

Lychanthrope

"Werewolf Story"

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

The Moon is full.

Trees loom beyond the light of a massive bonfire.

Popular MUSIC is pumping from a teenager's party, with the hidden fire circle, a few trucks pulled up, and a grassy parking area for smaller cars set out along the roadside.

A dozen friends gather around the circle, mingled in a blur. Some of them chat or fool around. Others are drunk, rowdy, and making a mess. They break bottles and shout at the trees.

TOMMY and JANEY, two teens on a date, are locked in a kiss while resting on a blanket behind his old truck. It is parked nearby, positioned on the edge of the ring lit by the fire.

TOMMY

Janey! You're so...

Janey pulls away from him, and stands.

TOMMY (cont'd)

Hey! Where ya' goin'?

She turns and bounds away from him, leaving him slack-jawed on the crumpled blanket. He sits back, looking confused.

JANEY

I'm ready for another beer! You want one?

TOMMY

Oh, uh. Hell yeah!
And a little bit more of what we had
goin' on there, yea? Please?

JANEY

Ha! We'll see about that, big shot.

Janey slides over to a cooler full of beer.

Tommy, still hunting for attention, sneaks up from behind to grab her by the waist with hopeful enthusiasm.

He places kisses along her neck.

JANEY (cont'd)

Hey Hey! Time out!

Tommy lets her go, and she spins around to face him.

Janey grins, devilishly, and puts a cold can to his cheek.

TOMMY

Ow! That's not fair!

Tommy jerks back, and Janey giggles while holding her makeshift torture device between them. She taunts him.

He grabs the beer seeming embarrassed, but undaunted.

He POPS it open to take a long swig with Janey watching him, but can't get it all down, and chokes.

She opens her own beer, places it to her trembling lips with a spark of challenge in her eyes, and inhales it.

As she lowers her arm, finished, beer suds flying everywhere, she laughs, and they look each other up and down.

Tommy goes back to their blanket campsite with a hint that she follow, but she doesn't move. He goes on alone.

Janey takes in the night before returning. She feels the cold chill of the air, and shivers. Behind her beckons the warm, dancing light of the fire, which is obscured by dark trees.

She checks over her shoulder at Tommy and the others, watching the revelry taking place in silhouette, beyond.

Janey finds herself uninterested, smirking.

She BURPS in a way only a woman can, with a graceful bounce.

Tommy is about to call her back when she heads his way.

She approaches, comes to a stop, and rears up with an idea. Janey CLAPS her hands together with a giggle before telling.

JANEY

I know! Let's take a walk in the woods,
Tommy! Come on!

He shoots her a strong look, playing serious and wounded.

TOMMY

Aw, no way! You serious? But you got me
all... hot, you know?

She shakes her head.

JANEY

I can get you all 'hot' again, after.
(beat)
Dude! Come on!

Janey trots toward the tree line as Tommy is picking himself up to follow after her. She giggles as she moves further into the dark cavern of tree-covered night.

Tommy remains in anxious pursuit of his girlfriend.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The woods are dark and heavy with growth.

Tommy catches up to Janey as she slows to a stop before him, grabbing for one of her petite, waiting shoulders.

TOMMY

Gotcha! No more playin' hard to get,
little girl! Now, come on.

Janey turns to him with a predatory smile, and they kiss.

Tommy places soft kisses all over, and she closes her eyes.

A twig SNAPS somewhere behind them.

Hearing this, Janey's eyes shoot through the darkness in a vain attempt to find a source. There is no bearing on the sound. She attempts to push Tommy back as he holds her tight.

JANEY

Hey, did you hear that?

TOMMY

No, but can you feel this!?

Janey struggles to pull free of his groping hands.

JANEY

Cut it out! I'm serious!

Seeing that she is startled, and not joking, he considers where they are. After a thought, he lets her go to have a look around. He circles, but catches no sign of danger.

TOMMY

Uhm.

Janey peers from shadow to shadow, still unsettled.

JANEY

Do you feel that?

He doesn't notice, or answer, as bushes move in the breeze.

JANEY (cont'd)

Let's get out of here. I'm sorry! We should really just go now.

In charge, Janey takes off without waiting for his response. Tommy takes a few hesitant steps, then follows once more.

TOMMY

Come on!

(muttering to self)

Makin' me work.

(shouting)

I've been waiting pretty good I think!

Hey babe?!

Janey steps faster as she feels watching eyes upon her.

Tommy is trailing behind.

TOMMY (cont'd)

Janey? Slow down! There's nothing here.

Janey is almost in the clear as black claws reach down to snatch Tommy from behind. He is wrenched up in a violent tug, and pulled quickly from sight into the forest's cover.

It happens too fast to make out his short-lived GASP.

In front, Janey takes no notice.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Janey emerges from the trees to startle a couple hanging by the edge of camp. She keeps going towards the fire.

Turning around to check, she continues to walk backwards until tripping over another friend, BEN, by the fire.

BEN

Hey! Janey, you okay?

JANEY

Where's Tommy?!

BEN

I thought he was with you?

She paces in a tight, nervous circle.

JANEY

I swear, he was just behind me.

She dabs something dark, sticky, and wet from her hair, considering it as Ben tries to help her.

BEN

Oh, he probably just had to, uh...

Tommy's mutilated body spins through the air into the fire. It BURSTS when it hits, sparks flying everywhere.

People jump at first, but as recognition sets in, one girl begins to SHRIEK with animalistic horror. The rest drunkenly get to their feet, stumbling in unprepared panic.

Their eyes remain locked on Tommy's.

They move in chaotic unison, pushing into themselves first one way, then the other, and try to run toward the pathway.

A monstrous BLACK FORM leaps from the trees to land upon the lead runner's back. At this, all are exchanging SCREAMS of terror, shock, and unwanted adrenaline.

They back-pedal. A girl is accidentally shoved into the bonfire. Her hoody ignites, and in agony, she stumbles further to trip three guys who try to get around.

The shadowy brute drives two vicious strikes through his first victim in a sucking chest-wound SPRAY of blood.

As it moves on, it extends a blurred claw one way to scissor the legs from another stunned girl, while throwing its body at the three drunks still flailing on the ground.

Janey and Ben, going the opposite way first, head around the carnage to try to make it to safety. The large hairy form descends upon the trio of guys who have fallen before it.

It TEARS the heads off of two, ripping them one at a time.

Taking the third by the foot, the unknown attacker swings the kid up and around to bash his spine in half over the hood of a nearby truck, making a WHUMP-SNAP sound, and a dent.

Low, guttural PURRING emanates from the lethal form before it darts away, taking impossible strides to chase down the rest. They WAIL in terror, not fast enough.

It keeps its momentum, murdering one fleeing man, then the next girl, a third, and then a fourth, who it guts and flings into the bushes still SQUEALING in agony.

The attack continues.

CUT TO:

EXT. PATH - NIGHT

The path is thick and sandy, with tall grass on either side. There is no other clear route to the parking area.

Ben and Janey are sprinting as the creature finishes the last person from the clearing behind them. They push on faster.

Ben gets well in front of Janey, going full speed to his car. It is parked just beyond the others, nearest to the road.

JANEY

No Ben! Please wait! Please!

BEN

Oh! Oh! Oh?! Fuck You!

JANEY

Ben, wait!

Janey turns to see if the monster is still in chase.

Heavy, rhythmic TRUDGING intensifies. Claws menace through the darkness towards her, but she can't gain speed.

Janey is hit from behind and knocked into a patch of grass. She CRIES out from the pain and blood splashing around.

Hurt, she pulls her head above the weeds to see the muscular creature double around angrily, and bare its horrid fangs.

It lunges and ends her life, ripping at her throat until silencing the bloody DEATH-RATTLE.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING AREA - NIGHT

Several cars are parked on the grassy area by the road.

Ben passes a number until slamming head-long into his own, then ruffles through his pockets for his keys. He opens the door and jumps into the driver's seat, SLAMMING it closed.

Ben fumbles while trying to put the keys into the ignition, but drops them on the floor. He takes a frightened look down, then checks back outside with a GASP.

The beast is moving full speed his way, emerging from the darkness. Ben tries to react as the form looms closer, faster, until reaching the vulnerable little car.

WHAM! It flips with massive force to land yards away, sliding upside-down in an unnatural, crumpled heap.

Ben is stunned and crying as he tries to escape from his mangled vehicle, but there is no escaping the shadow outside.

The side-window SHATTERS, and two powerful arms reach ferociously in to pull Ben's legs out from behind him.

Ben YELLS in terror, and clings to his car seat for life.

The claws rip him away with such force that he takes a piece of the seat-cushion with him, still held firmly in his grasp.

Only the silence of the night remains.

CUT TO:

TITLE SEQUENCE ANIMATION:

FADE IN:

EXT. CAMPFIRE REMAINS - PRE-DAWN

CORONER'S ASSISTANTS pull back the sheet covering a recently mutilated victim. They note that the young man appears to have been gnawed at by some large, fang-toothed predator.

They shake their heads and shrug their shoulders, leaving the boy's body to tend to other duties. They go left to the entrance of the campsite, which is now growing active.

Crime scene personnel are arriving from all around in response to the massacre found a short time ago.

The dawn is beginning to light up the sky, just slightly.

THE LOCAL SHERIFF steps into the clearing through the tape, coming from the grassy lot by the road and wreckage.

The clean-up operation required seems massive, but they are still trying to pool resources from town. The Sheriff watches the jam of emergency vehicles trying to press into the site.

Continuing on, he walks with a commanding presence, but even amid the grisly scenery he receives mixed glances of awe and mistrust from everyone. They all give him space when passing.

Very few try to greet him, coolly, then move on.

The Sheriff approaches one of his best, most senior vets, Deputy Lieutenant BOBBY CLARK, tall and lanky, but clean-cut.

SHERIFF

Morning, Bobby!

BOBBY

Sheriff. Had a trucker report this one when he saw the wreckage just driving by, as usual, but he's damn near useless, 'sides that. Christ all mighty, Sheriff. What the hell could have done this?

DR. STEVE JANSEN, the Chief Medical Examiner for the county, hurries up to them. He begins with barely contained shock.

JANSEN

Good morning, Sheriff. Bob.

SHERIFF

Morning, Doc. What is this?

JANSEN

Can't say. Appears to have been some kind of animal attack, for sure. There were approximately eight to a dozen people here, so I'm leaning towards...

BOBBY

Woah, woah. What do you mean, eight to a dozen? Is it eight? Ten? A Dozen?!

JANSEN

Well Bob, we just. Well, we just can't account for all the parts, frankly. Maybe if we could, ah. Maybe if we could find some of their teeth out there.

BOBBY

Shit!

SHERIFF

No way we're doing any of that 'til the dogs show up.

JANSEN

Yeah. We did find several long hairs and collected just as many blood samples as we could find out there. We'll know more soon, but I don't see any black bear alone going so crazy, so fast. It's as if it had to be several large animals, but then again.

BOBBY

Maybe psychopaths dressing up?
(to himself)
God-damn *had* to be!

The youngest man in the department, GLEN, comes jogging up. He is shaking, sweating, and panting, nerves going wild.

GLEN

Sirs! Sirs!
(beat)
Oh! We just saw. We just. One of the victims is Barry Hogan? He's down in the bushes back there. This must have been his goin-away party folks was talking about throwin' him for the Coast Guard.

The other men all look shaken by the news, frowning grimly.

GLEN (cont'd)

Jason found him all ate up lookin'. I spoke to Barry just yesterday. My God, Sheriff! These people were friends.

SHERIFF

I know, Glen. We... Heh.

The Sheriff looks at a pile of body parts under sheets.

He faces away from the others.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

Where're those damn dogs?

BOBBY

It's okay, Glen. We'll let the Sergeant take the rest of the day off, or escort the evidence today or something.

The Doctor stands and holds up a finger.

JANSEN

Oh! Sheriff, ahem. There's, ah, more I need you to see. Right this way.

The Sheriff follows after the Doctor.

The men separate from the investigators still combing the site, and go back toward the entrance at a brisk walk.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING AREA - PRE-DAWN

The Sheriff, Deputy Bobby, and Doc Jansen, all move over by the flipped car to examine the mashed-in driver's side door. Handily, the Doctor CLICKS on a small flashlight.

JANSEN

This was no car accident from people trying to flee like we first thought. Whatever attacked them rammed the vehicle, here, and turned it over.

SHERIFF

Impossible. Nothin' out here could *throw* a car like this, unless squirrels are learning how to drive bulldozers now.

Jansen raises a brow as he shakes his head in denial.

JANSEN

I'm just telling you what the evidence points to. Not just that, but look here.

They lean to inspect the interior.

Jansen points out the shredded seat-cushion.

JANSEN (cont'd)

Looks like it also pulled the person who was in here clean out, and took half of the seat with him. No way 'round that.

BOBBY

Crazies could've tied him to the back of another vehicle n' dragged em for kicks.

The Sheriff examines where a person clung to the torn fabric.

There are blood splatters with fingernail imprints embedded into the cushions, and long black hairs in the broken glass.

They stand up when Bobby, not making his point believable, loses their attention as they are interrupted.

GLEN

(BG)

Sheriff! Hey hey, Sheriff! The press is here all ready!

SHERIFF

Before the dogs, again!?! God dammit!

(to bobby)

Hell of a morning, hm?

He kicks up dust.

In the distance, a female reporter and her paunchy cameraman descend the embankment beyond the yellow tape.

She wears a striking violet dress.

THE LOCAL RANGER assigned to guard the scene holds up a hand to halt them. They protest, getting in his face and loudly identifying themselves as media with their press-cards.

The Ranger stares back, unmoved.

Reporter MELANIE JAMES turns her attention to the Sheriff, who is making his way over, leaving Bobby and Doc Jansen to catalog evidence. His movements are full of tension.

MELANIE

Sheriff! You can't keep us in the dark on this one and you know it! Word is it's a blood-bath in there, and what's all this about The Marines?

Behind her, the cameraman, SKIP, is trying to snag a shot.

SHERIFF

This crime scene's barely a few hours old and you want to stomp around all over it, already? Look, until we're certain the area's even secure, you need to remain behind the lines. And it was Coast Guard.

MELANIE

Whatever. When will it be?!

Before the Sheriff can answer, a horn HONKS and the group turns their attention to see the K-9 Unit pull up, driving canted around Melanie's large and inconvenient news van.

The Sheriff is ready to lose his nerve, but forces professionalism while side-stepping the question.

SHERIFF

Look. They're bringing the dogs, now.

DOG HANDLER SIMON walks up to the group about to speak. The Sheriff cuts him off with a motion to follow. He and his GERMAN SHEPHERDS walk by with their heads bowed.

Without warning, the Sheriff backs up to the sleepy Ranger and points to Melanie, who is fuming mad.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

Don't let her through.

Bobby and the Sheriff go hunting.

Melanie looks angrily at the Ranger, who shrugs it off seemingly carefree. Skip shrugs in return, behind her.

Simon is trying to hold his pack steady as they are baying and YELPING, ready to enter the bloody forest.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

Okay. Simon!

Take point and keep them close.

The K-9 Unit, dogs pulling at their leashes, takes lead of the group searching the woods near the kill-ridden campsite.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - SUNRISE

Pistols drawn and on the move, the Sheriff and his Deputies turn off their flashlights. The morning Sun peeks through the trees to illuminate a thin, lazy fog-cover.

The dogs move deeper into the greenery, sniffing all over.

They freeze. Their ears pin back and tails straighten.

SIMON

Got something.

He points a nervous hand in the general direction his dogs are facing. They stand trained to be strong, but gone timid.

The other men make their way through the trees as visibility worsens. There is an area too overgrown to pass through.

The dogs watch as the rest approach in a half-circle.

SIMON (cont'd)

(over shoulder)

They don't ever just alert at nothing.

The trees are silent, and with the exception of the men's breathing, not even animal sounds can be heard.

The dogs are frozen up. They begin to pace back and forth, their collar's JINGLING the first sound to break the silence.

The men train their guns in that direction, eyes darting. They hold their breaths through a long pause.

Suddenly wild, the dogs yank at their leashes, and BARK.

BOBBY

Holy Hell! What's in there!?!

A few of the men's weapons shake in their hands.

As they move forward, they scan for anything.

GLEN

Something's there!

The Sheriff checks in Glen's direction. His eyes bulge with nervous fear, pistol RATTLING in his hands, barely audible.

SHERIFF

Careful, Glen.

Glen pushes further into the thick brush.

With no time to evaluate the threat, there comes a startled YELP of shock as Glen springs back from the tangled cover of overgrowth in a rush of instinct, adrenaline, and fear.

The men almost lose ranks, but hold their fire and search for the threat as trained. Glen continues to scramble away.

Behind him, a huge, clawed arm takes a powerful SWIPE.

On the other end is an enormous BEAR with a human leg held firmly in its mouth. It BELLOWS with anger, and attacks.

Glen, in the way of the other men's shots, attempts to fire his own weapon. BANG! BANG! BANG! Three shots wide to the right. His jaw drops in disbelief and sudden panic.

Bobby steps up to try a shot.

The Sheriff side-steps him, and in one, fluid stride, puts a round through the bear's left eye, then leveling his sights, puts a second under its chin. It topples down with a THUD.

He takes a step back to grimace, after.

