OFFICER

Anyway... we will keep you updated on the situation.

JAMES

Please do. If there is anything I can do to help, I am one hundred percent available...

POLICE OFFICER

I appreciate that, Mr. Hibbert. We will talk to you as soon as we have more information. Have a nice day.

The police officer leaves and James closes the door.

INT. MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Margaret comes to the door, curious about the situation.

MARGARET

What was that about?

JAMES

Apparently, a girl has gone missing.

MARGARET

You mean from the school?

JAMES

Yeah... but it's not a big deal. I'm sure she'll come back.

MARGARET

James, we could get in trouble for this.

JAMES

For what? We didn't do anything wrong.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

The young female teacher gives a lecture to her students.

FEMALE TEACHER

Question number two. What is a subordinate clause?

Before anybody can answer, the PRINCIPAL of the school walks into the classroom. She briefly interrupts the teacher and begins speaking to the students.

PRINCIPAL

As you guys know, there's been an incident. One of our students has gone missing. So far the reason for her disappearance has not been determined. I really want to stress the importance of abiding by the rules when you are at this school. No going out after nine, no inviting strangers into your room. If you have any kind of problems, let me know or any of the staff members, and we will help you. We want to make sure that what happened last night does not repeat. Other than that, you're all safe here. There is nothing to worry about. Okay? Have a great day.

The principal exits the classroom and the teacher resumes her lecture of English by writing on the white board: "thesis statement".

FEMALE TEACHER

Where does the thesis statement usually appear?

A STUDENT raises his hand.

FEMALE TEACHER

John.

STUDENT

The introduction.

FEMALE TEACHER

Very good...

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby exits his parked SUV and walks to the school entrance.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

All the students have a book open in front of them, except for Walton, who is using a BLACK DIGITAL BOOK READING DEVICE.

FEMALE TEACHER

Okay... We're going to start reading chapter two. We have about forty minutes.

All the kids begin reading their books and Walton presses play on his digital device and listens with his headphones. As the students are quietly reading, detective Colby walks into the classroom and briefly chats with the teacher. He walks around the classroom observing the students and smiling at them. He notices one student in particular, Isaac, who is looking back at him. Detective Colby approaches his desk and squats down to his level.

DETECTIVE COLBY

What are you reading?

ISAAC

"The Butcher in the Mirror"

DETECTIVE COLBY

Ahh... very nice. What's your name?

ISAAC

Isaac.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Isaac. I'm detective Colby.

The detective shakes his hand.

DETECTIVE COLBY (CONT'D)

I wanted to ask you a few questions. You seem like a knowledgeable kid. Would you mind?

Isaac shakes his head.

DETECTIVE COLBY (CONT'D)

Have you ever noticed anything suspicious at all at this school?

ISAAC

Like what?

DETECTIVE COLBY

Anybody acting strange?

ISAAC

No... Not really.

DETECTIVE COLBY

What about the staff? Have they been nice?

ISAAC

Yeah. They're really nice.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Okay. Good. I just wanted to make sure.

Detective Colby turns his head and notices Walton listening to his digital book reading device.

ISAAC

That's my friend, Walton. Kids pick on him a lot because he's disabled.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Does your teacher know about it?

ISAAC

No. I haven't told her. But I will if they continue picking on him.

DETECTIVE COLBY

That's good...

Detective Colby gets up.

DETECTIVE COLBY (CONT'D)

It's been nice talking to you, Isaac.

ISAAC

Yeah. You too.

Detective Colby pats Isaac on the shoulder. He leaves the classroom after waving goodbye to the teacher.

INT. JAMES' CAR - CONTINUOUS

James pulls into the school campus and notices detective Colby exiting the school.

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby waits for James to get out of his car.

DETECTIVE COLBY

You must be James.

JAMES

Yes. And you?

DETECTIVE COLBY

Colby. I'm the lead investigator working on the missing girl's case.

Detective Colby and James shake hands.

JAMES

Nice to meet you.

DETECTIVE COLBY

I've been meaning to talk to you for a while.

JAMES

Yeah, I know. I already had a talk with a police officer. This is a very sad situation... It's not something we anticipated.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Yeah. Things happen... How long ago did you open this school?

JAMES

Just a few weeks ago, actually. This is my biggest project. It's my baby.

DETECTIVE COLBY

I spoke with the girl's parents. They're considering pressing charges...

JAMES

Yeah, well... I have my attorney for that. They shouldn't worry too much, though. I'm sure she'll be found.

DETECTIVE COLBY

You seem very confident.

JAMES

You know, kids... they're pretty restless. I'm sure she'll turn up somewhere.

DETECTIVE COLBY

That's what we're hoping for. But things aren't looking so good...

Detective Colby looks at the school building.

DETECTIVE COLBY (CONT'D)

So, has this place been approved?

JAMES

Yeah. It's been inspected. There are no problems. We're working on installing cameras and we're upgrading the locks on our doors. We don't want to compromise the safety of our kids.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Very nice to hear... Well, Mr. Hibbert, I will keep in touch with you throughout our investigation, and hopefully everything will go smoothly.

JAMES

Absolutely. I'm here to help in every way I can.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Thanks a lot. We'll talk again soon.

James watches as detective Colby gets into his SUV and drives away.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - LOBBY - LATER

James supervises an electrician as he installs a security camera on the ceiling.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - STAIRS/ HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He walks upstairs to the hallway and watches a man install a door lock on a dorm room door.

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - NIGHT

A big kid, the same one who had bullied Walton, is sitting on steps and hanging out with his BUDDY outside of the school building. He pulls out an E-CIGARETTE from his pocket and shows it to his friend.

BIG KID

Check it out.

BUDDY

(in disbelief)

You vape?

BIG KID

Of course. But don't tell anyone.

It's past curfew and everyone is back inside the school, except the two.

BIG KID (CONT'D)

You wanna try?

BUDDY

No way.

BIG KID

Loser.

BUDDY

Whatever... We have to go inside.

It's past 9.

BIG KID

I'll be there in a while.

The buddy gets up and walks into the building. The big kid vapes alone as he sits and relaxes. Suddenly, he feels a presence approaching him from behind. He turns around but doesn't see anyone. Slightly nervous, he continues vaping, but at a faster pace. Finally, he puts the e-cigarette back into his pocket and walks to the entrance door. He tries to pull the door open, but it's locked. He repeatedly attempts to open the door without any success.

He BANGS on the door hoping someone will hear and let him in, but nobody does. An ominous presence MOVES CLOSER to him. There is fear in his eyes as he desperately tries to enter the building, while LOOKING at the figure coming toward him. Before he can react, he is KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS by a crow bar and taken away.

INT. DETECTIVE COLBY'S OFFICE - DAY

Detective Colby is going through files when his colleague walks in.

COLLEAGUE

We have another one.

DETECTIVE COLBY

(befuddled)

Another one?

COLLEAGUE

Another kid is missing. From the same school.

A look of disbelief and resignation envelopes detective Colby's face. He stares at his colleague for a while before looking away in frustration.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - DORM ROOM - DAY

Isaac is on the top bunk bed with a view of the outside from his window, in which he can see a police car parked in the school's driveway. He looks out the window as he speaks to Walton, who is sitting on the lower bunk.

ISAAC

Who do you think will be next?

WALTON

Next for what?

ISAAC

To go missing.

WALTON

I don't know, but this is really weird. Even though I hated him, I hope he's okay.

ISAAC

Do you think he's being punished for what he did to you?

WALTON

Who knows. Maybe.

ISAAC

They're saying he might have run away, because he was using drugs.

WALTON

That wouldn't surprise me...

ISAAC

To be honest, I'm kind of scared to be here.

WALTON

What's the worst that could happen?

ISAAC

I might go missing and end up dead.

WALTON

Trust me, there are worse things than being dead.

ISAAC

Yeah? Like what?

WALTON

Like not being able to see.

ISAAC

I disagree.

WALTON

That's because you don't know what it's like.

ISAAC

Yeah. Probably. If I was disabled, I would probably be angry.

WALTON

I'm not angry. I'm just saying, there are worse things than being dead. I'm actually looking forward to being dead. In the next life, I might be able to see like everybody else.

ISAAC

Don't say that. You're making me feel bad.

(Pause)

At least you're not blind.

INT. MANSION - BASEMENT - NIGHT

We see in the darkness a hand cutting up a piece of meat with a knife.

CLOSE ON the hand holding up a slice of meat and putting it inside of a mouth. The hand and the mouth both belong to James. He chews the slice of meat while savoring the taste. Suddenly, the light is TURNED ON and Margaret walks in. Like a deer caught in a headlight, James is startled, almost choking on the meat.

MARGARET

What are you doing?

JAMES

Nothing. Just having some snacks.

MARGARET

This late? What are you eating?

JAMES

Some left over.

Margaret looks at him for a while, bemused.

MARGARET

You've been acting really strange lately. Do you know that?

JAMES

In what way?

MARGARET

You're sneaking around doing some really bizarre things.

James finishes chewing the meat.

JAMES

I think you're exaggerating. I'm acting completely normal.

MARGARET

Then why did you leave the house last night?

James is caught off guard by the question.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

You thought I was asleep, didn't you?

JAMES

I needed some fresh air. I went for a walk.

Margaret is doubtful.

MARGARET

You know about what happened last night, right?

JAMES

What happened?

MARGARET

Another kid went missing.

JAMES

(sarcastic)

Oh, gee. What a big surprise.

MARGARET

How exactly is it not a big surprise?

JAMES

One kid runs away, so another one does the same. It's called peer pressure.

MARGARET

You know you're going to be held responsible, right?

JAMES

For what?

MARGARET

For their disappearance.

JAMES

You're overreacting. Relax. Everything is okay. They will come back and everything will be back to normal. I promise.

MARGARET

How do you know that?

JAMES

I just know. You have to trust me.

