

Running Free

By
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NOTES

This film is about the power and control a kidnapper has over his young victims. It is not about the sexual abuse of minors, which is a background theme, never shown or realised on screen. It is not intended to be a pornographic film. Producers must be careful to film this script without showing any sexual acts or nudity. These things are alluded to, but never actually shown. (Check with a solicitor to ensure it complies with State Rules.) Ideally, it should be filmed at a slow, languid pace, to build up the terror. Although the description and dialogue is tight, it should ideally take about 90 minutes. In some ways, the film is more European than American in style.

I deliberately made this a very inexpensive film to make. There are two main characters, George, and Craig. Most of it is set in George's cabin, or in his town apartment kitchen. There is one supermarket scene, one street scene, and two scenes in the waiting room of a police station. Road scenes are on country roads. Two police cars are used, as well as up to four policemen.

Cast:

George Bender	Kidnapper
Craig Watson	Kidnapped boy 11 and later, 14 (Could be 2 look-alike brothers.)
Lisa	Girl in shop
Joanna	Lisa's friend
Detective Johnson	local detective
Constable Daeger	Johnson's partner
Robbie Carlisle	2 nd boy kidnapped
Tom Carlisle	Robbie's father
Judy Carlisle	Robbie's Mother.

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This is entirely a work of fiction. Names, places, corporate or government entities, techniques, operations, etc. are either the product of the author’s imagination, or if real are used fictitiously. All historical material is fantasy fiction. All personal images are C.G.I. and not real people.

The kidnapping scenario in this story is generic and does not refer to any specific crime. Sexually based kidnappings tend to follow a pattern and this is reflected in the story. It is totally fictitious.

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EXT. COUNTRY ROAD AFTERNOON

It is hot. Baking hot. The unpaved road is dusty and rough. There are a few farm houses set back for privacy. Most of the area is lightly wooded. A dusty, beat-up panel van sits to one side, just off the road. It has seen better days. A man in dark clothing (GEORGE BENDER 35+) with sunglasses sits in the driver’s seat, waiting for something.

C.U. We see his wrist as he checks the time. His hands are powerful.

He looks into the mirror. A boy (CRAIG WATSON) is cycling along the road. He is about eleven years old, slightly built, wearing baggy shorts, a cotton shirt over a faded yellow t-shirt. His bike is old, as if made from spare parts. There is the clatter of wheels on the road. The spin of bicycle tyres and the flash of feet with short socks in cheap trainers.

The van’s engine starts. As the boy draws level with it, the vehicle accelerates across the boy’s path, so the cyclist prangs into it. Boy and bicycle swerve across the road and end up in the grass and bush by the side of the road.

In a flash, the man in black tracksuit jumps from the van and rushes over to the boy, who is dazed.



GEORGE

Are you hurt? Sorry about that. I didn’t see you.

He grabs the boy by his arm and pulls him to the van, opening a side door and sitting the boy down on the step.

CRAIG

You nearly ran me over. Why didn’t you signal?

George still holds the boy’s hand. He reaches into pocket of his pants and produces two pairs of handcuffs. Without ceremony, he cuffs the boy’s hands behind his back, then puts the other cuffs around Craig’s ankles. The boy lies on his stomach as George hogties his hands to his feet with a short plastic rope. Craig struggles, but George is very strong.

CRAIG

Help! Somebody help me! Let me go you bastard! Stop! Stop! It’s hurting me!

He looks up at George’s face and realises the predicament he is in.

Oh, shit. You’re kidnapping me. You’re one of those men who kidnaps kids. Oh, Lord. This can’t be happening to me. No!

George ends the conversation and shouts for help by placing a piece of gaffer tape over Craig’s mouth. The boy is bound, gagged, and helpless.

He lies on his side as George dumps his bicycle on top of him. The boy notes that George is wearing latex gloves. The man leans over the boy.

GEORGE

Now we’ve a way to go, Kid. If you cry, your nose will block up and you’ll smother yourself, so shut the hell up and lie quietly.

He slides the van door shut and sweeps the road to remove tracks by rubbing it over with an old sack. Satisfied he’s destroyed any evidence of the accident, he gets into the driver’s seat and the van moves off.

EXT. FORESTED AREA LATER

George is setting up a video camera on a tripod. In the background, just out of focus, Craig stands with his hands cuffed behind his back, but pulled upwards to a tree branch by a length of rope. He stands stooped forward. George has a remote control to the TV camera. He walks up behind Craig and looks towards the camera, flashes the remote at it. The red led light comes on, and we see the camera is operating. C.U. of lens moving as Craig starts screaming.

CRAIG (V.O.)

Stop! Please, no more! You’re hurting me. No! Aargh! Stop it!

LATER

George adjusts Craig’s shorts and pats him almost affectionately. The boy’s eyes are red and he has been crying. He stands sobbing – his hands are cuffed behind, but the rope over the branch has been removed. It is obvious that George has raped Craig.

CRAIG

Now you’ve got what you want, please let me go. I promise I won’t tell anyone.

George packs the video tripod away and looks at the footage.



We hear Craig’s screams coming from the small video camera. George takes the camera to the boy and shows him. Craig is devastated.

GEORGE

Won’t tell? (laughs) Bullshit.
You’re so good at it. It only
hurts the first few times, then
it feels really good.

CRAIG

Not again, please. No more.

George produces a wicked looking pistol that he rubs against Craig’s face.

GEORGE

When I’m tired of you, lad,
you’re history.

Craig flinches back in fear.

Don’t worry – I’ll make a nice
little hole for you to rest in for
eternity. Nobody will ever find
you.

He puts another strip of gaffer tape across Craig’s mouth and shuffles the boy back towards the van. Craig’s bike has been removed from the van. It is dumped beside the tree where Craig was raped. George drops some blood–stained underwear beside the bike.

George makes Craig lie on the floor of the van, hogtying him once more. This time, he reaches for a large sack and pulls it over the boy. Craig whimpers. George pulls the top of the sack over Craig’s head and closes it with a thick plastic cord, so the boy is completely sealed in.

GEORGE

Don’t struggle. Lie very
quietly. Soon, we’ll be home.



Any fuss from you, and it’s a
bullet. Got that?

He shuts the side door, gets into the driver’s seat, and the
van moves off down the rough forest track.

EXT. GEORGE’S CABIN EVENING

It is twilight when George arrives at his lonely cabin. The
van drives into a shed, and George removes the sack with
Craig, puts it over his shoulder and carries it into the cabin.