Glen walks by, pale and shaken. To the rear, Bobby lets out a WHOOP, and laughs. He holsters his weapon, then holds up a hand to squeeze an imaginary trigger into the air.

He gives a light-hearted smile, having fun at Glen's expense.

BOBBY

We have to work on that trigger pull,
boy! Haha! Squeeze her next time!

He CLAPS Glen on the shoulder as they walk away.

BOBBY (cont'd)

(brotherly)

That was too close.

The Sheriff stares down at the half-eaten leg, dropped where the animal had tried to protect its scavenged meal.

The scene is beginning to attract flies.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - DAWN

A cold mist settles among the ferns and grass of the woods, now silent and empty. The fog is deepening, thick in patches.

One bird CALLS out a repeating song, shrill and empty, hurt, as if longing for a lost mate. The Sun rises fully.

A distance away, branches CRASH and the bird ceases singing. In its place, a pained ROAR turns to a SCREAM of agony.

Only silence for a sickening moment as everything stills, waiting, until the bird begins its sad song once more.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING AREA - DAWN

The Sheriff and the search party stand around a petrified Deputy Glen, who is sitting on the hood of a squad car, wrapped in a blanket and shaking like a child.

Melanie James storms through the tape and past the Ranger, who does little to stop her. She holds her nose high.

Skip tries to keep up while hauling his recording equipment, and most of her's, which he has thrown all over himself, now CLACKING away as he hustles.

She carries her microphone and a cold smirk, only.

MELANIE

Now that you've stalled us long enough,
maybe you can provide us with some
answers as to what has occurred here,
Sheriff!?!

She holds the microphone to her front as she moves.

Skip tries any workable shot he can manage, but Mel stops abruptly when spotting Glen in recovery.

MELANIE (cont'd)

What the hell happened to him?

SHERIFF

Bear.

MELANIE

A bear? Are you saying a bear's connected
to what happened here last night?

The Sheriff says nothing.

BOBBY

He's saying a bear just dropped by to
check on all the funny smells outside.
And Glen here.

Bobby tugs on the blanket Glen is holding in a death-grip. Glen pulls it even tighter, now aggravated.

The Sheriff's face knots up, a furrow in his brow.

SHERIFF

You're just gonna have to wait, Mel.

The men look away as a small number of civilians gather around the police line, pulled from their normal routines to gawk at the unusual amount of activity taking place.

They gather on a hill beyond the tape to enjoy the drama.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - DAY

The department is run-down from years of police work.

It is dreary and damp looking with its old dark wood finish, which glistens beneath weak interior lighting. Yellow bulbs HUM, not replaced from years of neglect and a low budget.

The rare modern touches come from random personal items found scattered throughout the small cubicle spaces.

Worsening the decoration is a sickly greenish hue, which glows where someone installed the wrong colored tint to a portion of the building's opaque exterior windows.

The stronger light shines through softly circulating dust motes, around corners, and into paper filled cubby holes.

Central to the many side halls, labs, and the county lock-up, are the department's bullpen and meeting areas. These spaces constitute the bulk of the ancient structure's floor area.

The staff are at half-shift.

The few people not glued to desks, in toil, move between dark corners while passing files to one another, in whispers.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

The Sheriff is standing by his desk regarding his half-empty bookshelf. The workspace is separated from the bullpen by decor only, with low-sitting cabinets and a flimsy divider.

A steady CLAMOR flows from the rest of the office, which is now being flooded with calls and evidence to sort through.

On the shelf, a few books on criminology lean to one side, but most of the space has been taken by personal favorites.

His eyes linger while browsing them. An antique phone RINGS from another part of the building, in BG.

He keeps his eyes on the shelf until the fourth, piercing RING of the telephone shakes him from of his deep musing.

The Sheriff slides his hip around the corner of his large brown desk. On it, everything has been pushed to the sides in a poor attempt to reorganize. A photo rests at its center.

It is of Ben's car after the attack.

He smooths his uniform before sitting. It has been pressed with haste, but has a clean, cared-for look. The brass and fabric gleam in stark contrast to the dismal surroundings.

After settling himself, he calls over the divider.

SHERIFF

How we doin' Mary!?

MARY HENDERSON, the county's long-time secretary, raises her shrill voice as she ends the abrupt phone call. It goes CLANG when she slams it, then SHUFFLES a mass of papers.

Mary flings the door wide, leaning through the old entryway. It is nothing more than a nice frame nailed down between cabinets, and tilts under the weight of her thick hands.

Stretching in, Mary seems to tower over the Sheriff. She just about matches the decor in every way. He peers up at her.

MARY

What?!

SHERIFF

(sadly)

Just keep them at bay until we've put anything like a case together, at all.

MARY

Somebody's in the interview room to see you. I can't chat. These people won't stop calling. Buncha morons!

She SLAMS the door, leaving. She continues to her desk, sitting with little regard for her space, or anyone's.

MARY (BG) (cont'd)

As if we don't have anything better to do than listen to their dumbass opinions?

As she SCOOTs her chair in, the harsh sound claws over the barricades that constitute his office in mean, little bursts. The shelves sway, roughly, BUMPED from her side.

The Sheriff rearranges his own papers.

He pulls one out to look at more carefully, but once engrossed, finds himself snapped back to reality by another RINGING telephone in BG. It CLATTERS up in impatient hands.

MARY (BG) (cont'd)

Hello?! Ugh.

The Sheriff winces and sighs to himself.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - DAY

Past a sulking Mary's desk, the Sheriff enters the bullpen, where the bulk of on-duty staff remain busy. Over all, above, most are gazing down and going myopic over paperwork.

A man TAPS an empty water-cooler while passing the lowest row of disorganized stations. The sound drums hollow along with the office's meandering pace, as the work continues flowing.

The only to stand apart are a small group gathered around the top of the room, who give condolences to a grieving, tired, Sergeant JASON CAMPBELL. He is holding back fresh tears.

Radiating purpose, the Sheriff marches his way down the central aisle and out through a pair of double-doors.

Light spills in, then fades away.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

The department's interview room is cramped and painted a dull hospital yellow meant to soothe the criminal mind.

It is furnished with the expected mirror wall, restraints, table and chairs. On left, Melanie James sits with her legs crossed, and waits in quiet frustration for her meeting.

The Sheriff enters, CLICKING the heavy door closed, softly. He appears somehow diminished while in the room with her.

During their time the two rarely meet glances. They struggle through vain attempts to look anywhere else, instead. Ending this, Melanie finally forces a stare-down with the Sheriff.

She's standing. Her dress is the lightest, silkiest violet.

The Sheriff remains quiet, spying her. His eyes go up and down, pained and searching, until they find the other chair.

He carefully moves over to it, and pulls it out to seat himself, but chooses to remain where he is standing.

Believing she has read him, with a breath, she speaks.

MELANIE

I'm sorry for how I can be.

He looks at her for any sign of intention as he sits. She holds, his chair settling itself with a CREAK. Mel is easily unnerved and annoyed, but continues.

MELANIE (cont'd)

I know how I can be.

They are separated by oceans across the table.

Melanie remains standing, self-assured. She looks down at him with her high-heels planted, and hip cocked in his direction.

In spite of her confident stature, however, she bares an aspect of pity, if only slight, when sitting down, herself.

The Sheriff's hands clasp together in his lap. He scrutinizes every inch of them while blinking, and tries to smile, but just smirks pathetically, and looks away.

SHERIFF

Yeah.

He manages to really smile, finally, a mere flash, but quickly folds his arms. There is no room for emotion.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

You know, my dad said.

MELANIE

(coldly interrupting)

I know all your dad stories, man.

She puts a photograph on the table. The Sheriff frowns. Considering as he does so, he reaches a hand out to take it. It SLIDES across the table, crisp and newly printed.

He picks it up with a SNAP, and looks troubled to find an exact copy of his own from his office. He shakes, lightly.

She leans forward, keeping her eyes locked with his. A pained, confused expression creases his aging face.

SHERIFF

We don't have anything on this, yet.

MELANIE

What can you give me?

The Sheriff stands his ground.

SHERIFF

Nothing.

Melanie leans further forward.

MELANIE

People are in danger aren't they?

SHERIFF

Yeah. That's why we don't do business
this way. At all.

MELANIE

But this one's different. You know it.

The Sheriff closes up, and doesn't say another word.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE - DAY

The Sun has risen to mid-morning over a small, pristine lake. The woods all around look beautiful, stretching out.

A MAN emerges from the crystalline water, leaving a pink cloud floating to his rear. He appears gaunt, but strong.

To his front by the tree-line, a set of wet clothes are spread and hung to dry. They are of the day's fashion.

He strolls over to a tree on the left, hugs it, and rubs into it shoulder first. He turns his back to scratch every inch, turns again, and covers the other shoulder.

He shakes himself hard, muscles flaring as he goes, then takes long, calming strides while reaching for the sky.

The Man stops there to dry in the Sun. He takes an enormous breath as he lowers his arms and shakes out his hands.

He works his lips and gums around, moving his tongue across his teeth in an apparent attempt to find them. He lifts a hand to pull a loose, fang-like tooth from his mouth.

He lolls along the last few paces, working his tight neck, and ponders the fresh, bloody-white canine.

The Man finishes finding himself with a few hard blinks, then turns to a surprise guest. When he sees him, the Man's face slackens in mimicry of the mutilated teenager, nearby.

Ben's corpse lies aslant with its neck broken, just a blood-soaked mess against the far side of the clothes-drying tree.

Its mouth is open. The tongue has been removed. To the side, other teeth of various qualities, shapes, and sizes have all been set out in a neat row along a rotting stump.

The Man allows his face to recall the teen's dying moments. He plays to an unseen crowd for fun's sake, then leaves, remembering to bring the teeth with a small flash of grace.

He darts back to grab the clothes, then goes to leave again with a genuine laugh to himself, the woods, and Ben's body.

CUT TO:

EXT. RV CAMP - AFTERNOON

To the front of the open lands that surround the town, and make up much of the county, a portion of the forest has been cleared to make room for an RV park, and the tourists.

It sits apart, lazily, at about a third of its capacity.

The tiny sprawl is filled with tents, RV's, tables, and grills, with an assortment of people who amble around.

The Man's teeth bare as he makes his way along the winding path to his own camp. He keeps a distance from the strangers.

He buttons the stolen shirt as he strolls, and once finished, searches all of the pockets for the late owner's wallet.

The Man wriggles it out and opens it. His face is a blank as he regards the license. The name reads BENJAMIN TOMLINSON.

He looks at it, blinking with the Sun in his eyes as he finds a trash barrel. He hangs over the rim and remains still. The Man smiles - a bit at first, then bright and wide.

He takes the ample amount of cash from the wallet to pocket for himself. With an outstretched arm, he drops the wallet into the barrel where it ceases to exist.

He completes his long, meandering walk to the next campsite, and finds his old '72 Winnebago RV with red stripes.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MAN'S RV - AFTERNOON

Inside his used, but immaculately well-kept and scentless RV, the Man saddles into the comfortably springy driver's seat.

He looks down and over at a small, invisible passenger with him in the front seat, and shows it love. Nothing is there.

He continues to look at it.

The front of the RV's old tape player has a wooden finish, with two big knobs separated by thick, aging buttons.

A hand reaches to turn the dial to 'on' and crank the volume up as the song "Nature Boy" by Grace Slick begins.

He beams across the large steering wheel. Calmed, the Man dons dark sunglasses and REVS the old engine. He SNAPS a finger, then points to the waiting road.

CUT TO:

EXT. RV PARK - AFTERNOON

The Man's little RV GROWLS away from the campsite. He takes his time in leaving, prowling to the exit.

He gains speed along the road that leads from the deep wilderness and out through the last of the campgrounds.

When he reaches the edge of the park area, he swings right, slides around the corner, and zooms off with his music high.

A few angered by it look disgusted and shake their heads. Most, however, don't care where he goes, and don't watch.

CUT TO:

EXT. LONG ROAD - SUNNY AFTERNOON

The Man's old Winnebago crosses an endless landscape of grass and trees, which stretch out gloriously under a golden Sun.

It follows the long and winding road in graceful arcs.

Light gleams the RV's metal as its wheels spin.

From outside the window, the Man's collared-shirt is loose to allow the breeze in. He stretches outward to view the sky. The Man smiles into the wind, and continues.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MAN'S RV - SUNNY AFTERNOON

Inside of his RV, the Man straightens up as something catches his eye to his right. He checks his seat-belt, twice, and places both hands on the wheel while checking his mirrors.

As he begins to veer from the road, a sign passes by the window announcing a pleasant outdoor mall.

The lawn is manicured. The big bushes are trimmed and shaped with walkways made of fake cobblestone around the perimeter.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTDOOR MALL - SUNNY AFTERNOON

The outdoor mall is an upgrade from outdated strip-mall.

It has all of the same places and things in a row, but is polished with an aesthetic finish. The Man idles for a space.

He chooses a lonely parking spot in a tucked away corner, ensuring that no one may park on his driver's side.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MAN'S RV - SUNNY AFTERNOON

The Man is no longer happy.

He is rocking in his seat and staring at the wheel.

He tenses his hard muscles, drawing his hands together between his legs with stress. He grinds his knees and jaw.

His hands move to his temples to rub them. Sitting up fast, suddenly, he darts a hand to his mouth and removes a dead tooth that he has been sucking on like a piece of candy.

The Man places it on the passenger seat, sticky and wet.

He draws back as if from a snake, performs a happily realistic grimace, and exits with his eyes on the tooth.

He gives it a brightly renewed smile, and gets out.

CUT TO:

EXT. PET STORE FRONT - SUNNY AFTERNOON

Signs for every sort of animal someone could think of cover the front of a delightfully fun-filled Pet Store.

The Man stiff-arms another out of the way to get in.

An unknown time later, the Man exits looking refreshed.

CUT TO:

INT. PRETZEL SHOP - SUNNY AFTERNOON

The Man enjoys a fine, gourmet pretzel - the big, doughy, salty kind - while seated on a tall stool, facing out.

He takes a bite as others in the shop go about their days.

He sighs out of the window, and chews.

CUT TO:

INT. BOOKSTORE - SUNNY AFTERNOON

The Man bounds down the aisle of a retail Bookstore.

All around are rows of books, chairs, and yuppies browsing.

A YOUNG WOMAN at the end of the Man's aisle picks out a book, and holds it up to flip through. The Man approaches.

He stands himself beside her, and after regarding her space, places a hand on her shoulder, extends his reach side-ways, and presses her against one of the shelves.

She hardly reacts, but looks at him, and as he applies the gentlest of hand pressure away from himself, she slips from his grasp, cat-like, and steps nimbly out of the store.

Refocusing, he selects one of his favorite books to thumb. The Man smiles, and rears back with a silent laugh.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTDOOR ICE CREAM SHOP - RAINY AFTERNOON

The Man stands under cover by the window of a charming, franchise Ice-Cream Shop, and is trying to avoid a light afternoon rain beginning to drizzle from an overcast sky.

He is eating a mountainous vanilla and chocolate swirl, sprinkles spaced perfectly on top, as rainwater PATTERS a steady song at his feet. He enjoys the treat, and moment.

A woman in a violet dress goes gently by, her hips swaying. He sniffs the air in reaction. His body lists as his heart-rate increases. The Man becomes stilled by awe.

He hides his actions by analyzing one, long, shallow breath. The Man catches something that makes him go wide-eyed, his world shrinking to small and meaningless around him.

He reaches a hand up to scratch his neck, not thinking, using a light touch. He takes a lick of his ice cream, but grows sinister and cold to the taste of it.

He opens a trash can and SLAMS the rest into blackness.

CUT TO:

INT. EVIDENCE ROOM - RAINY AFTERNOON

There is only darkness for a few, long, still seconds.

Muffled VOICES approach from another room.

BOBBY
(inaudibly)
... Such long legs.

They halt their conversation mid-way, and search for keys. There is a RATTLE, a CLINKING dropped key-ring, then success.

A door opens with a rough CREAK. The keys JINGLE up, then go back into a pocket. A man CLEARS his throat, pauses, and comes SHUFFLING into the space, going right from center.

A second set of FOOTSTEPS enters as the first becomes agitated from PAWING at the walls for an elusive switch.

The hand finds its mark, and on POP the lights to fill the room with a dull, navy-blue and white; terrible blue paint.

Weak lights, they continue to shimmer with a lingering BUZZ, are badly connected, and do little to help the seclusion.

At the far end of a narrow aisle of yellowing, labeled boxes, the Sheriff and Deputy Bobby stand to either side of the room's entrance. There is a darker hall outside, leading up.

The evidence storage room is located at the ground level. Little from above ever reaches it, and few people here ever visit the old cases which are left to gather dust, instead.

The men look over the drab, industrialized surroundings.

They remove a single box from a shelf in the corner, set it in the middle of a table, open it, and place the beat-up old lid aside with a dry card-board CLATTER.

They pull specific files from the decomposing container, along with a number of paper-bagged items, and re-seal it.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIEFING AREA - RAINY AFTERNOON

The setting Sun shines through thinning rain clouds, and with the office bullpen's ugly windows flung open, light fills the room with a cool blue-gray hue that drapes over everything.

A light, rainy mist settles in the room after the sun-shower. There is thick, dark greenery outside, too, and as the last raindrops PATTERN down, leaves sway in a playful dance.