James grabs Margaret's arm and kisses her cheek. Reassured, she leaves the basement.

MARGARET

I'm going back to sleep.

JAMES

Okay. I'll be there in a while.

James looks like he just dodged a bullet.

INT. DETECTIVE COLBY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Detective Colby is alone in the dark going over surveillance footage from inside the school building.

CLOSE-UP. COMPUTER SCREEN/ DETECTIVE COLBY'S FACE

We see kids going in and out of the school until finally the big kid's buddy walks into the school. Detective Colby waits for the big kid to also walk into the building, but he doesn't.

INT. DETECTIVE COLBY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

While he is staring into the screen, his colleague suddenly walks into the room, leaving him startled.

COLLEAGUE

What have you got?

DETECTIVE COLBY

It looks like the kid never walked back into the building.

COLLEAGUE

Maybe he decided to leave the campus.

DETECTIVE COLBY

That's one possibility...

COLLEAGUE

Did you look at the outside footage?

DETECTIVE COLBY

No. There's no exterior footage.

COLLEAGUE

How come?

DETECTIVE COLBY

That's a good question. I'm guessing there's no camera outside.

COLLEAGUE

That's strange.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Yeah. It is...

INT. MANSION - DINING AREA - DAY

James and Margaret are having breakfast in their large dining area. Margaret pours tea from a kettle into both her and James' cup.

MARGARET

How do you feel?

JAMES

About what?

MARGARET

Everything. The school. Your achievements. You've come a long way.

JAMES

I know... I guess I feel okay.

MARGARET

I mean, are you happy now that you managed to accomplish what you've always dreamed of?

JAMES

I guess... There's still a lot more to do. I'm thinking of starting a business. I forgot to tell you about that.

MARGARET

Well, that's interesting. What kind of business?

JAMES

I don't know... Maybe a department store or something like that.

MARGARET

You should totally go for it.

James reaches out to grab the salt and Margaret notices a scratch on his forearm.

MARGARET

What's that?

James looks at her confused.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

On your arm.

James looks at the scratch on his arm.

JAMES

Oh, this. It's from a tree branch, from when I was out hunting.

MARGARET

You should probably get a bandage.

JAMES

Don't worry about it. I'll be fine.

Long silence while they consume their meals.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I'm thinking of a boutique...

EXT. MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby parks his SUV in the driveway and approaches the door.

INT. MANSION - DINING AREA/ DOORWAY/ LIVING ROOM -
CONTINUOUS

The doorbell rings and James goes to answer it. He opens the door and sees detective Colby standing on the doorstep.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Mr. Hibbert. It's nice to see you.

JAMES

Detective. Welcome. Please come in.

James invites the detective into his mansion. The detective is awestruck by its grandeur. He smiles at Margaret, who is still in the dining area. He and James sit on a living room couch to discuss a matter.

JAMES

Tea?

DETECTIVE COLBY

No. I'm fine.

Detective Colby gets right down to business. He stares into James' eyes. James seems quite nervous.

DETECTIVE COLBY (CONT'D)

I had been going through some surveillance video from the school. It appears that this was most probably a runaway case.

James is relieved by what he hears.

JAMES

That's what I figured. I mean, what else could it be?

DETECTIVE COLBY

We haven't been able to verify this definitively. However, we have pretty strong indications.

JAMES

We have to find these kids. I know some of them came from rough backgrounds. I do my best to make the place as accommodating to them as possible, but sometimes, there's nothing you can do...

DETECTIVE COLBY

I understand...

Detective Colby remembers something.

DETECTIVE COLBY (CONT'D)

There is one thing I've been wondering about... how come there are no cameras outside the building?

James is caught off guard by the question.

JAMES

I haven't really thought about that. I guess we ought to have one installed outside as well...

DETECTIVE COLBY

Yeah... that would make our job much easier. In fact, that's one of the reasons why we haven't been able to conclusively dismiss the possibility of foul play.

JAMES

I am more than willing to help in any way I can.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Thanks. I appreciate it. It's been nice talking to you, Mr. Hibbert. I will keep in touch with you.

JAMES

Yeah. Please do.

As detective Colby gets up to leave, James reaches out to shake his hand and the detective notices the scratch on his arm.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Take care.

Detective Colby shakes James' hand and walks out of the mansion, without raising the issue.

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - DAY

Isaac and Walton are hanging out outside of the school. They sit on a concrete block talking to each other. Other kids can be seen in the background, including Annabelle and her group of friends.

WALTON

That girl. You like her, don't you?

ISAAC

Annabelle?

WALTON

Yeah.

Isaac briefly turns to look at Annabelle and sees her talking and smiling with her friends. He turns back to Walton, not realizing she is now looking at him.

ISAAC

Even if I did, what difference does it make?

WALTON

Well, have you asked her out?

ISAAC

No...

WALTON

Why not? If you're ever going to ask her, this would be the perfect day.

ISAAC

Why is it the perfect day?

WALTON

Because it's valentine's day.

ISAAC

She's probably gonna say no.

WALTON

How do you know if you've never tried?

ISAAC

Come on. Look at her.

Walton looks at Isaac, annoyed.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Sorry. I forgot... What I'm trying to say is, she's out of my league.

WALTON

I think you just lack confidence.

ISAAC

Why don't you ask her out then, since you're so confident?

WALTON

I'm not the one who has a crush on her.

ISAAC

If she likes me, she'll let me know.

WALTON

The guy is supposed to ask the girl, not the other way around.

ISAAC

Well, that's not the way it works with me.

WALTON

You must be strange then.

ISAAC

Yeah, I am. Thanks for letting me know.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

James is having a meeting with the staff of the school.

JAMES

As I'm sure you all know, there's been several incidents in the past few weeks. I'm here to reassure everyone that there is nothing to worry about. We have everything under control. The whereabouts of the individuals in concern is being investigated and I'm sure we'll have results. They will be found safe and unharmed. Make sure that kids are not going out at night or doing things they're not supposed to. If you notice any problems or any indications that someone is planning on leaving without permission, please notify the parents. Aside from the new locks and security cameras, we have installed a new alarm system.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

This way, anybody who opens the doors will trigger a notification on the monitors. So everything should be okay and we should have no further incidents. Thank you all for your time.

INT. MANSION - BEDROOM - DAY

Full of suspicions and curiosity, Margaret SEARCHES through the bedroom closet. She searches James' jackets, checking each pocket until from one of the pockets she pulls out an e-cigarette, the same one the big kid had used. Baffled, she stares at the object. She is rattled when James suddenly walks in.

JAMES

What are you doing?

MARGARET

I'm looking for the key to the garage. I know it's here somewhere.

JAMES

Check the nightstand.

Margaret turns and sees a key on the nightstand.

MARGARET

Oh, there it is.

She grabs the key.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

By the way, I didn't know you smoked.

James looks at her with confusion. She shows him the e-cigarette.

JAMES

Oh, that. Yeah. I just wanted to try it. Just for fun.

MARGARET

Let's hope you won't get addicted.

JAMES

It's not addictive...

She puts the e-cigarette back into the pocket and closes the closet door. She casually smiles at him and puts him at ease.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - GYM - DAY

Students are playing dodgeball. Six players are lined up on either side of the court with rubber balls placed in the middle of the court. Other students are standing on the sidelines as spectators, including Walton. Among the players are Isaac and Annabelle, who are on the same team. The WHISTLE BLOWS and the players RUN to grab the balls and begin to throw them at each other. A ball HITS a player on the opposing team and from the look on his face it seems the balls hurt pretty bad. Finally, only three players are left. Isaac and Annabelle on one side and another player on the other. Isaac sees the player aiming for Annabelle and throwing it at her. Isaac acts quickly by LUNGING forward, blocking the ball from hitting her. He is out and she smiles at him. While they are distracted looking at each other, the other player THROWS another ball and HITS Annabelle on the forehead. The other team wins.

Isaac is slightly embarrassed for Annabelle but is relieved to see her laughing it off.

INT. DETECTIVE COLBY'S OFFICE - DAY

Detective Colby is working on his computer.

CLOSE-UP. COMPUTER SCREEN

We see a profile picture of a man along with fingerprints and personal details. It is a CRIMINAL BACKGROUND REPORT and the man is the YOUNG MALE TEACHER whom James had previously hired. Detective Colby scrolls down the web page until something catches his eye. Alarmed, he turns to his colleague.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Three arrests... Drug possession, resisting arrest and attempted sexual assault. What do you think?

COLLEAGUE

It's not looking good for him. He could be our guy.

DETECTIVE COLBY

But there's nothing about kids...

COLLEAGUE

You never know...

DETECTIVE COLBY

I wonder how he got this job.

Brief silence as the detective reads the information on the screen. He turns to his colleague.

DETECTIVE COLBY (CONT'D)

You know the owner? I talked to him a few times. He seems very nonchalant about the whole thing. Like he's not too concerned.

COLLEAGUE

Those aren't his kids. Maybe that's why.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Either way, we definitely need to check this guy out.

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - NIGHT

A LADDER is pushed up against the wall of the school building, slightly below the window of a second floor room. With gloved hands, a person CLIMBS the ladder toward the window.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A kid is sleeping on the top bunk of a bunk bed. He is awakened when he hears knocking on the window. He looks out from the window but doesn't see anyone. He assumes he is imagining things and tries to go back to sleep. Moments later, he hears a knock again, but no one is outside. Curious, he opens the window and peeks his head out.

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

As the kid is looking out the window with much of his torso sticking out, a hand suddenly REACHES UP and forcefully PULLS him out of the room.

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - DAY

An INVESTIGATOR is standing next to a ladder leading to an open window. He closely examines the ladder as he dusts for fingerprints. Detective Colby enters the frame.

INVESTIGATOR

No fingerprints...

Detective Colby looks at the ladder and at the open window, trying to surmise what had taken place. He turns around and sees a car SCREECHING TO A HALT on the side of the road and a WOMAN exiting. She RUSHES into the school building.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The woman STORMS into the building and speaks with the receptionist.

