

O F F S P R I N G

Written by
Charles Huttinger
&
Jeff Huttinger

Jeffhutt@hotmail.com

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FADE IN:

On a ROSE.

It sits in a small vase surrounded by a bouquet of dying or already dead mates.

This particular one still clings to life. There's a lingering brightness in its petals that pleads, "Please, I'm just not ready to go yet."

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

Beside the vase, a waif-ish young girl, JACKIE (7), lays on the bed tangled in her sheets. Her arm is hooked to an I.V. bag dangling just above her bald head.

She anxiously scans the clock as the seconds creep past. *TICK... TICK... TICK....* 6pm.

Instantly, she is beaming. She turns to the door --

Like clockwork, a handsome YOUNG PHYSICIAN glides into the room pushing a wheelchair with a large grocery sack.

DR. CHRIS REYNOLDS (late 20s), possibly even more excited to be there --

CHRIS

You ready?

Jackie proudly holds up a little pink backpack.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Let's go!

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - A LITTLE LATER

Racing through the corridors of the Cancer Care Unit of this Children's Hospital --

The wheelchair, now carrying Jackie's fragile frame, rushes past various hospital personnel at a safe, but still fun, speed.

Jackie moves her tiny fist forward and backward like a stick-shift as the young doctor revises the sound of his "VROOM!" accordingly.

The chair comes to a "screeching" halt.

Jackie opens the backpack as Chris reaches in. Pulling out a pudding cup and a plastic spoon, he races inside a hospital room, placing a dessert on the tray of an anxious TWEEN PATIENT.

TWEEN PATIENT
(weakly)
Thank you, Dr. Reynolds.

CHRIS
You're more than welcome, sweetie.

INT. PETEY'S HOSPITAL ROOM

A LITTLE BALD BOY sits up in bed, eagerly awaiting his treat.

Chris leans in the doorway --

CHRIS
Petey! My man! What's your pleasure tonight? I've got chocolate, vanilla, or chocolate mixed with vanilla.

PETEY
(all smiles)
Chocolate!

CHRIS
(horrible British accent)
An excellent choice, sir!

EXT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jackie hands Chris TWO chocolate pudding cups.

CHRIS
Two?

Jackie nods as a mischievous smile creeps onto her face.

Her infectious grin goes to work on Chris. He can't help but smile back.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
You're the boss.

INT. PETEY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chris places the two cups onto a tray in front of Petey.

CHRIS
 Petey! You little stud you! One is
 from me... and one is from...

Chris leans down, whispers something into Petey's ear. He
 gestures back to the hallway as Jackie peeks in.

Chris high-fives Petey as the little boy blushes.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 (to Petey)
 Keep up the good work, buddy.

EXT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Chris's cell phone rings. Scanning the caller ID -- "EMILY".
 Sighing, Chris declines the call.

CHRIS
 (to Jackie)
 Who's next?

Throttling forward, Jackie points down the hall.

JACKIE
 Katie!

Chris "starts his engines" and ZOOM, they're off.

INT. DAVID'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NEXT DAY

Chris stands over the bed of another sick patient. Six-year
 old DAVID jerks a hand-held video game around as his PARENTS
 take in his latest prognosis --

CHRIS
 (to parents)
 So I think we give this new
 medication a chance and see where
 we are in a couple of weeks.

They nod wearily. Exhausted -- they're obviously running on
 fumes at this point.

Tossing the game aside, David pulls out a book of scary
 stories from under his blanket.

DAVID
 Story time!

David's father takes a look at the book. On the cover -- a GROTESQUE MONSTER stares back at him.

DAD
Where did you get this?

DAVID
Hospital library.

DAD
I don't think so, pal. Visiting hours are almost over. Tell you what, tomorrow your mother and I will return with some new books. Something... a little more your speed. Okay, kiddo? How does that sound?

Chris watches as David's heart is crushed.

CHRIS
I'd be happy to return that for you on my way out.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NIGHT -LATER

A PRETTY NURSE makes her rounds, peeking into the children's rooms, making sure everyone is asleep. All the rooms are dark... except for one.

The nurse makes her way to the dimly lit room at the end of the wing. Gazing inside --

Chris animatedly reads from the scary book to little David. Holding a flashlight under his chin for effect, he cackles maniacally.

The nurse shakes her head and simply smiles.

INT. RECEPTION DESK - LATER

Sweaty and out of breath, Chris stops by the desk. He hands the pretty nurse, RACHEL, some files.

RACHEL
You're gonna give that poor boy nightmares.

CHRIS
Just harmless fun. Besides, David has worse things to be scared of.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
His T Cell count is down and the
radiation isn't working.

Chris's eyes say it all. David doesn't have much time left.
Rachel affectionately places a caring hand on top of his.

The two share a look. A look that seems to say there is more
here than professional courtesy. Rachel catches herself
staring at Chris for a little too long.

RACHEL
Well, these kids are very lucky to
have someone like you looking after
them.

Chris and Rachel share a look again. She smiles.

Chris's phone rings again. Spotting the called ID -- "Emily."

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Let me guess. Emily again?

CHRIS
Fifth time today.

RACHEL
Christ almighty, it's not like you
promised to marry her. I guess some
girls don't know when a good time
is just a good time.

CHRIS
(softly)
Right. Just a good time.

Eyeing him seductively --

RACHEL
You know, you'd never have that
problem with someone like me.

INT. SUPPLY CLOSET - MOMENTS LATER

PING! A new VOICE MAIL. The message plays over the scene --

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
*Chris, I need you to pick up. I
need to speak to you... I don't
want to do it like this.*

Chris and Rachel burst into the small room already hot and
heavy.

Months of simmering sexual tension finally boiling over.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*But you're not leaving me any
 choice here. I've been calling.
 I've been calling all day and --*

They bump into a shelving unit a little too hard as medical supplies rain down on them.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*I'm pregnant. I'm pregnant, Chris.
 You're gonna be a father.*

They share a laugh before going right back at it.

INT. DINER - DAY

Sitting across from Chris -- EMILY DAVIS (mid 20s), petite and "pretty-ish." I mean, not ugly but under the right conditions, could easily be described as plain.

Chris picks at a blueberry muffin as Emily pushes away a half-eaten omelette.

EMILY
 I don't know what I was thinking
 ordering that.

CHRIS
 How far along are you? Officially.

EMILY
 Six weeks.

CHRIS
 So still early?

EMILY
 Still early enough to change my
 mind, is that what you mean?

Chris puts his hands up, defensively. *I don't wanna fight.*

CHRIS
 What clinic did you go to?

EMILY
 You wanted discretion, right? Don't
 worry, we don't know anyone there.
 Your dirty little secret is safe.

Chris looks away. Maybe this was a mistake.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I just thought... I just thought your reaction would be so different. You losing your parents at a young age. Me bouncing around foster home to foster home. We could be a family. I could give you a family.

CHRIS

Stop.

EMILY

I just know that once you see our child, once you've held him --

CHRIS

Emily, stop! I never wanted this. I never asked for it!

EMILY

You told me things, Chris! You made promises. Back when you were still a rookie pissing your pants at the sight of blood. Remember? Who was there for you?

Emily's eyes well with tears. Chris's would too if he wasn't so good at playing tough. Pushing past the pain --

CHRIS

Listen, you won't get a husband. That kid won't get a father, and you won't get your happily ever after. What you will get is a check every month. And a constant reminder that you're all alone in this. I'm moving to New York and that's it.

Emily nods. Wiping her eyes, she slides out of the booth.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

What are you gonna do?

EMILY

Raise it. With all the love you've denied yourself.

Tossing the SONOGRAM at him before exiting --

EMILY (CONT'D)

Have a nice life, asshole.

INT. HOSPITAL

MONTAGE

- Chris pushes Jackie in her wheelchair - their daily snack delivery. Jackie is looking worse for the wear, definitely not up to the task. She vomits all over her gown. Chris rushes to help, along with other hospital staff.

- Chris enters the room of the anxious tween girl we met earlier. She is thinner now. Weaker. Her parents have to help her sit up in bed to greet her visitor.

- Chris brings a pudding cup to Petey. Petey looks past him, to the hallway, eager to see Jackie. Chris shakes his head "sorry." Petey's enthusiasm deflates.

- Chris reads aloud to an unconscious David, while his respirator breathes for him.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

CLOSE on a flower. The flower. The last one bursting with life...

It's dead now. And Jackie's room is empty.

Except for the solitary Chris, sitting in the dimly lit room. He clutches the sonogram in his trembling hand, gazing at it.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

A door is pounded on from outside.

Moving cautiously through a darkened room -- the resident, wearing only boxer briefs, approaches the entryway. Gripping a PISTOL at his side, he nervously looks out the peephole.

This is PATRICK REYNOLDS (25), Chris's little brother and closest friend.

A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN slinks up from behind, equally concerned with who is beating on the door. She is dressed in a POLICE DEPT. t-shirt and nothing else.

She snatches the guns from Patrick's grasp --

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN

(whispering)

Give me that thing before you hurt yourself. Who is it?

Patrick backs off from the peephole, looking relieved.

PATRICK
It's my brother.

Patrick yanks open the front door to an extremely intoxicated Chris.

CHRIS
HEEEEEYYYYY!!!!

PATRICK
Christ man, get in here. We thought
you were her husband!

CHRIS
Ah, the Reynolds boys! Always
sticking it where it doesn't
belong. We're brothers alright!
(singing)
WE ARE FAM-I-LY!

Chris finally truly notices the woman.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Hi. I'm Chris, Patrick's older
brother. And you are... probably
still in shock at how small his
penis really is.

Quickly gathering herself, she heads back to the bedroom.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN
I should probably get going.

PATRICK
I'm sorry.

Chris calls after her --

CHRIS
Everyone at school called him
Babydick!

LATER

Chris and Patrick share a brew out on the balcony.

CHRIS
She's a cop?! Are you kidding me?

PATRICK

And a damn good one. Ambitious as hell. She'll make detective in no time.