The briefing room set-up is not unlike the Sheriff's office, except, the wood railings and furniture that divide it from the rest of the bullpen have gaps to pass through, freely.

Anyone in the main part of the station can look over at the briefing desks to watch the Sheriff and his Deputy pour over medical reports, lab findings, and suspect lists.

It takes up the area around one of the building's two main support beams, and is designed by the Sheriff for efficiency.

Its area is large enough to hold about fifteen people near the central beam, on which is fashioned a wrap-around table.

There is a bulletin board to one side full of wanted posters and evidence photos, with a scribble covered white-board for presentations that takes up the opposite side.

People come and go with their collars open to the heat, looking depressed, tired, and damp. They mingle, then leave.

Two men and a woman pass by on their way to view an online video a friend is beckoning them to the far side to watch. They stand and giggle together as it quietly plays.

It is striking how the Sheriff manages to keep his uniform so neat, pressed, and of such rich color, when everyone else in the building sags from the lukewarm humidity seeping through.

The Sheriff and Bobby have everything they need to try to gain an overall perspective of the case. Every essential piece gathered has been organized into a wide layout.

Of the many papers around, the suspect list is the smallest. Bags of physical evidence are lined up in rows, nearby.

The photos from the recent crime-scene in the woods are spread on the board, juxtaposed to many others.

Some are terrible, gruesome, and bloody. Still, one person has put a joke-picture found on the internet overtop of a killer's mug-shot using a red, ladybug-shaped thumbtack.

The two men stand back from the table to contemplate it.

They take glances at each other for hints and options.

The Sheriff pulls a plastic bag from the table.

He holds it up between them to inspect the tuft of dark hair contained inside. It is matted with dirt and glass.

Deputy Bobby leers at him through the baggy.

BOBBY

So, what happened back there?

The Sheriff frowns at the question.

SHERIFF

It doesn't even matter.

He THUMPS the bag of strange fur back down onto the table. Deputy Bobby patiently awaits an answer.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

I don't know. Back and forth, forever?
You want me to be focused on this - Why
bring that up? We can't even make sense
of what's right in front of our noses.

He trails off, back to pondering the case.

Bobby mulls it over in the corner, and adds a thought.

BOBBY

Don't want to think about tomorrow.

Deputy Recruit ANTONIO GARCIA whips through the entry in a hurry. Panting and hot, he catches his senior's attention.

ANTONIO

You guys, did you hear? I'm supposed to
tell you, that, they just found another
(MORE)

ANTONIO (cont'd)
body about three miles East of the fire.
(beat)
It's got no teeth!

Antonio chuckles a little at the thought. His hair is damp, dark, and glistens, sweating from the stuffy room.

Over his shoulder, as in each corner of the room, an ancient fan slowly circulates, but fails to move any air around.

The Sheriff and Bobby size him up, annoyed.

Antonio remembers something.

ANTONIO (cont'd)
Oh, and they asked me to see if you guys
got the lab reports yet? Like, those
weird ones?

He looks at them with hope, and waits for any response.

SHERIFF
Yeah, son. Go tell him those
inconsistencies he mentioned match with a
search Bobby did. Pulled an old case from
back before they ever even heard of DNA.

After sweeping his arms across the evidence, and believing he has made the point clear, he takes another look at Antonio.

Deputy Antonio rocks on nervous heels and toes.

SHERIFF (cont'd)
And I'll catch up with him later.

Antonio nods his approval.

ANTONIO
Okay!

Antonio Garcia wanders away and mixes back into the crowd. Bobby has remained propped against a desk to take in the exchange with humorous contempt, and a grin.

BOBBY

Go team?

The Sheriff lets out a small, reflexive chuckle.

BOBBY (cont'd)

(mockingly)

'You guys?' Man.

He shakes his head

BOBBY (cont'd)

What is it about those teeth, though?
Told you it was crazies, probably all
dressed up. Just some back-woods freaks
with chain-saws and machetes.

Bobby lets that sink in. The Sheriff compares new notes to old. Bobby goes to take his leave, but pauses.

BOBBY (cont'd)

Oh, and let her go, man. Sorry.

Facing away from Bobby, he winces, then recovers.

The Sheriff holds up an old photograph to consider.

Bobby leaves, finally. The Sheriff takes a closer look at the image in his hand, and renews his inspection.

The scene from the photo depicts an ancient trolley car used to tour the old downtown circle that has been violently pushed onto its side in a flooded-over ditch.

Far away in the black and white greenery rests a human leg.

He squints, purses his lips until they whiten, and wishes the errant limb not connect with anything, at present.

Holding it out and away from his face, he forces himself to act on impulse, and sets the picture back down.

As he goes to leave, himself, he checks over his shoulder. Deputy Glen is huddled comfortably in BG, and still wrapped in his blanket to the far side of the bullpen.

He is lounging between two chairs, watching the animation "Ponyo" by Miyazaki on a small vintage television set.

The Sheriff hums along as it nears its end, while leaving.

CUT TO:

EXT. COFFEE PLACE - EVENING

The world around the comfortable, umbrella speckled deck of a cozy local Coffee Shop, is soaked with rain and mist-covered. Only a few DRIPS drop here and there.

The clouds maintain their blueish cast, blowing gently by.
BG: On the horizon, the storm recedes away.

Melanie James sits at one of the outdoor tables set by the edge of a railing that surrounds the patio section.

She appears lovely in her violet-blue dress, and silly, sipping coffee from the largest sized cup available.

The lid dribbles a little with every taste.

In one careless sip a splash of coffee lands on the newspaper that she has splayed across the table in front of herself. One of the obscured headlines mentions killings.

She pays no attention to news. She scans for hints about stories, steals, and writes lines on a note pad.

After scribbling a thought she double-checks herself, and finds that she has indeed stained her dress while working.

In the distant BG: Hidden from view, an eye peeks out from behind well chosen cover. No one is meant to see it back.

CUT TO:

EXT. COFFEE PLACE ENTRANCE - EVENING

Melanie casually strolls to the front doors of the little Coffee Shop from her table, edging her way through.

The air conditioning is frigid, blasting from the entrance. Its chill stings Melanie as she enters, ruffling her dress.

An entry bell CHIMES a welcome to her.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE PLACE LADY'S ROOM - EVENING

The lady's room is pink, bright, and florescent.

With her purse on the sink, Melanie splashes water around the stain on her dress. She tries to blend it in, but fails.

She gets a paper towel that resists her with its TEARING.

Mel looks at her yellowing teeth in the mirror, hidden under beautiful, luscious, soft lips. She keeps checking herself.

CUT TO:

EXT. COFFEE PLACE - EVENING

Melanie paces back over to her table through the pinkish haze of a sunset after rainfall. The air brightens as she comes.

She adjusts a loose heel on her way.

To her side, she betrays a curt glance at a pair of older men who have set trash cans nearby for some improv street jazz. They keep it low, mellow, and strange.

Only feet from the table, her phone BEEPS.

She is receiving an incoming call from Skip. Mel rolls her eyes at the screen, silencing it without hesitation.

Still vibrating, she mashes the "End" button repeatedly, and performs a little show for the men who watch her, discretely, but don't hide it. Some men can't stop glancing for anything.

She sits at her table exuding grace and class. After a moment of brooding and twirling her hair, she straightens her back to give a friendly welcome to someone approaching.

MELANIE

Glen! Hi!

Wearing plain clothes, Deputy Glen sits across the table from Melanie. He smiles back, embarrassed. She bats her eyes at him, understanding, and grins as she lifts her drink.

GLEN

(sheepishly)

Hey. I see you already almost finished your coffee, huh?

He smiles with real admiration for her as she lifts the tall cup to take a sip, and shows its contents nearing the bottom through the paper in the light. She grins around the lid.

Setting her coffee back down, after a thought, she finishes the pleasantries with a final fake smile of her own.

MELANIE

I ended up getting out of that meeting early. Didn't feel like waiting. Nothing but BS to do here, you know?

GLEN

Oh wow. Yeah, I.

MELANIE

Oh! Before you forget!

She returns to being friendly with him.

MELANIE (cont'd)

Did you bring me all the stuff I needed? I could use it, now. Quickly.

GLEN

Well, yeah! I wouldn't forget about you.

MELANIE

Good, because you know the Sheriff just wants this spotlight for himself, as always. Ha! He's too obvious.

Glen returns with a dull chuckle.

He leans and removes a set of folders from a large, tacky shopping bag, which he carries for no other reason than its capacity. He also pulls out a goofy straw cowboy hat.

As he does so, Melanie turns to the men who are drumming. They're good. One looks up as if expecting a tip. She puts a fist to her mouth, tongue in cheek, and blows them off.

Her eyes are cold and dead as she does so, which shocks them, but they play through the rude distraction.

Glen is ready, finally, and grabs her attention.

GLEN

Yeah! Hey look! I picked this up over there. It'nt it sweet?

He puts on his new hat to gain a reaction.

It has a button brandishing a confederate flag with the word "Fuckhead," written cross-ways in ink, to deface it.

She gives nothing.

Melanie opens the file for a cursory browse.

She stands up, snatching her purse and folder under one arm, then grabs what is left of the coffee with her free hand.

In haste, moving on, she reaches down to adjust her dress after getting up, using one tricky motion.

MELANIE

Thanks Glen. I'll see ya.

His lower lip droops down, going limp as she walks away.

She steps gingerly in her violet-blue dress to the exit.

CUT TO:

EXT. COFFEE PLACE PARKING - HAZY SUNSET

Melanie halts by a trash-can while leaving the Coffee Shop. She holds the cup high to finish the final drops.

Something RATTLES at the base of her cup, and she stops before tossing it away. Mel opens the lid a crack, then off, and peers down to its bottom.

A human molar sits among the last drops of coffee.

Melanie's face twists with denial, shock, and disgust.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - SUNSET

The interior of the Sheriff's office glows a faint orange-red now that the rain clouds have finally evaporated away.

The sunset's light creeps into the wet and dreary building.

The Sheriff stands by his desk to stretch as he looks over an assortment of papers. He is holding a tape-recorder ready.

He strides over to the open window, stops short a few paces, and sighs to himself while gazing out.

With a practiced touch, he presses record, then speaks.

SHERIFF

(dictating)

County Sheriff's Daily Report. A homicide investigation is under-way. Our first in over a year. Tourism is affected by the park lands, but the city is keeping out for now to catch the runoff of people and media. We have teams on it, and collected all the evidence we could get from the scene. Eighteen hours, since.

Having the lab cross-check samples taken from the scene with ones from a cold case. We may have something, or we may have nothing, but there are now two camps on whether it was just animal, or humans playing animal.

The Sheriff presses pause and lowers the recorder, exhausted. He ambles back to his worn-out old desk.

He continues to dictate his report, unsure of what to note, and sits heavily in his comfortable chair.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

I don't know what I think yet.

He presses stop.

The Sheriff reaches behind him to a secret spot, and slides out a mid-sized box packed to almost full with small, dust-covered tapes. They are organized in neat rows.

He leans back, slides the fresh cassette into place, then returns the box to its cubby hole under the shelves. Finished, he turns around and sits to attention.

After a moment of waiting, far off on the other side of the building, some anonymous jerk shouts a slight towards him.

UNKNOWN (BG)

Nerd!

There is LAUGHTER in BG.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE - SUNSET

The Sun is setting over a rural road which leads to the outskirts of the more populated parts of the county.

The Man's RV is parked to one side on the grass.

He is urinating on his own back fender and proud of it, though no one else is around to catch him.

Once satisfied, he strolls back around to the driver's side. The Man swings the door open, and slides in.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MAN'S RV -SUNSET

Back inside his RV, the Man puts his driving glasses on, starts the engine, and returns to the lonely road.

CUT TO:

EXT. LONG ROAD - SUNSET

The Sun has almost disappeared as John Coltrane's, "Ole," begins playing softly on the Man's radio.

The road the Man follows is long and straight, cutting a line through the forest and farmland. What turns it takes are shallow, and the road itself is endless seeming.

The Man's RV is a speck, by contrast, ROARING down the road.

CUT TO:

EXT. RED LIGHT DISTRICT - TWILIGHT

The town has set what makes up its small red-light district far away at its edge. The road runs through its middle, where the Man's RV is on the approach to the strip, going up it.

Sex-stores, bars, eateries, gas-stations, and gambling houses line either side. They are lit with cheap neon.

The Sun has gone to let the night begin.

The Man drives in search of a place with the least number of people and cars. One bar stands apart at the end of the strip to the left, glowing more red than the others.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MAN'S RV - TWILIGHT

The Man grows hopeful as he spots the red-painted bar with motorcycles parked out in front. The sign reads, "Roy's."

Roy's Bar is an All-American classic, and favorite of the hard-core bikers who frequent it. It is sinister looking in the early night, set far apart from the other buildings.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROY'S PARKING - EARLY NIGHT

As the sky goes dark, red neon lights glisten off of the motorcycles and junk-cars. The moon has yet to rise, but the stars twinkle. The Man's dark RV RUMBLES into the dusty lot.

The Man exits, his door CREAKING and SLAMMING, then he crosses the small expanse of dirt to the bar's entrance.

CUT TO:

INT. ROY'S BAR - EARLY NIGHT

The bar is colored blood-red inside, with low set lights, grime everywhere, and little welcome.

The Man steps through the door and walks in. He gives the place a once-over as he strolls with his head held high.

The room boasts a small poker table with two pool tables on the other side of the bar. There are only five patrons tonight, a waitress hiding somewhere, and the BARTENDER.

The five, SID, TRAVIS, JEROME, FOX, and NEAL, sit around the table and are well into their regular game. They aren't part of a larger gang, but a tough and tight-knit clique.

They laugh, play rough, and get drunk.

The waitress, LIZZY, finally grabs a fresh pitcher from the counter where the Bartender is busy cleaning glassware.

The Man steps up to a lonely seat at the bar.

The Bartender ignores him, intent on the mug he is rinsing.

As the waitress drops off the pitcher, in BG, the bikers act sweet to her. They proceed as if she somehow can't resist them, but she continues to play along, flirting away.

LIZZY

Shouldn't ya be home with your wife, Fox?

Fox is the eldest and craziest of the group.

FOX

(resentfully)

Ha! My wife's the scariest thing in this whole damn state! Ain't nuthin' gonna get her. She's unstoppable! 'Sides, she's been dead for like'n ten years, anyhow.

Lizzy looks disgusted, but the other men roar with laughter. Even the Bartender cracks a smile over the tasteless joke.

The men play a hand as the Man takes a seat.

Lizzy heads to a booth after finishing with the men, and sits to watch the TV in the corner. She slumps, her act finished.

Sid and Travis, the big enforcers, eye him as the others continue their game. Fox keeps his attention on Lizzy.

He stares at her wild-eyed, but she only sulks down lower, hand under chin, and continues watching her show.

The Man finally has to signal to the Bartender to come over, but shows no reaction at being ignored for so long.

The Bartender, who had been smiling, sets down the glass mug with an annoyed CLANK to frown at the unwanted newcomer.

He ambles over, but says nothing, raising a questioning eyebrow at the Man, instead.

BARTENDER

What'cha want?

The Man responds by looking at the Bartender as if having never heard a person's voice before, almost frightened.

Remembering, he points to a cheap bottle of scotch.

The Bartender looks the Man over, not sure why he is there, but pours the drink and adds an ice cube to the quarter-filled glass. He slides it into the Man's open hand.

Once prepared, the Bartender goes back to his cleaning, and questions the men at the table to renew their conversation.

BARTENDER (cont'd)

I can't believe that even after those murders you guys still show up to play?

He begins wiping the counter, waiting for a response.

The Man listens, sipping his drink with his eyes down.

Looking at his glass and not liking the taste, he fishes the ice cube out, and puts it in his mouth to chew as if sore.

It makes an audible CRUNCHING as his jaw works.

Neal, the silent leader, takes a hard look over.

Sid speaks his turn.

SID

What? Like some gang of psychos dressed up in wolf-skins/bear-skins, or some shit, are just going to come fuckin' with us? What do you think we are?

JEROME

It was a bear, man.

SID

What!?

JEROME

I'm tellin' you, man. It was a fuckin' family of bears, I heard. And all them little kids, man, was just too close to that honey, all settin' fires'n'shit, and then, PHEWP! Done. Fuck that. I ain't tryin' get near no bear's honey, man. Then, when it was all over, *that's* when the mountain people came. Oh?! Haha!

He looks at his hand more closely. Fox is dumbfounded.

Fox

What the hell'd you *give* him, Sid?

Sid smiles as Jerome wins the hand.

JEROME

I got a... Full house!

Jerome sets his winning hand on the table.

Sid is laughing and pushing away his chips.

Neal looks over to where Fox is being angry, as usual.

Travis adds his one and only thought.

TRAVIS

Whatever it was, animals, enemies, or
outsiders, we could end 'em.

They take turns looking at the Man, and each other.

The Man is sitting at the bar and staring at the wall.
It's stocked with bottles of every kind, but many are empty.
He can see himself in the mirror.

Sid is all out of chips. Travis re-deals as Sid leans back.
He takes a lustful look over at the waitress, then around.

The Man continues to stare into space.

His face is pale and showing the faintest beads of sweat
along his brow. His breathing is shallow. He sits on the
stool holding his drink, ice in mouth, looking statuesque.