INT. KITCHEN–DINING AREA DARK

George switches on a light and dumps Craig, still in the sack,
onto a couch. The cabin is a mess – piles of discarded boxes
of stuff clutter the area. The floors are dirty, covered with
litter. The walls are papered over with cuttings and
pictures. There is an old clock on the wall, and a stand with a
TV set, a couple of lounge chairs, mis–matched. The wooden
kitchen table with four chairs is cluttered. George opens the
refrigerator door, removes two packs of frozen food, and
opens them, pierces the plastic covers, and places them into
a microwave oven.

Then he moves over to the sack, opens it, and Craig’s head
pokes out. The boy, still tape–gagged, looks around.

GEORGE

Home, sweet home, boy. Get
used to it.

He removes the sack and Craig sits on the long couch,
grunting. George pulls the tape from the boy’s mouth.

CRAIG

Thanks. I couldn’t hardly
breathe. I nearly smothercated.

GEORGE

We wouldn’t want that, now,
would we?



He sits next to Craig and puts his arm around the boy’s shoulders, pulling him towards him. Reflexively, Craig tightens and tries to pull away from him. George reacts angrily, punching into Craig who cannot defend himself. The man goes berserk and smacks Craig across the face, punching him in the ribs, and throwing him onto the floor so he can kick into him.

Craig screams and tries to get away, but handicapped by the cuffs on his ankles and wrists, can only wriggle, then curl himself up into a defensive ball. Craig screams in pain. Finally, his rage over, George pulls the boy to his knees.

GEORGE

You wet yourself.

CRAIG (SOBBING)

I’m sorry. I didn’t mean it.

GEORGE

We’ll change them, don’t worry.

Come here.

He pulls Craig back onto the futon and cuddles him. The boy’s eye is closing with a black bruise imminent, and he cuddles in close as George comforts him.

CRAIG

Please don’t hurt me.

GEORGE

We’ll get those wet shorts off you, and get you a change of clothes. That means taking the cuffs off. Now if you try anything, I’ll show you a real belting.

LATER

Craig has changed into a pair of navy–blue jeans and a long sleeved red hoodie, which lies across his shoulders. He sits at the table eating from the plastic plate of spaghetti.



GEORGE

Not a bad fit. Got them off the last boy I had. I asked him to be my boy – my son, but he refused the offer.

CRAIG

What happened to him?

GEORGE

He was disobedient. Wouldn’t do what I said, so we parted company.

He makes his two fingers into a gun and points towards Craig.

Phtew!

He makes a popping sound with his lips. Craig stops eating and looks at him.

CRAIG

So I’m wearing his clothes.

GEORGE

Does that bother you?

CRAIG

No. Not really. I mean, if he’s dead, he doesn’t need them any more, right?

(Break)

My chest hurts – badly.

George gets out of his chair and walks behind Craig to feel the boy’s ribs. Craig whimpers as he presses in.

GEORGE

Your rib’s broken. It’s not serious – just at the joint. I’ll strap it. You shouldn’t get me mad at you.

CRAIG

Sorry.

GEORGE

That’s all right. You’ll learn how to behave. A bit of pain – it’s nothing, really. Most people can stand pain.

He is looking at Craig, who notices the man’s face – hard and remote.

CRAIG

I hate pain.

GEORGE

You’ll learn to love it. I’m very good at pain. Do you like tie-up games? You know – cowboys and Indians?

CRAIG

I’ve never played that.

GEORGE

I’ll teach you. it’s good fun. I find ropes so much more comfortable than handcuffs. My uncle taught me that. When my folks died, he brought me up. Now he was really good with the ropes.



Craig resumes eating. He has nearly finished his plate. He mutters quietly

CRAIG

That figures.

LATER

Craig has been roped. His hands are tied behind his back, and the rope is cinched around his chest and upper arms, with tightening turns around his arms. He is watching TV as an announcement is given:

ANNOUNCER

Police have issued an amber alert for young Craig Watson, who vanished this afternoon, and has not returned home after his paper round.

George switches the TV off.

CRAIG

Looks like me – the photograph.

GEORGE

Easily fixed.

He waves a knife towards Craig.

I can crop your ears, a few cuts over the eyebrows to change their shape, and narrow your mouth.

CRAIG

Please. Don’t cut me.

GEORGE

No hurry. It’s our bed time.



CRAIG

I’ve got to sleep with you?

George stands and pulls Craig to his feet. We see his ankles are wearing the two cuffs, so he has more stepping room, but still can’t escape. George pushes the boy into his room and shuts the door. The camera pans around the room, revealing the clock on the wall. Eight o’clock.

There is a loud, agonizing high–pitched scream from George’s bedroom. The screaming goes on and on.

Darkness, but the moon’s light illuminates the clock. Snoring is heard from the room, and muffled sobs. The clock shows Twelve o’clock.

INT. CABIN KITCHEN NEXT MORNING

Craig is cooking porridge on the stove. He has laid the table and set out toast, marmalade, butter, etc. George is relaxing in a bath towel. He looks at what the boy has done. Craig shows the obvious signs of bruising on his face and arms. He looks bruised and battered all over.

GEORGE

Well if you aren’t a surprise.
Quite the domestic, aren’t you?

Craig sets out the breakfast for the two of them. George sits down, keeping an eye on the boy. He is being cautious.

CRAIG

I always have to help out at home. I know how to make breakfast. Got any eggs?

GEORGE

I’ll get some from Town today.
What else – O.J. bacon?

CRAIG

Bread, milk, washing up liquid,
tins of soup, more ready-meals.
Are we going to have proper
meals, or just packets?

GEORGE

You can cook, too?

CRAIG.

Easy stuff. Stew, curry, rice,
stir-fry. Mum teaches me
stuff.

George walks behind Craig and puts his arms around the
boy.

GEORGE

You’re full of surprises. Make
me a shopping list and I’ll get
what we want. You’ll have to
stay here.

CRAIG

Watch my ribs. They’re sore

GEORGE

Now you can choose from the
dog-cage, or be hogtied on the
couch. Couch is better, because
you can watch TV. Cage gets
you stuffed in tight with
handcuffs – hurts a lot after an
hour or so.

CRAIG

The other boys got put there?



GEORGE

Yes. I got put in there when I was a kid. Uncle’s punishment box. Especially fun when he lights it up with electric fencing tape.

CRAIG

I’d prefer to watch TV.

George leans over Craig, running his head beside the boy’s face.

CRAIG

You need a shave.

GEORGE

I need my morning fix. You’ve got me horny. I’ll buy some KY jelly and condoms – won’t hurt so much then.

Craig leans forward onto the table and cradles his head in his arms. We see bread pop up in the toaster as Craig screams in pain. George has finished. He is breathing deeply. He holds Craig around the neck and pulls him up, blowing into the boy’s hair.