WOMAN

I need to see my daughter.

RECEPTIONIST

What's your daughter's name?

WOMAN

Annabelle.

RECEPTIONIST

Wait a second please.

The receptionist leaves for the lounge area, where Annabelle is hanging out with her friends.

RECEPTIONIST

Annabelle?

ANNABELLE

Yeah.

RECEPTIONIST

Your mom is here.

Annabelle looks confused. She sees Isaac standing with Walton just a few meters away. He watches as she is led away by the receptionist to the front desk, where her mom awaits. He follows her from a distance.

WOMAN

Come on, we're leaving.

ANNABELLE

Why?

WOMAN

Because you're not safe here.

ANNABELLE

But I want to stay here.

WOMAN

No. You're not staying. I've
already cancelled your
enrollment. Get your things.

Annabelle begrudgingly leaves to get her belongings from
her dorm room.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - STAIRS/ HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Isaac follows her into the hallway.

ISAAC

What's going on?

ANNABELLE

I'm leaving.

Isaac is saddened by the news. Annabelle goes into her room
and comes out with a suitcase. She sees Isaac standing in
the hallway, dazed and confused. She smiles and waves her
hand to him.

ANNABELLE

Bye...

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Isaac watches helplessly as Annabelle and her mom leave the
school.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

James, detective Colby and a teacher stand in front of a
classroom full of students as James makes an announcement.

JAMES

Good afternoon students. I am
James Hibbert, the founder of this
school. We are gathered here today
as a result of some unusual
developments that have taken place
here over the past few months.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

Detective Colby wanted me to personally come here and address you all about the need to be vigilant for anything suspicious or out of the ordinary. So far we have no proof that anyone is hurt, but we want to make sure that no more students go missing from our campus and that everyone is safe.

While speaking, James continually glances at Isaac, who is sitting in the front row of the classroom. Isaac seems somewhat unsettled by James.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Detective Colby has reassured me that he is doing everything he can to find our fellow students and bring them back. From now on, we will have a security officer monitoring the school campus at all times, 24/7. Just to make sure that everyone's safety is one hundred percent guaranteed and that nothing bad happens. Do we understand?

The students nod.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

The young male teacher is sitting and nervously waiting when detective Colby walks in with a file in hand.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Thanks for coming here.

YOUNG MALE TEACHER

Yeah, no problem...

DETECTIVE COLBY

The reason why I brought you here is because I wanted to talk to you about several details from your past, concerning criminal activity.

YOUNG MALE TEACHER

Sure. I have nothing to hide.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Would you like to elaborate on why you've been arrested three times?

YOUNG MALE TEACHER

You know... I'm no angel.

DETECTIVE COLBY

I can see that...

YOUNG MALE TEACHER

I've done some things in the past that I'm not particularly proud of.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Like..?

YOUNG MALE TEACHER

Drugs, getting into fights, sometimes with strangers, other times with people I know. Such as my ex-girlfriend.

DETECTIVE COLBY

What happened between you and your ex-girlfriend?

YOUNG MALE TEACHER

Well... I caught her talking to some guy on her phone and things took a turn for the worse. She

filed a police report and I was arrested.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Do you have any kids?

YOUNG MALE TEACHER

No. I don't. I'm not too fond of kids.

DETECTIVE COLBY

What do you mean?

YOUNG MALE TEACHER

I just don't like them.

DETECTIVE COLBY

But you're a teacher, aren't you?

YOUNG MALE TEACHER

Yeah. I know. That's what's so weird about it... I guess I'm okay with them as long as they're not mine.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Fair enough... You're aware of the incidents that have taken place at your workplace, correct?

YOUNG MALE TEACHER

Yeah. Of course. Several kids have gone missing and nobody knows their whereabouts.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Do you?

YOUNG MALE TEACHER

Do I what?

DETECTIVE COLBY

Know where they are?

YOUNG MALE TEACHER

Of course not.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Give me a reason why I should believe you.

YOUNG MALE TEACHER

Because I'm telling you the truth. I have nothing to do with their disappearance.

Detective Colby stares hard at the young man, hoping to get a confession. He gets nothing other than a blank stare in return.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Okay...

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - LOBBY - DAY

Isaac and Walton are sitting in the lounge area talking about recent events.

WALTON

Why are you so quiet?

ISAAC

I don't know. I'm sad, I guess.

WALTON

Because Annabelle left?

ISAAC

Yeah. It feels kind of empty without her.

WALTON

I know what you mean. At least you have me.

Isaac smiles.

ISAAC

Yeah. I guess you're right.

WALTON

At least for now...

ISAAC

What do you mean?

WALTON

My parents said they might also
take me.

ISAAC

Everyone is leaving. Soon I'll be
the only one left.

WALTON

What about your parents?

ISAAC

They just want me to stay in
school and stay out of trouble.

INT. MANSION - BASEMENT - DAY

Margaret is snooping around and going through the clutter. She looks inside of several cardboard boxes, pulling out random objects, mostly broken. She notices an object buried deep in one of the cardboard boxes. She pulls it out and realizes it's a BLOOD STAINED SAW. The doorbell rings, causing her even more distress.

INT. MANSION - DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS

She opens the door and sees detective Colby.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Hello, Mrs. Hibbert. I'm here to
have a word with your husband.

MARGARET

Sorry. He's not here.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Would you mind telling me where he is?

MARGARET

I'm pretty sure he's out hunting.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Is there any way that I can reach him?

MARGARET

He turns his phone off whenever he's out there... I can let him know as soon as he gets back and he'll give you a call.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Great.

Margaret looks like she wants to say something, but hesitates. Detective Colby waits for her to let it out, but nothing comes out.

DETECTIVE COLBY (CONT'D)

Well, have a nice day.

MARGARET

Yeah. You too.

Detective Colby leaves and Margaret closes the door.

EXT. ROADSIDE - MOMENTS LATER

Detective Colby parks his SUV on the side of the road next to a densely wooded area, not too far from the mansion. He gets out of his car and follows a trail which leads into the woods. It is eerily quiet and nobody is around. Detective Colby walks some distance into the trail before turning back. As he walks, he can sense a presence following him. When he turns around, there is nobody there. The presence continues as he resumes walking, getting closer to him.

Detective Colby draws his gun and prepares to engage. He walks backward toward his SUV, while pointing his gun straight ahead. He finally reaches his SUV and gets inside, somewhat unnerved.

EXT. MANSION - DAY

James arrives at his house with a shotgun in hand. Margaret opens the door to let him in.

MARGARET

What took you so long?

JAMES

I was looking for deer. Came up empty.

MARGARET

The detective came by earlier. He said he wanted to speak with you.

JAMES

About what?

MARGARET

I have no idea.

INT. MANSION - CONTINUOUS

James gets into the house. He rests on the sofa and Margaret sits next to him.

MARGARET

James, there's something I need to tell you.

JAMES

What?

MARGARET

You're not gonna like it.

JAMES

Well, then, don't tell me.

MARGARET

No. I have to. I've been thinking about it for a while.

JAMES

Okay. What is it?

MARGARET

I'm thinking about moving in with my mom.

JAMES

What?!

MARGARET

Maybe we need to rethink our lives... We haven't exactly been seeing eye to eye lately.

JAMES

Are you saying that you want to leave me?

Margaret looks at James, somewhat disappointed.

MARGARET

I have been under a tremendous amount of stress, James. There are things that I can't explain which are causing me to have second thoughts about our marriage.

JAMES

Like what?

MARGARET

Like the way you've been acting lately. The mounting legal problems you are facing because of the kids that are missing. I can't handle it, James. I don't have the strength.

JAMES

I have always been faithful to you, Maggie.

MARGARET

I know. But it's not about that. It's about our understanding of each other. It doesn't seem like we have much in common anymore.

JAMES

Look. I'm sorry. I'll try to fix things. I'll try to be a better husband. Okay?

Margaret looks at James for a while and forces a smile. She neither agrees nor disagrees.

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - SOCCER FIELD - DAY

Students are playing soccer on a field in the back of the school campus, an area surrounded by trees and shrubs.

The game is just finishing and the players are starting to disperse. Isaac, sweaty and worn out, chugs a bottle of water and sits next to Walton, who is sitting on the sidelines, not having played.

ISAAC

Do you remember that guy who came into our class?

WALTON

Which one?

ISAAC

The guy who owns this place.

WALTON

Yeah. What about him?

ISAAC

I don't know... I get these weird
vibes from him.

WALTON

Yeah. He's kind of weird.

Someone lurks between the bushes from a distance. The
person has a clear view of the soccer field and the kids.
He focuses on Isaac and Walton.

Isaac notices kids are going back into the school and he
and Walton are being left behind.

ISAAC

Come on. Let's go.

Isaac and Walton follow the rest of the group back into the
building.

INT. DETECTIVE COLBY'S OFFICE - DAY

Detective Colby is having a discussion with his colleague.

DETECTIVE COLBY

You know what I find odd? Nothing
seems to work. They install a
camera, they put in locks, they
have a curfew. I don't know.
Something doesn't add up.

COLLEAGUE

It makes no sense...

DETECTIVE COLBY

Hopefully the security guard will
put an end to this.

Detective Colby takes a deep breath. His colleague tosses
him a book. It is "Now or Never" by James Hibbert.

DETECTIVE COLBY

What's this?

COLLEAGUE

This is the book I've been telling you about. The one written by Mr. Hibbert.

Detective Colby dismissively flips through the pages.

COLLEAGUE (CONT'D)

You should read it... You might find something.

Detective Colby looks at his colleague in bewilderment.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Sure. Thanks.

INT. MARRIAGE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

James and Margaret are sitting on a couch in front of a MARRIAGE COUNSELOR, an elderly woman. They hold hands and look at each other repeatedly as they discuss their troubled marriage.