The space draws in between them, and it gives the Man pause
to see Sid's eyes liquefy into pus and blood for no apparent
reason, with Sid just sitting there, laughing.

Back behind him in her booth, the waitress's eyes also BURST
all over the tables and walls with a painful gushing.

There is another POP. The Man looks to his left to see the Bartender's eyes have rendered to liquid, running down his face and all over his shirt. The empty sockets keep OOZING.

The Bartender stares back with an unnatural, gaping smile.

The Man goes to take another drink, his hand shaking as he turns around and tries not to watch the others any longer.

Sid, appearing fine and healthy, is staring at the Man.

From his point of view, the Man almost seems unconscious.

Jerome also leans back to watch the Man's discomfort.

His face knots up in worry, paranoid of the strange behavior as he watches the man shake, seeming stiff and awkward.

The others play their game and wait to sense things out. Steadily, they grow angry at the strange disturbance.

Neal orders action from the group with a subtle nod.

TRAVIS (cont'd)

Is that guy sick?

SID

I think he's a weird asshole.

FOX

Maybe he saw Jerome's mean, ol' honey-bear. Hehe!

Sid gets up, fully, and walks half-way to the Man.

Behind the old counter-top, the Bartender moves nearer to the spot where he conceals a small shotgun, and a club.

BARTENDER

Settle down boys.

(to man)

Hey you. That drink too stiff for you or something?

He holds for an answer.

BARTENDER (cont'd)

What the hell's wrong with you?

SID

You heard what he said?

(to gang)

It's one thing if he's really sick, but what the hell are we going to do with a guy who's not even respectful enough to answer his *hosts*?

NEAL

I think.

Jerome raises his hand, excitedly.

JEROME

Beat 'im up!

NEAL

(continuing)

We have an issue that needs to be addressed, gentlemen.

The Man is slowly turning to them with his mouth open, completely confused. Looking directly at Sid, his face turns to a snarl, and his muscles twitch.

He looks at the Bartender, who's empty eye sockets are turning maggoty as he stands in a silent scream of lunacy.

The Man moves from his seat and slings his glass like a fast-ball straight into the Bartender's face, breaking both. The Man watches the damage still starry eyed and hallucinating.

Sid rushes the Man from behind to bear-hug him to the ground while the other men leap from their seats ready for battle.

Lizzy curls into a tight protective ball under the booth.

The Man pushes Sid back by his chest before he can wrap his meaty arms around. Sid is larger, but thrown off by the mighty push. The others come scrambling over to help.

The Bartender flinches at the first move, clenching his weapons, but he does not panic. He remains calm and ready with experience, while pushing through his pain.

Travis takes point with Fox patting at his back to taunt him. Neal lilts with a dangerous walk, bringing up the rear.

Jerome lists away, being the slowest. He feints joining.

Sid, fallen back a few paces, catches and recovers himself. He lifts his right arm to strike, then attacks.

The Man counters with the bar stool in a wide over-hand swing directly to Sid's forehead. It smashes him back and down to the floor with a wet sounding THUNK and impact.

A bloody SPURTING sound comes from where he falls.

Travis steps over him, wide-eyed and furious. Still to his rear, Fox moves faster, looking pleased to see death again. Neal slows by Sid's body and gazes at it, coldly.

The crack in Sid's skull is just lethal enough to cause severe hemorrhage, swelling, and almost instant death.

Jerome is in the back trying to push on a locked emergency exit near where Lizzy is doing her best to hide in a shadow.

The Bartender chooses the club, finally, and moves down the bar to where the Man is catching his own balance. He gets in a hit, then wraps the club around the Man's neck.

It doesn't work. Rather than try to slip out, the Man reaches behind to grab the Bartender by the back of the head, pulling him up and over the bar. He hits the floor with a CRASH.

The Man kicks a stool along with the Bartender, and puts enough stuff in the way to slow Travis down.

The Man grabs the club from the Bartender's flailing hand as he splays out, stunned and furious. Travis gets through, jumping the stool and sidestepping the Bartender.

Fox changes course, eagerly making a grab for the shotgun left behind the counter at the outset of the brawl.

The Man back-swings the club at Travis, who dodges. He tries to time out his next move as the Bartender rolls to grab the Man by the legs. Travis takes a hold of the club.

Fox runs up with the shotgun at the ready.

Neal grabs the weapon from Fox before he can fire, and orders that he help Travis hold the Man with a quick signal.

Jerome sneaks back to re-join the fight behind them.

The Bartender stands and moves out of the way as Fox and Travis hold the Man down with his arms stretching out.

Neal levels the barrel to the Man's face, ice cold.

He reconsiders.

NEAL (cont'd)

Take him outside.

They wrestle the Man away from the bar.

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT SKY - EARLY NIGHT

The moon appears red for the second night of the phase.

CUT TO:

INT. ROY'S BAR - NIGHT

Roy's Bar is in shambles, full of blood and debris.

Being pulled almost half-way across the barroom by the arms and legs, the Man begins to change in the biker's grip.

They drop him sweating and panting to his knees in the middle of the floor, and no longer bother with their plans.

TRAVIS

Woah! Woah! I think this guy's on something, for real!

The Man throws up a small amount of blood on the floor.

FOX

Oh, shit!

Fox tries to back away with Travis, but the Man holds his wrists tight. His hair begins to move on its own.

Fox can't resist the Man's sudden strength, almost doubled.

Jerome is pushing on the back exit.

Neal raises his weapon, but the Man pulls Fox in his way. Being blocked, Neal holds. Travis grabs a pool cue as the Bartender gets the club back. They rush the Man together.

The Man's eyebrows grow longer, as does the hair on his forearms. He picks his target between the two runners.

He throws Fox at Travis, the first attacker, just as Travis is bringing down the stick. The Man pounces on the Bartender, but takes the wild blow to his ribs as he lands.

The hit causes more change to the Man, and his anger builds.

Jerome finds the door still doesn't work after many tries, so he slips away to hide behind the bar. This goes unnoticed.

Holding onto the Bartender's club-arm, the Man gets his hands behind his head, pulls him down, and knees him in the face.

He turns and throws him in Neal's direction.

Neal still lacks a shot, so he side-steps wide.

Travis is large and slow, but manages to bring a hard swing of the pool cue down on the Man's blocking arms. The strike sends a ripple through the Man's muscles, strengthening them.

He breaks the old pool cue in half with a scissoring CRACK. It splinters as he grabs the ends with a war-cry.

He kicks Travis in the chest, and slashes at Fox with one splintered stick. Fox goes into a flurry of some old military training, but gets cut. Startled, he quickly moves aside.

The Bartender, face bloodied, returns with a kick and a clubbing to the back of the Man's head. The Man's hair grows under the strike. His back and shoulder muscles bulk up.

The blows are ineffective this time. The Man runs the Bartender through the shoulder, bloodily, and lets go.

Neal rushes and jump-kicks the Man back towards the bar, where he slides to a stop on his shoulder, then sits up.

Neal hustles over to get within point-blank range.

NEAL

Fucking die!

With a WHOMP, the sawed-off shotgun blasts the top of the Man to a bloody, SPURTING pulp, dead in front of the bar.

Neal watches, mesmerized as the smoke clears.

Jerome goes to tap Sid's lifeless body as it becomes cold.

JEROME

(correctly)

I'll bet that was one of the mother-fuckers right there! What the hell was wrong with him? Sid?

In BG somewhere, a pay-phone receiver goes CLANG!

During the brawl, Lizzy has used the phone by the men's room. She runs outside as fast as her legs can carry her.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

The mid-sized Hotel that Melanie James and Skip have checked-in to, is located by the center of town near the Sheriff's.

She enters from the parking lot where her van rests.

The lobby is dimly lit and painted a tacky aqua-green.

It stands empty, but for her, some other media types, and a trio of European travelers who are chatting as they walk by.

The MANAGER is sitting at the counter. He opens a tabloid that reads, "What Would You Do if You Saw Spaceships over Glasgow?" Below that is a bold mention of the massacre.

As Melanie crosses the lobby and approaches his desk, the Manager looks up and gives her a tired smile.

MELANIE

Hi. I need to find someone who checked in about two days ago for the geek-convention? He checked in as...

(checking text message)

Skippard Von Worthington the Sixth?

She rolls her eyes at herself, and turns to make a retching motion, finger in mouth, to the wall. It doesn't react.

The Manager checks his logs, half-remembering.

MANAGER

Ah, yes ma'am. He's in room 306.

Elevator's down the hall on the right.

She turns a shoulder before he can finish, and walks away.

MELANIE

Yea thanks.

She hustles to the old stamped-steel elevators, with big plastic buttons made to look fancy, cheaply.

She presses number three, and listens for the DING.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

The Hotel's hallways are the same faded aqua-green as the lobby, but dotted with rows of aged doors and lights.

Melanie exits the elevator, and follows after the signs. Room 306. After a short walk to the right, she reaches it. The door is unlocked and somewhat open.

CUT TO:

INT. SKIP'S ROOM - NIGHT

Melanie steps into the basic two-bed Hotel room, but it appears that no one is in. She frowns as she enters.

It looks like a barn after being lived in by Skip for even one day. A bag's contents have been emptied on the other bed. Take-out food and beer cans line the table-tops.

She is startled by the toilet FLUSHING in the bathroom behind her, followed by a rumble of pained, throaty COUGHING.

Skip exits the bathroom in a cloud of cigarette smoke.

SKIP
(ashamed)
I fell asleep.

Melanie goes to the night stand to look through some papers. Among them are sections of newspaper clippings.

The various articles about the massacre are cut out and stacked on the table. Under those, she finds Skip's scrap-book containing many cases, theories, and legends.

MELANIE
You're still on this "Moonslasher is a Werewolf" shit?

The words 'BEWARE THE MOON' are penned just inside the cover of his small journal using his messy, fan-boy script.

SKIP
It's interesting to me.

MELANIE
You fucking child. You're going to ruin my career with this! He's just some crazy guy! They don't even have all of the pieces together yet! If you start making
(MORE)

MELANIE (cont'd)
 it look like we're hunting monsters
 again, we'll be a laughing stock! *Again!*

Skip relights his dead cigarette and grins at her.

SKIP
 How was the Sheriff?

Melanie puts the book into her purse and steps away from him.
 She walks from the room, turning back to close the door.

SKIP (cont'd)
 We came here for a damn comic convention!
 I know it's home, but shit Melanie. Is
 there anything you wouldn't do for your
 career? Hm? Guy sits in the hospital for
 saving his buddy, and did he really put
 some pressure on you when you came by
 trying to get that story?

(beat)
 Did golden boy really "stalk" you, over
 it, or was he just that sorry, ya think?

MELANIE
 He was just that confused.

SKIP
 Did you use him?!

She slams the door before he can say more. He stands there,
 and watches her go back to work for the thousandth time.

Skip lights up a joint, and stops caring.

He looks out of his window as the red moon drifts alone.

FADE TO:

INT. OFFICE BUNKS - NIGHT

The bunks at the Sheriff's department are meager at best.

With the windows closed, the exterior lights cast green
 shadows in through the darkness of the night.

Rather than rest at home, the Sheriff has come to sleep in one of the many available cots. Only one other is staying. Handler Simon is sleepily tucked away in the far corner.

The Sheriff lies awake. He pulls a sheet around himself. Thinking hard, but not aware, his hand moves around an invisible form on the other pillow, and holds it.

His phone alerts an incoming call, but he doesn't notice.

It takes a few RINGS to snap him out of his memory, or dream.

He reaches down by the side of his bed to the buzzing phone, and holds it up. The screen shines, "DISPATCH."

He answers.

SHERIFF

Sheriff.

DISPATCH

Sorry to wake you, sir. We've got something.

He takes a sudden breath.

SHERIFF

All right!

He slams the end button, adrenaline pumping, and jumps up. Simon leers up from his cot.

The Sheriff stands and belts up. He slides a smaller caliber pistol into an ankle holster, secures it, and heads out.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROY'S PARKING - NIGHT

The full moon has risen a quarter of the way into the sky from the haze, and casts its cold white light upon Roy's.

It hangs above the dirt parking lot and gleams the few motorcycles and a truck nearby, deepening the shadows.

In one shadow by the street corner, Lizzy is standing and holding herself, shaking, still watching the bar's entrance.

A Deputy's car pulls in on the hunt. After stopping, a large Deputy emerges. Deputy Jason Campbell raises himself up, kicking dust and wearing a worried expression.

He spots Lizzy.

JASON

Sheriff's Department, miss. Are they
still inside?

She points to the bar's front doors.

JASON (cont'd)

Okay. My name's Sergeant Jason! Just get
about a block down to that store and hold
tight. We'll send someone to come talk to
you when it's clear!

He runs toward the bar's grimy entrance, belt heavy, pistol drawn, with a deep scowl on his face over recent events.

CUT TO:

INT. ROY'S BAR - NIGHT

Deputy Jason enters the cloudy bar. Gun-smoke and cigarettes have left a blue haze hanging in the air.

Neal sits on a table with his leg up. The shotgun is across his lap, being cradled by one arm. He is smoking a menthol. He doesn't look up, but points the weapon at the Deputy.

The others only watch as the two lock eyes in a standoff. Jason breaks contact, momentarily, and scans the room.

Sid is outstretched near the middle. The Man is in a heap, steaming, bloodied, and torn in the blast zone.

Travis has taken his seat back over by the poker table where he rests with his head bowed, and Jerome is behind the bar.

JASON

Hey now, man. It's okay. Just tell me what happened here. I can help you out. Nothing else needs to go down.

He watches Neal for any reaction or movement.

JEROME

(helpfully)

That guy killed our friend.

NEAL

Shut up, Jerome.

Neal lifts his head up, moving his hair aside.

NEAL (cont'd)

Wasn't s'posed to be no outsiders, but that Man there went bat-shit crazy on us. I ain't going to jail for defending me an my friends.

JASON

I know, man. Just.

TRAVIS

We think that guy maybe killed those people out in the woods, too. You should have seen him move.

NEAL

You could just let us walk away with our reward, then?

Jason eyes them all at once, back and forth.

JASON

You're definitely going to have to come down to the station, after, but you're doin' fine man. Just put that gun down.

Lizzy walks in against all reason. Neal becomes enraged and points the shotgun in her general direction. She trash talks.

LIZZY
Screw you, asshole!

Deputy Jason takes action, jumping in the way while firing. The two weapons answer one another with a shocking BANG-WHOP. Lizzy is unharmed. She curses them all while taking cover.

Jason's shot only grazes Neal, but Jason is hit in the chest, taking much of the blast in his armor. He is bleeding from his face and arms, but left aware enough to RADIO for help.

Neal is cursing. He can't find new shells.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLEARING SKY - NIGHT

The full moon is bright and nearing its apex.

CUT TO:

INT. ROY'S BAR - NIGHT

In the bar, Jason has slowly dragged himself behind cover, leaving a dark blood-trail across the floor. He is resting motionless, wheezing, and getting close to passing out.

Neal has Travis try to patch his arm while the Bartender searches for fresh shotgun shells in the back office.

Jerome is still kneeling behind the bar, doing something. Lizzy is hiding again under her corner booth. A blue, lingering shroud of gun-smoke hangs thickly in the air.

The Man's body remains by the bar. The sound of bones CRACKING begins to rise painfully from his spot.

Neal and Travis stop what they are doing, and look.

The Man's body is changing again, worsening. Growing. Breaking and morphing, then becoming larger and stronger.

Hair is pushing out from all exposed skin. Flesh and bone CHURN together. The Man sits up while in the midst of it.

The Man's wounds heal, sealing across his chest.

His face is the last to change. It elongates as it reforms into a large and deadly looking snout, grinning.

His head takes on a Wolf's likeness. His eyes burn and fangs snarl foaming madness. The thick, matted, dark fur covering his body finishes its growth, and his claws sharpen.

The Bartender comes running out of his office from the side, the front of his shirt and face covered with his own blood.

BARTENDER

Oh, bullshit!!!

Neal puts a hand up as a signal for the Bartender to throw the shotgun shells he has cradled in his hands. The Bartender complies without thinking, a perfect toss out of reflex.

THE WOLF hears as they fly through the air, and responds.

It lunges at the Bartender, grabbing him by the ankles and head, above and below to rip him in half. It makes a mess.

As the Bartender is SCREAMING his death, around in BG, Neal is loading a fresh pair of cartridges. Travis stops bandaging him, kicks over a table, and grabs a chair for protection.

Finished mauling the Bartender, the Wolf tears across the room in Travis's direction. Travis throws the chair. Neal fires a blast with another WHOP of the sawed-off shotgun.

To the biker's startled dismay, the shot bounces off of the Wolf with no effect. It continues shredding furniture.

It drives its claws in an upper-cut through Travis's gut that sends him into the ceiling. Lizzy, under a table in BG, stifles a scream after seeing the kill from up close.

Travis's torso is pulverized. The Wolf drops his body, limp.

It turns to Neal, who backs up and tries to reload with his good arm. He fumbles a number of shells in the process.

Jerome stands from behind the bar, screaming crazed nonsense. He has been crafting molotov cocktails using the hard bottles under the counter with old rags. His eyes bulge with fear.

He lights one, and hurls the flaming bomb across the room.

It hits the Wolf with a harsh sounding CRASH, bursting into a shroud of flames as it shatters and releases its contents.