CRAIG

Condoms and that jelly stuff would be better. Please don’t hurt me.

GEORGE

You are good. Really good.

Turns Craig round to face him.



GEORGE

I’m not looking forward to
ending our little relationship.

LATER

Craig sits on the long couch, handcuffed behind to a chain going round the chair so he can’t escape or reach his gag. His ankles are cuffed around his short sox, and he sits back watching the TV. The clock shows nine in the morning. There is nothing to do. The announcer shows police searching for him, and the amber alert photographs of his face.

The clock shows time passing. Craig is powerless to do anything but sit and watch the TV. His jeans are wet in front. There are no visitors. He hears the van drive in. The clock shows five o’clock. George enters. He has bags of groceries.

GEORGE

You can help me with these.

He looks at Craig, noticing the wet jeans. Tears off the boy’s gag.

Can’t hold your water?

CRAIG

Not for eight hours, I can’t.

GEORGE

Went to a second hand store
and got some things for you.
Don’t want my son to look
ragged, do I?

Craig forgets himself.



CRAIG.

(Angrily) I am not your son.
Your twisted uncle might have
bent your brains silly, but
there’s no way I’m your son.

George goes red in the face. He goes into his room and returns with a thick leather strap.

EXT. EXTERIOR CABIN LATE AFTERNOON.

Sounds of strap hitting Craig and the helpless boy’s screaming.

INT. REAR OF CABIN EVENING

Craig has been locked in the dog’s cage. His feet are cuffed, as are his hands – behind his back. He has no room to move about.

EXT. CABIN EARLY

George gets into his van and drives off towards town and his work–place. The cabin is eerily silent.

INT. CAGE ROOM MORNING

Craig, still in the cage, is tape–gagged and unable to move. He is suffering badly. He cannot scream any more, but is gasping in hunger, thirst, and pain.

LATER

George stands by the cage looking in at Craig.



GEORGE

Ready to obey me, Son?

Craig, spirit broken, nods his head and George unlocks the cage.

GEORGE

You can clean it up. I had to do it with my tongue, but you can use a dish. Shit stinks, don’t it? Like it in there?

Craig shakes his head.

GEORGE

After, you can pleasure me a bit. We’ll try out the lube. Know how to suck?

CRAIG

No. Heard about it. Kids at school used to talk about the sixty-nine club and stuff.

GEORGE

I’ll enjoy teaching you, Son. Uncle had a version of it. Used to call it “the Candle”. You’ll love it.

INT.

KITCHEN AREA

EVENING

Craig hangs by his sheer-lashed ankles from a roof beam. Hands tied behind. His head is level with George’s thighs. He has to lift it because George has lit a candle under his head which will burn him if he drops. Whatever has happened, it has stopped as George pinches the candle out. Craig drops his head in relief, and George wipes the boy’s mouth.

GEORGE

Not too bad, was it?

Craig doesn’t reply. He is totally exhausted, and can’t find the energy to speak.

LATER

Craig lays the table and sets out plates of stew. He prepares the coffee and sits, waiting for George to sit.

CRAIG

We don’t say ‘Grace’?

GEORGE

‘f it makes it taste better, you can.

CRAIG

Don’t have anything to thank him for today, so I’ll give it a miss.

He begins to eat. George starts, nodding his head in satisfaction.

GEORGE

This is good. I do believe you’re learning, boy. No old man’s sitting on a heavenly throne. It’s just a lot of bullshit.

CRAIG

Figured that for yourself, or did your Uncle teach you?

George looks at Craig. There is something more than rebellious anger in the boy. He is secretly defiant, and will be a constant danger.

GEORGE

Uncle taught me that Satan exists. So does hell. He did me four – sometimes six times a day. You’re getting it easy. Some of his rope tricks could only come from Satan. Crucified is good – arms stretched out between two uprights, body hanging feet off the ground. You can’t breathe, and the pain – you couldn’t believe it.

CRAIG

I’m sorry he hurt you. Are you going to hurt me tonight? My rib’s still sore. I’ll be real good. I Promise.

GEORGE

Promises are like pie–crusts. Meant to be broken.

CRAIG

My mother used to say that a promise is sacred and mustn’t be broken. If I promised her something, I’d keep that promise – even to death.

GEORGE

Well I never had a mother – not for long, so I guess I missed out on that. I want to make another film tonight. There’s a tie I want to use – a new one. The Straight–Jacket tie.

CRAIG

Are you offering me a choice?



George, smiling, looks at Craig and shakes his head.

EXT. CABIN IN MOONLIGHT DARK

Screams can be heard from the cabin. Leaves can be seen falling, denoting the passage of time.

INT. CABIN KITCHEN NIGHT

Craig is awake, standing on a short piece of log. His hands are cuffed behind him. He is very tired, but every time he shuts his eyes, George hits him across the face.

GEORGE

Stay awake. You aren’t allowed to fall asleep. Say “Thank you, Daddy,” when I correct you.

Craig slips and George slaps him. He lifts the boy back onto the small stump.

Well?

CRAIG

Thank you, Daddy. Please stop it. Please, Daddy, no more.

INT. CABIN KITCHEN MORNING

Craig is lying back on a long couch, fast asleep. He is handcuffed, but not tape-gagged. The TV drones on, and the boy wakes as the news announcer comes on.

ANNOUNCER

Police today confirmed that they have ceased searching for young Craig Watson, who went missing two months ago. His parents have accepted the fact that he is probably dead. A

memorial service will be held
for him at his Baptist church
next Monday.

The TV drones on, and Craig weeps quietly. The knowledge that his parents were searching for him kept his hopes up that he might be found. Now he has nothing.

LATER

George has arrived home from work. He is different, somehow. His attitude has hardened. He undoes the chain around the couch, but leaves Craig handcuffed. Then he takes a rope from one of the bags. At one end is a hangman’s noose.

GEORGE

All good things must come to
an end, Craig. The police have
given up looking for you, and
the case is being taken over by
the F.B.I. full time.

Flips the end of the noose over a ceiling beam and tightens it so the noose is about six feet above the floor.

Course, they were always
involved, but they’re good.
Time for covering tracks.

CRAIG

You’re going to hang me!

GEORGE

No. You’re going to hang
yourself. It’s suicide, plain and
simple. You can write your
Mum a note. I’ll put it in your
pocket – wear the clothes I
picked you up in.

George throws a set of clothes onto the couch. It is the cotton

check shirt. T-shirt, and baggy black shorts he was wearing when he was kidnapped.

GEORGE

I’m going to unlock your hands.
T shirt goes on first, then the
shorts. Check shirt last.

CRAIG

Please don’t kill me, Mr.
Bender. You’ll have to kidnap
another boy – and you know
how risky that will be with the
F.B.I looking for you and all.