MARGARET

He's been quite erratic in recent months.

JAMES

Yeah. She's absolutely right. I've been doing some questionable things.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

Like what?

JAMES

Like going out in the middle of the night for a walk, talking to myself... But one thing is certain, I love my wife.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

What do you think is driving you to do these questionable things?

JAMES

I have urges... urges that I can't control...

The counselor stares at James, wanting more detail.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I need help. Which is why I agreed to come here.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

How do you think you will overcome these urges?

JAMES

To be honest, I don't know...

James stares at the counselor, who seems taken aback by his demeanor.

INT. DETECTIVE COLBY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Detective Colby is in his office quietly reading "Now or Never". He reads a paragraph with unease.

JAMES (V.O)

...When I was ten years old, I had my first experience with hunting. My father used to take me hunting out in the forest, where there are a lot of elk. I've been a hunter ever since. I remember asking my father why we humans only eat certain animals when there are so many to choose from. He told me it's because that's how we evolved, only to eat certain kinds of meat. I had always wondered what it would be like to eat different things, even human flesh.

(MORE)

JAMES (V.O) (CONT'D)

Of course, that remained only a curiosity, something I'm sure we've all had at some point. I'm pretty sure it tastes awful...

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - OFFICE - DAY

The young male teacher sits in front of James, confused and apprehensive.

JAMES

Mr. Sanders. I'm sorry to inform you but your position as a teacher in this school has been terminated. We have received some information about your criminal history, which we had failed to properly investigate and that you had failed to disclose. We can't afford to have you here any longer in light of all of the recent incidents regarding our kids. I hope you don't take it personally and I wish you a great future.

James smiles at the young man, who is staring at him in disbelief.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Isaac occasionally looks out his window into the darkness as he and Walton talk about their future.

WALTON

Where do you see yourself in ten years?

ISAAC

Ten years from now, I see myself graduating college, having a house and a wife.

WALTON

That's what everybody says.

ISAAC

What about you?

WALTON

I see myself traveling the world.
Going places I've never been.

As Walton speaks, Isaac is distracted by something outside.
He sees a shadowy figure lurking in the trees.

ISAAC

Shh... there's someone outside.

WALTON

What are you talking about?

ISAAC

Someone is looking at us.

WALTON

You're just seeing things.

ISAAC

No. I'm serious.

Isaac looks again and the figure has disappeared.

WALTON

It's probably the security guard.

Isaac reluctantly accepts Walton's explanation. He makes
sure his window is closed tight shut.

INT. MANSION - DINING AREA - DAY

James and Margaret are having a discussion over breakfast.

MARGARET

Why do you have a saw in the
basement?

JAMES

What?

MARGARET

I found a saw in the basement.

JAMES

Yeah. I have a saw.

MARGARET

What for?

JAMES

I use it for many things.

MARGARET

Like what?

JAMES

Like -- don't worry about it.

MARGARET

It had blood on it.

JAMES

Okay. I use it for cutting deer.

James looks annoyed as he pours tea in his cup.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Can we talk about something else?

MARGARET

I mean... It's just a bit odd.
That's all.

JAMES

To you, everything about me is
odd. What are you doing sneaking
around in the basement anyway?

MARGARET

I was cleaning.

JAMES
(sarcastic)
Sure you were.

James takes a sip from his cup.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I think your suspicions of me have
gone too far. What do you think I
am, some kind of monster?

MARGARET
I never said you were.

Margaret notices James is becoming increasingly irate.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Calm down.

JAMES
You know what? I'm done.

Margaret watches James as he angrily leaves the dining room without finishing his meal. He sits on the living room sofa and turns on the TV.

INT. DETECTIVE COLBY'S OFFICE - DAY

Detective Colby walks into his office and hangs his coat on a rack. As he is about to sit on his chair, his colleague walks in.

COLLEAGUE
So, did you read it?

DETECTIVE COLBY
Not all of it. But I find some of
the things he says quite
disturbing.

COLLEAGUE
What do you mean?

DETECTIVE COLBY

He talks about having interest in cannibalism. I mean, who in their right mind says something like that?

COLLEAGUE

Maybe he's sick.

DETECTIVE COLBY

I'm having second thoughts about this guy.

COLLEAGUE

You think he might be involved?

DETECTIVE COLBY

You never know... I'm gonna have to look at him more closely.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Students are in their classroom with their books open. Isaac frantically searches his backpack for his book, but can't find it. Suddenly, he remembers something. He gets up from his chair and walks to his teacher.

ISAAC

I left my book in my room.

TEACHER

Okay. Hurry up.

Isaac leaves for his room.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - HALLWAY/ DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The hallway is quiet and empty. As he walks he begins hearing what sounds like footsteps. He turns around to see if anyone is following him, but there is no one. As he starts walking again, the footsteps start. He hurriedly opens the door to his room, grabs his book and quickly walks back to the classroom.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Isaac walks into the classroom and finds everyone immersed in their studies. He sits in his chair and begins reading, but he can't help but wonder what it was he just experienced.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

James is quietly sitting, waiting for someone to arrive. As he looks around the room anxiously, detective Colby walks in.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Hello, James.

James looks up at the detective and smiles.

DETECTIVE COLBY (CONT'D)

I'm sure you're wondering why I brought you here. The reason why I brought you here is so I can ask you a few questions that have been on my mind and get a few things cleared up.

JAMES

Okay...

DETECTIVE COLBY

To start off... tell me a few things about your past.

JAMES

Like..?

DETECTIVE COLBY

Like your childhood, your marriage, the places that you've been... anything.

JAMES

Well, I was an only child.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

My parents divorced when I was a little boy. I was raised by my father. My mother was an alcoholic. She passed away not too long after she and my father divorced.

DETECTIVE COLBY

So, you had a rough childhood.

JAMES

I guess you can say that. My father did the best he could to provide for me, so I can't really complain.

DETECTIVE COLBY

What about your wife?

JAMES

I met my wife in college about twenty years ago. As soon as I laid my eyes on her, it was love at first sight. I knew I was going to marry her.

DETECTIVE COLBY

And you've had a good life ever since?

JAMES

Yeah. Wonderful life.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Any kids?

JAMES

Unfortunately, we don't have any kids. We would love to have kids, but my wife is infertile.

DETECTIVE COLBY

I'm sorry to hear... tell me a bit about why you decided to open a school.

JAMES

That was something me and my wife decided recently, because of our love for children. Since we weren't able to have any of our own, we figured what better way to be around kids than to open a school.

DETECTIVE COLBY

That sounds reasonable. Was this a spur of the moment thing?

JAMES

Yeah. Pretty much. Because we were able to afford it. We had some success as a result of a book I wrote.

DETECTIVE COLBY

That's what we'll be discussing next. Tell me more about your book.

JAMES

It was something that I had always wanted to do, to write a book. This was my first one, actually. I never thought it would receive the kind of attention that it ultimately got, but that's how things turned out and I'm quite pleased by it.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Was this book mostly inspired by real life events?

JAMES

For the most part, yes. I took inspiration from my own life and the obstacles that I had faced and had to overcome...

DETECTIVE COLBY

In one part you talk about having interest in cannibalism.

James looks up at detective Colby, quite surprised.

JAMES

Yeah... I'm sure I might have. I talk about a lot of things in my book.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Can you elaborate more on that?

JAMES

On what?

DETECTIVE COLBY

On your fascination with eating human flesh.

JAMES

There's really not much to talk about. It was all just words. That's all it was. We all have curiosities, don't we?

DETECTIVE COLBY

Is it like some kind of fetish that you have?

JAMES

No. Absolutely not. Like I said, it was something I was merely curious about. Nothing more, Nothing less.

DETECTIVE COLBY

You must admit it's quite a strange curiosity to have.

JAMES

I guess you can say that. We all have different opinions on what is normal and what is strange.

Detective Colby looks at James for a long time.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Okay. Mr. Hibbert. Thank you for your time. I appreciate you coming in.

JAMES

Yeah. Anything. As long as it helps to catch the real killer.

James realizes he had slipped. Detective Colby looks at him with alarm.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Excuse me?

JAMES

I mean, as long as it helps to solve this case.

DETECTIVE COLBY

You said "as long as it helps to catch the real killer." Can you explain that to me?

JAMES

I made a mistake... Sorry, I gotta go.

James abruptly walks out of the interrogation room. Detective Colby watches him as he leaves, highly suspicious.

EXT. MANSION - DAY

Margaret is watering the grass in the front yard. The water exposes a small SHALLOW GRAVE hidden beneath some leaves and grass. She clears the area and digs up the dirt. She can see what appears to be a HUMAN SKULL buried in the ground. Startled, she stumbles backwards, almost falling over. She quickly puts the dirt back on the skull to cover it and puts it back as it was.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - LOBBY - DAY

Isaac is playing pool with a couple of kids when he sees Walton come to the lounge area and sit on the couch. He stops playing and goes over to him.

ISAAC

Hey. Were you following me earlier?

WALTON

No... why?

ISAAC

There was someone following me in the hallway.

WALTON

Here we go again...

ISAAC

I'm not kidding. I heard footsteps.

WALTON

You're always being paranoid. It's because of what happened to those kids.

ISAAC

I don't know... I could've sworn I heard footsteps following me...

WALTON

Come on. Don't be scared. You're
not a little kid anymore.

Unsure of what to believe, Isaac looks around the building, suspicious of everyone around him.

EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT

A black SUV with its headlights off creeps toward the mansion and parks at a distance. Inside is detective Colby. He looks into the building with binoculars. Behind the window curtain, he could see two figures moving inside the lit bedroom. He focuses his attention on James' parked car and notices there is no one inside. He puts his binoculars down and decides to rest. Just as he begins to recline his seat, he sees James coming out of the house. He waits until James gets into his car and quickly drives away, hiding behind a street corner. James drives past him without having noticed his presence and detective Colby follows his car.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby follows James along a long winding road to a local store. He parks his car at a distance and begins taking photographs of James going in and out of the store. James gets back into his car and begins driving, heading back to his house. Detective Colby follows him for a while then turns back.