The Wolf is consumed, briefly, by orange fire, but it turns to a hot, bright, almost magical blue and white, growing huge, then extinguishing with a RUSH of air and heat.

The Wolf is unharmed. Smoke swirls off of its fur and away. It grins a wide snarl, then attacks.

Neal gives up trying to re-load, and attempts to swing the gun like a club. The Wolf catches him, crushing both the weapon and his hand, simultaneously. Neal raves with pain.

Using one motion, the Wolf flings Neal over the bar's counter to where Jerome just stands there, petrified. He holds a second bomb in his hand, but is unable to take action.

The Wolf takes menacing steps toward them.

Jerome holds the Molotov up in front of him, as Neal, both arms destroyed, is trying to push himself up from the ground with his chin. The effort causes him to yell out in pain.

Still not sober, Jerome panics and CLICKS his lighter.

Neal is on his knees, leaning over to rest on Jerome's hip. The Wolf is only yards away, now. It displays its superiority with a hate-filled ROAR, and continues to approach.

JEROME

Oh man! Oh man!

NEAL

Jerome! No!!!

As the Wolf lunges over the bar to finish the criminals, Jerome lights the rag and SMASHES the bottle between himself and the Wolf, but it goes bursting through claws first.

The pair of men die screaming in flames, being shredded.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROY'S PARKING - NIGHT

Three more Deputy's cars speed up to the bar's parking lot, and SKID to a smoking halt with lights and SIRENS blazing.

They hold for a moment to scan the area, then exit their vehicles on high alert. The Sheriff, Deputy Bobby, and two other burly ON-DUTIES, arrive at the scene with guns drawn.

The Sheriff CLICKS his radio for a silent response.

CUT TO:

INT. ROY'S BAR - NIGHT

Deputy Jason remains sprawled across the floor, immobilized. His radio CLICKS a signal contact from somewhere.

His eyes blink open, gaining some small awareness.

He can see the Wolf to one side. He can also see Lizzy under her table. She has curled herself up in careful hiding as far back in the corner's shadow as she can manage to squeeze.

He reaches for the clicker of his radio as the Wolf stands next to the smoking heap that had once been Jerome and Neal, smelling the air. Its ears perk-up and turn, in search.

Jason pushes the CLICKER gently with his thumb. He signals an SOS, repeats it, and hopes. The Wolf turns in his direction.

It takes two large SNIFFS, then crosses the destroyed room.

It stops just short of Deputy Jason where the lawman is trying to crawl backward in a painfully slow and bloody mess. The Deputy doesn't get far enough with his open injuries.

The Wolf stops to inspect the wounded man. Jason whimpers.

Before he can fully scream, Jason's head, neck, and shoulders are engulfed in a maw of jagged teeth.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROY'S PARKING - NIGHT

The Sheriff, Bobby, and his men, stand with their guns trained on the entrance of the moonlit bar.

They remain safe behind their car doors, eyeing one another, preparing to move in, but then holding.

There is a sudden TEAR of metal and flash of blue-gray fur leaping from the back exit. The Wolf escapes into the night.

BOBBY

What the fuck was that!?!

The Sheriff scowls. His eyes follow the shape, but go back to the doors. The Deputies check all around, fearfully.

SHERIFF

Just hold on Bobby! We've got a man down
in there. You two keep watch!
We're inside.

The Sheriff and Deputy Bobby round the sides of their cars as the other two Deputies move to cover the exits from outside.

The Sheriff and Bobby stack-up on the bar's front entrance.

They breach the doors.

CUT TO:

INT. MELANIE'S VAN - NIGHT

Melanie is alone in her old news van, which she has personalized herself. Among many of the work-related items placed all over, are music posters, CD's, and pictures.

She listens to punk rock, only. The real old stuff.

Most of her pictures are humorous, but she has one of herself near to the front, standing with her oldest and best friend; her championship horse, who she no longer owns.

It is posted with a ladybug thumbtack. She glances at it.

She is flipping through one of Skip's old notebooks.

It is full of articles and photos of where Skip has been tracking other, similar massacres for many years.

One picture is of two men wearing bell-bottoms. The elder on the left is smiling and waving. He's only vaguely familiar.

The Man on the right appears in a second Polaroid picture, also, but seems unchanged by time and very striking.

It is filed along with a picture of soldiers in Vietnam-era gear, a list of their missions, and a citation for valor belonging to the same Man. She gazes at these, curiously.

She tries to put the pictures on her board, but can't find a tack. After searching, she pulls the one from her own photo. Melanie spins the tack in her fingers.

She posts the picture on the wall, leaving it with an uncomfortable clear of her throat.

She tucks herself into the sleeping bag she has fashioned, and CLICKS off the small reading lamp.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOMEONE'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

The Wolf is a moving shadow jumping fences through the small, low-income suburbs that surround the downtown area.

It rages forward with focused intent, the moon at its back.

As it pulls itself forward, it hunts nose-first in search of a scent on the wind. It continues on, relentlessly.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROY'S PARKING - NIGHT

The Sheriff exits the bar with Deputy Bobby to his rear.

They look exhausted and shaken. A veil of light-colored smoke billows in a small plume from the doorway behind them.

Two ambulances, a fire-truck, and additional Sheriff's units arrive, setting the streets alight with their approach.

Bobby sways side to side, and crosses his arms in discomfort. Finally, he turns to go back into the smoky bar, alone.

The Sheriff remains to examine the moon and stars.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL PARKING - NIGHT

The sparsely populated parking lot of the Hotel where the news crews have hunkered down is well lit by the moon and street-lights, but surrounded by a shroud of darkness.

A strange gray shape rises and falls, getting larger with every leap. It moves toward the Hotel from the horizon.

It jumps and slides along - part of many shadows at once.

The shadowy shape picks up speed, and gets closer.

CUT TO:

INT. MELANIE'S VAN - NIGHT

In the news van where Melanie lies in a restless sleep, moonlight beams into her darkened den, crossing her cheek.

Outside, a form slips down a wall, over a fence, and into the parking lot. Its movements are fluid with the atmosphere.

There is TAPPING on the corner of the van, and the odd sound of the Wolf SNIFFING through the door from outside.

Melanie awakens. She checks her clock, not being alert.

The van rocks with a SLAM as it is hammered by the Wolf. No idea of the cause, she sits up petrified.

There is a second, powerful SLAM to the side of the van, which causes her to shriek. The form moves around front.

He spots her through the window. Melanie tries to curl up. She sees the Wolf's gray fur and bright eyes peering in. It sort of PURRS at her from deep within its chest.

The Wolf darts back to the side door. The metal sinks under the weight of its shoulder pressing from the other side, but it remains calculated in the amount of force it applies.

The van is rolled over with Melanie screaming helplessly. She BEATS on the walls for help, but the van is pushed over, carefully being pinned on its side with the door locked shut.

The driver's side, now facing upwards, bulges under the weight of the Wolf climbing onto it.

Melanie grabs her phone, but it has no charge. Silently, she curses the situation, sets the phone back down, then instinctively removes the photo and tack from the wall.

Making no sound, she pulls herself to the front of the van. She strains her neck and risks a peek through the top window just in time to catch the Wolf's shoulder as it settles.

In the moonlight, the Wolf circles, finds a spot, curls itself up as if to stand guard, and lets out a deep SIGH.

It surveys its new territory, resting its head, gently.

The Wolf never closes its eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROY'S PARKING - NIGHT

The Sheriff is helping load Jason into an ambulance. He is unconscious, full of tubes, and covered with drying blood.

Doctor Jansen rounds the corner of the ambulance.

JANSEN

I've done everything I can with them.
He'll be in good hands.

SHERIFF

All right. Thanks Doc.

JANSEN

Yeah. Well, they're getting him all
hooked up now. I've got to see to the
others inside, and more bodies to count.
At least there's no kids this time.

Doc Jansen carries a sour expression as he turns to go back
into the bar and latest crime scene.

Deputy Bobby is with the waitress, Lizzy, in BG.

She is unharmed, but being checked. She isn't responding to
questions, and only stares into the distance, blankly.

Bobby tries his best to get her to open up, but fails.
Further in BG, the Man's RV is being appraised by the local
towing service. Lizzy only points toward it with wide eyes.

Finishing, Bobby catches up to the Sheriff for an update.

BOBBY

She's not talking at all. I don't know if
she will for a while, but seems scared
half to death by that camper. I'd wager
it's our guy's.

SHERIFF

All right. Let them take care of her
while we get started. Jason's being
loaded in. Doc thinks he could be stuck
in a coma indefinitely, looking at him.

BOBBY

Okay. Shit. I'll let Glen know as soon as
I get back to the office.

SHERIFF

Yeah, yea. Okay, thanks Bob.

He turns to see an inept tow man struggle to get the Man's RV hooked up and moving. It isn't going smoothly.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

We've gotta get a look inside that thing.

Bobby takes a last look over at the waitress, then nods.

The two men make their way across the lot to stop the tow. Halfway there, they shout for tow-guy BILL'S attention.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

Hey man! Hey! Hang on a second!

The poor man looks up.

TOW GUY

Oh, hey. Oh, I uh.

SHERIFF

Relax... Bill. Man. How the hell do you guy's even get out here so fast?

TOW GUY

Well, we've got an agreement with the bar. It's all good. We just.

The Sheriff cuts him off with a gentle hand and knowing nod.

SHERIFF

There's no more bar, friend. Sorry. It's a crime scene now if you didn't notice? We're having a look inside, then she's going to the impound. You gotta crowbar?

The tow guy takes a moment to realize his blunder.

TOW GUY

Yeah! Yeah yeah. Here.

He reaches into one of the many compartments on the rear of his old tow-truck, and removes a heavy crowbar for them.

The Sheriff wastes no time moving to the camper's door and CRACKING the lock with determined force. Having ripped the door almost completely off, they make ready to enter.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MAN'S RV - NIGHT

The Sheriff enters the Man's RV with Bobby a step behind him.

BOBBY

This better give us a clue as to where he
might be headed next.

The Sheriff stops them at the top of the small steps.

When Bobby is able to view the interior over the Sheriff's wide shoulders, he cuts himself off from further speaking, and the two men stand frozen, scanning the small quarters.

The inside of the old Winnebago is cramped, but at first glance, also immaculately spotless. Decorating the space, however, are a series of war memorabilia and trophies.

Some items date back to the Vietnam war, like a worn out field jacket with boonie cap on the closet door, and an M-60 machine gun mounted on the wall above the bed to the rear.

Among the trophies next to the cabinet set, including a few medals, certificates, and a flag, appear to be human remains with tufts of hair, teeth, and bleaching finger bones.

What has the Sheriff standing so frozen, is the claymore mine set up on the stove and aimed directly at the doorway.

SHERIFF

Bobby? Back on out of here.

Deputy Bobby takes slow, deliberate steps back out of the camper, full of sudden fear with no way to help.

Carefully, the Sheriff lifts his body up to the ceiling using the hand rails, over the tripwire stretched across the length of the top stair. As he gets by, he draws his knife.

Reaching the claymore, with a practiced hand, the Sheriff disarms the deadly trap and re-engages the safety.

He wipes sweat from his brow, and stops holding his breath.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROY'S PARKING - NIGHT

The Sheriff is crossing the parking lot of Roy's with Bobby trailing him. When he reaches the far side, he tosses the disarmed claymore into the back of his patrol car.

BOBBY

So... some kind of vet?

SHERIFF

Yeah, but not even current from the looks of it. Wait for the dogs, and when that thing is clear, I want it searched top to bottom. Rip it apart if you have to.

They reach the ambulance, which is now ready to depart. The Sheriff loads himself into the rear of the ambulance with the wounded Deputy Jason. He closes the doors, leaning back.

The ambulance blazes down the street, and away.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Of the few vehicles in the parking lot of the small town's business Hotel, the news van in the corner is on its side.

A dark mass of fur is coiled on top, breathing up and down.

Melanie has been trapped inside for almost three hours according to her charming little alarm clock.

CUT TO:

INT. SKIP'S ROOM - NIGHT

Skip awakens in his darkened Hotel room. He sits up, coughs, goes shambling out of bed, and crosses the trashy floor.

He pulls the curtain to peek out of the room's window. After a moment of stargazing he spots the large, black looking form at rest on Melanie's van, and gawks with sudden recognition.

He jumps to where his bag rests, grabs his digital camera, and bolts down the hall with crazed excitement.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL PARKING - NIGHT

Skip, camera in hand, nervously approaches the van.

He is inching his way through the spaces between cars.

His digital camera RATTLES as he shakes and comes closer, while wearing a wide, childlike grin on his round face.

The Wolf is not sleeping. It is on guard and doesn't hesitate to respond to the sounds moving closer. It perks its ears.

Skip takes a few more steps. The Wolf lifts its huge head, then picks its body up from the van's dented side.

Skip continues to film the Wolf as it prowls over to him.

CUT TO:

INT. MELANIE'S VAN - NIGHT

Inside her van, Melanie lies awake in fear of the Wolf's sudden movements. She pulls her shaking knees to her chest.

In a moment of clarity, she pockets her most important items. She protectively saves the thumbtack for last, then waits.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL PARKING - NIGHT

The standoff continues in the Hotel's parking lot.

The Wolf throws itself down onto the asphalt, claws first, and begins to close the gap between it and the cameraman. Skip backs up a few steps, but exclaims with a rush.

SKIP

Woah! Dude!

The Wolf crosses the few spaces through the lot and tears Skip apart, screaming, but still attempting to record. Strangely, the Wolf does not appear on the footage.

The tape catches shadowy movements, blood, Skip's CRIES, and in BG, Melanie is carefully opening the back door of the van. She jumps from the crushed section, and runs for the Hotel.

Before crossing the camera's lens, she lets her shoes fly off with a muffled CLAMOR. The digital continues to roll footage of Skip's death until the Wolf smashes it on the pavement.

Mel moves as fast as she can while the Wolf is busy killing. She makes it to the Hotel's side entrance, and slips through.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Melanie runs down the hallway to the stairwell. Once in, she takes them two at a time. At the third floor she enters the next hallway, and sprints through that one even faster.

CUT TO:

INT. SKIP'S ROOM - NIGHT

Melanie charges through the doors of the room and begins to throw things around in a panicked search, carelessly.

MELANIE

Skip, you idiot!

She finds Skip's phone after trying a few empty spots, goes to the same window where Skip had stood, and dials a number.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The corridor containing the hospital's ICU is wide and endlessly long. Its white florescent lights stretch from end to end, half-on, half-off, still and quiet at this hour.

Though long after lights out in the unit, a few nurses perform their duties, silently darting from room to room.

The Sheriff exits from the last unit down. He watches the nurses at work, preferring to stay by the softly lit doorway.

Deputy Bobby, newly arrived, steps from an elevator to the front-side of the building, turns, and walks down the hall to where the Sheriff waits for him with concerned stoicism.

The Sheriff and Bobby greet each other with sorrowful nods, eyes turned down, and enter the lonely room together.

CUT TO:

INT. JASON'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jason's room has been dimmed for lights out, but keeps an old yellow reading lamp switched on in the corner.

The curtains are drawn shut. By his bed are a small, useless food-tray, and a stack of magazines on a cart.

Jason is bandaged, secured in his hospital bed, and meant to be left in a coma for the many surgeries needed to repair his bloody wounds. Tightly wound gauze covers him all over.

The Sheriff and Deputy Bobby stand to either side of the bed. They are looking Jason over in a moment of silence when a FEMALE DOCTOR enters the room from the right. She's young.

HOSPITAL DOC

Hey guys. To let you know, we think he'll be fine, but it's going to take a lot of reconstruction. He's gonna be under probably for a few weeks, but he'll need our help all the way. Twelve broken bones in his upper torso. Lots of stitches and grafts. A serious looking infection. We're just getting started.

(beat)

He's a really tough guy though.

They pay close attention, eyes locked with her's, looking back down at Jason once she has finished.

It is Bobby who remembers to respond.

BOBBY

Uhm. Thanks Doctor.

The doctor turns, switches a pair of clip-boards, and leaves.

BOBBY (cont'd)

He is tough. So what, exactly, could be tougher than Jason you think? What the hell'd we just see back there?

The Sheriff shakes his head but doesn't answer. His phone begins to VIBRATE an unknown caller, interrupting them.

The doctor leans back through the doorway, suddenly.

HOSPITAL DOC

Sir? You can't have that in here.

Perturbed, the Sheriff turns off his phone. After another moment of silence, Deputy Glen charges through the door and into the room, desperate to see his friend.

The Sheriff has gone deaf to him, but it looks like the young Deputy is mouthing the words, "I'll kill him. I'll kill the guy who did this!" They watch him vent his grief.

CUT TO:

INT. SKIP'S ROOM - NIGHT

Melanie watches the call go unanswered, confused.

Seeing the Wolf cross the lot to the entrance downstairs, then push on it, she tries to dial again.

She stops short when a little OLD WOMAN from the laundry across the street runs outside with a broom and phone while screaming at it in Vietnamese. New SIRENS are heard in BG.

Annoyed by the sound, the Wolf turns its attention to the lady in the street, and bounds over the wall toward the outskirts of town. His speed is unnaturally quick.

The moon has moved three-fourths of the way across the sky, and looms over the retreating form.