He pulls his shirt off and changes into his old clothes.

I’ll be your son. Honest. I
promise I won’t tell anyone
about us. If you let me live, I’ll
let you do anything you want to
me. I can take pain. Just don’t
kill me, okay?

George approaches to slip the noose around Craig’s neck, but the boy pushes him away. They fight furiously as Craig tries to stop the rope going round his neck. Craig screams desperately.

I told you, if I make a promise
– a really excellent promise, I’ll
keep it. On my mother’s word,
I’ll be your son. Please don’t
kill me!

George is a bit out of breath. He hasn’t counted on Craig being so strong out of desperation to survive.

GEORGE

Everything I say? You’ll let me
do anything to you?

CRAIG

Yes. Anything. Film it, sell it, I



don’t care. Just don’t kill me.

GEORGE

And you’ll never give me away,
or tell anyone about us?

CRAIG

Never. We’ll be father and son.
I’ll be Craig Bender or you can
choose another name for me if
you like.

GEORGE

Craig is fine. Craig Bender.
My son. Promise you’ll stay
with me for ever.

CRAIG (RESIGNEDLY)

Yes, Dad. Forever. I’m your
son. I’m Craig Bender.

George smiles.

GEORGE

Then drop those shorts and
come give your old man some
pleasure.

Craig strips off the check shirt and his T-shirt. He throws
them to the floor and then reaches down for the belt around
his shorts.

EXT. CABIN OUTSIDE

AFTERNOON

There is the sound of George giving a sort of yippee noise,
with the sound of Craig’s laughter – a little forced, perhaps,
but he has made a deal with the devil to survive, and he
intends to keep his promise.

INT. KITCHEN AT NIGHT DARK

Craig is hanging by his lashed ankles from the overhead beam, hands tied behind his back. The candle has burnt out, so he can lower his head. George is sleeping on the couch. The clock clicks over to twelve midnight. Craig cannot sleep in this position, but he doesn’t want to wake George. He hangs upside down watching the clock.

CRAIG (MUTTERS)

I did say you could do anything to me. But I’m not a bat.

THREE YEARS LATER

EXT. APARTMENT BLOCK DAY

Craig, now nearly fourteen, (New character?) is wearing a denim jacket, torn jeans, and spiked hair which is bi-coloured black and red. He looks like a punk and is hard to recognise as the clean-cut youngster abducted two years before. He rides to the front door of the apartment and lets himself in.

INT. BENDERS’ APARTMENT DAY

The new place is a far cry from the old shack in the woods. For one thing, it is cleaner. Craig is in charge of domestic work, vacuuming the floor, getting rid of rubbish, cooking, etc. In many ways, he is the ‘wife’ in the old style. He has a sink full of dishes, which he begins to wash and put on a draining board. There is the sound of a vehicle. George can be seen in a brand new SUV which he parks outside. He enters the house, dressed in a smart courier’s uniform. Packets of shopping are placed on the table. One of the packets contains some hard objects. George pulls out a small box of 9mm pistol ammunition and two pairs of heavyweight security type handcuffs. Craig pokes at the cuffs.



CRAIG

Anyone in mind?

GEORGE

There’s this kid who’s getting a bit uppity. Thought I’d tame him down a bit.

CRAIG

Now, or do you want to wait until after tea?

GEORGE

After tea. I’ve had a hard day – need to relax. Join me in the shower?

CRAIG

Saving water? All right. I need a good soap down.

LATER

INT.

SHOWER CUBICLE

EVENING

Shot From waist up, George is getting randy as Craig submits quietly enough. The shower is off, and they dry each other with towels. George produces some clothes pegs and opens one near Craig’s nipples.

CRAIG

Those hurt. I hate them on my nipples.

GEORGE

I will do whatever I am told.

He applies the clothes peg as Craig winces. Then George puts another one on. Craig gasps, but puts up with it as he towels himself dry and shrugs his denim jacket on. He sits at the table. George joins him.

CRAIG

Okay. So you really did have a bad day. My pain, your gain.

GEORGE

The apartment is sound-proof. You can scream your head off, and nobody will hear.

CRAIG

Videoing it?

GEORGE

Of course. It more than pays the rent. You’re a star, Craig. People all over the world pay to watch you. You’ve got a Personal computer, PS2, Internet access, pocket money. You should be grateful.

CRAIG

Sorry, Dad. If only it didn’t hurt so much.

GEORGE

Thought you’d be used to it by now. Those screams – you’re just acting for the camera.

CRAIG

I wish.
I don’t fake it. You know how to hurt me.

George puts the handcuffs on Craig’s wrists, behind his back. They are heavy hinged security types.

EXT. OUTSIDE APARTMENT NIGHT
Craig’s screams are just audible, but ignored. Nobody seems

to care what happens in the apartment.

INT. LOCAL STORE DAY

Craig has been doing the shopping. He goes through the checkout. Things are quiet. (LISA 16) The girl at the checkout smiles.

LISA

You must be a local. Seen you around a bit. Don’t go to school?

CRAIG

Schools don’t get along with me. I do home–schooling.

She checks his groceries into a large bag.

LISA

Hurt your wrist? Looks like a bad bruise.

CRAIG

Dropped something on it. It’ll heal. When do you get off?

LISA

I’ve got this afternoon. Care to take in a movie?

Craig isn’t sure about Lisa. She seems to be ‘picking him up’, and this has never happened to him before. He looks at her, a bit tongue–tied and uncertain.

CRAIG

Sure. Love to. I mean, why not?

He leaves, looking back at her, she sees him get onto his bike and ride off. Her friend, (JOANNA 16) looks at her amused.



JOANNA
Baby–snatching, Lisa?

LISA
I think he’s rather cute.

EXT. STREET SCAPE DAY

A montage of Craig doing various things – visiting shops, enjoying some basketball with a group of neighbourhood kids, getting a book out of the library, generally enjoying his freedom as a normal kid. He has the run of the town.

EXT. APARTMENT LATER

As Craig rides his bike into the apartment complex, he sees George’s courier truck. Craig opens the door with his key. George is waiting inside for him.

GEORGE
Hi, son. One of our vans has broken down, so I’m taking this one to replace it. I need a hand offloading the parcels so we can do the deliveries on time.

CRAIG
You want me? This afternoon?

GEORGE
You’ve got the run of the town. All I’m asking is one afternoon. Got something else on?

CRAIG
I was going to take Lisa to a movie, that’s all.
(subdued) Okay, I guess it will have to wait.

GEORGE

Lisa? Who the hell is Lisa?

CRAIG

I need a life. Give me a break.
I’m not a little kid any more.