INT. MANSION - DAY

James wakes up to the sound of zippers being closed. He clears his eyes and notices Margaret walking back and forth in the bedroom packing her belongings. He is surprised and confused.

JAMES

What's going on?

MARGARET

I'm leaving.

JAMES

What do you mean you're leaving?

MARGARET

I'm done. I'm going to my mom's.

JAMES

You can't be serious.

MARGARET

I'm serious. We've had our fun.
Now it's time for me to move on.

James can't believe what he's hearing. He staggers out of bed.

JAMES

What is this all about?

MARGARET

We've already talked about this, James. We have grown apart and it's time that we go our separate ways. You have a lot of things planned, I'm sure. So, work on them.

JAMES

What can I do in order for you to stay?

MARGARET

There's nothing you can do to convince me. I have already made up my mind.

Margaret looks out the window and sees her ridesharing car arriving. She smiles at James and leaves the room with her bags, one on her shoulder, and one pulled.

INT. MANSION - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

James follows her into the hallway, pleading for her to stay.

JAMES

What about our future? The school,
the cruise...

MARGARET

What about them? You can find
someone to do these things with.
But it's not gonna be me.

EXT. MANSION - DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

James follows her outside as she greets her driver and
begins loading her bags into the car.

JAMES

You can't be doing this, Maggie. I
love you. What have I done to you?

MARGARET

Nothing. You've done nothing to
me.

Margaret gets into the back seat of the car.

MARGARET

So long James. I hope you'll have
a great life.

She gives James one last smile and closes the door. James
watches in disbelief as the car drives away.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - LOBBY - DAY

Detective Colby speaks with the school SECURITY GUARD.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Anything unusual so far?

SECURITY GUARD

Nothing so far...

DETECTIVE COLBY

How are the cameras?

SECURITY GUARD

They're working.

DETECTIVE COLBY

What about the alarm?

SECURITY GUARD

We tested it yesterday and everything is fine.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Would you mind showing me?

SECURITY GUARD

Sure. Follow me.

Detective Colby follows the security guard to a monitor screen at the reception desk. The screen shows surveillance footage covering all corners of the school campus, inside and outside.

SECURITY GUARD

Wait here and look at the screen.

The security guard walks to the main door and opens it, causing RED FLASHING LIGHT TO BLINK ON THE MONITOR and A BEEPING SOUND TO GO OFF. The detective is quite impressed.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Okay. Well, be ready for anything.
We might see some action soon.

Isaac and Walton are in the lounge area not too far from the detective. Isaac looks over and notices the detective talking with the security guard.

ISAAC

I wonder if I should tell the detective about what happened.

WALTON

What are you gonna say to him?

ISAAC

He asked me if I thought anybody was acting strange. I definitely think that James guy is strange. Maybe he was the one following me.

WALTON

You really think that?

ISAAC

I don't know... It could be him.

WALTON

Well then, go tell him.

ISAAC

What if he doesn't believe me?

WALTON

Who cares? He's a detective. He'll figure it out.

Isaac thinks for a moment and decides to tell. But when he turns, he realizes the detective has already left the building and is heading to a car, where his colleague is waiting for him. Isaac runs to the exit in order to catch up to him.

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

By the time Isaac is outside, detective Colby has gotten into the passenger seat of the car and has closed the door.

ISAAC

(yells)

Wait!

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby is unable to hear Isaac as the car engine roars.

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Isaac attempts to catch the detective's attention by waving his arms.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Just as detective Colby turns his head, his colleague's head blocks his view, preventing him from seeing Isaac.

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

The car drives away and Isaac is left disappointed.

INT. JAMES' CAR - DAY

James frantically drives his car while calling a number on his phone.

INT. AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Margaret's phone VIBRATES continuously. The call is from James. She ignores the call and smiles at the woman sitting next to her.

EXT. AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

James arrives at the airport entrance, still calling Margaret.

INT. AIRPORT - CHECKPOINT - CONTINUOUS

Margaret puts her small belongings on a conveyor belt, including her phone. CLOSE ON the phone as it constantly vibrates and the caller is James.

INT. AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

James runs into the airport and looks for Margaret. Just as he reaches the checkpoint area, she has passed through and is boarding the flight. Disappointed, he turns and notices a man watching him, while pretending to be waiting for a flight. James exits the airport.

INT. JAMES' CAR - MOMENTS LATER

James is driving back to his house. He notices in the rear-view mirror a car following him.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Isaac and Walton are talking to each other before they go to sleep.

ISAAC

I want you to do me a favor.

Walton turns to look at Isaac.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

If something happens to me, I want you to give this to Annabelle.

Isaac hands Walton a small ENVELOPE.

WALTON

If something happens to you?

ISAAC

Yeah. Like if I were to go missing...

WALTON

Why do you keep saying that?
Nothing is gonna happen.

ISAAC

Just do me this favor, okay?

Walton reluctantly puts the envelope in his backpack.

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

Detective Colby's SUV is parked outside of the mansion, just out of view. He uses his binoculars to look into the house, and the activities taking place. He can make out a figure behind the window curtain moving around.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby's colleague's phone rings and he answers. He is parked at a corner with a clear view of the school campus.

DETECTIVE COLBY'S VOICE

I can see him inside. What have you got?

COLLEAGUE

Nothing.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby speaks on his phone while looking inside the mansion.

DETECTIVE COLBY

I'll wait here for a while...
He'll probably come out.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The security guard is sitting at the front desk eating an apple and looking at the monitor containing security footage of the school campus. Suddenly, the PHONE RINGS. He ignores the call and lets it ring. The phone rings again. Frustrated, he picks it up.

SECURITY GUARD

Hello?

There is no one on the other end. Only a dial tone.

CLOSE-UP. MONITOR

While the security guard is on the phone, we see a shadowy figure in dark clothes RUN PAST the view of the security camera.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby's colleague sees a car approaching with its headlights glaring. He immediately calls detective Colby.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby's phone vibrates and he answers.

COLLEAGUE'S VOICE

I think we have something.

DETECTIVE COLBY

What do you see?

COLLEAGUE'S VOICE

A car...

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

The car parks on the school's driveway.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The security guard is looking at the car in his monitor with suspicion. He hears the LOUD HOKING OF A HORN. The honking REPEATS FIVE TIMES. The security guard finally gets up to find out what's going on.

CLOSE-UP. MONITOR

On the screen we see red light flashing repeatedly and we hear a continuous beep, indicating someone has gotten into the building.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Walton clears his eyes and gets up from his bed. He notices Isaac is sound asleep. He slowly exits his room.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

After locking the door, Walton walks down the hallway and goes into a restroom.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Isaac is laying in his bed asleep. He tosses back and forth, in a state of REM sleep. We hear footsteps approaching in the hallway. We don't know if it's Walton's or someone else's. Isaac also seemingly hears the footsteps in his sleep.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

A gloved hand INSERTS a key into a door lock, unlocks it and pushes the door open.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Isaac abruptly AWAKENS from his sleep, LOOKS at the open door and sees a frightening figure whose face is hidden in shadow standing there. Paralyzed with fear, he is unable to move. The frightening figure walks toward him menacingly.

EXT. ROADSIDE - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby's colleague exits his car and runs over to the honking car, just as the security guard is making his way to the same place. They both converge on the same spot, where they confront the driver of the car. Detective Colby's colleague knocks on the car's window. The driver rolls down his window and we see a YOUNG MAN who seems out of place.

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - DAY

Several police cars are parked throughout the school campus.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby speaks with Walton.

DETECTIVE COLBY
What happened last night?

WALTON

I went to the bathroom and when I came back the door was opened and Isaac wasn't there.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Did you lock the door when you left?

WALTON

Yeah... I always make sure to lock the door.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Did he say anything before he went missing?

WALTON

Yeah. He said that someone was following him in the hallway. I told him he's just being paranoid. But now I realize he was probably telling the truth.

DETECTIVE COLBY

When did he tell you that?

WALTON

A few days ago. He said that he feels like something might happen to him. He told me if anything happened, to give this to Annabelle.

Walton shows detective Colby the envelope Isaac had given him.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Okay. And who's Annabelle?

WALTON

She used to be a student here. But her parents took her away.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Do you know why?

WALTON

Because of the incidents. They were worried for her. My parents said they'll come take me, too. Especially after what happened last night.

Detective Colby walks over to the security guard at the front desk.

DETECTIVE COLBY

So, what went wrong?

SECURITY GUARD

I really don't know... I'm still trying to figure that out...

DETECTIVE COLBY

Were you being vigilant?

SECURITY GUARD

Yes. I was. But there were a sequence of really bizarre incidents that totally distracted me from doing my job. In hindsight, I understand those were probably meant to throw me off...

DETECTIVE COLBY

Tell me, what happened exactly?

SECURITY GUARD

Around midnight I was sitting at my desk, watching the monitor.

(MORE)

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

Looking for any suspicious activity. Then out of nowhere the phone rings. Twice. The first time I ignored it. The second time I answered, because I felt like it was going to keep ringing. That's when I took my eye off the ball.

(pause)

Then, a car started honking its horn, repeatedly. So I went over to check what's going on. I assume that's when the intruder came in.

The security guard looks down in shame and embarrassment.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

I'm really disappointed in myself. I should've done a better job looking out for these kids...

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

The driver of the car from the night before is sitting in front of detective Colby and his colleague. He is in his late teens with long hair and baggy clothes.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Why were you at the school last night?

YOUNG MAN

I received a call. Someone was looking for a ride.

DETECTIVE COLBY

A ridesharing app?

YOUNG MAN

Yeah. I work part time as a driver.

DETECTIVE COLBY

So, you received a call and what happened?