CHRIS

That's awesome! Right here --

Going for a sloppy hi-five, Chris loses his balance, almost doing a header right over the railing.

Patrick catches him before being pushed away --

CHRIS (CONT'D)

No, no, no. Let me fall. In fact, what did you do with that gun? A bullet to the brain doesn't sound like a bad idea right about now.

PATRICK

What happened tonight?

CHRIS

I could never be a father, Patty. I just can't. I don't have it in me.

PATRICK

Oh. This again.

CHRIS

I see kids dying all the time. Helpless victims. In a world that just wants to destroy. I could never have a child and... and then just lose them. I'm not strong enough, bro.

Patrick wraps an arm around his older brother, squeezing him closer.

PATRICK

You're stronger than you think. Stronger than anyone I've ever met. Whatever happens... it's going to be alright. Try to look on the bright side.

CHRIS

What's that?

PATRICK

I always wanted to be an uncle.

Chris laughs but is clearly on the verge of tears.

CHRIS

Did I tell you why I broke up with Emily? Why it all fell apart? Because I found an engagement ring in her car. Can you believe that? She was going to propose to me. I was her forever. That's what she used to say. *"I was her forever."*

PATRICK

Listen, it's late and you're drunk. Crash on my couch. We'll figure this out tomorrow. Sound good?

Chris stands, pulls himself together.

CHRIS

Thanks, but I can hear my own bed calling my name tonight. I'll get an Uber.

INT. CAR - A LITTLE LATER

Chris, sprawled out in the backseat of a Prius, rolls up the window as the brothers wave bye to each other.

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATER

All quiet as the vehicle makes its way down an empty stretch of road atop a large hill.

Approaching a RED LIGHT at an intersection, the DRIVER brakes.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Chris stares out the window at the night sky. The driver, looking to break the silence --

DRIVER

How was your night?

CHRIS

Could have gone better. You?

The light turns GREEN.

DRIVER

Eh, you know. Pretty slow really.
Been driving all --

BOOM! A large SUV SMASHES into the side of the small Prius. The impact sends the car flying. It hits the guardrail, FLIPPING over before ROLLING down the hill.

Chris's POV: as the car spins over and over again. His limp legs bashing the roof of the car repeatedly. Dirt, rocks, and branches pierce the vehicle as the car finally comes to an abrupt stop, SLAMMING into the side of a large rock.

The driver's body hangs out of the shattered windshield like a broken doll. His head split down the middle like a coconut.

Chris lays in a motionless heap in the backseat. His face painted in blood and bits of glass.

The distant sound of voices fade in and out from just up the hill --

VOICE #1

Oh my god!

VOICE #2

Someone call an ambulance!

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: SIX YEARS LATER

INT. UNKNOWN LOCATION

The dream is almost always the same...

Chris, bewildered. Trapped in a place he doesn't recognize.

The world around him, surreal. Hazy and unfocused.

An unexpected familiarity begins to creep in. Little details, though... different from the last time.

And in the center of the room... sometimes it's a swing. Other times, a crib. Now --

A vintage BABY CARRIAGE. Inside, a INFANT coos.

Chris approaches cautiously. Just as he is close enough to peer inside --

BLOOD bubbles up from the bassinet, pooling at the top before gushing over the side.

In the distance, a baby WAILS. Chris can't quite track the crying. Spinning in circles, he calls out desperately, shouting into the void.

CHRIS

Where are you? WHERE ARE YOU?!

VOICE (O.S.)

Daddy?

Chris turns. In front of him, a YOUNG BOY, covered in blood -

YOUNG BOY

Help me.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - PRESENT DAY

Chris is the patient now.

Gaunt. Unkempt. He's comatose. Dead to the world.

As the BEEPING of a heart monitor keeps a steady pace --

Chris's hand TWITCHES. His toes begin to curl. Under the lids, his eyeballs are dancing back and forth.

The machine BEEPS faster now, steadily increasing, before going into full blown panic.

From the hallway, a NURSE sprints into the room. She surveys the surrounding equipment.

His head is rocking back and forth now, like he's desperately trying to wake himself from the nightmare --

His eyes SHOOT open!

CUT TO:

EXT. SAINT LUKE'S HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - DAY

Adorned in nurse's scrubs from the neck down -- Emily, six years older now. Exiting the hospital, she reaches her SUV.

The staff entrance swings open one more time as a HANDSOME NURSE chases after her --

STEVE HARPER. Grabbing Emily around the waist, he nuzzles his face into her neck.

STEVE

What? You don't even say goodbye anymore?

Startled, Emily pushes him off. Upon realizing --

EMILY

Christ, Steve. You nearly gave me a heart attack!

Steve leans in for a kiss.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Stop it. Someone could see us.

STEVE

C'mon, I thought that was part of the thrill!

Off another attempt --

EMILY

I said stop!

Steve erupts, shoving her backwards.

STEVE

Fine! Fuck it!

Emily bounces off the vehicle behind her.

Steve quickly composes himself, looks around the parking lot for witnesses.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Sorry. I'm sorry, okay?

Emily nods. The look on her face says none of this behavior is new.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Let me see you tonight. Please? You and Jacob. I could grab a pizza and a couple movies. Make it a night in. Just the three of us.

Emily pulls her keys from her purse.

EMILY

I don't think that's such a good idea. Maybe another night, okay?

STEVE
Why? What's up?

EMILY
It's been a long day. I really
don't feel like getting into it
right now, Steve.

Steve scoffs, begins to laugh slightly.

STEVE
What?

Emily sighs out of frustration.

EMILY
Okay. It's just that... he doesn't
like you very much. He thinks
you're mean.

STEVE
Mean? Are you serious?

EMILY
He says you yelled at him.

STEVE
I didn't yell. I may have raised my
voice. Once. But it was only
because I caught him talking to
that goddamn toy again. That shit's
just not normal.

EMILY
He's five years old, Steve.

STEVE
He needs discipline.

EMILY
Well, you're not his father.

STEVE
After a year together, I'm the
closest thing he's got to a father.
You're both not making any effort
to give me a chance.

EMILY
He'll come around when he's ready.

STEVE

And when will you come around?
Aren't you tired of being off and
on? Let's make this official. I'm
ready. I'm just waiting on you.
What are you waiting on?

Emily looks away. Steve grabs her arm.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Let me stop by. I'll play with him.
It'll be nice. You'll see. Real
bonding time. How's that sound?

EMILY

I guess that's okay.

STEVE

Great. I'll swing by around eight.
I'll bring pizza.

Steve kisses Emily's cheek before heading back inside the hospital.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Emily climbs in the driver's seat. Her cell phone rings.
Caller ID -- "PATRICK."

EMILY

(into phone)
Hey, Patrick! It's been a while.
(listening)
What?! Jacob and I were just there
yesterday. There was no change in
his status.
(listening)
Oh, my God! Ok, I'm on my way!

INT. CHRIS' HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Chris lays there, still half out of it -- the few loved ones
that hung in there surrounding his bedside.

His brother brushes the bangs out of his eyes.

PATRICK

Welcome back, bro. You've been
asleep for a while now.

Chris looks around the room, scanning each of their faces.
Familiar, but slightly different. Aged.

CHRIS
You all look... so different.

The group share a look... and a secret. Chris picks up on it.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(realizing)
How long how long was I asleep?

Emily steps out from behind Patrick. She approaches the bed.

EMILY
It's been six years, Chris. But
you're back now. That's all that
matters.

Chris looks a little surprised to see Emily there.

CHRIS
Emily?

She nods, a gentle smile gracing her lips.

PATRICK
What's the last thing you remember?

CHRIS
There was an accident.

PATRICK
Car accident. Drunk driver ran the
light. Don't worry, we got that son
of a bitch. He's doing time --

Chris shakes his head, waving away the unimportant.

Emily takes Chris's hand, squeezing gently. Chris subtly
pulls it free.

She tries to mask her disappointment.

Chris's fingers trace the surgery scar on the back of his
head, slowly absorbing the news.

CHRIS
Jesus. Six years?

His eyes begin to well with tears. They stream down his face
as the rest of the room joins in.

An emotional dam finally giving way.

EXT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - LATER

Patrick and Emily stand in the hall talking to Chris's doctor.

DOCTOR

Chris is going to need everyone's help making the transition back to a normal life. It's not going to be easy for him, or for you.

PATRICK

What are we looking at here, doc?

DOCTOR

Well, it's not uncommon for people with injuries like his to suffer from memory gaps. Bits and pieces from his past may escape him. Events, faces, it'll all come back to him with a little time and patience.

EMILY

When can he come home?

Patrick shoots Emily a look.

DOCTOR

Chris's limbs are suffering from atrophy. A couple weeks of physical therapy should get him back around to walking on his own. We'll reassess his condition then and make a decision.

PATRICK

And work?

DOCTOR

Chris will never be able to practice medicine again. With his injuries, the memory loss, the forgetfulness, no hospital would take him on. It'd be too much of a liability. I'm sorry.

EXT. EMILY'S HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Steve stands outside on Emily's front porch with a large pizza in his hands.

Banging his fist on the door. Hard. He's been at it for a while.

The neighbor's porch light flips on -- an elderly couple, REGGIE and CAROL (60s) step outside.

REGGIE

Steve?

Steve approaches.

STEVE

Hey, Reggie. Carol. Have you guys seen Emily? We were suppose to meet tonight.

CAROL

She said there was an emergency at the hospital. She's fine, don't worry. She dropped Jacob off a couple hours ago. Said she'd be back late.

A LITTLE BOY peeks out from behind the older couple -- JACOB (5), bright-eyed with more than a hint of shyness.

But we've seen this child before. Covered in blood.

Quietly staring back at Steve, he clutches a raggedy STUFFED FROG, gripping it to his chest like it was the Hope Diamond.

STEVE

Oh, well I'm here now. I know where she keeps the spare key. Thanks for watching Jacob.