EXT. ROAD TO NEXT TOWN DAY

George spots the courier van parked in the trees off the road a bit. He pulls over and gets out with Craig.

GEORGE

What’s it doing parked like this? Of all the stupid pricks.

He walks round the van and sees the body of Joe lying half in and out of the cab. He’s been shot through the head.

GEORGE

Oh, shit. Big shit. Don’t touch anything.

CRAIG

Van’s empty. What was it carrying?

GEORGE

Cigarettes, Liquor, Stuff for the Casino. I’m going to have to call the police, Craig.

He dials 911 on his mobile phone, then turns to the boy.

Any shit, any mis–placed comments, and those videos of you will be all over the TV and papers. Got it?

CRAIG

I keep my promises, Dad. I told you. Remember when they picked me up for breaking

curfew last year?. They brought me home, and I told them nothing. You thanked them. I’m a promise keeper. Trust me.

George pats him on the arm and they return to their van to wait on the police.

INT. WAITING ROOM IN POLICE STATION LATER

Craig is sitting on a wooden form. Above him is a pin-board with wanted posters and missing people. One of the posters is for “Craig Watson”. It has an age-progressed photo next to the one taken when he was eleven. It is similar to his face, (but not sufficiently alike to make a comparison.) A detective (JOHNSON 40) enters from his office with George. The detective hands him his pistol – still in its plastic evidence bag. George places it in his pocket.

JOHNSON

You’re clear, George. Glad you declared it at the crime scene – it was the smart thing to do. This your boy?

GEORGE

Craig. This is detective Johnson, Craig. Don’t worry, Sir. I’ll talk to the boy about what he’s seen. Nasty business.

JOHNSON

Kid shouldn’t see those sort of things, but we can’t protect them from the evils of this world. You all right, lad?

CRAIG

Yes, sir. I didn’t see that much.

Johnson nods and shows them out. He walks past the flyer of Craig Watson without a sideways glance.

EXT. APARTMENT LATER

George stays in the van as Craig looks in at him through the driver’s window.

GEORGE

I’ll be working on this all night.
Insurance claims, phone calls.
Don’t wait up for me. I’ll be late.

CRAIG

Right, Dad. See you when I see you.

INT. APARTMENT EVENING

Craig finishes his tea – a microwaved packet, and goes to the fridge to get some ice cream. He eats it from the pack with a spoon while watching TV. Then he cleans up. He showers and changes into a sweatshirt and jeans. Then he opens a drawer and takes out the two pairs of handcuffs. He sits on the couch. places one pair of cuffs around his ankles, and clips the other pair around his wrists, lies back on the couch with his head on a pillow, watching the TV. He plays at struggling against his bonds, then relaxes, breathing deeply. His eyes close, and he falls asleep.

EXT. FRONT OF STORE DAY

Lisa is leaving the store with Joanna. Craig runs from behind, ready to apologise for missing the date.



CRAIG

Lisa! Wait up.

Catches up to her.

Sorry about yesterday, but I had to go help my Dad. We found a body.

Lisa is about to short change him, but her curiosity gets the better of her.

LISA

What body?

JOANNA

Was that the one in the news this morning? Someone robbed a courier van.

CRAIG

Yes. Dad’s company. We went down to rescue the van, but the driver had been shot, and everything was missing. Spent the afternoon at the Police Station. I missed out on having the movie with you.

Joanna looks at the theatre, which is nearby.

JOANNA

Well the film is still showing, Craig. I don’t suppose you can afford to take both of us?

CRAIG

Course I can. Think I’m a derelict, or something?

Lisa looks him up and down. In his slightly ‘Goth’ clothes, he could be as poor as a church mouse, but appearances can be

deceiving. She smiles, takes him by the elbow, and they walk to the cinema. The delighted boy finds he has ‘two strings to his bow’.

EXT. APARTMENT LATER

Craig is surprised to note a police car in front of their apartment. He turns his bike around and pedals back down the street. He moves in closer to one of the other apartments and watches. The police leave. He waits for a while, then cycles back.

INT. APARTMENT AFTERNOON

George is inside, making coffee.

CRAIG

What did they want?

GEORGE

Just checking it wasn’t an inside job, I guess. They had a search warrant. Didn’t stay long – just wanted to make sure I didn’t have any liquor or cigarettes in the place.

CRAIG

The videos?

GEORGE

I was a bit worried, but they ignored them. They weren’t looking for anything like that. Glad you were out. They could have asked awkward questions.

Craig looks away. The police seemed to be in their face a lot lately. George hands him a cup of coffee, and Craig drinks it, sipping slowly.

CRAIG

I don’t look like him.

GEORGE

What’s that?

CRAIG

The boy who vanished a long time ago. His poster – I mean, he doesn’t look like me.

GEORGE

We should take a break from here. I’m due time off. We could go back to the cabin for a couple of weeks.

CRAIG (QUIETLY ANGRY)

I hate that cabin. Just as I’m starting to make friends, you want us to move again.

GEORGE

It isn’t up for discussion. We’re going, and you’re going to do what I tell you.

CRAIG

Well, stuff you!

He throws a chair over so it falls with a noisy bang, and goes to his room, slamming the door. George is angry. He puts his hands on his hips, breathing hard. He walks to the cupboard and takes out the handcuffs – only to find that Craig has double locked them and taken the keys. He opens the wall safe for the 9mm pistol. It is still there, untouched, as he has the only key to the pistol safe.

GEORGE

Damned teenagers.

He picks up the chair and smiles.

Lovers’ tiff.

Silly of me.

He goes to Craig’s door.

Craig, all right. We won’t go.

You can stay in town with your
friends.

Sits to watch TV. After a while, Craig opens the door of his
room and comes out as if nothing has happened.

CRAIG

I’m Sorry.

GEORGE

That’s all right, son. See how
much I love you?

He points the pistol at him and looks at the boy who
experiences a stab of fear.

You’re not dead. Yet.

(Break)

You got the keys for these?

Holds out the security handcuffs. Craig reaches into his
pocket and hands the handcuff keys to George. The boy
looks at the floor. His hand shakes, revealing his fear.

GEORGE

Good boy. Good, obedient boy.

George puts an arm over Craig’s shoulder, pulling him into a
cuddle on the couch. Craig curls up against him, and puts
his thumb into his mouth. George looks down at him and
smiles.

INT. APARTMENT LATER

Craig lies hogtied on the floor tape gagged and unable to move. George sits on the couch casually hitting him with a strap – enough to sting, but not really hurt. In front of the boy’s face is a plate of spaghetti, but he can’t reach it. George is enjoying himself. Craig is annoyed, frustrated, but not screaming. George starts hitting him across the soles of his feet.