YOUNG MAN

I was given instruction to come to the school, park my car and honk the horn five times. The person told me he will come out as soon as he hears that and I would give him a ride home. He said that he works at the school and he doesn't have a phone, so he was using someone else's phone. I was wondering why so late, but I figured it's a boarding school. So I guess it made sense.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Okay. And do you mind if I take a look at your phone?

YOUNG MAN

No problem.

The young man hands detective Colby his phone. Detective Colby hands it to his colleague.

YOUNG MAN

Am I free to leave?

DETECTIVE COLBY

Yeah. You're free to leave. We will take a look at your phone and return it to you as soon as possible.

YOUNG MAN

Great...

The young man eagerly gets up and leaves.

INT. DETECTIVE COLBY'S OFFICE - LATER

Detective Colby is flipping through paperwork when his colleague comes in with some news. He hands him the cell phone the young man had given them.

COLLEAGUE

He used a burner phone. No caller ID.

DETECTIVE COLBY

I figured... Who do you think it could be?

COLLEAGUE

It has to be someone who knows the ins and outs of that place. He knew about the security guard, the cameras... to be perfectly honest, all fingers are pointing to Mr. Hibbert.

Detective Colby is skeptical.

DETECTIVE COLBY

It can't be him. I was there at his house watching him. How could he be at two places at once? It doesn't make sense.

COLLEAGUE

Well... whoever it was had a pretty damn good idea of what the hell he was doing. He did it right under our nose.

DETECTIVE COLBY

(snickers)

Yeah. It's embarrassing... we have to get this guy, one way or another. Otherwise, he's never gonna stop.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

James is having a meeting with the school staff. Also present is a police officer.

JAMES

The reason why we are gathered here today is because there have been new developments concerning our school. The school board has decided to suspend my certificate to operate this school, as a result of the things that have taken place, for which I take full responsibility. It is unfortunate, but we must accept their decision. I have been told that this school will no longer be operational after the end of the school year. I encourage all of you to look for new employment opportunities...

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Unbeknownst to the people in the conference room, Walton is listening in from outside through the open door.

JAMES (CONT'D) (O.S.)

I have had a wonderful time with you all and I hope you have as well. Anybody wishing to leave before the end of your tenure, you are free to do so. Thank you all very much.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As James is about to leave the meeting room, Walton walks in and confronts him.

WALTON

Did you take my friend?

James stares at Walton. There is awkward silence as everyone in the room anticipates a response from James. You could hear a pin drop.

JAMES

Ahh... no. I did not.

James takes one last glance at the crowd and forces a smile.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

James abruptly brushes past Walton and walks out of the room.

EXT. ROADSIDE/ MANSION - NIGHT

Detective Colby's SUV pulls in on the side of the road, close to the mansion. He gets out of the vehicle and quietly walks over to the house. He looks to see if there is anyone in the house and doesn't notice any movement. All the lights are turned off. He walks around the mansion to the backyard.

EXT. MANSION - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

He notices a BACKDOOR and a pathway leading out of the property and onto a road. Suddenly, he hears commotion coming from inside the house. He is on high alert and prepares to draw his gun.

INT. MANSION - BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

James is scrubbing blood stains off the floor. He is exhausted and periodically wipes sweat off his face. He stands up and checks from a distance whether or not any blood could be seen. A door ring disturbs and startles him.

EXT. MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby is outside the door, waiting for someone to open it. James opens the door. Detective Colby immediately notices a blood stain on James' shirt.

JAMES

Detective. What are you doing here so late?

DETECTIVE COLBY

I just wanted to check up on you. See how you're doing. You're not in trouble.

JAMES

Okay. Good.

DETECTIVE COLBY

I have a few questions regarding the incident last night. As you might know, yet another kid has gone missing.

JAMES

Yeah. I know. It's unfortunate. Now they're taking away my license as a result.

Detective Colby notices James' heavy breathing.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Have you been working out?

JAMES

Yeah. I was. Gotta stay in shape, right?

DETECTIVE COLBY

Right... Would you mind telling me where you were last night?

JAMES

I was here.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Are you sure about that?

JAMES

Of course I am. I was watching TV.
I can even tell you what show I
was watching.

DETECTIVE COLBY

No. That's fine.

(pause)

I noticed you have a backdoor in
this house.

JAMES

There's a backdoor, yes. But
hardly anyone ever uses it. I
always use the front door whenever
I go out.

Skeptical, Detective Colby points to the bloodstain on
James' shirt.

DETECTIVE COLBY

What's that on your shirt?

James looks down on his shirt.

JAMES

It's blood...

Detective Colby looks at him with alarm.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Don't worry. It's not human blood.
It's from a deer. As you know, I'm
an avid hunter.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Would you mind if I come inside?

JAMES

What for? You don't have a search
warrant, do you?

DETECTIVE COLBY

This tells me you have something to hide, Mr. Hibbret. Are you aware of that?

James is becoming slightly irritated, although he tries to hide it.

JAMES

I don't have anything to hide. I just don't want anyone coming into my house this late.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Okay... I will leave you alone.

JAMES

Thank you. I would appreciate that.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Have a good night.

JAMES

Yeah. You too.

James closes the door. Detective Colby hears the loud click of the door being locked.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Margaret is sitting on a bed alone. A cell phone is laying next to her. She looks at the phone and contemplates. Finally, she picks it up and dials a number.

INT. DETECTIVE COLBY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby is analyzing the surveillance footage containing the dark figure running past the camera, pausing and replaying repeatedly. His phone vibrates and he answers. He continues to look at the video closely while he speaks.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Hello?

MARGARET'S VOICE

Hello, detective. This is Margaret. James' wife.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Good morning Margaret. How do you do?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MARGARET

I'm doing fine... Listen, detective. There's something I've been meaning to tell you for a while...

INT. DETECTIVE COLBY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The detective listens with heightened interest.

MARGARET'S VOICE

It's about my husband...

DETECTIVE COLBY

Sure...

MARGARET'S VOICE

I think you oughta look into him more, concerning the missing children.

DETECTIVE COLBY

What do you mean?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MARGARET

He's been acting really bizarre ever since he opened that school, and it's hard for me to say he has nothing to do with those kids' disappearance.

INT. DETECTIVE COLBY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

DETECTIVE COLBY

Okay...

MARGARET'S VOICE

I won't go into further detail.
But, go look in the front yard of
the mansion and you'll find
something quite disturbing...

A long silence follows.

MARGARET'S VOICE (CONT'D)

I'm not a scientist or a
detective, but I'm pretty sure
it's not supposed to be there.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Would you mind telling me --

Before he could finish, Margaret hangs up. The detective
thinks to himself for a while about the strange phone call.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - DORM ROOM - DAY

Walton is in his room packing his bags.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The receptionist receives a phone call. She answers it and
repeatedly nods her head.

RECEPTIONIST

Okay... I'll let him know.

She hangs up the phone and leaves the front desk.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - STAIRS/ HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

She walks up the stairs and into the hallway, toward the
boys' rooms. She knocks on Walton's door and he opens it.

RECEPTIONIST

Walton, your parents just called.
They wanted to let you know
they'll be running late. They
won't be coming to take you today,
but they'll be here before the
week is through.

Walton looks at the receptionist somewhat disappointed.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

There are noticeably fewer students in the classroom and half the chairs are empty. Walton, along with the rest of the students, listens to the teacher as she finishes her lecture. She glances at the clock.

FEMALE TEACHER

Okay, guys. Don't forget to do
your homework and stay out of
trouble. Have a wonderful day.

The students disperse from the classroom.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Walton rests on a couch by himself. He is alone with nobody to talk to.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

James is out in the woods hunting. He spots a deer and quietly stalks it. As he aims and shoots, the shotgun EXPLODES in his hands. He lunges backwards in pain.

JAMES

Dammit!

He can't believe what just happened. He pauses for a moment to think about his next move.

EXT. GUN STORE - LATER

James pulls into a gun store parking lot and walks inside.

INT. GUN STORE - CONTINUOUS

A collection of firearms fill the wall and the front glass protected display case. The GUN STORE OWNER welcomes him with a smile. A YOUNG MAN is with him, most likely his son.

GUN STORE OWNER

Hi. What can I do for you?

JAMES

I'm looking for a shotgun...

GUN STORE OWNER

What kind?

JAMES

Any kind. For hunting. My last one broke.

GUN STORE OWNER

Okay. Do you have an ID on you?

JAMES

Yeah...

James pulls out his ID from his wallet and slides it on the counter. The gun store owner takes a look at the ID. He then gives James a form to fill out.

GUN STORE OWNER

Go ahead and fill this out please.

James promptly begins filling out the form. He quickly finishes and hands it back to the gun store owner. The gun store owner retreats to the backroom with the form. The young man remains to keep an eye on James, smiling at him occasionally. James smiles back. The gun store owner quickly returns.

GUN STORE OWNER

Sorry. No good.

JAMES

What?

GUN STORE OWNER

You failed the background check.

JAMES

You're kidding. There's gotta be a mistake.

GUN STORE OWNER

No. It says that you have been admitted for psychiatric treatment, I believe five years ago.

James looks at the gun store owner, frustrated.

GUN STORE OWNER (CONT'D)

That's the rule... We're not allowed to sell to people who have any mental conditions.

James is very disappointed by the news, but manages to keep his cool.

JAMES

Thanks for your time.

GUN STORE OWNER

You're welcome.

James storms out of the gun store. The gun store owner and the young man watch him from their store as he drives away at full throttle.

EXT. MANSION - MOMENTS LATER

James arrives at his mansion to find several police cars and SUVs parked in his driveway, among which is detective Colby's. There are a number of police officers surrounding the premises, coming in and out of his house. He rushes out of his car to confront them. He spots detective Colby and immediately goes to him.

JAMES

What are you doing? What the hell is this?

DETECTIVE COLBY

Mr. Hibbert. I hate to inform you, but we're obliged to conduct a search on your property.