CUT TO:

INT. SKIP'S ROOM - NIGHT

Melanie breathes a sigh, releases her tension, then returns to the familiar number she has dialed.

MELANIE

Why'd I do that?

She puts the phone away in frustration, moving on.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Melanie walks through the Hotel's lobby as fast as she can without being overly suspicious in her movements.

She works her way down the central part of the room, passing a couple of REPORTERS from the other channel who are up late sipping coffee and chatting about their boredom.

While talking, they hear the commotion of muffled SIRENS. They stand to peer out of the windows.

Before slipping by them unnoticed, Mel kneels to snatch one of their bags. She keeps on strolling, remaining casual.

Mel lifts the keys and sets the bag on the next empty chair she passes. She checks back behind her, and keeps going.

She exits through the front doors.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL PARKING - NIGHT

A pair of Sheriff's units race down the town's main street, just outside of the Hotel. Their many colored lights weave between the old downtown buildings as they approach.

Melanie makes her way to her competition's news van, gets in, and starts it up. She takes a look around, puts it in drive, then peels away from the lot before being blocked-in.

The stolen van makes its way at high speed to the outskirts of town, beyond. She does her best to follow the trail of the fleeing Wolf on a straight path, due East.

The police and ambulance lights twinkle back and away, getting smaller, but still gleaming all of downtown.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The entrance to the hospital signals through the warm night in a long bright beam racing outward. A pair of polished glass automatic doors quietly slip open for two men.

The Sheriff and Bobby come outside, worn down by fatigue. After striding a short distance, they survey the landscape.

The town ahead is dismal, wet, and softly lit by the moon.

The Sheriff reaches into his pocket for his phone. It is still powered off. Just then, Bobby's own phone RINGS a call.

He answers and gets an urgent message.

Bobby nods along with the caller's short, choppy voice.
After hanging up, he turns to the Sheriff, disturbed.

BOBBY

Uhm.

SHERIFF

What's up, Bobby?

Deputy Bobby swallows hard, and tries to find words.

BOBBY

Something else happened. City got a call
back downtown. Looks like the same thing.

The Sheriff spins out in a frustrated circle, then returns.

BOBBY (cont'd)

And.

SHERIFF

And?

BOBBY

And it took place at the hotel Melanie's
supposed to be at, Sheriff.

The Sheriff's face goes from mad to deadly serious.

BOBBY (cont'd)

And her camera-guy, Skip, is a victim.
Her van's all banged up, and flipped. One
of the other crew's vans has been stolen,
and we still don't know what the hell it
even is that's causing it.

The Sheriff goes pale while taking in the report.

A realization dawns.

The Sheriff pushes by the Deputy and runs a hard sprint to
his waiting patrol car. He gets in, and takes off.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAD NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

The direction the Wolf has taken brings it to a run-down section of town. The area is infested with condemned buildings which menace behind decaying walls and fences.

A number of HOMELESS PEOPLE are sharing a vacant lot. They scatter at the shadow of the Wolf stalking by.

At first, it glides along the walkways.

In the next instant, it is on the rooftops lurking with predatory calm. It ignores others, and keeps hunting.

It pulls itself along the ground and rooftops with its huge upper body. Its glowing eyes lock forward as its ears pin back for any sound behind it, moving stealthily, but fast.

One COUPLE sitting on their porch to kiss under the stars duck back into the shadows as the Wolf lumbers just beyond their backyard, over a fence, and into an ally-way.

Where the buildings come to an end, and only open space remains, the Wolf accelerates its escape from the town.

It growls away, defeated.

CUT TO:

INT. STOLEN VAN - NIGHT

The competing news crew's van is much more professionally equipped and clean on the interior than Melanie's own.

Mel's hands are placed at ten and two on the steering wheel, properly, as she goes chasing in the direction of the Wolf.

She speeds through the suburbs and sees the aftermath of the Wolf's passing. She follows the trail of fear and confusion.

Outside, the homeless people who had been startled before, have moved out onto the street to gaze down the road.

Melanie continues to follow the direction they are looking. They gawk with their mouths open, and keep pointing.

She purses her lips, grips the steering wheel even tighter, and presses hard on the accelerator.

The large van REVS and RUMBLES faster.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S PATROL CAR - NIGHT

The Sheriff is speeding to the scene at the Hotel.

He wears a tough scowl on his face, preparing for anything, but turns pale for a moment, and tries not to throw up.

He catches himself, then firmly returns to his duty.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL PARKING - NIGHT

The Sheriff pulls his car into the Hotel, the scene of which is just beginning to bustle after the attack.

The town's remaining, over-burdened paramedics are on scene, along with some Deputies not needed at the bar.

Two of the tired, grouchy Medics are busy trying to reason with the Laundry Woman. She is waving her arms around while shouting, still terrified - urgent, but untranslatable.

The Sheriff doesn't get out of his car. He leans from his open window, hurried, and addresses one of the Deputies.

SHERIFF

What's she saying?!

DEPUTY

I don't know. Something about a hairy, dog-man? I can't follow. She just keeps pointing East, and that's the way...

The Sheriff keeps driving in a race to catch up.

DEPUTY (cont'd)

And hey!

(trailing off)

There's no one else left out there!

The Sheriff almost misses the last part as he burns asphalt, chasing Melanie and his mystery killer.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODED BLUFFS - SUNRISE

The Wolf stands on a small hillside overlooking the woods. Pain grips him as he reaches for the dawn.

He changes back into the form of the Man.

With his shaking arms, he cradles himself in a euphoric daze. His roar becomes diminished, but still holds strong.

Once manlike, he stands tall and clenches his fists.

After a short time calming, he takes deep pulls of the air, looks around, and grows tired. He falls limp to the grass.

CUT TO:

INT. STOLEN VAN - DAWN

Continuing in the stolen van, Melanie sits up, drives faster, and redoubles the effort of her search.

Her face is growing more frustrated with each passing house, street light, car, and person starting their day.

She reaches into the handbag on the console and pulls out a cigarette with her lighter. She puts it to her lips, lighting it with a quick, frustrated flurry which doesn't take.

She focuses back on the road, and is startled as a fast approaching vehicle ROARS up in her side-mirror.

The Sheriff's blue and red lights dance to life.

MELANIE

Shit!

The Sheriff gives a few quick bursts of his SIREN.

Melanie is stuck at a loss.

She rocks in her seat with anxiety from the sudden change, takes a deep breath, and pacifies herself.

Once in control, she gives up and pulls over.

She snuffs her unlit cigarette, then snatches the license and press card from her bag, covering the former with the latter.

She grinds her jaw, but puts on a smile as the door of the Sheriff's car opens to her rear. She watches in the mirror.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE TRAFFIC STOP - DAWN

The morning is taking form with the Sun now clearing the horizon. Its rays burst out from between trees in the distance, and sparkle on dew covered grass.

The town's thinly populated outskirts are just behind, quietly waking up to an early, humid dawn.

The Sheriff's eyes are forced to refocus as he exits his car, pursing his lips, going pale, and taking a deep breath.

He adjusts a few things on his belt as he walks to the driver's side window of the stolen van, and Melanie.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. STOLEN VAN - DAWN

Seeing the Sheriff approach in her mirror, Melanie turns her head away and winces as if struck.

She goes pale, swallows, then tries to regain some composure as the Sheriff reaches her window. His soft eyes are set squarely on the other side of the glass, studying her.

He is stone-faced as he waits for her to roll down the window. She only looks at him, also waiting.

Melanie lets him knock before snapping out of it.

She is proper and professional once engaged. She almost begins to greet him and hand him her card, but realizing the pointlessness, bites her tongue and restrains herself.

The Sheriff does not seem surprised by the bluff.

He glares at her, mouth twisting for a word.

Stopping, he wipes his brow and simply takes in the morning, eyes saddened, tired, and full of pain.

SHERIFF

What were you thinking, Mel?

Melanie is suddenly furious.

MELANIE

Shut up! You know damn well I don't want to hear it! You have nothing like that to say to me. Ever!

She pushes her way from the van, and past him.

He gives her space to let her by, remaining cautious.

MELANIE (cont'd)

And do not touch me! I'll walk myself!

He had not tried to, but his hands do raise some for her, then return to his belt. He follows after her, watchfully.

As she nears his car, he finds something to add anyway.

SHERIFF

You could have been killed.
What's the worth of trying to.

She cuts him off before he can finish.

MELANIE

Ugh, I coulda blah blah! What's next?
A 'How dare you?' How about a 'Who do you
think you are!?' Fuck you.

With that, she slams the door on him, and folds her arms in the back of the Sheriff's car, ready for jail. He is left standing by his door to gaze at the woods, just beyond.

SHERIFF

I'm the damned Sheriff, man.

He shakes it off a little, and grows stern. He gets inside. Once at ease, he sits to attention and buckles his seat-belt.

He checks his mirrors. Melanie is glaring out of her window at the woods with her arms tightly crossed, and biting a lip.

The Sheriff cranks it into drive, going back the other way.

FADE TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - DAWN

The Sheriff's eyes are locked on the road as he drives Melanie to the county lockup. She is sitting still, but playing cold and strong in the backseat.

The muscles in the Sheriff's face tense a steady rhythm. Suddenly, Melanie sits forward with a demand.

MELANIE

I want to talk to Jason.

He holds.

MELANIE (cont'd)

Look, you wouldn't believe the shit I've
been through tonight. I want to talk to
Jason, asap. Get him on the radio.

The Sheriff tries a dodge.

SHERIFF

What happened to you out there, Mel?

MELANIE

Fuck off.

Melanie rests back, obviously scared and shaken, but hiding.

SHERIFF

For another story?

MELANIE

Just fuck off.

Of the many things he seems to have to say to her, instead, he finds himself forced to share the bad news.

SHERIFF

Mel. I um. I do have to tell you one thing. Bad news you oughta hear.

She sits back up in her seat, now wide-eyed. Her chest rises with a long intake of breath and feeling. She already knows.

MELANIE

(softly)

No, you bastard.

From a look of beautiful, stunned shock and pain, she rages, then doesn't give another thought to reason.

SHERIFF

Mel, I.

MELANIE

No! No no! No! We were never some great friends! I don't ever want your feelings shoved down my throat! I don't want your bullshit! I want nothing to do with you! Do you understand?!

The Sheriff can't breathe to respond, gripped by agony.

Melanie slams back into her seat, defensive again, and looks out at the woods. She holds strong tears of rage, only just, as they are trapped by her long eyelashes.

She blinks one down her cheek, sobs quietly, then stops.

SHERIFF

Jason, had to go to the hospital. They're taking care of him fine, but he got hurt pretty bad. I'm sorry.

(beat)

Also, I still have to do this. We need to know what happened, Melanie.

MELANIE

You're a mean son of a bitch. Asshole.
You have no idea what you're up against.

She turns her head in numbed anger to the Sheriff, and stares at his back as he keeps driving. He sighs, not understanding.

Her body slackens under the weight of fear and hatred.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAGIC FIELD - MORNING

There are magic fields hidden deep within the woods.

They are large expanses of grass full of wildflowers and mushrooms, where cows wander in herds, grazing lazily.

A decayed, bleaching cow's skull sits on the edge of a portion of treeline, and glows in the morning sunlight.

The Man lies curled up nearby, resting with partially eaten mushrooms and grass scattered around him.

There is a slow twitch in his body - light, but continuous.

THREE YOUNG MEN with scraggly hair, loose fitting hippy clothes, and hemp picking bags, stand off to one side.

They gawk over him, standing shoulder to shoulder. Each of their faces holds a different reaction, but all are unsure of what they have found. The three are stuck in place, thinking.

The Man bellows a terrible SCREAM, making flocks of nearby birds take flight to escape the sudden outburst.

One of the guys pulls the latest phone from his bag, fumbles it to his ear, backs away, actually dials for emergency, and then shouts when there is an answer.

The other guy jumps a little. The third runs home.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - MORNING

In the dried out, hot, stuffy Sheriff's department, an emergency meeting has been called in the briefing area.

All available staff are present, and miserable.

They slouch around the space full of old boards and desks, with many arms crossed, and faces wearing scowls.

The room shows new evidence, with the journals and photos taken from the scenes at the Hotel and bar, just added.

The Sheriff stands at the center to speak, but few watch. Their eyes wander anywhere else while he prepares his notes.

Settled, the Sheriff grabs their attention and begins.

SHERIFF

Thank you all for coming, guys, but what are we doing here today?

Staff people amble around being rude, with a few who chat among themselves. What Deputies are here on station look distantly in low spirits. No one appears ready for action.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

We've got everything we can to get this thing settled, but still a lot of questions. So, what's next as a team?

A few people trade glances, but no one has an answer.

One young woman, an OPERATOR, begins speaking her mind.

OPERATOR GIRL

Maybe we should call someone else?

The Sheriff grimaces at the thought. No.

SHERIFF

This is a string of killings in our jurisdiction. It's in our house.

There is a long pause of held breaths and thought.

Glen lifts his head to break the silence with a question.

GLEN

Sheriff? Why's *she* here, still? You know?

Staffers in the back nod at each other and cluck. Some of the Deputies and staff around are uncomfortable, but one OTHER OPERATOR next to the first persists with the point.

OPERATOR GIRL 2

(to group)

Why don't he just let her go see him?

A few people go pale, looking sick, others turn angry and agree, while others, still, give her a hard glare in silence.

The Sheriff is only startled momentarily, but finds no words for it. He stands before the gruesome photos, breathless.

Bobby enters the bullpen and walks into the briefing area. His brow is raised to the tension, but unaware of why.

He looks the Sheriff up and down, worried, but does not show anything to the crowd. He makes his plan, and takes over.

Bobby clears his throat, making eye contact with everyone.

BOBBY

We've all seen the stuff we picked up this morning. This is no joke.

Mary cuts him off with her usual attitude.

MARY

You want us to think there's a Werewolf running around?

Bobby stands amazed.

BOBBY

No. Of course, it could be anything.
Any cult or.

MARY

This is stupid.

BOBBY

Any cult or psychopath out there who's
just into this stuff.

A younger Deputy, a ROOKIE still working the beat, leans forward with a thought. He is filled with confidence.

ROOKIE DEPUTY

(arrogantly)

Well, if there's a pattern of this thing
going around killing stuff, shouldn't we
call in the FBI or something?

A man from the armory, who's job is to maintain the weapons,
ARMORER JACKSON - an old hand - snorts and chimes in.

ARMORER JACKSON

How about callin' in the National Guard?
Shit.

There is SNICKERING from the group at that, and K-9 handler
Simon gives Jackson an affirmative elbow from nearby.

SHERIFF

We haven't established any larger
pattern. Just because something is spooky
doesn't make it a case, for fuck's sake.

Bobby looks over at the Sheriff, pleased, even if interrupted
by his sudden re-centering of himself. The staff are angry.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

We also don't just go around shooting at
everything that moves, so we have to
figure out some connection.

Bobby helps drive the point home.

BOBBY

What we have is a bunch of hearsay and urban legend mixed with a bunch of crap. We can't discern any pattern, place to place, but found similarities to some cold cases back in the seventies. Yes, there is a lot of interest in the old Lychanthrope killer, but with all we've seen, we're likely looking for a copycat. A big, brutal copycat, and they're clearly interested in this case.

Bobby stops to check on the Sheriff.

He is deep in thought, looking at an image from a tabloid.

SHERIFF

We know we can't explain some of the evidence, but it just means be ready for anything. It doesn't matter if we find satan riding a dinosaur in the end. Our job's to get him.

(beat)

We've got plenty of experience and skill, and I know you all can do it.

People drift away a little as he speaks, all leaving.

Some in the crowd confirm his idea with low, faded voices.

ANONYMOUS

Yeah! Team or whatever!

ANONYMOUS 2

We do all of that, all ready!

The Sheriff gives a nod that is calculated to be polite and respectful to the leaving staff, but his eyes narrow.

THE SHERIFF

Okay. You're all doing fine. Bring me any news or ideas you come up with!
Door's always open.

He gives Bobby a sad look, then returns to the evidence.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT LOBBY - MORNING

The front lobby and intake section of the old Sheriff's department is little more than an official hand-off point. The ancient, open, lifeless room is less than welcoming.

It grows hotter out, and the CLERK at the front desk is sweating in his chair. He fans himself with a magazine.

The heavy guy jumps at a sudden commotion CRASHING through the front doors. Sunlight floods into the open room.

The Man, wrapped in a blanket, is prodded through the door by the two burly deputies from the bar, and a paramedic.

As they proceed, the Medic lets go and leaves the Man in the custody of the Sheriff's department. She hangs by the doors.

A JAILER enters from the rear, and the Clerk leans in his chair satisfied to watch the new entry. Deputy Antonio, with a buddy, leaves the bullpen and passes through, going out.

The others step aside as Antonio glances over, off-hand, curious while walking by. The pair exits. Antonio laughs with his partner as they half-joke about needing lunch.

The Jailer stops halfway across and addresses the Deputies.

The two overweight men sport full mustaches, both twitching at the sudden tension and excitement.

JAILER

What have we got here?

The older Deputy raises a brow and smiles at the Man, who is shaking with chills in the room's heat. The junior responds.

DEPUTY 2

Druggy. Found him out in the fields,
naked and screaming.

The Jailer and the Clerk share a short laugh.

JAILER

So, the usual?