GEORGE

The choice is yours Craig. You can stay here, or come to the cabin with me.

Craig finally nods his head, accepting the cabin choice.

GEORGE

That decision wasn’t too hard, was it?

EXT. CABIN EVENING

Craig and George are tidying the cabin, sweeping the floor, carting out rubbish. It is in better shape than it was before. The floor has been scrubbed and mopped. The tables are clear of junk. Power is on. Craig looks up at the ceiling beams. They look strong enough for George to use, as does a central line of poles holding up the ridge line. He goes out to get more things for the kitchen, then returns carrying a lightweight microwave oven, which he puts onto the bench top. He checks the refrigerator, and as it’s getting cold, he removes packets of frozen food from an esky (A fiberglass box with Styrofoam lining used by campers to keep food cold.) and puts them in the freezer section.

GEORGE

We’re just about done. Want a beer?



CRAIG

Can do.

He takes two cans from the esky and pops the tops. George switches on the TV and leans back in one of the old lounge chairs while Craig sits at the table to drink his.

GEORGE

You’re getting to be a big lad,
Craig.

CRAIG

Growing boy, Dad. So?

GEORGE

How’d you like a little brother?

Craig takes it in. He feels his blood run cold.

CRAIG

No fucking way. You’re not
snatching another kid.

He turns angrily to George, confronting him.

I swore I’d be your ‘son’ for
life. I’m your son. Nobody is
taking my place.

GEORGE

Hey, cool down. I never said
anyone was taking your place.

They sip their cans in silence for a while.

But let’s face it. In a couple of
years time, I’m going to have to
stand on a brick.

Despite the gravity of the situation, Craig has to laugh.

CRAIG

You want to train another kid –
like you trained me? No way.
I’m not letting you do that.

GEORGE (FIRMLY)

You’re going to help me get another boy, and then you’ll help me train him. You and a younger kid on DVDs. We’ll make a mint. If the kid gets to be a problem, we’ll off him.

Craig’s mood changes instantly. He is a very volatile boy – easily angered.

CRAIG

You want me to be like you! If you get caught, You want me to go to jail with you; you sick bastard! No way. No fucking way!

He throws the can at George, who catches it with one hand and hurls it back. Craig ducks, but George has moved from the chair with lightning speed and grabs Craig by the throat.

GEORGE

My most excellent promise. I will do whatever you say. If you let me live, I’ll be your son for ever.

Craig has tightened his neck muscles. He is a lot stronger than he was as a kid. He grasps George’s wrist and pushes into the wrist bones with his thumbs, breaking the grip, but George is ready for him and belts Craig in the jaw with his other hand. The boy drops to the floor stunned, and George kicks him in the ribs. Craig screams.

EXT

CABIN

DAY

There the sound of fighting coming from the cabin, and Craig’s screaming.



CRAIG

No! Stop it! You cunt! Stop!
Fucking bastard! Get off! No!
It hurts!
Motherfucker! Aargh! Aargh!
Please! Please stop! Aargh!
Aargh!

Then silence.

INT.

CABIN KITCHEN

LATER

Craig kneels in front of one of the upright beams. His hands are cuffed behind it, and his ankles are also cuffed behind it so he cannot stand up. It is a painful position to be in. His face is bruised, and blood drips from his nose and mouth. George sits in his chair, comfortably sipping from another can of beer. One of his eyes is bloodshot and he has blood on his face. It is obvious that Craig managed to do a bit of damage, even is he has lost the fight. George puts his beer down and lifts his pistol to sight it towards Craig.

GEORGE

Phtew! Between the eyes.

CRAIG

(angrily) Go ahead, if it makes
you happy.

George adjusts the safety catch, points it towards Craig, and fires. The bullet chips the upright, a couple of feet above the boy’s head. Craig winces and screams.

CRAIG

NO! Don’t!

GEORGE

Please, pretty please?



CRAIG

Please, pretty please.

His jeans are wet.

GEORGE

You’ve wet yourself again. Big hero can’t hold his water. What am I going to do with you?

CRAIG

Please, let me go. I’ll be good. I’ll do what you want.

GEORGE

Give me a little suck?

CRAIG

Yes.

GEORGE

Just to rub it in, you can stay there tonight. I’ll see how sorry you really are tomorrow.

Craig drops his head in defeat. His rebellion hasn’t had any success, and he’s more under George’s control than he ever was. He sobs quietly.

George watches him in his misery and feels a great deal of pleasure watching the boy suffer. Then he stands up and walks over to the beam, his crotch is level with the boy’s face. He grab’s Craig by the ear and straightens him up. He places the pistol at his head.

GEORGE

Now I don’t want you biting or trying anything nasty.



CRAIG

No, Sir. Anything you want me to do. But I’m not going to kidnap anyone for you. Nobody should go through what I’ve had. I won’t do it.

GEORGE

All right. We’ll leave it at that. I don’t want to lose you, Craig. I really love you.

INT. CABIN BEDROOM NEXT NIGHT

George is snoring in the Queen sized bed. Craig, shirtless, lies next to him with the covers over his chest. He’s awake, with his hands behind his head on the pillow. He is thinking, restless, unable to sleep.

INT. CABIN – CLEARED PART DAY

George has set up the TV camera on a tripod. There are two powerful lights ready to illuminate the scene. Craig is coiling up a length of rope – a thick white sash cord.

He’s wearing a blue sweat shirt, jeans, a black leather belt, and sports shoes – runners. There is a large carpet mat on the floor, where Craig can lie.

GEORGE

You’ll be in a hogtie, struggling, for about five minutes. Roll about, and wriggle around so the viewer can get a good look at you from all sides.



Craig catches sight of something outside through the window.

CRAIG

There’s a police car coming in.
Are you expecting them?

George goes to the window to look out.

GEORGE

Shit. Now what do they want?
Drop that stuff.

Craig drops the rope onto the floor beside one of the beams. He sits on the couch. There is a loud banging on the door, and George goes to answer it.

It is the detective – Johnson. There is a State policeman (DAEGER 30) with him. The detective smiles warmly.

JOHNSON

Why, Mr. Bender. So good to find you at last. You didn’t leave us with a contact number or address.

GEORGE

I’ve got a couple of weeks leave. Sorry, I didn’t think you’d be wanting me.

JOHNSON

Well, we tracked you down. No harm done.
We’ve found the perps. who took out the Courier van. We want you as a prosecution witness.

He hands George an envelope, and, uninvited, walks into the cabin. In one sweep of his eyes he takes in the lamps, the video camera focused on a clear area of the floor, the carpet,

the rope lying on the floor, and the sets of handcuffs lying on the desk by the couch Craig is sitting on. The boy is not looking at him.