JAMES

(furious)

You can't do this! You have no right!

Detective Colby raises a search warrant for James to see.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Like you said, if you have nothing to hide, there's no reason for you to worry. Is there?

JAMES

Of course not. Go ahead. Search. Go through everything. Search my closet, my basement. Search everywhere.

DETECTIVE COLBY

That's exactly what we came here to do. Now, will you allow us to do our job?

James smirks at the detective and goes back into his car, driving away furiously.

INT. MANSION - MOMENTS LATER

Detective Colby and several officers go through the house, opening drawers and checking in closets. An investigator downloads James' computer files onto a hard drive.

INT. MANSION - BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby detects a foul odor. He points his flashlight at the source of the smell, hoping to find something. He focuses on what looks like a dark plastic container. Unable to see what's inside, he lifts the lid and realizes it is filled with rotten food. Flies come out and the putrid smell keeps him from looking any closer. He quickly closes back the lid.

EXT. MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby walks outside and sees his colleague.

COLLEAGUE

Find anything?

DETECTIVE COLBY

Just rotten food...

Detective Colby focuses his attention on the front yard. He looks around the area for a sign of anything suspicious. He notices a spot where a hole has been dug. He removes the leaves and grass covering it, and scoops up the dirt, expecting to find something buried. He finds nothing. Disappointed, he turns to his colleague.

DETECTIVE COLBY

You know, I'm starting to think we
might have the wrong guy.

He watches as other officers bring out evidence from the mansion and take them to their cars. He dusts the dirt off his hands and looks at his colleague. His colleague looks equally baffled and uncertain.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Walton is alone in his room listening to his digital device. He gradually lowers the volume on his device and listens to a sound coming from outside. He can make out the sound of footsteps, getting closer and closer. His heart

begins to beat faster and he is petrified. He waits and stares at the doorknob.

He sees the door handle turn and the door opens. To his relief, it is the security guard.

SECURITY GUARD

Hey, Walton. Just checking up on you. Are you doing okay?

WALTON

Yeah. I'm fine.

SECURITY GUARD

Okay... Let me know if there's any problem.

WALTON

Yeah. I will. Thanks.

The security guard closes the door and locks it. Walton breathes a sigh of relief and goes back to listening to his device.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby is waiting for the security guard at the front desk with a pair of headphones on. The phone on the front desk is connected to a recording adapter, which is connected to detective Colby's headphones, allowing him to listen to a phone conversation, as well as to record it.

The phone rings. Detective Colby gives the security guard a signal to answer it and listens in. The security guard picks up the phone.

SECURITY GUARD

(into phone)

Hello?

All that can be heard is heavy breathing.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

Hello?

A brief silence then the person hangs up. Detective Colby and the security guard both look at each other, baffled.

INT. DETECTIVE COLBY'S OFFICE - DAY

Detective Colby's colleague scrolls down a web page looking at a call detail record between the school and the anonymous caller. He has a frustrated look on his face. He turns to detective Colby.

COLLEAGUE

It's the same guy again. He used a burner phone. He must've realized we were listening in, so he hung up.

DETECTIVE COLBY

How can he know that?

COLLEAGUE

He probably heard a click...

Detective Colby lets out a sigh and scratches his head, disappointed and confused.

COLLEAGUE (CONT'D)

The most important thing is he didn't take anyone... I think we can be happy about that...

DETECTIVE COLBY

All the kids are leaving anyway. They're shutting that place down for good. Thank god.

Brief silence.

DETECTIVE COLBY (CONT'D)

Speaking of which, I think we oughta speak to that disabled kid. He said he was leaving soon. He's the closest thing we have to an eyewitness.

COLLEAGUE

You're talking about the blind kid?

DETECTIVE COLBY

Visually impaired.

COLLEAGUE

Right... Well, let's go talk to him.

Detective Colby and his colleague put on their coats and leave the office.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Class is over and students are packing their bags. Walton zips his backpack and walks out of class.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

He arrives at the lounge area and sits on a couch.

The phone rings at the front desk and the receptionist answers. She repeatedly looks at Walton while she talks on the phone.

RECEPTIONIST

Yeah, he's here... Okay. I'll let him know. No problem.

She hangs up the phone and walks directly to Walton.

RECEPTIONIST

Walton, your parents just called. They said a ride is waiting for you outside.

Walton thinks for a while. Finally, he gets up and leaves for his room.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - DORM ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Walton packs his belongings, his backpack and a suitcase.

He takes a look at the envelope that Isaac had given him and puts it back in his bag. He almost forgets his digital book reading device, but remembers it and also puts it in his backpack. He leaves his dorm room for the last time and locks the door.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Walton hands the receptionist the key to his room.

WALTON

Goodbye...

The receptionist smiles.

RECEPTIONIST

Okay... take care.

WALTON

Tell Ms. Einhorn I said bye.

RECEPTIONIST

Okay, I will...

The receptionist watches Walton as he walks out of the school building.

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

In the driveway, Walton sees a BLUE CAR parked in reverse with one of its back doors open. He walks to the car and peers inside. A hand gestures for him to get in. He throws his bags into the car and gets in the back seat. The car drives away.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby and his colleague pull into the school campus just as the mysterious blue car leaves. Detective Colby catches a glimpse of the car, but doesn't think much of it. Detective Colby and his colleague exit the SUV and head into the school building.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby and his colleague approach the receptionist.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Hi. We're here to speak with one of your students. Walton, I believe is his name.

RECEPTIONIST

He actually just left.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Where did he go?

RECEPTIONIST

He's going with his parents.

Detective Colby appears disappointed.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Crap...

He thinks for a while and a grave realization comes to his mind.

DETECTIVE COLBY (CONT'D)

What number did his parents call from?

The receptionist looks at the call history on the phone.

RECEPTIONIST

I don't know... It doesn't say.

Detective Colby and his colleague look at each other with trepidation.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Do you know what kind of car it was?

RECEPTIONIST

No... I didn't have a chance to
look at it.

Without further delay detective Colby and his colleague
RUSH out of the school.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby and his colleague get into their SUV and
quickly fasten their seatbelts. Detective Colby is driving.

DETECTIVE COLBY

It's the car that drove away. That
was him.

Detective Colby and his colleague peel out of the school
campus.

INT. BLUE CAR - CONTINUOUS

Walton is in the back seat listening to his digital device.
He looks out the window at the scenery, mostly forests. He
occasionally looks at the driver. We can see the driver's
eyes looking at Walton through the rear-view mirror, but
never speaks to him or turns around to look at him. The
ride is quiet and eerie.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby and his colleague try to figure out which
way the car went.

DETECTIVE COLBY

(points to direction)

He had to have gone this way. He's
taking him to the forest.

They make a turn leading to a long winding road through a
forest. They run red lights and almost get into a wreck as
they speed past an intersection.

INT. BLUE CAR - CONTINUOUS

Walton looks out the window. It is getting dark and he sees no sign of civilization. He is becoming a bit worried.

WALTON

Are we going to the airport?

The driver slowly nods his head without saying a word.

WALTON (CONT'D)

This doesn't look like the way to
the airport...

He gets no response from the driver. He puts his digital device back on and continues to listen.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby and his colleague reach a dead end. They look lost and confused. They turn around and begin driving in the opposite direction.

DETECTIVE COLBY

If this kid dies, we're the ones
to blame.

COLLEAGUE

(points to direction)

Try going this way.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Why would he go there?

COLLEAGUE

Because there's an abandoned
factory.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Let's face it. We have no idea
where he is. I don't think we'll
find him.

COLLEAGUE

The kid doesn't have a phone?

DETECTIVE COLBY

Not that I know of.

COLLEAGUE

Maybe we should call for backup.

DETECTIVE COLBY

What good is that gonna do? I
didn't run his plate.

INT. BLUE CAR - NIGHT

The car slowly comes to a halt on a gravel road in a SECLUDED AREA. Walton is utterly confused by what's happening.

WALTON

Where are we?

He waits for an answer. Finally, the driver, whose face is hidden in the shadow, begins to turn his head toward him. The look on Walton's face is that of sheer terror.

INT. SUV - LATER

As detective Colby and his colleague are driving, they spot tire tracks leading into a secluded wooded area on a gravel road. They make a turn following the tire tracks.

EXT. SECLUDED AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Detective Colby and his colleague pull into the area where the blue car is parked, with the driver door and back passenger door both opened. They slowly approach the vehicle and exit their SUV. They search inside the car and find a backpack and a suitcase left in the back seat. Detective Colby and his colleague both realize they have arrived too late.

EXT. SECLUDED AREA - DAY

Crime scene investigators surround the car and police tape encircles the crime scene. Investigators dust the car for fingerprints. Detective Colby unzips the backpack and takes out the envelope Walton had shown him. He takes the envelope to his SUV and gives the backpack to one of his colleagues. A tow truck arrives on the scene and operators begin the process of impounding the car. Detective Colby watches as the car is loaded onto the tow truck and driven away. His colleague approaches him.

COLLEAGUE

The car was purchased just a few days ago. We know the owner, where he lives. But apparently it was sold to a random individual. No paperwork or anything.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - LATER

Detective Colby and his colleague pull into the driveway of a small and dilapidated house. They knock on the door and are welcomed by a middle-aged MAN who is missing half his teeth and wearing dirty clothes. Detective Colby flashes him his badge.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Hello. We wanted to ask you some questions about a car which belonged to you.

MAN

Oh, yes. Please, come in.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby and his colleague enter the house. The place is very dirty and unkempt. Beer bottles everywhere, trash and cigarette butts. The carpet is dirty.

Detective Colby looks at the couch and notices it is filled with stains. He hesitates to sit down, but does so anyway, next to the man. His colleague chooses to remain standing.

MAN

What can I do for you fellas?

DETECTIVE COLBY

We wanted some information on the car that you sold and the person you sold it to.