He chuckles again, and motions for them to bring the Man.

CUT TO:

INT. COUNTY JAIL HALLWAY - DAY

The doors from the processing hall open with a BANG.

The Man, now donning an orange jumpsuit, moves through in heavy restraints with the two mustached Deputies, and Jailer.

The long corridor is bright and sterile. A light green stripe runs along the center of its white walls to point the way, and an attempt has been made to renovate the area to code.

The Man's muscles twitch in their chains, which makes the Deputies nervous. They hold him tight and grip their batons.

Step by step, they reach an open cell for the Man to wait in.

They hold him, unbind him, and rest him on the empty cot.

When they go, they lock the cell. The Man sits up and sees Melanie watching him from the cell across the hallway.

She looks down from the guards, and their eyes meet.

CUT TO:

INT. CRIME LAB - DAY

The county's crime lab is located in the back of the department building, set away from the common areas.

The remote location offers the Sheriff and Doc Jansen privacy as they continue to analyze evidence for any available lead.

The Sheriff stands at a tall counter full of lab equipment, holding the same stack of photographs in his hands.

Doc Jansen stands off to the side with his arms folded, watching. His brow is creased with worry and sweat.

Doctor Jansen scoots nearer to the Sheriff, to speak.

JANSEN

You know, I'm not often this stumped.

SHERIFF

I know, Doc.

The Doctor sways from side to side, takes in a deep breath, and states another obvious point.

JANSEN

You'd figure, out of all unknown species of animal in the world, a never before seen canine wouldn't be one of them.

SHERIFF

But that's what the computer says.

JANSEN

I ran it five times! There's nothing wrong with the thing, or my work.

SHERIFF

(laughing)

I know! I know, Doc. No. There's something to these guys.

(beat)

Here.

The Sheriff points at a handful of photographs containing the same two men, both found in different places and periods.

He selects one of the older looking pictures to hold up.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

This is from that cold case I pulled out last night. See them there?

In the photograph, the Man, an Army Specialist at seventeen, stands with a handful of soldiers returning from Vietnam.

Another OLDER MAN smiles with an arm around his shoulder.

The older Man is a huge First Sergeant. They wear the smiles of comrades - once strangers before wartime - bonding after a fight through hell and a return journey home, together.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

Not long after, we've got a violent attack by the old downtown district. Remember the trolley incident? At the same time, these two soldiers just vanish from the face of the Earth.

He sets the photo of the veterans down by the trolley article. There are others with images of this new, Older Man, nearby.

He sighs as he reaches for another from the opposite corner of the spread. The two men regard it thoughtfully for maybe the dozenth time. Still, they consider it with fresh eyes.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

And this, from the cameraman's belongings. This is where it gets...

JANSEN

Fucking weird?

The Sheriff gives a knowing glance of approval, relating.

This other picture is newer than the rest. In it, the Man has only aged a few years time, apparently. He is, however, much larger and stronger looking than in the previous images.

He appears cold looking crossing a street, facing up-road. The headline at the base of the photo reads, "Wolfman Caught! Real Lychanthrope Killer: Exposed!" It's a cheap tabloid.

The Sheriff and Doctor just frown. Disturbed, the Doctor almost attempts to ask something, but holds his tongue.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL CELLS - DAY

In the county's hot, bright, holding and processing cells, Melanie sits taken by the Man's sad, lonely, handsomeness.

He has not moved his eyes away from her since catching her scent and emerging from his languorous, fugue-like state.

He stares at her thin, curvy form, onyx hair, pursed lips, and doe's eyes. He stares at a ghost reflection of himself.

Dilated pupils frame her in one, painterly visage, dreamy, set behind the bars of the cell with her back to the window.

Her posture is naturally perfect. She sits, gracefully, and is at once curvy, seductive, and ageless in that moment.

His own aspect is the same to her, in male form.

He speaks with no words. Melanie gets up and moves cautiously, even with two sets of bars between them.

She grips her fingers around the cold, painted iron.

He watches her, expectantly.

Melanie smiles, but is overcome with frightful butterflies. She tries the usual stupid line.

MELANIE

What uh. Well, what are you in for?

The Man's mouth forms a silent, "oh," and he sits in wonder at her speaking to him. Still, there remains a cold distance. Melanie tries another direction, tall and accusatory.

She points one of her long slender fingers, and continues.

MELANIE (cont'd)

No. Come on. I've seen you before.

He leans back in a shadow to hide himself.

Down the hall, gruff, muffled VOICES bring a lost verdict to a drunk man. A cage door flings open, then closes and LOCKS, as the other inmate is scheduled to move on to real prison.

He complains as they take him away, in BG.

MELANIE (cont'd)

What's wrong with you?

The Man starts laughing, and Melanie reverts to fear.

He sings the opening lines to Bob Dylan's classic, "Man of Constant Sorrow," and hums the harmonica section to himself.

Melanie stands in silence.

When he is finished, the Man flashes her a smile, then in an instant, becomes deadly cold and grim. He looks at his cage.

He hates the cage that keeps her from him, but waits.

MELANIE (cont'd)

You're weird, man.

She goes back to her cot to sit and watch the walls.

Melanie rolls onto her side to curl up, cold and alone.

Her hands move to rest under her cheek. Pain crosses her face as she thinks of Jason, secretively, and remains worried.

She spares an angry scowl for the Sheriff, as well.

Melanie takes a long and difficult breath, closing her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. BULLPEN - DAY

In the hot and stuffy department bullpen, staff are ambling around, tired, caring for the station's few other duties.

Deputy Antonio sits at a borrowed desk in the corner to watch the security footage found at the latest crime scene.

He rests his chin on one hand, growing heavy-eyed in front of an outdated computer. With his other, he scrubs tape forward.

He closes one useless reel, then opens the file to another.

The point of view of the security camera is from the ATM of a building across the street, set at an angle, and overlooking the bar's front doors. It is the only footage that does so.

Antonio watches restlessly until the Man's RV pulls in.

He sits up as the Man gets out, looks around, and walks into the bar. Antonio scrubs back to where the Man faces the lens. There is a slight note of recognition, but he can't place it.

Antonio keeps the image frozen, and raises from his chair. With his eyes frozen on the face of the Man, he leaves to confirm what is bothering him.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL CELLS - DAY

Melanie wakes from her exhausted nap to a light TAPPING sound from somewhere nearby. She frowns, becoming confused.

Something small lands on the rough blanket with another TAP.

She picks it up with her thumb and forefinger, using care, and examines it to find a human molar.

Horrified, Melanie glances to see the Man by his cell bars, staring at her and clutching his hands to his chest. The Man smiles at her brightly, fishing out a long, sharp tooth.

Melanie angles herself to watch the Man from the corners of her eyes, only, trying not to look at him.

Biting his lower lip with concentration, the Man tosses the other tooth, either to torment her or to get her attention.

She doesn't move a muscle.

CUT TO:

INT. DEPARTMENT HALLS - DAY

Antonio hustles down one of the side halls that runs the station's length. He is racing to get to the labs.

Bobby leans from an open doorway and calls out as the young Deputy hurries along with a muddled expression on his face.

BOBBY

Hey! Tony! What's going on, man?

Antonio pauses to consider, then turns.

ANTONIO

I gotta find the Sheriff.

He starts back down the hall at a faster pace.

ANTONIO (cont'd)

I think I saw our guy!

Bobby leaves the room he was working, and follows.

BOBBY

(chasing)

Now, hold on a minute.

His curiosity persists as he trots after Deputy Antonio.

CUT TO:

INT. LAB - DAY

The Sheriff and Doc Jansen are at the tail-end of a heated debate next to one of the lab's many paper strewn work areas when Deputy Antonio barges into the room.

Deputy Bobby catches up to hover by Antonio's shoulder, waits, and watches the argument come to its conclusion.

SHERIFF

What do you mean, 'Maybe?!'

Maybe what?

JANSEN

Maybe... Well, I over-think things.

The Sheriff raises a brow to push him forward.

JANSEN (cont'd)

(exasperated)

Maybe, professionally speaking, it's just too fucked for me.

Doctor Jansen throws up his hands. The Sheriff grows disappointed. For the first time, ever, they look at each other as complete strangers, one not knowing the other.

After some time to reflect, the Sheriff neatly wraps things up with a final thought of his own.

SHERIFF

We may have some strange, awful stuff that's fallen into our laps lately, but we can't, cannot - absolutely, have a duty to not - ever panic people with wild conjecture and fairy tails.

The Doctor shows his knowing acceptance of the fact, nodding.

The Sheriff points to the table of evidence before them.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

That could very well be our killer, but come on, Doc.

They notice Deputies Antonio and Bobby for the first time when Bobby clears his throat. They give their attention.

Bobby prods Deputy Antonio from behind to finally speak.

Antonio steps forward, childlike, filled with the suppressed pride and nervousness contained within his report.

The Sheriff and Doctor respond at the same time.

SHERIFF AND JANSEN

Yes?

Yeah?

Deputy Antonio gulps, goes to speak, and tries to extend the note of suspense by remaining unforthcoming and vague.

ANTONIO

I got something you guys might want to take a look at.

He points his thumb back over his shoulder, smirking and slyly biting his tongue.

The Sheriff and Doctor respond at the same time.

SHERIFF AND JANSEN

No!

They each then give their two cents in a rapid-fire succession, almost in concert.

JANSEN

Just give us the facts.

SHERIFF

Let's hear your report, Deputy.

BOBBY

Just tell them, man.

ANTONIO

Okay! Okay.

He straightens himself to a lazy attention.

ANTONIO (cont'd)

I matched the face from security tapes in evidence to a guy we took in this morning. We got our guy, I think.

(assuredly)

We already got our guy.

The group chases after the Sheriff, who is scrambling from the room in a wide-eyed rush. He grabs the handle of the door to the lab, and swings it wide. The men stay at his heels.

CUT TO:

INT. BULLPEN - AFTERNOON

The Sheriff marches down the main aisle of the department's bullpen. The doors ease closed behind him and his small party, consisting of Bobby, Doctor Jansen, and Antonio.

They move in a V-pattern down the length of the room.

Staff are huddled around in small groups, watching.

Arriving at the door to the corner of the Sheriff's office, they stop to let the Sheriff proceed inside, alone.

Antonio looks left to see Glen and some others wave him over. He strolls off to meet them, and see what they are doing.

Jansen hardly acknowledges Antonio's parting, and Bobby remains intent on watching the Sheriff gather important files, a pen, and a set of master keys from his drawer.

The Sheriff exits his office, folders in hand, but spying Antonio, Glen, and the other staff, he LOCKS his door.

He looks over his men and gives his only instructions.

SHERIFF

Let's go. Tony! Come on!

They turn and begin walking toward the holding cells.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL CELLS - AFTERNOON

The Man stands motionless by the bars of his cell as he stares at Melanie, who has withdrawn into herself.

In her frustration, Melanie's fear of the Man turns to anger. She rolls back over to rail against him, standing with a jump and filling her lungs to shout until her face goes red.

MELANIE

You know what!? You fucking creep! Hey!

The Man, staring at a spot on the floor before him, looks up into her eyes with a singularly cold, stone-faced expression.

MELANIE (cont'd)

What's wrong with you!? I got you!

She grasps the bars, white-knuckled and full of rage, trying to kill him with a look. His look remains just as deadly.

The doors down at the far end of the hall are flung open. Through them, the Sheriff enters with his small team.

They march to the holding cells.

Not hesitating, Mel tries to fill them in as they pass.

MELANIE (cont'd)

Guys! Sheriff!

The Sheriff ignores her entirely.

Deputy Bobby posts himself beside the Sheriff to watch Melanie with suspicion, and Antonio sneaks her a small wave.

MELANIE (cont'd)

Guys! Guys, wait! He's not human!

The Sheriff unlocks the Man's cell.

MELANIE (cont'd)

Listen to me! He's not even human!

The Sheriff addresses the Man, pulling cuffs from his belt.

SHERIFF

Turn around.

The Man smiles.

He makes a violent move for the Sheriff.

Bobby is too quick with his Taser for the Man to connect.

The Man is stunned, but maintains enough control to push away from a full shock. It takes both men to bring him down and cuff him. After a small struggle, he submits.

Melanie's voice is drowned as she can do nothing but watch, helpless and frozen. She backs away, speechless and unsure.

The Man is still smiling as they drag him out.

CUT TO:

INT. BULLPEN - AFTERNOON

The department's bullpen staff have all gathered in a corner around Deputy Glen and a few others.

Their muffled voices fall to a hush as the Sheriff bursts in with his prisoner being pushed to his front.

They take a right towards the interrogation chambers, all eyes upon them as they hurry through. The Sheriff stops by Deputy Antonio's shoulder as they approach the doors.

SHERIFF

Hold it down out here, Tony.

The younger Deputy nods an affirmative to his leader.

The Sheriff's cold frown remains as he continues on to the interrogation rooms, and the doors swing SHUT behind him.

Once the Sheriff is gone, Deputy Antonio turns to the eager crowd on the other side of the bullpen, and beams victory.

ANTONIO

They tased him! Haha!

It gains a reaction from many. Glen beckons him back over.

He abides with sudden caution.

ANTONIO (cont'd)

Oh? What gives?

He walks forward to where his friends are gathered.

Deputy Glen bids he follow away from the rest of the group.

Together, they make their way down the many halls going in the direction of the lobby. Antonio presses for an answer.

ANTONIO (cont'd)

What gives man?

Deputy Glen pushes on the front door just a fraction.

GLEN

Oh, you'll see.

His smile is wicked, betraying a scheme as they exit.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT PARKING - AFTERNOON

Deputies Glen and Antonio walk outside, pass the faded front exterior, and sneak to the gravelly parking lot on the side.

They reach a beat-up old pickup truck with a confederate flag on the window next to the sticker of some terrible rock band. A dirty, paint-drizzled tarp is draped over the rear.

The Deputies approach it, and Glen pulls back a corner.

ANTONIO

Holy shit, dude!

Deputy Glen responds with a huge grin of pride.

In the bed of his large truck he has brought an arsenal.

Among the various shotguns and assault weapons are a collection of explosives, both surplus and homemade.

Deputy Glen picks out a pipe bomb to show, and lets the shock sink in before explaining. Antonio sags from the weight.

GLEN

I didn't go to justice school to be pushed around by no criminals.

He hefts the bomb back from a nervous Antonio.

GLEN (cont'd)

But that doesn't mean I'm gonna be slowed down by no pussies, either. I've been ready for this, for years.

Glen puts the bomb back in its place.

Deputy Antonio's awed expression turns to enthusiasm.

ANTONIO

True that, man! Haha! Yea!

They take in Glen's contribution with excited, childlike anticipation for a few seconds, then close it shut.

CUT TO:

INT. JASON'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

In Jason's quiet, isolated hospital room, his bandaged, unconscious form dreams restlessly. He sweats and shakes, moaning, while his closed eyes dart from side to side.

His breathing quickens and becomes erratic, jarring him. Though unaware, he moans with some terrible inner pain.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL CELLS - AFTERNOON

Melanie holds the bars of her cell and looks at the far wall of the other. She droops a soft cheek against the cold metal, and stands there a while, thinking, hurting with confusion.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - AFTERNOON

The interrogation session is proceeding.

The Sheriff and the Man sit eye to eye in a bold standoff with the Man locked in restraints wearing an orange jumpsuit.

The Man remains silent and distant as the Sheriff considers his options. He has a file-folder containing evidence under a hand on the table. They both regard it with matching frowns.

SHERIFF

Why don't you tell us your name?

No response.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

How about what you're doing in town?

The Man doesn't seem to relate. The Sheriff notices the strange uneasiness, and presses on with his questioning.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

Do you have family here?

The Sheriff takes a moment to study the Man's unusual reactions. He seems confident to the lawman, but having a strange conversation with his own imagination, in silence.

The Sheriff opens the folder to reveal the photographs, observing the Man with anticipation as he does so.

The Man's attention is grabbed by the photo of soldiers for a moment. He scans the others, cursorily, then returns to it.

The Sheriff notices the shift, and points to the resemblance of the Man at a younger age standing with a veteran Sergeant.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

How about him? Your Dad?

(beat)

Big brother maybe?

The Man smiles a silent laugh for an unknown joke.

The Sheriff points to the older soldier in the picture.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

And him?

The Man's smile disappears.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

Do you know him?

With the Man's continued blank expression, the Sheriff loses his patience. He places the samples of fur on the table.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

(forcefully)

Well does this mean anything to you?

The Man takes a sniff at the items, and looks at the sample of gray fur with a hint of recognition. He opens up, finally.

THE MAN

It's the Sergeant. Sergeant Chaney.

He smiles again, both happy and wicked.

The Sheriff is wanting more.

SHERIFF

Oh? What can you tell me about Sergeant Chaney? Is he from around here?

Nothing.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

Sergeant Chaney?

The Man SLAMS his fists down on the table in spite of his restraints. The blow shakes the entire room, loudly.

The Sheriff immediately reacts by standing and stepping back.

The Man rages, pulling at his restraints.

The Sheriff quickly regains control. He produces his canister of pepper spray to subdue him. The Man assumes a submissive posture, but tightens, ready to absorb the pain.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

Enough?! I want answers! Now!

The Sheriff stands at his fullest height.

THE MAN

(laughingly)

You ever heard of the A Shau Valley?