JOHNSON

How are you doing, Craig?
Having a holiday from school?

Craig looks at him, and Johnson notes the slightly swollen face, the black eye, the thick lip, and the boy’s generally depressed appearance.

CRAIG

I’m home schooled, Mr.
Johnson.

GEORGE

Craig has a few problems
getting on with other kids.
Had a bit of a barney with
them the other day – before we
came out here.

JOHNSON

Got a bit of a shiner, eh?
You’ve got to watch those town
kids. Some of them are a bit
rough.

CRAIG

I guess.

Johnson turns to George.

JOHNSON

We didn’t get your cell-phone
number.

GEORGE

Sure. I’ll give you one of my
cards. It’s on the back.

He rummages in a kitchen drawer and produces a card.



Johnson takes it and has another quick look around, smiling disarmingly.

JOHNSON

When we ask you questions at court, don’t ramble on. Just answer the question as briefly as you can. If we want more details, we’ll ask more. Okay?

GEORGE

Sure. You can’t coach me, can you?

JOHNSON

No, Sir. These days, we have to play fair.

He points to the handcuffs.

You thinking of joining up, Craig. We’re always looking out for young fellers.

George sees the detective out and watches through the window until the car has left.

CRAIG

We can start, now?

GEORGE

No. I’m not in the mood right now. I hate – the police.

INT.

POLICE CAR (DRIVING)

DAY

Johnson is quiet for a while, but thinks aloud to his partner.

JOHNSON

Wonder what he was filming on the carpet. Rope, handcuffs, boy. Out of the way cabin; no

contact with the outside world.

DAEGER

Bondage videos with the kid?

JOHNSON

No. I’ve seen them before. The kid’s too close to him – father, son. He loves that kid. Any teenage rumbles lately?

DAEGER

Haven’t heard – not that we hear everything. I’ll ask about. The grapevine tells all.

He grins at Johnson, who smiles.

JOHNSON

Might be worth while digging into Bender. No criminal history. We checked that. See if there’s anything else you can find.

INT.

CABIN KITCHEN

DAY

Craig. Wearing jeans and the blue sweatshirt, sits in one of the old lounge chairs, his hands cuffed behind his back, and secured by a chain – as he used to be when he was first taken. He is tape-gagged.

GEORGE

You don’t have to come with me, Craig. I’ll do this on my own. Come tonight, you’ll have a little brother to look after.

Craig can’t speak, but he growls his disapproval.

CRAIG

Urrgh!



GEORGE

What was that? Have a nice day? You too. Don’t piss your pants if I’m late.

The TV has been left on. Craig is used to the routine, so leans back to sleep. The clock shows a bit after seven in the morning.

EXT.

VIEW FROM SUV

LATER

George follows a school bus route, He wants to find school students who might be on their own later in the afternoon. He is looking for a boy who could be walking home on his own. As it is morning, he is only stalking. He hangs back, well behind the bus.

INT.

CABIN KITCHEN

EVENING

George enters. He is late, and Craig is getting anxious. George walks over to look at him carefully.

GEORGE

Dry boy. Your bladder must be getting bigger.

Pulls the tape from Craig’s mouth

Have an interesting day?

CRAIG

Please. Let me loose. I need to go.

GEORGE

Get used to it. You don’t want to help me, so you can stay home while I look for a little brother for you. I’m not taking the chance you’ll do something stupid.

He undoes Craig’s handcuffs and frees his ankles.

GEORGE

It’s up to you, Craig.
Come with me, or stay here.

CRAIG

You’re on your own. I’ve got a
bad feeling about this one. I
can’t help you.

He walks stiffly into the toilet.

GEORGE

(Calling out) I’ve had a long
day, Craig. I need you after.

CRAIG

Don’t worry, there’s plenty of
paper in here.

EXT. ROADWAY SCHOOL BUS STOP DAY

The school bus stops but no student appears. It waits for a while, then drives on. A minute later, a boy ROBBIE CARLISLE, 12) appears and begins to run after the bus, waving his arms. He has missed it. He stands, puffing, as George drives by. The boy waves him down with a hitching thumb sign. George stops. Robbie approaches the driver’s window.

ROBBIE

I just missed the bus. It should
wait, but it didn’t.

GEORGE

Looks like we’re in luck. I
think I can catch it. Get in.

Robbie forgets all he has been told about taking lifts with strangers. He runs to the passenger side, and gets into the cab with George.

There is a brief struggle as George secures Robbie with Gaffer tape, hogtying and tape–gagging him.

EXT. ROAD DAY

The boy’s school bag is dropped from the car window as George heads off in the opposite direction with his young captive.

INT. CABIN KITCHEN DAY

Craig, tied in the lounge chair, wakes when he hears the TV has an Amber Alert. The announcer shows a photograph of Robbie Carlisle.

ANNOUNCER

Twelve year old Robbie Carlisle missed his school bus this morning, and his parents were notified that he didn’t attend class. They found his school bag by the road. He has no history of running away, and there doesn’t seem to be a reason for leaving his bag – which seemed to have been dumped from a moving vehicle. The FBI child rescue team is examining the area. Anyone who has seen Robbie is asked to contact local police immediately.

The announcement is repeated. Craig is devastated. He shakes his head, and a muffled “No!” comes from behind his gag. He lies back to ease his cramped limbs,

LATER

The door opens. George enters with Robbie over one shoulder.

GEORGE

Surprise! Guess what I found today – lost.

He takes the cuffs off Craig, who stands up. Free at last, he goes to the toilet. George takes the gaffer tape off Robbie’s wrists and replaces it with the handcuffs. He puts the boy on the table, removes the tape and cuffs his feet. Robbie is terrified and starts to shout as soon as the tape is taken off his mouth.

ROBBIE

Let me go! Help!

George pulls him off the table and bends him over it. He deliver a couple of hard whacks.

GEORGE

Shut up, or I’ll really give you a hiding.

Craig comes from the toilet and puts his hand on the boy.

CRAIG

Stop that. You’re scaring him.

GEORGE

You know what I want. Don’t interfere.

CRAIG

Don’t hurt him!

George back-hands Craig, who staggers back.

GEORGE

I’ll do what I like with him.
He’s mine. Back off, Craig, or
Phtew!

He shows Craig the pistol, meaningfully.

If you haven’t forgotten, I don’t
need you any more now.

Craig walks outside. He can’t stop George.

EXT.

CABIN

EVENING

There is the sound of screaming from inside. To Craig, it is
all too familiar.

ROBBIE

Don’t do that. No! Aargh!
Stop it! Stop it!