MAN

Right. I sold the car two days ago for five grand. I was really running short on cash. I had no other choice...

DETECTIVE COLBY

Do you know anything about the person you sold it to?

MAN

Other than the fact it was a man, no. I never even looked at the guy. My brother is the one who sold it to him, but he ain't here right now.

DETECTIVE COLBY

So you don't know anything about the guy?

MAN

No. Absolutely nothing. Like I said, I really needed some cash. I posted the car online. I got a reply. We arranged a meeting. He came and bought it. He paid cash. It's as simple as that.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Do you know what the man sounds
like?

MAN

No. I never talked to the guy. My
brother did...

Detective Colby and his colleague look at each other with
frustration.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Is there anything you can tell us
about the man who bought the car?

MAN

All that I can tell you fellas is
that he also bought a shovel.

Detective Colby's and his colleauge's attention heightens.
They look at each other.

MAN (CONT'D)

He saw a shovel laying around in
the front yard and apparently he
had taken a liking to the damn
thing. He paid ten dollars for it
and left.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

James is in the woods digging a hole with a shovel. We can
see his mansion in the background, hidden behind the trees.
After digging a sizable hole, he wipes sweat off his
forehead, drops the shovel and walks away.

EXT. MANSION - CONTINUOUS

He opens his car and pulls out a gas can and a garbage bag
full of clothes. He tightens the bag and returns to the
woods.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

He tosses the bag in the hole he dug, pours gasoline over it, lights a match and burns it.

EXT. MANSION - DAY

Detective Colby and his colleague quickly pull into the mansion driveway and rush to the door. Before they could ring the doorbell, James opens the door, neatly dressed and with a smile on his face.

JAMES

Good afternoon, officers. What seems to be the problem?

DETECTIVE COLBY

Are you aware of what had taken place last night, concerning another one of your students?

JAMES

No. Actually, I'm not. I'm no longer involved in the day-to-day operations of the school. As you know, my license has been suspended. As far as I'm concerned, that is no longer my problem.

DETECTIVE COLBY

What if we told you that we have probable reason to believe you were involved in last night's kidnapping?

JAMES

I would tell you that you're crazy.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Would you mind if we take a look inside your car?

JAMES

Go right ahead. You're not gonna find anything.

James follows the officers as they walk to his car and begin searching.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You looked all over my house and never found a thing. What makes you think you'll be lucky this time, huh?

Detective Colby searches the vehicle while his colleague keeps an eye on James. Detective Colby searches under the seats, in the trunk and various places, but doesn't find any incriminating evidence. He and his colleague look at each other.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Let's book him.

Detective Colby's colleague takes out a pair of handcuffs from his pocket and quickly places them on James' wrists.

COLLEAGUE

You're under arrest. Anything you say can and will be used against you.

James is beside himself as he is being handcuffed.

JAMES

What are you doing?

Detective Colby and his colleague forcibly drag James and throw him in the back of their SUV, kicking and screaming.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You can't do this! I've done nothing wrong! You have no evidence against me! None!

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Detective Colby and his colleague bring James into an interrogation room and uncuff him. He grabs a chair and they sit in front of him.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Okay. Mr. Hibbert. We can do this the easy way or the hard way. Either you consent to us swabbing you for DNA or we will get a court order.

James, frustrated, relents.

JAMES

Do whatever you want.

DETECTIVE COLBY

I want to remind you that you have the right to have a lawyer present during this time.

James leans into detective Colby, indignant.

JAMES

I don't need a lawyer. I'm not guilty of what you're accusing me of.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Very well, then...

Detective Colby takes a small cotton swab and rubs it in James' mouth. He then puts the swab in a plastic bag. Detective Colby and his colleague momentarily leave the room.

INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

DETECTIVE COLBY

I'm gonna go back to his house and look for more evidence.

(MORE)

DETECTIVE COLBY (CONT'D)

You stay here and interrogate him.
Make sure to bring up the shovel.
Ask him where he put it. Lie if
you have to.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby's colleague comes back into the
interrogation room and sits in front of James

COLLEAGUE

Okay. So, tell me the truth,
James. What happened?

JAMES

What truth? I haven't done
anything wrong. I am not
responsible for what happened to
those kids, period!

COLLEAGUE

This is going to be a long day...

JAMES

We can be here all day. It's not
going to change anything. I'm
completely innocent.

COLLEAGUE

We know what you did, James. We
know about the car you purchased.
We know about the shovel. We have
a mountain of evidence stacked
against you.

EXT. MANSION - DAY

Detective Colby carefully pushes the door open and enters
the mansion.

INT. MANSION - CONTINUOUS

He walks into the living room and immediately begins looking for items of interest. He sees nothing but a neatly organized living room filled with expensive objects. Boiserie, crystal chandeliers, heavy swag curtains, mahogany furniture.

INT. MANSION - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

He walks into the bedroom and notices a HUMAN SHAPED BALLOON slowly floating around in the room. The balloon floats toward the closet. He stares at the object.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby's colleague continues to interrogate James.

COLLEAGUE

We know it's you, James. You took those children away and you know their whereabouts. So, where are they?

JAMES

I have no idea what you're talking about...

(pause)

So, what is this mountain of evidence that you speak of? Where is your proof?

COLLEAGUE

That's not something you need to worry about. We have all the proof we need to know that you are responsible for these crimes. Sooner or later, you are going to slip up and we are going to find exactly what we're looking for to

(MORE)

COLLEAGUE (CONT'D)

put you behind bars for the rest
of your miserable and pathetic
life.

As detective Colby's colleague is talking, James withdraws into himself, drowning out the voice. He suddenly realizes something. He mutters under his breath.

JAMES

Oh no...

INT. MANSION - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby opens the closet door and on the top rack he spots what he recognizes as the black digital book reading device which he had once seen Walton using.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Detective Colby's colleague receives a phone call from detective Colby. He stares at James while listening. James stares back, curious what the conversation is about. Detective Colby's colleague promptly proceeds to put James in handcuffs. James is distraught and agitated.

JAMES

What is this about?

COLLEAGUE

You know what it's about. I'm
placing you under arrest for
murder.

JAMES

You gotta be kidding.

COLLEAGUE

No... I'm not. Prison is your new
home from now on.

James looks at detective Colby's colleague, hoping for leniency.

JAMES

We can work something out. I'm rich, you know.

Detective Colby's colleague leads James out of the interrogation room in handcuffs.

EXT. ANNABELLE'S HOUSE - DAY

Detective Colby pulls into the driveway of a house with a neatly manicured front yard. He gets out of his SUV with an envelope in hand, the same one Isaac had given Walton. He knocks on the door and a woman answers, Annabelle's mother.

WOMAN

Hey.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Hello, ma'am. I'm detective Colby. I'm looking for Annabelle.

WOMAN

Why? Is there something wrong?

DETECTIVE COLBY

No. There's nothing wrong. I'd just like to have a word with her concerning her former school.

The woman looks at detective Colby for a while and retreats to get Annabelle. Annabelle appears at the door shortly after.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Annabelle. I don't think we've met. I'm detective Colby. I worked on the missing person cases at your former school.

Annabelle nods her head, still somewhat confused.

DETECTIVE COLBY (CONT'D)

I'm here to fill you in on a few new developments that you might not be aware of... As you might have known, several kids had gone missing from the school. I'm sad to inform you that one of them might have been a close friend of yours. I believe this is for you.

Detective Colby hands Annabelle the envelope.

DETECTIVE COLBY (CONT'D)

He wanted you to have this shortly before his disappearance. He gave it to his friend, who is unfortunately also missing.

She opens the envelope and finds a valentine's day postcard with a heart. She opens the postcard and finds a beautiful picture of a boy and a girl holding hands. She speaks softly under her breath.

ANNABELLE

Do you know what happened to him?

DETECTIVE COLBY

We have good reasons to fear the worst. We believe that he was killed, along with his friend.

Annabelle begins to sob. Detective Colby hugs and consuls her.

INT. DETECTIVE COLBY'S OFFICE - DAY

Detective Colby's colleague walks into the office and finds detective Colby silently reading a book. The book is "Now or Never" by James Hibbert. His colleague looks at him amazed.

COLLEAGUE

You're reading that thing?

Detective Colby looks up at his colleague, surprised to see him there.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Just finishing up what I started.
Somehow I find this stuff
fascinating, believe it or not.

COLLEAGUE

Don't tell me you're inspired by
it...

DETECTIVE COLBY

No. Not really. Although he does
make a few good points here and
there, minus the whole cannibalism
thing.

COLLEAGUE

Right...

Detective Colby closes the book and sits up right.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Anyway... I don't know if I told
you this is going to be my last
day in office.

Detective Colby's colleague is surprised by the news.

COLLEAGUE

You're retiring?

DETECTIVE COLBY

Yep. I came to the very sudden
conclusion that there are more
important things in life than
solving crime.

COLLEAGUE

(snickers)

Yeah? Like what?

DETECTIVE COLBY

Like family for example... My daughter is about to graduate college. I'm thinking of traveling the world with her. Get a new perspective on things.

COLLEAGUE

I can't say that I envy you. But, yeah... That could be what you need.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Well... that's what I'm going to find out. Anyway, It's been a pleasure working with you. You make one hell of a partner. I'll tell you that.

COLLEAGUE

You're not too bad yourself.

Detective Colby gets up from his chair and approaches his colleague.

DETECTIVE COLBY

From now on, that chair belongs to you.

Detective Colby's colleague smiles. Detective Colby and his colleague shake hands.

DETECTIVE COLBY (CONT'D)

Make sure to keep in touch.

COLLEAGUE

You know I will...

Detective Colby pats his colleague on the shoulder.

DETECTIVE COLBY

Take care of yourself.

Detective Colby watches as his colleague walks over to the chair and sits down. Detective Colby smiles and leaves.

FADE OUT

THE END