Steve reaches for Jacob, who quickly backs off, hiding behind Carol.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Come on, Jacob. Let's go home.

Jacob runs back into the house. Steve begins to follow.

STEVE (CONT'D)

(annoyed)

Jacob! Come here!

Reggie steps up, blocking the doorway.

REGGIE

Emily gave us specific instructions not to let Jacob out of our sight until she got him herself. You understand.

Steve takes the hint --

STEVE

Whatever. Tell Emily I stopped by.

CAROL

Do you want to leave the pizza for Jacob?

STEVE

What pizza?

Slamming it in the garbage can on the way to his truck, Steve peels out as Reggie and Carol share a concerned look.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Emily enters the hospital. She's on her cell phone.

EMILY

(on phone)

I know it's you, Steve. I can hear you breathing. For the last time, it's over. Chris is awake now. Stop calling, or I'll have you arrested for harassment!

She hangs up. Pulling herself together, Emily meets Patrick in the hallway.

INT. HOSPITAL REHABILITATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Patrick and Emily observe Chris's progress through an observation window.

He is now walking on his own with little assistance from a cane.

A PHYSICAL THERAPIST helps an exhausted Chris into a chair before exiting the room. She approaches Emily and Patrick.

PHYSICAL THERAPIST

He's been making a speedy recovery over the last few weeks. He should be ready to go home in a couple days.

She leaves. Patrick turns to Emily.

PATRICK

When do you plan on telling him?

Emily takes a deep breath --

EMILY

No time like the present, right?

She enters Chris's room.

Emily takes a seat next to Chris, trying her best to soften the blow.

We can't hear the conversation, but it's clear from Chris's reaction that he is stunned.

Emily pulls out her cell phone and begins to show Chris PHOTOS OF A CHILD -- their child.

Instant recognition in his eyes. The boy in my nightmares... *is my son.*

His mind reeling, he lowers his head into his hands and sobs.

Emily hugs Chris, who hesitates, but slowly, reluctantly, embraces her back.

Patrick watches from the hall, his heart breaking for his brother.

INT. CHRIS'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Chris folds a shirt on the bed. Nearby, Patrick helps pack a suitcase.

Mid-conversation, there's an obvious tension in the air...

PATRICK

Help me understand this.

CHRIS

Let's just drop it, okay? They'll be here any minute.

PATRICK
So talk quickly.

CHRIS
I almost died. Alright. Good enough?

PATRICK
That's not it. I know you, bro. Better than anyone. And that's not it.

Chris abandons the perfect fold, tosses the wrinkled shirt in the bag.

CHRIS
You wouldn't understand --

PATRICK
Try me.

Chris simply shakes his head.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
Six years ago you wanted nothing to do with this woman. Or this kid. Now... what? You're suddenly ready to play house? Come home with me. There's a fold-out couch with your name on it. Hell, you want a "World's Greatest Dad" mug, I'll buy you one myself.

(beat)
You don't have to do this --

CHRIS
(softly)
I already knew him.

PATRICK
What? Knew who?

CHRIS
Jacob. Before I ever actually saw him... I knew him. When I was lying there, dead to the world, I was having these dreams. Nightmares, really. He was in trouble. Jacob - exactly as he looks now. The love I felt... the way I wanted to protect him. How I never want to be apart from him. It was all instant. That's fatherhood. I mean, it's gotta be, right?

Patrick shrugs.

PATRICK

I don't know.

Chris nods. *How could he possibly know?*

CHRIS

My son needs me.

Ding! Chris reaches for an older model iPhone. He reads the incoming text.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

They're here.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY

Emily holds hands with Jacob.

Jacob takes in his surroundings with wonder as he is lead down a brightly lit corridor.

There is an eerie calmness about him as he makes eye contact with all the passing patients, doctors, and visitors.

His expression flat, unmoving.

Emily and Jacob pause in front of a small bench outside of Chris's hospital room.

She bends down, looks him over before straightening his outfit and hair. Her hands are practically shaking as she fusses over every last detail.

EMILY

You're going to meet someone very special today, Jacob. I want everything to be perfect.

She turns to the stuffed frog in Jacob's grasp.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Honey, Iggy is filthy. I'm just going to put him back in the car for now.

Emily reaches for IGGY -- Jacob instantly pulls away, screaming loudly.

He's not giving up that toy without a fight. It's the first real emotion we've seen from the boy so far.

Emily quickly relents, frustrated. She's used to this type of reaction.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Fine. Fine! Iggy can stay.

Jacob is still freaking out, squirming to get away. Emily grabs him by the shoulders.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Jacob! Stop it! Iggy can stay. Stop this!

Jacob begins to relax. His tantrum subsiding.

EMILY (CONT'D)
(sighs)
We're not going through this again right now.

She takes a step back, inhales a few deep breathes trying to calm herself.

She places Jacob on the bench as Patrick exits the room.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Patrick, hey. I didn't know you were here.

PATRICK
I'm just leaving. You three have a nice time.

EMILY
Um, thanks.

Patrick leaves as Emily shifts her attention back to Jacob --

EMILY (CONT'D)
I want you to wait right here, okay. I'll be right back.

Jacob waits patiently as Emily enters Chris's room.

He leans down and begins whispering into Iggy's ear. It's as if they're having their own little private conversation.

JACOB
(to Iggy)
I don't know.
(pause)
I won't let her.
(annoyed)
I said I won't! Jeez.

Jacob lowers his head like a child would being scolded for his bad attitude.

JACOB (CONT'D)
 (to Iggy)
 I'm sorry.

INT. CHRIS'S HOSPITAL ROOM - SAME TIME

Chris checks himself in the mirror -- his movements slight and still feeble.

He turns when Emily enters the room.

CHRIS
 How do I look?

EMILY
 You look great.

Chris looks out into the hallway at Jacob.

CHRIS
 Meeting for the first time, then having me move in. I hope this isn't too much too quickly for him. I don't want to come on too strong. What do you think?

EMILY
 We'll take it slow. You in the basement, us upstairs. Once he is comfortable with you being there, we can sit him down and explain everything to him properly.

Chris nods. Emily leans in for a kiss. Chris quickly turns so she gets his cheek instead of his lips.

She smiles it off.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Emily comes back into the hallway with Chris close behind. Chris uses a cane to help him walk.

EMILY
 Jacob, this is mommy's friend, Chris. He's going to be staying with us for a while. Doesn't that sound like fun?

Chris slowly, and painfully, kneels to Jacob's level. On his way down, Emily whispers to Chris.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Don't touch the frog.

Chris nods.

CHRIS
Hi there, Jacob. Your mom has told me a lot about you. It's really nice to meet you.

Chris extends his hand for a shake. Jacob stares at it, then back at Chris, never moving a muscle.

JACOB
You walk funny.

EMILY
(surprised)
Jacob!

Chris laughs. The ice is broken.

CHRIS
(to Emily)
No, it's alright.
(to Jacob)
I do, don't I? I was in a car accident a while back. I had to learn to walk again. But I'm okay now.

Jacob only stares at Chris. His expression still blank.

Chris improvises.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
So I hear you like pizza?

Jacob nods.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Yeah? Cool. Cuz it's my favorite, and I'm hungry.
(gesturing to Iggy)
What about him? He like pizza too?

Smiling, Jacob shrugs.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
What's his favorite topping? Flies?
Ugh. It's flies, isn't it?

Jacob giggles. This is working.

EXT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Through a large window, we see the entire family sitting down to dinner.

Chris playfully showing Jacob the food in his mouth as Jacob laughs hysterically. Their bond growing.

INT. JACOB'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chris and Emily stand in Jacob's doorway as he goes to bed for the night.

Emily blows him a kiss and walks away. Chris lingers just a little bit longer, slightly overwhelmed at this new life.

INT. BASEMENT

Chris creeps down the steps of a renovated basement where he'll be staying. A PULLOUT COUCH is all made up for him.

LATER

The tiniest bit of light creeps through the basement window as Chris sleeps, surrounding him with shadows.

The silence is broken by a faint WHIMPER. Someone CRYING.

It begins to slowly build. Louder now. Growing louder still.

A BLOOD CURDLING SCREAM fills the room --

WOMAN'S VOICE
(screaming)
Aaaaahhhh!!

Chris's eyes immediately SHOOT open. He quickly sits up in as a terrified yell escapes his mouth.

CHRIS
JESUS CHRIST!

He's covered in sweat, breathing heavily. His eyes dart around the room as he tries to gain his bearings.

It takes him a moment, but he soon realizes he's at home, safe, surrounded by boxes and junk being stored in the basement.

Chris smells something in the air. Confused, he inhales deeply, trying to put his finger on the aroma.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Flowers?

Chris wipes his eyes, oblivious to a shadow in the corner that stands out from the rest. It oddly resembles the shape of a person --

The shadow moves ever so slightly.

Chris slows his breathing, wipes his brow, and takes a drink of water from the cup sitting on the night stand.

The shadow moves again.

Chris turns but doesn't see it. He climbs up from the bed, flipping on the light. The shadows disappear.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Close on a couple of eggs being cracked into a sizzling skillet.

A fresh pot of coffee simmers nearby.

ON THE STAIRS

Emily, dressed in robe and slippers, sniffs the air. Jacob appears beside her.

EMILY

You smell something, kiddo?

Taking his hand, she leads Jacob into the kitchen --

Finding Chris pouring orange juice into a child-size cup. He's wasting no time earning his keep.

CHRIS

Good morning, sleepyheads!

EMILY

Uh, morning. What's all this?

CHRIS

Have a seat. Breakfast is almost ready.

Emily and Jacob exchange a look.

Chris takes notice of Jacob's sleepwear. He's decked out in pajamas with the cartoon LAZER PILOTZ! on the front.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Cool PJs. What is that, your favorite show?

Jacob ignores him.

EMILY
So, you're up early.

CHRIS
Uh, yeah. Didn't sleep too well last night.

Emily takes a mug from a cupboard.

EMILY
Everything okay?