The Sheriff pauses to consider his history lessons.

SHERIFF

What? Recon? I sort of gathered that.

What the hell's it got to do with.

The Man grins.

THE MAN

You just don't get it, my man.

The Sheriff takes a deep breath, growing wary.

SHERIFF

No. I think you're the one who's not getting it. We've got you on tape entering that bar, and a truckload of evidence connecting you with crimes I can't even begin to describe.

(beat)

Are you going to start explaining yourself? Just start from the top.

THE MAN

I don't even think I need to.

The Sheriff furrows his brow at the strange retort.

He breathes in as if to say something poignant, but stops.

SHERIFF

I've had enough of you.

The Sheriff walks back to the doorway, opens it, and leans out to call Deputy Bobby over to finish up.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

Get him out of here! We're done. Take him back to his cell!

(to the man)

We're going to figure you out.

THE MAN

Oh yeah.

Bobby storms into the room and moves to unhook the Man. They leave peacefully, the Man seeming mellow.

CUT TO:

INT. JASON'S ROOM - EVENING

Deputy Jason, still unconscious, twitches and shakes in his hospital bed. He is covered with sweat, and moaning subtly.

Beyond his window, the Sun is setting.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL CELLS - EVENING

Deputy Bobby handles the Man back to his cell. Melanie James, reporter, pushes her face through the bars and shouts to him.

MELANIE

Bobby! Listen to me!
He's a fucking werewolf!

Bobby stops with the Man's elbow in hand. He looks back.

BOBBY

You're a fucking werewolf.

The Man shuffles into his cell. Bobby shuts the cage and locks it, then unshackles the Man through the bars.

He takes his leave, with the Man just standing there.

MELANIE

Did it bite him?! Did it bite Jason?!

Deputy Bobby exits the holding cell area without responding.

The Man's face is a work of evil, gazing at the sky through the cell's small window. The sly grin has not left his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT SKY - SUNSET

The Sun dips behind the horizon as its counterpart rises.
The third night of the full lunar phase has begun.

CUT TO:

INT. JASON'S ROOM - NIGHT

As the night looms into Deputy Jason's room, and the hospital enters lights-out time, the wounded man's tremors increase. His wounds, both bite and buckshot, heal across his body.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL CELLS - NIGHT

The Man remains standing in the position he had been left.

In the cell across the way, Melanie has moved forward to the bars and is watching intently. Her breathing grows shallow.

Without warning, the Man takes three steps to the far wall. He drops to his knees in a praying position.

As the moon begins its ascent outside, the Man SMACKS his forehead against the concrete. SMACK. SMACK. SMACK. SMACK.

Each blow becomes more wet as his blood, skull, and brain splatter from his open head and upon the white walls. Though safe in her cell, Melanie recoils from the horror.

CUT TO:

INT. JASON'S ROOM - NIGHT

Deputy Jason's eyes snap open. He takes a deep gasp, looking around in a frantic daze. Inside, his bones break and churn.

As his muscles strangely begin to increase in mass, he screams, and long gray hairs extend from his every pore.

Transforming, he writhes as his bandages tear away.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL CELLS - NIGHT

Dead on the floor, the Man's body twists and deforms. Loud CRUNCHING can be heard from inside of him. Melanie realizes the meaning of the ugly sight, and screams.

MELANIE

Somebody help! Help me!!!

No one responds as the Man continues to turn.

CUT TO:

INT. JASON'S ROOM - NIGHT

Half-way through his transformation from man to wolf, painfully, Jason's screams become less and less human.

His spine and shoulders arch violently as his face stretches and morphs into a snout. Opening, sharp teeth push through. The tortured screaming continues with every rhythm of change.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL CELLS - NIGHT

On the floor of his jail cell, the Man's body is growing bulbous with fresh musculature and dark fur pushing out.

As his self-inflicted head injury begins to heal, and his snout appears, something like wet, insidious LAUGHTER comes from his working jaw, jutting teeth, and lengthening tongue.

Melanie is too frightened and in shock to scream anymore.

As the moon reaches the center of the small jail-cell window, in a jolt, the Man's body springs up, ripping the uniform. The Wolf is made and healed in one motion of pure strength.

It takes a moment to revel at the moon, then turns around.

With extreme aggression it destroys its cage, breaking out. The bars TEAR from their hinges with ease in its great claws.

It wastes no time getting to Melanie. The Wolf grabs her up in such a way that she can only hang on like a small child, clung to its thick fur, wide-eyed and begging for release.

CUT TO:

INT. JASON'S ROOM - NIGHT

The final stages of Deputy Jason's transformation are violent and uncontrollable. Taking on a lighter gray color, he rises.

The GRAY WOLF fills the space as it stands and tears the small room apart. It CRACKS the window with its head and shoulder, then flings the heavy bed into the far wall.

Not wanting to take the leap - or fall - from a high story, the Gray Wolf squeezes out of the door with a ROAR and single-minded purpose. It checks around for a way out of the halls.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT LOBBY - NIGHT

The fat clerk manning the desk of the department's lobby hears the sound of tearing metal, and looks over.

There comes a sudden CRASH, booming, that shakes the walls.

The few others seated in the lobby go to stand, unsure.

CUT TO:

INT. BULLPEN - NIGHT

The relative peace of the bullpen at this hour, during shift change, is disturbed by an ominous and rhythmic POUNDING.

All heads turn in the half-filled room. The uniformed Deputies begin to move cautiously in its direction.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Escaping from the stress of his recent confrontation, deep in thought, the Sheriff rests at his desk with headphones on.

Depression marks him, draining his color and spirit away. He refuses to sulk, but bobs his head as he reads a novel.

His desk moves to a sudden tremor, then shaking of the room. He is curious as his coffee sloshes strangely in its mug.

Again, there is a sudden SHAKE. He tears the headphones away.

The Sheriff stands and moves to the door with fresh concern.

CUT TO:

INT. DEPARTMENT HALLS - NIGHT

Deputy Bobby remains in the outer halls of the building nearest to the labs and the jail area. He turns to a BOOM.

Hearing it's similarity to a gunshot, he resolves himself to check on the sudden disturbance. He runs there double-time. Warily, he approaches the doors to the processing rooms.

With a resounding SMASH, the Wolf batters its way through, sending splintered pieces of wall in all directions.

It still holds Melanie over its shoulder in a protective way. She is awake, but delirious. Seeing Bobby now, she whimpers.

Instinctive shock sets Bobby's face into frozen terror. Deputy Bobby reaches for his weapon and swiftly draws it.

Moving even faster with its free hand, the Wolf takes hold of a massive metal file cabinet, with claws tearing into it.

Using one heavy swing of its huge arm, it brings the object around in a haymaker and obliterates Bobby against the wall.

Ego removed, Mel feints in the Wolf's grasp. Watches no more. The Wolf continues for the building's exit, to freedom.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The glass doors of the hospital's front entrance SHATTER as the Gray Wolf breaks its way out at the ground floor.

To its rear in the lobby, unknown blood covers everything.

It takes hold of an injured looking runner, throwing him through another tall window like a fastball to his death.

Continuing forward in an enraged panic, the Gray Wolf stops periodically to check for a scent, or feeling. Sensing it, finally, the Gray Wolf chooses a direction and bounds away.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

The Sheriff is the first member of the department with the courage to fully respond to the calamity. The others wait to his rear on the other side of the door and by the bullpen.

Spotting the monstrous form of the Wolf outside the window with Melanie swung over its shoulder, he understands.

The only part of Deputy Bobby that has remained intact, resting mangled in the corner, is a hand with his watch.

The Sheriff recognizes it, and stands over his friend's crushed remains. Horrible, fresh loss crosses his hard face, then is replaced by a firm resolve. He finally breathes.

Unable to wait, he rushes for the front doors. Glen, Antonio, and number of others peering over his shoulder, step in after him to examine the damage for themselves. They stop in alarm.

GLEN

I knew it! Come on!

The Sheriff barely catches this as he sprints outside.

His men backtrack and go to the rear of the building.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT PARKING - NIGHT

Deputies Glen and Antonio, followed by most of the men, Simon, and Jackson, make their way to the vehicles.

Glen rushes directly to his truck and begins unloading his heavy arsenal. Though his eyes are determined, a small, excited smile creases his otherwise dull face. He hustles.

Antonio takes hold of an illegally modified assault rifle, and gets charged up. The others stand shocked, but aware of the need for extra firepower, they take the guns and bombs.

GLEN

Come on! We gotta get everybody on this!

He grabs a bundle of pipe bombs and dynamite, then runs off back to the Sheriff's department offices, rushing awkwardly.

Deputy Antonio remains at his heels, and the others comply.

To the front of the parking lot, the Sheriff drives away.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Mary, the operators, and other desk-staff, have secured themselves in one of the many small office partitions. Deputy Glen comes bursting through the door in a hurry.

GLEN

Hey! Wake up!

He hands one of the operators a bomb.

GLEN (cont'd)

This thing could be back any second!

He hands Mary a stick of dynamite and an uzi from his bundle. She takes them, looking confused and now terrified.

GLEN (cont'd)

You're gonna need these! We're gonna get this son of a bitch!

He drops more equipment on a small coffee table, nods to the frightened, inexperienced men and women, then exits the room. Load lightened, he exhales and is impressed with himself.

He closes the door behind him, stepping into the bullpen. Antonio and one of the mustached Deputies are waiting.

ANTONIO

Jackson's getting the wagon! They're bringing it around front, now!

Confidently in charge and walking towards them, Deputy Glen nods his approval for their initiative, and is emboldened.

GLEN

Alright! Let's just.

BOOM!

Behind him, the glass of the office shakes with the concussion of a pipe bomb explosion, and is drenched with the fresh blood and ichor of the room's slaughtered occupants.

Glen looks back with his mouth open, and his knees shake. Doctor Jansen enters with a shotgun aimed firmly at Glen. With all fight gone from him, Glen submits and holds still.

The mustached Deputy pushes past him with Antonio behind. They crack the door of the small office and peer inside.

DEPUTY

Jesus, holy shit!

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Weaving its way along the town's empty main street, downtown, the Sheriff's patrol car with its lights turned off, attempts to pursue the rapidly fleeing Wolf, and Melanie.

About a quarter of a mile away, the Wolf's form can be seen leaping building after building with Melanie over-shoulder.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN PARK - NIGHT

Reaching the town's central park - a grassy, tree lined, path and fountain speckled affair - the Wolf gently sets Melanie down on the cool, dew covered lawn by the pond.

Her dress is maroon as dried blood in the thick moonlight.

It raises up to consider the moon's reflection on the water.

For a moment it turns to look down almost understandingly upon Melanie, who remains unconscious after her long ordeal.

The Wolf's eyes widen as it spins, catching a new scent.

Trees on the far side of the park SHAKE to a large presence. There is silence for a time, the whole park holding still.

The Wolf braces itself as a sudden onrush of large, pawed FOOTSTEPS comes charging in its direction. It waits, ready.

From the shadows of a nearby treeline, the Gray Wolf comes leaping out, and makes a furious attack charge that closes the gap between itself and the Wolf almost immediately.

The two Beasts lock arms in a furious struggle for dominance. A battle ensues, bloodily raging all over the park.

Melanie awakens to witness the combat. She makes no sound.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Most of the town's small businesses are located along the strip of its main street. Storefronts of all types.

The Sheriff's patrol car confidently turns from the road and plows through the front of the local jewelry store with a CRASH of glass and metal that sprays in all directions.

He rolls out of his smashed car and wastes no time in gathering as much of the silver as he can grab through the broken, jutting shards of glass in the display cases.

He does not notice the pain of his cuts, but carries the determination of a man who owns his mistakes, stays hopeful, and knows what to do now. Hardly a piece of silver is left.

Popping the trunk of his patrol car, he places the silver into one of his brown paper evidence bags, then folds and wraps it as tightly as he can into a packed rectangle.

He takes his trusty roll of duct tape, and secures it to the front of the ancient claymore mine taken from the Man's RV.

Once finished, it forms a shaped charge of silver death.

He holds the weighty object to his chest and goes running as fast as he can out of the storefront towards the park.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN PARK - NIGHT

Fierce growling and TEARING of flesh continues in the park where the wolves do battle. Hair and shadow crash like waves.

Melanie is trapped by the fountains, observing in horrified bewilderment, but she makes no move to run or escape.

She does retain enough clarity and initiative to try snapping photographs with Skip's phone - always a reporter, first.

The clash of the Wolf and Gray Wolf rages around the trees, to the edge of the pond, through the water, under the moon.

They cut swathes from the surroundings wherever they go. During the fight, the Gray Wolf goes berserk and wild while the Wolf remains a calm, steadfast, dominant presence.

For every powerful blow of the Gray Wolf, there is a recovery and counter-attack. The two match force.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

The Sheriff hustles as hard and as fast as his armored, utility belt equipped, land-mine holding, aging, desk-bound body can carry him. He works to control his breathing.

Bounding through one intersection, he unfastens his belt and lets it fall in a CLATTER to the pavement. He picks up speed.

The park he must reach is on the next block. He can see it. He can hear the growling, GNASHING, and roaring in BG.

It takes an eternity to struggle those last hundred yards.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN PARK - NIGHT

The two Wolves throw one another a distance apart.

After regaining their feet in the torn grass, then posturing, on the cue of the twitching of their ears and the moon behind cloud cover, they make a final banzai charge for dominance.

Their meeting is terrible and savage, but the Wolf delivers the most severe blow to the chin of the Gray. Stunned and off balance, the Gray Wolf is no longer a match for its maker.

The Wolf takes it by the midsection and throat, then hurls it into the nearby pond with a massive SPLASH that settles.

Melanie, only vaguely aware of what is occurring and having difficulty even telling the two creatures apart, stretches for a look from behind her hastily discovered hiding spot.

The Wolf takes a few confident steps to the water's edge.

It catches a familiar and deadly smell on the wind, halting.

Its massive snout forms something like a smile.

The Wolf gives Melanie one last look over its shoulder, but such a look is almost indescribable. Pity? Admiration? Hate?

There is no time to decide as it takes off into the night.

Appearing safer with the Gray Wolf's defeat, Melanie comes forward and begins to photograph the damage to the park.

There is a disturbance on the water, creating a ripple with a STIRRING. Melanie looks up from her camera phone and turns the light away to take a better look at the pond's surface.

After a short settling, the Gray Wolf once again stands tall. Water drips from its soaked, clingy fur, and darkens it over.

The Gray Wolf's pupils glow bright as it opens its eyes.

It takes a moment to regard her there, but shows no sign of recognition. She remains frozen. The Gray Wolf trudges away from the water to follow in the direction of its opponent.

MELANIE

Jason?

The Gray Wolf stops its brooding motion.

Turning into an enraged, mindless, hate-filled monster of no relation to its former self, the Gray Wolf spins towards her.

MELANIE (cont'd)

Jason?! No! NO!

It moves at killing speed towards the obstacle in its way.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The Sheriff reaches the park, pushing through exhaustion. He rounds the corner of the entrance archway, jumps a hedge, and arrives just in time to witness the end of Melanie James.

The Gray Wolf strikes her hard enough to hit the trunk of a tree that circles the path around the park's central pond.

Her spine breaks with a loud SNAP, and a THUMP to the ground.

The Sheriff feels no more fatigue during his murderous assault on the Gray Wolf. Silently, he charges for it.

The Gray Wolf acknowledges his coming with a SNARL.
The Sheriff runs almost to where Melanie lays broken.

Finally, he lets his war-cry free, besting even the Gray Wolf's mean growling in volume, pitch, and hateful fury.

Between it and Melanie, the Gray Wolf addresses the new threat with a fresh charge, claws outstretched to kill.

Using precision and latent acrobatic skill, the Sheriff sets the claymore in its path, and performs a backwards roll.

CLICK-CLICK-CLICK, as the Sheriff thumbs the clacker.

WHUMP-BOOOM!

In a flash, the mine sends its six hundred ball bearings and pieces of silver showering into the Gray Wolf's body, which vaporizes it in a puff of flesh, bone, and tufts of fur.

The Sheriff, still dangerously close to the event, is blown back by the concussion near to where Melanie is resting.

Silence and the night sky consumes him, briefly.

Melanie James opens her beautiful eyes, a line of blood on her lips crossing along a small smile. She looks at him. Neither is able to move. The Sheriff lays in tatters.

She tries to say something.

SHERIFF

Mel?

She struggles for the words, but finds few.

MELANIE

(inaudibly)

Hey. Hey handsome.

(beat)

Here. This was your's.

She works her hand into a pocket and produces the ladybug.

SHERIFF

It's okay, Mel. I got it. You're gonna be okay. Heh. You're gonna be fine.

MELANIE

There were two. Two.

The Sheriff crawls painfully to her side.

MELANIE (cont'd)

I lost.

The Sheriff does not want her to exert herself, hurting from her pain as much as his own. Horrible worry claws his face.

MELANIE (cont'd)

I lost you both.

Melanie James passes away in that moment.

The Sheriff beholds her angelic face a little longer. He removes his backup weapon from his ankle holster. His hand shakes as he places it to his temple.

Drops it back to his side.

Cries for a moment.

Puts it back to his temple.

Is more steady this time.

Drops it.

The moon watches everything.

CUT TO:

THE END

End Credit Animation:

First Person of the Wolf running through woods.