Craig puts his hands over his ears and moves away from the
noise. He sits on the doorstep of the SUV and sobs. He feels
so helpless. The sound he hears reminds him of himself,
when he was taken.

INT.

CABIN KITCHEN

NIGHT

Craig has taken the long couch as his bed for the night. He
looks at the clock. It is after nine, and there are still moans
and sounds coming from George’s bedroom.

LATER

MORNING

Same scene, but morning light streams into the cabin.
Robbie is brought out from George’s bedroom. He is wearing
handcuffs behind. George goes to the bathroom, and Robbie,
who has been crying, looks at Craig.

CRAIG

Did he hurt you?



Robbie nods. He walks over to Craig, who holds him gently and helps him pull his feet through his hands so they are cuffed in front of him.

He sometimes hurts me, too.
I’m Craig.

ROBBIE

Robbie.

George has finished in the bathroom. He walks out into the cabin kitchen with the pistol in his hand.

GEORGE

I might take Robbie for a short drive, Craig.

CRAIG

No. Not yet. Let him stay with me, Dad. You did say he’d be my little brother. Just one day, please.

GEORGE

You’ll look after him? All right. Anyway, I’ve got to go into the office. We’re due back next week. I’ll be back by midday.

CRAIG

I can look after him. Take the cuffs off.

GEORGE

You’re sure?

CRAIG

We’re miles from anywhere. Where could he go? I won’t let him out of the Cabin. Promise.

George looks at the boys, and nods in agreement. He takes



the cuffs off Robbie and hands Craig the handcuff keys.

GEORGE

No going outside.
I’ll sort it when I get back.

INT. POLICE STATION WAITING ROOM NEXT DAY
(TOM CARLISLE 35) and his wife (JUDY, 32) are sitting on the wooden form waiting for the detective handling the case of their missing son. Johnson comes from his office.

JOHNSON

We’ve put out the amber alert. FBI are examining the tyre tracks at the scene, but they’re a common brand, so we may not get much there. The bag has Robbie’s prints on it, but there are no others.

JUDY

Sometimes you get them back, right?

JOHNSON

I’m not going to quote statistics to you, Mrs. Carlisle. Every case is different.

JUDY

I don’t want my boy to end up on a poster like that one.

She is pointing to the NCMEC poster of Craig Townsend. Johnson looks at it, then looks again, harder. And the penny drops.



JOHNSON

Oh, my glory. It’s him. He
even kept his first name.

He almost runs back into the office to get Daeger.

EXT. ROAD TOWARDS CABIN DAY

Two police vehicles, no sirens, but lights flashing, head down
the highway towards George’s cabin, which is a long way
from town.

INT. CABIN KITCHEN DAY

It is nearly mid-day when George arrives home. He enters
the cabin.

GEORGE

Time to farewell our new
friend, Craig.

CRAIG

He’s staying here. You
promised he’d be my little
brother.

GEORGE

Too many police are looking for
him. Can’t get away with it for
a second time.

He handcuffs Robbie behind and goes to the ropes drawer for
the noose. Craig is desperate, but George still holds him in
fear.

You can go to the couch, Craig.
Now!

Craig obeys. He has been conditioned to do what George tells him. George handcuffs Craig’s hands over the couch arm so he can’t get away, and puts a strip of gaffer tape over his mouth.

You can wait my return. I
won’t be long. I Might even
find your old bike up there.

He puts a strip of tape over Robbie’s mouth and the noose over his neck to lead him out to the SUV.

Be good, Craig.

EXT. CABIN DAY

George drives off with Robbie crouched in the passenger seat’s well.

INT. CABIN KITCHEN DAY

Craig tries to pull the cuffs off his wrist using brute force. They are too strong. He kicks in frustration and tries to drag the couch to the door. It is a great, but losing struggle.

EXT. CABIN DAY

The two police cars drive into the cabin’s block and Johnson and Daeger, pistols drawn, approach the door. Johnson carefully looks through a window. Craig’s predicament is clear. He boots the door open.

INT. CABIN KITCHEN DAY

Johnson carefully removes Craig’s tape–gag. He looks carefully at the boy.

JOHNSON
Craig Watson?

CRAIG

Yes. And he had Robbie here, too, but he’s going to kill him. I can’t get out of these – he has the keys.

JOHNSON

Policemen always carry keys, Craig. Where’s he taking Robbie?

He carefully unlocks Craig’s hands and the boy rubs them. His wrists are raw red and bleeding from trying to get out of the cuffs.

JOHNSON

We’d better get those looked at, Craig.

CRAIG

No time. He’s going to hang him. He’s going to do it where he took me. I know where it is. He said he’d bring my old bike back. Useless junk.

EXT. CABIN DAY

The police cars head out of the block. Craig is in the passenger’s seat next to Johnson.

INT. POLICE CAR DAY

They are directed by Craig, who points the way up the mountain path. His wrists have been bandaged by Daeger, they are tossed about in the fast moving vehicle.

CRAIG

Stop here. He’ll hear us coming, otherwise.



EXT. FOREST AREA DAY

The police and Craig move out of the cars and move up a rough pathway. Bender’s SUV can be seen hidden in the bushes. There is a terrible screaming noise – Robbie is in pain.

ROBBIE

Please don’t hurt me, Sir.
No! Stop!

Johnson looks through the bushes. Robbie stands on a lower branch, his hands are cuffed behind him, and a noose is around his neck. One mis-step and he’ll hang.

Bender turns as he hears a noise. He points his pistol at the police and kicks the branch. There is a cacophony of gunfire as George goes down, mortally wounded. Robbie is swinging from the noose. Choking.

Craig moves fast, racing to the branch and trying to support Robbie. Johnson joins him on the branch, but realises there is no way to cut the rope. He clings to the trunk of the tree as Craig shins up to his shoulders, hoists Robbie up by his shoulders, and pulls the noose from the boy’s neck. Robbie is gasping, but he is handed down to Daeger. Soon they have stabilised him, and he responds to having his throat gently massaged.

CRAIG

You’ll be fine, Robbie.
Just fine.

Robbie hold’s Craig’s hand and manages to wink at him.

ROBBIE

Thanks. You’re the best big brother anyone could have.

JOHNSON

You did real well, Craig.
You’re the hero in all of this.

Craig can’t talk much either. He’s exhausted. He merely turns to look up at Johnson, then down at George.

He’s dead, Craig. No way he
can threaten you now.

CRAIG

I never thought I’d say it, but
Praise the Lord.

EXT

OVERHEAD VIEW

DAY

The police team begins to leave. A crime tape is being placed around the scene. Craig and Robbie are heading home. There are parents to regain, lives to heal, and questions to be answered, but for now, the story has ended.

THE END