CHRIS
Oh, sure. First night in a new place. That's all. Well, I hope you two are hungry. I made eggs.

EMILY
Shoot. I wish I had known. We're running late as it is. They're rolling out a new data entry system today. I gotta get there asap. I was just gonna take Jacob in now. They serve breakfast for early birds.

They both turn to Jacob, who is already popping frozen waffles into the toaster.

CHRIS
I can take Jacob to school.

This catches Emily off-guard.

EMILY
Oh, uh...

Off her hesitation --

CHRIS
What? School's only a few blocks away, right? We could use the walk.
(to Jacob)
What do you say, champ? Can I walk you to school this morning?

Jacob shrugs.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
See? He's all for it.

Emily pulls Chris aside. Speaking in hushed tones, she looks a little concerned.

EMILY
Are you sure? You're still recuperating I can take him, really. It's not a problem --

CHRIS
You're not worried about me, are you?

EMILY
No, that's crazy.
(catches herself)
I don't mean crazy. I don't think you're -- Sorry. Poor choice of words.

Emily looks at the clock.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Damn it. I gotta get moving.
(heading back up the stairs)
Take him. Seriously. I trust you. It'll be a great chance for you two to get to know each other better.

LATER

Waiting patiently in the foyer, Chris watches a TV show on his phone --

CHARACTER
(on phone)
"We're the LAZER PILOTZ! Let all evildoers beware!"

CHRIS
Huh.

Hitting pause, he shouts up to Jacob, who's still in his room getting ready for school.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 Alright handsome, that's enough
 primping for today. You don't wanna
 break too many hearts.

He gets no answer.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 Jacob? We're gonna be late, buddy.

Still nothing. Chris climbs the stairs to check on Jacob.

EXT. JACOB'S ROOM - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Reaching Jacob's bedroom, Chris overhears a tiny voice
 inside.

Confused, he pauses just outside the door. It's slightly ajar
 but not enough for Chris to peek in.

He listens.

JACOB (O.S.)
 He's nice to me.
 (pause)
 Don't call me that. My name is
 Jacob!

Puzzled, Chris swings the door open wider. An unsettling
CREEEEEK fills the room.

Inside, he catches his son concealing Iggy at the bottom of
 his toy chest.

Jacob stands frozen at the sight of Chris.

CHRIS
 Everything okay in here? I thought
 I heard you talking to someone.

The boy looks terrified -- his body suddenly trembling in
 fear.

JACOB
 (angry, scared)
 No! Get out! You can't see where I
 hide him! Get out!

Uncertain how to respond, Chris approaches cautiously.

CHRIS

I'm sorry, pal. Are you hiding something over there? Is it Iggy? You can hide Iggy. It's fine.

JACOB

You can't know where he is! She'll get mad at me! I don't like it when she's mad!

CHRIS

Who? Mom? Mom will get mad?

Jacob shakes his head. He's sobbing harder now.

JACOB

No.

Chris kneels down, bringing Jacob in close for a hug.

CHRIS

I don't understand what you're getting so upset about, buddy. I won't touch Iggy. You can hide him there. It's okay.

Jacob begins to calm down in his father's embrace.

JACOB

You promise? You won't ever tell mom where I hide him? You promise?

Chris releases. He looks the frightened child in the eyes.

CHRIS

Yes. I promise you. I will never tell anyone. It's our secret. Cross my heart.

JACOB

...and hope to die?

Chris is a little taken aback at the question.

CHRIS

I, uh, I just promise. Okay?

Jacob looks back towards Iggy, hiding at the bottom of his toy chest. Turning back to Chris --

JACOB

Okay. We believe you.

Jacob grabs his backpack and exits the room.

A bewildered look on his face, Chris watches him go, unsure of what the hell just happened.

EXT. EMILY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Chris and Jacob walk to the sidewalk. Jacob slows his pace as Chris, relying on his cane, struggles slightly to keep up.

Jacob turns and waves "bye" to the house.

CHRIS

Who are you waving at? The house?

Chris decides to play along. He too turns and waves to the house.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Bye house! See you late --

Chris spots what looks like a WOMAN gazing out the upstairs window down at them.

Chris turns to Jacob, who is staring at the upstairs window. *Does he see it too?*

Glancing back at the window -- the figure is gone.

EXT. SIDEWALK - A LITTLE LATER

Chris and Jacob stroll down the street.

CHRIS

So... you excited for school to be ending soon?

Jacob nods.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Do you have lots of friends in class?

JACOB

I don't have any friends.

CHRIS

What? How come?

JACOB

I dunno. They just don't seem to like me very much.

CHRIS
I find that hard to believe.

JACOB
(snapping)
I'm not a liar!

Chris puts his hands up, defensively --

CHRIS
Whoa, easy there. Not what I meant.
At all. I just mean, what's not to
like? You're a great kid.

Chris and Jacob come upon an aged, run-down home a few blocks from theirs.

Compared to the rest of the charming neighborhood, this one stands out like an infected thumb.

Chipped, yellowing paint lines the crumbling facade as excessively overgrown hedges obscure nearly the entire first floor. Patches of grass are dead or simply gone all together.

It's a fixer-upper, to say the least.

Chris continues walking before abruptly realizing Jacob is no longer by his side.

He spins around, spotting his son several feet behind.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

Jacob stares at the neglected residence.

JACOB
I don't want to walk in front of
that house.

CHRIS
Why not? It's fine.

Chris trudges back to Jacob.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
C'mon, we don't want to be late for
school.

JACOB
Can we cross the street?

CHRIS

Cross the street? No, this way is faster. It's fine. Let's go.

Jacob hesitates, sticking his hand out for Chris to take.

A big moment for Chris as he reaches out, clasping his boy's hand in his own.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I got ya, buddy. It's okay. What's the big deal with this place anyway?

Transfixed, Jacob eyes the home suspiciously as they shuffle past.

JACOB

The bogeyman lives there.

CHRIS

Kid, I doubt anyone lives there --

Suddenly, Chris notices the HOMEOWNER peering out the window back at them.

He looks grizzled, rough. Just as broken as the house he lives in.

Weary of being gawked at, the shadowy homeowner draws the curtains closed.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You saw him too, right?

JACOB

Yeah.

CHRIS

Good.

INT. SCHOOL - LATER

Jacob and Chris enter the school.

The hallways are bustling with students and administrators. The screaming and yelling from the various children makes Chris a little uneasy.

He rubs his temples, desperately wanting out of there.

CHRIS

I'll pick you up later, Jacob.

Jacob turns to Chris --

JACOB

Don't you want to see my class?

Chris really doesn't. Jacob takes him by the hand and leads his down the hall.

INT. JACOB'S KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob sprints into the packed classroom, stopping at a small desk in the middle of the room.

JACOB

This is my desk.

CHRIS

Cool!

As Jacob heads to a cubby area at the back of the room, Chris takes a look around --

Immediately dodging TWO STUDENTS racing past him, excitedly lost in conversation.

STUDENT #1

And he's gonna have a magician, and a bounce house! And Mikey said his parents might even get him a pony!

STUDENT #2

Dude, that sounds awesome! I can't wait till Saturday!

Chris smiles. Wandering further...

He notices STUDENT ARTWORK displayed on a wall nearby. He scans the assorted drawings for Jacob's project....

Before realizing it's not there.

The teacher, MRS. LAWSON (30s), approaches Chris.

MRS. LAWSON

Can I help you?

CHRIS

No, thanks, I'm just dropping off my son.

MRS. LAWSON

Oh, I thought I knew all the parents. Which one is yours?

CHRIS

Uh... that one. Jacob.

Chris turns, pointing to Jacob.

As numerous kids maneuver around him, all cheerfully swapping stories back and forth, Jacob busies himself emptying his backpack -- alone and basically ignored.

MRS. LAWSON

(realizing)

Oh, you're Emily's husband! Chris, right?

They shake hands.

CHRIS

We're not married. We're just...

MRS. LAWSON

Well, Emily couldn't stop talking about you. You've just gotten back from the hospital, correct?

Chris, visibly uncomfortable -- at least to anyone that isn't Mrs. Lawson.

CHRIS

Right.

MRS. LAWSON

Well, welcome home. We're always happy to see both parents take an active role in their child's education.

Chris points to the drawings on the wall.

CHRIS

I was just wondering if you could tell me why Jacob doesn't have a picture on the board here.

The smile erases from Mrs. Lawson's face.

MRS. LAWSON

Emily hasn't spoken to you about this?

CHRIS

About what?

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Mrs. Lawson exhibits a few of Jacob's drawings, laying them out one-by-one.

They're your typical kid's art work -- crude, sloppy, and often times terrible.

MRS. LAWSON

The assignment was for each student to draw a picture of their family.

She hands Chris one in particular.

From left to right, we see three figures -- Emily, Jacob, and a THIRD FIGURE, seen standing off to the side just behind Jacob.

It's a female, brown hair and white dress. RED CRAYON MARKS scribbled all over her face and gown.

She's in all of the drawings, and always next to Jacob.

CHRIS

(to himself)

What the... ?

MRS. LAWSON

I asked Jacob about it. He told me it was the woman who lives in his house.

Chris points to the woman in the picture.

CHRIS

What's with the red all over her face?

MRS. LAWSON

(uneasy)

He... he said it was blood.

Chris looks shocked.

CHRIS

And you showed this one to Emily?

MRS. LAWSON

Last week.

Chris looks through the classroom door window at Jacob... who is eerily staring back.

EXT. SCHOOL - LATER

Chris exits the school holding Jacob's creepy drawings.

A car pulls up in front, cutting him off. Chris's brother Patrick hops out.

PATRICK

Hey, I thought I told you you weren't allowed within 100 yards of a school, you goddamn pervert!

Various parents take notice. Chris is beyond mortified --

CHRIS

Keep it down, asshole!

Chris smiles, offers a reassuring wave to all concerned.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

He's just kidding.

One mother clutches her daughter a little tighter as they enter.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

(to Patrick)

What the hell are you doing here?

PATRICK

Emily told me you took Jacob to school today. I was hoping I could catch you, maybe take you to breakfast.

CHRIS

Fine. Let's just go.

Chris climbs in the car. Patrick turns to the crowd --

PATRICK

Rest easy, folks. Ain't no one getting diddled on my watch!

CHRIS

(inside the car)

Would you come on!

INT. COFFEE SHOP - LATER

The brothers sit in a corner booth catching up on old times.

PATRICK

You remember the time Joe Caplin stole his dad's Range Rover when he was 14 and took us all for a joy ride?

Chris laughs to himself.

CHRIS

He couldn't drive for shit and crashed it into that... uh...

Patrick can see Chris is struggling to remember.

PATRICK

Lamp post.

CHRIS

Right! Lamp post.

The waitress drops off their food.

Digging into their burgers -- Patrick reaches over the table, gestures to a small scar on Chris's forehead.

PATRICK

That's how you got this scar, remember? Dad was so pissed. Threatened to have Joe arrested.

Chris picks up the metal napkin holder from the table. He looks at the scar in his reflection, touching it.

CHRIS

I don't remember that. Memories come back here and there, but there's still a lot missing. Seeing all the kids at school today reminded me of --

(chokes up)

I loved helping those kids. Now, I can't help anyone. Damn accident took everything from me.

PATRICK

Hey, not everything. You're here, and that's all that matters. I'm glad you're back, Chris. We all are.

CHRIS

Thanks.

PATRICK

Must be weird though, right? Waking up to a whole new life. One moment you're breaking up with Emily, the next you have a family with her.

CHRIS

It's definitely overwhelming. I'm not going to lie. What about you? Ever come close to starting a family?

PATRICK

Eh. Dodged a few bullets here and there. Family life just doesn't suit me. For now, I'll just live vicariously through you. Speaking of which, how's fatherhood treating you anyway?

CHRIS

It's... different. Jacob is a good kid. Kinda weird, but I suppose all kids are in their own way.

PATRICK

He's weird? Then he definitely takes after his mother.

CHRIS

How so?

PATRICK

After the accident, Emily pulled away from everyone. I offered to help with the pregnancy, fix up the nursery, all of that stuff. She wouldn't have any of it. She shut everyone out until after Jacob was born.

CHRIS

That is strange.

Chris takes a bite of food as he ponders Patrick's last statement.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Hey, what would you get a six-year-old boy for his birthday?

PATRICK

What's the rush? Jacob's big day isn't for months.

CHRIS
It's not for him.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT - LATER

EMILY
A birthday party?! I don't know.

Standing at the sink, Chris finishes drying the dishes before handing them off to Emily. She places them back in the cupboard.

CHRIS
Are you kidding? It's gonna be a blast. There's gonna be a magician and a bounce house. And rumor is, Mikey's parents might even be getting a pony.

EMILY
How did we get invited?

CHRIS
I got the birthday boy's number off the parents' call list. Explained the situation.

EMILY
The situation?

CHRIS
Yeah, that we got a real shy kid here just itching to bust out of his shell, and I think this party is the best way to start. They understood perfectly.

EMILY
Well, I really wish you'd run this by me first.

Chris pulls the creepy drawing Mrs. Lawson showed him from his pocket. He holds it up for Emily to see.

CHRIS
When were you gonna run this by me?

She glances at it, then looks to Chris.

EMILY
It's a child's drawing. Big deal.

CHRIS

Big deal? You don't think this is strange?

Chris reaches over, pulling more drawings from Jacob's open backpack resting on the kitchen table.

Several more ghastly images of the BLOODY WOMAN.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I met his teacher this morning. He told her this bloody woman lives in the house with him. Now why would he say that?

EMILY

I don't know, Chris. He's five years old. He has an active imagination. What do you want me to say?

CHRIS

I just figured you'd be a little more concerned is all. Is this normal behavior for him?

EMILY

Well, you're the expert, right? You've been his dad for all of what, two days? What would you know about Jacob's "*normal behavior*?" You weren't here. You weren't around for him, or for me!

Emily slams a dried plate on the floor, shattering it. Chris stands by, stunned. Hurt by her words.

She takes a deep breath, regaining her composure.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I just... I know you would have been here if you could have. It's just that it was hard raising Jacob on my own. And this sounds like you're saying I screwed up.

Chris hugs Emily.

CHRIS

I'm not saying that at all. You did a wonderful job with Jacob.
(regarding drawings)
I'm sure this is nothing.

Chris and Emily hear Jacob yelling from upstairs.

JACOB (O.S.)
 Help! Monster! Help me! There's a
 monster in my closet!

EMILY
 Ugh. It took three bedtime stories
 this time to finally get him to
 sleep.
 (yelling upstairs)
 Go to sleep, young man!

Jacob continues screaming for help.

EMILY (CONT'D)
 He is cruising for a bruising.

CHRIS
 I'll check on him.

Emily looks skeptical.

EMILY
 You sure?

CHRIS
 Yeah. He probably just wants a
 drink of water or something. It's
 fine.

Chris leaves the kitchen. Emily shouts after him --

EMILY
 Well, get used to it. I'm on nights
 all next week.

Chris heads upstairs. Alone, Emily lifts one of Jacob's drawings.

She simply stares at it. Her gaze lingering to a disturbing degree.

The bloody woman -- she's practically hypnotic.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Once upstairs, Chris approaches Jacob's room. His distress growing louder and louder.

JACOB (O.S.)
 Help! There's a monster in my
 closet!

INT. JACOB'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chris enters. Jacob's figure can be seen hiding under his blankets.

CHRIS

Hey, buddy. You're suppose to be asleep. You've got school tomorrow.

Jacob doesn't answer. He squirms under the blankets. Chris looks to the closet just past the bed.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Fine. I'll check the closet and make sure it's monster free, alright? But you've got to go to sleep after that. Deal?

Jacob still doesn't answer. Chris moves to the closet and opens the door. Nothing but clothes and toys inside.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

See? No monsters in sight.

Chris turns to leave the room.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Bedtime.

A NOISE from the closet stops him in his tracks.

Chris turns to a pile of clothes on the closet floor. Something subtly MOVES from beneath the pile.

Chris turns to Jacob, who is still under the covers, then back to the closet. Chris shuts his eyes tight and shakes his head. Is what he's seeing real or another hallucination?

Perplexed, Chris slowly moves towards the pile. Whatever it is SHIFTS and JERKS again from under the clothing.

Chris's heart races a mile a minute.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

(to himself)

What the hell?

Chris's eyes are wide in fear. He leans down, stretching his quivering hand out.

One article of clothing after the next is slowly and cautiously removed.

The shape of a head can be clearly seen moving under the last shirt. Chris RIPS it off, discovering --

Jacob, holding Iggy, and hiding in the closet. Utterly terrified, he looks up at Chris --

JACOB

There's someone in my bed.

Behind Chris, just out of his view, whoever is in Jacob's bed begins to stand. The blankets draped over them hiding their identity.

Chris stares at his son in disbelief. If Jacob is here, who is in his bed? Chris slowly turns in time to see the figure LUNGE AT HIM!

Chris screams. Tangled under the covers, he swings wildly at the UNKNOWN ENTITY.

Chris strikes a fleeing Jacob in the temple with his elbow, knocking the kid flat on his ass.

The entity erupts in anger!

UNDER THE SHEETS

Chris tries his best to wrestle his way out as someone or something CLAWS at him. Shapes of hands HITTING and a face BITING at him can be seen through the sheets.

Chris finally rips the sheets off of him expecting to come face-to-face with his attacker. Instead... no one.

Jacob, a little dazed, is now back in his own bed with Iggy as Chris sits there, breathless from the struggle.

Emily enters.

EMILY

What's going on? I heard yelling.

Chris doesn't know how to answer. He looks like he's in shock. Jacob turns to Emily.

JACOB

We were just playing. Right Chris?

Chris looks at Jacob, still puzzled as to what just happened. He scans the room. Everything appears normal.

CHRIS

Yeah. We were, uh, just playing.

EMILY

Well, it's a school night, boys.
Time to call it quits.

Chris heads for the door.

CHRIS

Yeah. Sorry.

On his way out, Chris turns and looks to Jacob, whose eyes give nothing away.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chris slams the door closed behind him. Analyzing himself in the mirror --

CHRIS

(to himself)

Keep it together, Chris.

Behind him, the figure of a WOMAN can be seen standing in the shower just over Chris's shoulder. The shower curtain blurs her features, but the BLOOD on her white dress can be clearly seen.

Chris splashes cold water on his face, returns to his reflection. The figure behind him is now gone.

EXT. PUBLIC PARK - DAYS LATER

Chris and Patrick stroll through the park.

Practically sleepwalking, Chris looks rough, like he hasn't relaxed in days.

PATRICK

So, what's up? What did you want to meet up for?

CHRIS

It's... ya know. I just wanted to see my little brother. Nothing is up.

PATRICK

Bullshit. Spit it out. What's eating you?

Chris looks away, ashamed to meet his brother's concerned gaze.

CHRIS

I'm not sure the medication is working. I saw something the other night. I can't really explain it, but I know it couldn't have been real.

PATRICK

The doctor said hallucinations were always a possibility.

CHRIS

This didn't feel like a hallucination. It felt so real.

PATRICK

You talk to Emily about it?

CHRIS

No. I don't want to scare her. Things with Jacob are getting better. I don't want to jeopardize that.

PATRICK

Alright. So, we'll swing by the hospital. Get your dosage increased.

CHRIS

Yeah...

(pause)

Listen, I want you to promise me something.

PATRICK

Sure.

CHRIS

I want you to promise that if I ever -- well, if I ever lose it, if it ever seems like I'm on the verge of doing something... I don't know, out of character, something that might hurt someone... I want you to put me away.

PATRICK

Chris, I don't think --

CHRIS

Promise me!

Patrick surrenders.

PATRICK
Okay. I promise.

EXT. SUBURBAN BACK YARD - DAY

CROWD
(singing)
*Happy birthday, dear Mikey. Happy
birthday to you!*

Beaming, MIKEY (6), blows the candles out on his HUGE CAKE.

Everyone claps.

LATER

Streamers. Balloons. Silly hats. And look, a pony!

A BIRTHDAY PARTY is in full swing, and Chris is in the middle of the chaos.

Clutching a bowl of melting ice cream and completely out of his element, Chris huddles inside a small cluster of GRUMBLING PARENTS.

In a backyard crowded with deliriously happy children, Chris spots a miserable-looking Jacob sitting all by himself.

Well, not completely alone -- Iggy, ever the faithful companion, eternally by his side.

Weaving his way through a horde of screaming kids as they rush past, Chris meets Jacob across the yard --

CHRIS
Hey, in case you didn't notice, we
gotta real sugar-shock frenzy
happening all around us. Why are
you over here by yourself looking
so glum?

Jacob mumbles a half-hearted response.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
What?

Jacob begins to speak again -- Chris puts his hand under his son's chin, gently lifting his lowered gaze to meet his own.

Looking each other in the eyes now --

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Talk to me, kid.

JACOB
I don't know anyone.

CHRIS
What do you mean? These are all
your classmates.

Jacob shrugs.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Well, let's change that right now.

Chris scans the room. For the first time, he's noticing the decorations...

LAZER PILOTZ! Napkins, plates, party favors. It's everywhere.

Chris spots the birthday boy, Mikey, darting past. He's even dressed in a Lazer Pilotz t-shirt.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(loud enough)
No way, man. I think Captain
Lockwood is the coolest character!
That guy's awesome!

JACOB
(confused)
Huh?

CHRIS
I mean, Sophia's alright but
Lockwood's the man!

Mikey stops in his tracks, his interest clearly piqued.

MIKEY
What are you guys talking about?

CHRIS
Oh, we're just arguing about which
is the best one on Lazer Pilotz. He
thinks Sophia is the coolest. I'm
trying to tell him it's Lockwood
all the way. But we definitely
agree Dr. Rifi is the worst!

MIKEY
Yeah, Rifi sucks.

Mikey turns to Jacob, like seeing him for the first time.

MIKEY (CONT'D)
You like Lazer Pilotz?

Jacob nods.

CHRIS

Like it?! It's only his favorite show. We watch it all the time. He's seen every episode.

MIKEY

Cool. I got the whole Imagine Island playset in my room. Even Plague Castle. You wanna see?

JACOB

Yeah.

Jacob starts to sprint away with his new best friend, lugging Iggy alongside. Chris stops him --

CHRIS

Why don't you leave him with me, champ.

JACOB

(hesitating)

Uh...

CHRIS

He'll be okay.

Placing the stuffed frog at Chris's feet, Jacob follows Mikey out of the room, but not before looking back several times.

Chris waves him on.

INT. MIKEY'S HOUSE - FOYER - LATER

Chris carries a passed-out Jacob in his arms as MIKEY'S PARENTS see him off.

He opens the front door, revealing it's night. They've clearly been there several hours.

Speaking in hushed tones --

CHRIS

Thanks for letting us hang out a little longer. It was great. This one had a blast!

MIKEY'S DAD

It was our pleasure.

MIKEY'S MOM

They were inseparable. It looks like Mikey has a new best friend.

CHRIS

I hope so. You both have a great night.

In the foreground -- Iggy, left behind on the floor.

INT. MIKEY'S BEDROOM - CLOSET

Mikey's dad drops a load of new stuff, including Iggy, in his son's closet. He closes the door behind him.

INT. HOSPITAL - SAME TIME

Emily finishes her rounds and makes her way down the hall towards the reception desk. A commotion around the corner catches her attention. Several people are heard arguing, yelling loudly.

Emily rounds the corner and is stopped by her co-worker, TAMMY.

TAMMY

Oh my god, Emily! Where have you been?

EMILY

I was finishing my rounds. What's going on?

Tammy lowers her voice, relishing the moment she gets to spread the latest gossip.

TAMMY

(whispers)

Steve showed up drunk to work today. Gave Mrs. Haskins in room 304 too much loperamide, you know, because of her diarrhea? Almost put her in cardiac arrest. The family is threatening to sue the hospital. He's done. Security is dragging his ass out of here. It is awesome!

EMILY

Oh my god!

Just then, Steve passes by, being practically carried down the hall by two large security guards. He struggles as he screams down the hall.

STEVE

You can't do this to me! You'll be hearing from my lawyer!

Steve spots Emily watching from nearby. His anger turns to rage.

STEVE (CONT'D)

(to Emily)

I bet you're loving this aren't you?

He breaks free from the grasp of one of the guards just long enough to get in Emily's face.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I know all about you, Emily. Now, everyone else will too. I'll see you soon, bitch!

The guards pull him back, forcing him towards the elevator.

Emily watches Steve leave, her mind racing.

TAMMY

Wow! What an asshole!

(snickering)

You may want to buy a gun... just in case.

INT. BASEMENT ROOM - LATE NIGHT

It's late. Chris twists and turns in his sleep. He's having a nightmare.

We zoom in on Chris' sweaty brow as his eyes dart back and forth under his eyelids.

QUICK FLASH: of Chris standing in a field of red and yellow roses. It's peaceful --

Two arms covered in rotting flesh BURSTS from the ground below him and begin to pull him down into the earth.

Chris quickly wakes up, screaming. He gathers himself. Looks around the room as he calms down. The alarm clock reads 3:30am.

He sniffs the air. The smell is back.

CHRIS
 (to himself)
 Flowers.

INT. MIKEY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The eerie calm of a darkened bedroom quickly interrupted --

MIKEY (O.S.)
 DAAAAAAADDDDD!!!!

Mikey's dad bolts upright in bed.

MIKEY'S DAD
 Are you shitting me?! Whose turn is
 it?

His mom, not stirring a bit, makes no attempt to get up.

MIKEY'S MOM
 Uh, the little prince called your
 name, not mine.

Dragging himself out of bed --

MIKEY'S DAD
 Fine. But there better be a blowjob
 in it for me when I get back.

MIKEY'S MOM
 I'll make a few calls.

INT. MIKEY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mikey's dad enters the room, neglecting to turn on the light.

Mikey, frantic, is already sitting up in bed.

MIKEY
 Dad, dad, there's something in that
 closet!

MIKEY'S DAD
 Yeah, your presents. Which I'm
 willing to return if you don't go
 to sleep. I've got gift receipts,
 mister! Don't make me use 'em.

The closet door begins to RATTLE.

MIKEY
 See?!

MIKEY'S DAD

You probably just left one of those
stupid dancing robot things on --

The door BANGS. Harder this time. Mikey's Dad begins to grow concerned.

MIKEY'S DAD (CONT'D)

What the hell?

The door BANGS again, almost coming off the hinges. Mikey's dad is frozen, eyes glued to the door.

BANG. BANG. BANG. BANG.

MIKEY'S DAD (CONT'D)

Jesus.

MIKEY

Dad!

Mikey practically dives into his father's arms. Both terrified, they cling to each for support.

BANG. BANG. BANG. BANG. BANG.

AS THE CAMERA SLOWLY MOVES CLOSER TO THE DOOR --

INT. EMILY'S HOUSE - FOYER

The door swings open.

Chris, half-asleep, is there to greet a very shaken Mikey's dad -- still dressed in pajamas and robe.

MIKEY'S DAD

Here. You forgot this.

He thrusts an object into Chris's grasp before racing back to his still running vehicle.

CHRIS

Uh, thanks.

Chris looks to see what he's holding -- Iggy, back where he belongs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Chris reaches the top of the stairs, Iggy in tow. He wanders down the hallway towards Jacob's room.

As he nears, he hears the soft sound of a LULLABY being sung from inside.

WOMAN'S VOICE

(softly)

Hush little baby don't say a word...

Chris smiles to himself and continues to the bathroom.

CHRIS

(to himself)

Poor guy must have had a nightmare too.

WOMAN'S VOICE

(softly)

...and if that mocking bird won't sing. Mommas gonna buy you a diamond ring.

(pause)

And if that diamond ring turns brass...

Down the hall, the light to Emily's room "CLICKS" on. From the crack in the door, Chris can see Emily move across the room to her own private bath --

She's not the one in Jacob's room!

Chris immediately swings Jacob's door open, scanning the room for the source of the voice.

The room is empty except for Jacob who is in bed fast asleep. A wave of confused relief washes over Chris.

Chris places Iggy on the bed next to Jacob. In his sleep, the child squirms, knocking the toy to the floor by the bed.

Chris reaches down and lifts the frog... just as a HAND covered in ROTTEN FLESH springs out from under the bed and GRABS Chris by the wrist.

Chris screams, falling backwards into a pile of Jacob's toys.

The BLOODY WOMAN suddenly CRAWLS out from under Jacob's bed. Her body LURCHES and JERKS inhumanly towards Chris. BLOOD drips from her body and dress to the floor.

She crawls right on top of Chris. Her face inches away from his. Her bloody hand grabs him by the throat, followed by a MONSTROUS SCREAM in his face. Chris, now covered in blood, sits frozen in fear.

JACOB
No! Don't hurt him!

She reacts to Jacob's pleading. SNATCHING Iggy out of Chris's hands, and just as quickly as she emerged, she scurries back under Jacob's bed, disappearing in the darkness.

Her arm out stretches from under the bed, placing Iggy by Jacob's side, before retracting back under the bed.

Stunned speechless, Chris takes his time getting to his feet. Jacob, now awake, can clearly see the fear in Chris's eyes.

Chris looks to a drawing Jacob has on his wall of the BLOODY WOMAN, then to Iggy the frog.

Emily rushes into the room.

The blood that was on Chris and the floor is gone. In fact, all traces of the terrifying ordeal have vanished.

EMILY
What the hell is going on? What was
that sound?

Chris and Jacob share a look. They don't want to tell Emily what really happened.

CHRIS
Nothing. I, uh, just wanted to give
Jacob a kiss good night, and I
tripped. Sorry to wake you.

EMILY
Oh, my god. You scared me.
(to Jacob)
You good, honey?

Jacob nods as he looks at Chris, who is holding his wrist.

INT. ICE CREAM SHOP - NEXT DAY

Chris and Jacob sit at a small table. Jacob is making a mess of his ice cream cone.

CHRIS
How was school today?

JACOB
Good.

Chris pulls out one of Jacob's drawings. It's of the bloody woman standing over Chris who is wrapped up in blankets.

CHRIS

I want to talk to you about these drawings, Jacob.

Jacob notices the drawing in Chris's hand. He lowers his head, almost ashamed.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

It looks like what happened in your room the other night.

Jacob doesn't respond.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Jacob, remember how we talked about my accident, and how it sometimes makes me see things that aren't there?

JACOB

Yes.

CHRIS

Well, this is really important, Jacob. You're not in any trouble, and I promise to not get mad. But I need you to tell me if this...

Chris points to the drawing of himself, then to the bloody woman.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I need you to tell me if this really happened.

(beat)

Or if it was all in my head.

Jacob doesn't respond. Chris is growing frustrated.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Can you at least tell me who this is?

JACOB

I can't talk about her. She'll get mad.

CHRIS

So she's real? She was in your room the other night? She's real?

Jacob nods. Relief washing over him, Chris laughs. He's practically in tears at the news.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Who is she? Where did she come
from? What does she want?

Jacob looks a little overwhelmed at all the questions.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Okay. Let's start slow. How about
that? Do you know her name?

Jacob shakes his head.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
When did you first see her?

JACOB
She's always been there.

CHRIS
What does she want?

JACOB
To be my friend. She doesn't want
Mommy to know she's my friend.

CHRIS
Why?

After a reluctant pause --

JACOB
She thinks mommy is mean. She
doesn't want mommy to be mean to me
or Iggy.

CHRIS
Why Iggy? What's so special about
him?

Jacob hesitates.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
It's okay, Jacob. This is just
between you and me. I won't tell
mommy anything you say.

JACOB
She says Iggy knows how mean mommy
is. She isn't allowed to touch him.
Ever!

CHRIS
I don't understand --

JACOB

Can I have more ice cream?

CHRIS

Uh, sure. We'll get some for the ride home. Just promise me mommy doesn't find out you had ice cream before dinner.

JACOB

I won't tell.

CHRIS

Is there anything else you can tell me about the woman in your room, Jacob? Think hard for me.

Jacob thinks.

JACOB

Mmmm. She doesn't call me Jacob.

CHRIS

What does she call you?

JACOB

Oliver. I hate that name.

Chris's eyes move to Iggy, sitting next to Jacob.

INT. EMILY'S HOME - MORNING - NEXT DAY

Emily and Jacob are ready to leave for the day.

Chris watches cartoons from the couch.

EMILY

Say bye to Chris, Jacob.

Jacob scurries over to Chris and plants a big hug on him.

JACOB

(whispers)

I love you, Chris.

Chris can't help but smile. He whispers back.

CHRIS

You too, buddy.

EMILY

See you later tonight.

CHRIS

Have a great day.

Chris watches from the window as the pair climb into the car. As they pull out, Chris steps to the bottom of the staircase, looking up at Jacob's room.

He waits, as if expecting something, anything, to happen.

Frustrated, he moves to the closet and grabs his jacket before exiting out the back door.

INT. LIBRARY - LATER

Chris sits at a computer researching "HAUNTINGS". He browses past numerous picture of old photographs that claim to capture a ghost, eyewitness sketches, and videos of unexplained phenomenon.

He watches videos of objects moving inexplicably, doors slamming on their own, lights flicking on and off at random.

He types in "HAUNTED DOLLS". Picture after picture of creepy dolls and toys appear on the screen.

He stumbles on to a website listing "PARANORMAL INVESTIGATORS". A little self conscious, he looks over the website.

INT. UNIVERISTY LECTURE HALL - LATER

A UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR gives a lecture to a large crowd. He shows slides to the audience of one creepy doll after another. He stops on one listed as "MANDY". The creepy doll sits behind a glass case in a museum.

Chris walks in the back door of the room. He cautiously finds a seat in the dark and listens intently.

PROFESSOR

Now, in the case of Mandy, there were reports of the doll crying in the middle of the night and somehow getting out of her glass enclosure, which requires a key to open. It's not unusual in this field to come across objects in which a spirit or entity has attached itself. Simply destroying the object does not always end the haunting. Sometimes it can anger the spirit and make the haunting worse.

Chris periodically pauses the video to takes notes.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

Doing this will cause the spirit to search for a new vessel to inhabit. Usually it's a person too weak to fight the entity off, such as a child. The first step in combatting such a being is to find out where the object came from. It's important to understand who this spirit is and why it picked this object. Understanding more about the tormentor is the best place to start.

Chris nods with understanding.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

The family sits around the table eating.

Chris picks at his food. Emily can tell something is off.

EMILY

(to Chris)

Everything okay? Does it not taste good.

Chris sits up.

CHRIS

No, no. It's great. I'm just not that hungry right now.

Emily turns to Jacob, who is struggling to eat due to Iggy being in his arms.

EMILY

Honey, why doesn't Iggy sit on the counter until you're done eating?

Jacob pushes his chair out from the table.

JACOB

(sternly)

Ok but I'll put him there!

EMILY

I know. I know. I'm not allowed to touch Iggy.

Jacob places the frog on the counter. Chris looks at the raggedy doll.

CHRIS

Emily, do you remember where you got Iggy from?

Chris's question catches Emily off guard -- her latest bite briefly gets caught in her throat.

EMILY

(catching her breath)
Oh, jeez. Garage sale, I think. Maybe about five years ago. Why?

CHRIS

Nearby?

EMILY

Yeah, around the corner. A guy and his wife were expecting a child. I guess something happened. He ended up selling everything. Toys, crib, clothes. All of the really good stuff was gone by the time I nabbed Iggy.

Iggy suddenly drops from the counter. He lands next to Chris's foot.

Jacob leaps from his chair, rushing to Iggy's aid. The doll once again safely in his arms, Jacob takes his seat.

CHRIS

Any idea what happened to the family?

EMILY

(thinking)
Husband is still there. The wife... disappeared. It was big news around here for a while. Rumors went around. I heard he was abusive, and she left him. She was in my yoga class. Seemed like a nice lady. Shame about the home too. It used to be beautiful. The whole place needs to be repainted if you ask me.

Chris suddenly realizes he knows which home Emily is talking about.

CHRIS

The place by Jacob's school? We pass it on our walks.

Jacob whispers to himself, loud enough for Chris and Emily to hear him.

JACOB

The bogeyman's house.

EMILY

(to Jacob)

Honey, that's not nice. The man that lives there has been through a lot. Don't make fun of him.

(to Chris)

Why are you asking all of this, Chris?

CHRIS

Do you think it's possible... she didn't disappear? Like, maybe, he killed her?

EMILY

Chris!

Emily looks at Jacob who's listening to their conversation.

EMILY (CONT'D)

This is not an appropriate dinner conversation!

CHRIS

Yeah, but what if --

EMILY

Drop it, Chris! Now!

Chris leaves the table. On his way out of the kitchen, he pulls out his cell phone and dials.

CHRIS

(into phone)

Patrick? It's Chris. I need your help.

INT. POLICE STATION - LOBBY - NEXT DAY

Chris, still looking exhausted and slightly manic, spots Patrick on a bench. Chris gets sideways glances from the various cops in the room.

Patrick sips on a coffee as Chris takes a seat next to him.

CHRIS

Hey.

PATRICK

Whoa! Jesus, Chris. You look like shit.

CHRIS

I haven't been sleeping much. Nightmares. Will she see us? Did she get what I asked for?

PATRICK

She's got time for us, yeah. But first you're going to tell me what this is all about.

Chris removes Jacob's drawings from his pockets, spreading the pics out between them.

He has files littered with articles on hauntings and supernatural events.

CHRIS

Look at these. Jacob has been drawing pictures of a woman in the house.

Confused, Patrick sifts through the drawings.

PATRICK

Okay? So what.

CHRIS

(rambling)

I think this woman attacked me the other night. She's been hanging around Jacob. I reached for Jacob's frog, Iggy, and she grabbed --

PATRICK

Whoa! Stop, Chris. What are you saying? Attacked you? I don't understand. You're not making any sense right now.

Chris looks around the police station, scanning the room for prying ears. Pointing to the drawing --

CHRIS

I'm saying I think this woman is in our house. The house is haunted!

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 She's a ghost. She grabbed me.
 Look!

Patrick raises his sleeve, displaying a large bruise on his wrist where the bloody woman grabbed him.

Patrick examines Chris's injury.

PATRICK
 What'd you do?

CHRIS
 I didn't do it! She did! She's out
 to get me! I've seen her in my
 dreams and in Jacob's room.

Patrick's heart drops. He's watching his brother have a mental break down.

Chris notes the pity in Patrick's expression.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 (yelling)
 I'm not crazy! Will she see us or
 not?!

Now, it's Patrick looking around the room --

PATRICK
 Keep it down, godammit.
 (sighing)
 Just let me do all the talking.

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - MINUTES LATER

JENNIFER
 A neighborhood watch?

DETECTIVE JENNIFER DELANEY, Patrick's fling from earlier in life. Six years older now and still on the job.

Still beautiful, she's world-weary now. The weight of her profession taking its toll.

PATRICK
 Yeah. No big deal really. Just a
 handful of vigilant homeowners
 trying to do our part. We meet once
 a month. There's donuts!

Her bullshit meter is going into overdrive, Jennifer eyes her ex-boyfriend with a healthy dose of skepticism.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

So the file I had you pull, that guy lives on my nephew's street --

JENNIFER

As I said on the phone, we're usually not in the habit of discussing ongoing cases.

PATRICK

Look, we just wanna know if we should be concerned is all.

JENNIFER

Patrick, I haven't seen you in six years --

PATRICK

Not my decision.

JENNIFER

I know that. I didn't say it was.

Officially out of patience, Chris takes control --

CHRIS

All we need from you is some information.

PATRICK

Chris --

CHRIS

A friend said she bought some stuff at a garage sale from a run down place on Oak Drive. Owner said his wife disappeared. I've been doing a little research. I think something really bad happened to this woman. There's a missing person's report, right? Is that it?

Chris spots a file on the desk. He yanks a faded *HAVE YOU SEEN ME?* flyer from the middle of it --

JENNIFER

Hey!

The missing girl -- LISA DONOVAN. She's beautiful with wavy brown hair. Chris recognizes the face immediately.

CHRIS

(to himself)

It's her.

Jennifer snatches the flyer back.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 (to Patrick)
 This is the spirit haunting Emily's
 home

JENNIFER
 Excuse me?!
 (to Patrick)
 Ok, what the hell's this all about?

Noting the commotion, a GRUFF SERGEANT approaches.

GRUFF SERGEANT
 Everything okay over here,
 Detective?

CHRIS
 Back off, this is important.

GRUFF SERGEANT
 Who the hell -- ?

JENNIFER
 (to Sergeant)
 We're fine, sir. He was just
 leaving.

Yanking Chris to his feet --

PATRICK
 Nice job, psycho.

EXT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Patrick trails Chris out of the station.

PATRICK
 What the hell has gotten into you?!

CHRIS
 Patrick, I need to know!

PATRICK
 Fine. You're right. It's a missing
 persons case. Six years cold. What
 does that prove?

Jennifer barges out the door after them --

JENNIFER

(to Patrick)

You ask me for a favor, and this is the thanks I get?

CHRIS

It's not his fault. Listen, I'm sorry. Really. I just... I need you to tell me everything.

JENNIFER

Are you kidding me right now? That was my C.O. you just barked at, asshole.

Jennifer turns to Patrick for backup. Instead, he returns her glare with pleading eyes.

PATRICK

Whatever you could find out, Jen. Please.

JENNIFER

Wow. Ok, um... according to the file, the woman's name was Lisa Donovan, nine months pregnant, reported missing by her husband. Last seen leaving yoga class and headed home. We done here?

CHRIS

What happened? Why wasn't the husband ever charged?

JENNIFER

There wasn't anything pointing to foul play.

CHRIS

What do you think?

JENNIFER

I don't. It wasn't my case.

CHRIS

Well, what about the lead detective? Did he suspect the husband?

JENNIFER

No. The husband was out of town on business. Plenty of witnesses. No way he could have done it. Looked like Lisa just took off.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
 Disappeared without a trace.
 Without any probable cause, the
 home couldn't be searched. Case
 eventually went cold.

CHRIS
 (to Patrick)
 He killed her. I know it.

PATRICK
 Jesus, I can't believe we're even
 having this conversation right now.
 Do you have any idea how insane you
 sound?

CHRIS
 (to Jennifer)
 What would it take to get the case
 reopened?

JENNIFER
 Evidence, for starters.

CHRIS
 Thanks.

Chris turns to leave. Patrick grabs Chris by the arm,
 spinning him around.

PATRICK
 Hey! We had an agreement, remember?
 If you start going off the rails --

CHRIS
 The agreement still stands. But I'm
 not crazy. This will all make
 sense. You'll see.

Patrick stares his big brother down. Something in Chris's
 eyes says "trust me". Patrick waves him off.

Chris hurries off down the street.

PATRICK
 (to himself)
 Damn it.

Patrick pulls out his cell phone.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
 (on phone)
 Emily, it's Patrick. We need to
 talk.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - MINUTES LATER

Emily walks through the parking lot to her SUV as she finishes her conversation with Patrick.

EMILY

(on phone)

Thank you for the heads up,
Patrick. I'll be sure to speak with
him when I get home. I agree...
we're going to have to keep a
closer eye on him.

(pause)

I'll let you know how it goes.
Thanks again.

Emily sighs as she hangs up her phone. Dropping it in her purse, she fishes for her keys.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Hey!

Emily nearly jumps out of her skin. She turns to see who's behind her.

Steve -- his eyes are bloodshot, his movement unsteady. It's obvious he has been drinking.

EMILY

Steve, what are you doing here? I
heard the hospital --

STEVE

(angry, shouting)
Fired me!?

Emily, frightened, tries her best not to piss Steve off any more than he already is.

EMILY

I should really get going.

Emily opens her SUV door. Steve SLAMS it shut.

He leans in close, repelling Emily with the stench of booze.

STEVE

How are things with Chris? Did you
finally get your happily ever
after?

EMILY

He's the father of my child, Steve.
Please understand...

Steve stares at Emily for a moment, before the biggest grin slowly appears on his face.

STEVE

See! That's just it! Something isn't making sense here, Emily. Before I was fired, I was able to get my hands on your medical records. I think Chris would be very interested to hear what I found in there. Don't you?

Now, he has her full attention. Emily pleads for a little compassion --

EMILY

Steve, let's just talk about this. Please.

STEVE

Too late, bitch! I'll be seeing you. You can count on it!

Steve storms off.

EMILY

Wait! Just wait a minute --

Shaken to her core, Emily's whole body seems to give out. She sinks to her knees, trembling in the parking lot and trying her best to catch her breath.

EXT. DONOVAN HOME - EVENING

It grows dark in the neighborhood.

Across the street, Chris leans against a tree, spying on the Donovan home.

CUT TO:

INT. EMILY'S HOME - SAME TIME

Emily walks in the front door, only to find Jacob and Iggy, sitting in front of the television -- alone.

EMILY

Hi, honey. Where's Chris?

Jacob can't peel his eyes away from his favorite cartoon.

JACOB

He left.

EMILY

What? He wouldn't...

Emily looks confused. She calls out to the rest of the house.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Chris! Chris are you home?

Off no response, she checks room after room looking for Chris. He's nowhere to be found.

Emily reenters the living room and reaches for the phone.

CUT TO:

EXT. DONOVAN HOME - SAME TIME

Chris watches the neglected home. After a few moments, he scans the neighborhood. Empty.

He darts across the street, closer to the home. Covertly moving along the side of the house, Chris peeks in a side window.

Inside, DANIEL DONOVAN, (30s), sits somberly in front of the television, unaware of the uninvited visitor outside.

Chris quietly moves the back of the house. He peers into a basement window. It's too dark to see anything.

CHRIS

(to himself)

Damn it.

Shifting course to the attached garage, Chris inspects a low hanging window. Inside, he spots the family minivan.

Chris tries the window. To his surprise, it opens.

Chris takes a look around. The coast is clear. Lifting one leg inside --

BRRRIINNNGGGG

Chris scrambles to shut his phone off. Hearing the front door open --

He dives behind some bushes on the side of the house. Daniel peers out the screen door.

DANIEL

Is someone out there?

Chris sits frozen, watching Daniel step out onto the front porch. Noticing the garage window open, Daniel walks over and closes it, looking around suspiciously.

Chris waits patiently as Daniel makes his way back in the house. As soon as the door closes, Chris makes a mad dash for the sidewalk.

As soon as he reaches it, he's hit with the beam of a FLASHLIGHT right in the face. Chris raises his hands in defeat.

VOICE

FREEZE!

Caught. Chris lowers his arms... and sees Patrick and Emily standing in front of him.

Patrick grabs Chris by the shoulders --

PATRICK

Have you lost your damn mind? What the hell are you doing out here?

Emily moves to face Chris. She SLAPS him hard across the face.

EMILY

How could you leave Jacob home alone? I had to leave him with the neighbors to come find you.

CHRIS

Emily, I'm sorry. I wasn't going to leave him alone for long. I just needed to see his face.

EMILY

Who?

CHRIS

The man that lives here. He killed his wife. I just need to find some eviden --

Emily looks appalled. Patrick swings Chris around to face him.

PATRICK

You just got your life back, Chris.
Are you trying to throw it all
away?

CHRIS

Patrick, he did it. He killed Lisa!
I need to get evidence so the case
can be reopened --

Patrick snaps. He shakes Chris, hard.

PATRICK

STOP IT!

Patrick instantly regrets it. He leans in and hugs Chris.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

We're going to get you some help,
Chris. I promise.

As Patrick embraces his big brother, Chris stares at the
Donovan home suspiciously.

Patrick opens the back door of his car. Shutting it behind
Chris, he turns to Emily.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Jennifer recommended a psychiatrist
on staff they use to evaluate
suspects. I'll see if we can get
Chris looked at tomorrow. I'll tell
him it's an emergency.

Emily nods with tears in her eyes.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

I'm just letting you know... if
they think Chris is a danger to
himself or someone else, they will
have him committed to a mental
health facility.

EMILY

(crying)
I understand.

INT. PSYCHOLOGIST OFFICE - NEXT DAY

Chris sits in a modernly decorated office. A lot of browns
and tan colors cover the walls and furniture.

DR. KEVIN WESTWOOD (50) enters, takes a seat across from Chris.

WESTWOOD

Hi, Chris. I'm Dr Westwood. Your brother thought it'd be a good idea if we had a conversation. Why do you think that is?

CHRIS

He's worried about me. I'm fine though, really. Looking back on... I was just confused. There's something wrong with me, with my brain. I just get confused sometimes.

WESTWOOD

Patrick told me about your accident. Something like that can change someone. Make them see or hear things that aren't really there. Do you think that's what is happening with you?

CHRIS

Yes. I mean, maybe. I'm really not sure.

WESTWOOD

Tell me about the events that led your brother to find you at the...

Westwood checks his notes.

WESTWOOD (CONT'D)

Donovan home. Why did you go there? What were you hoping to find?

CHRIS

I don't know. I've been having weird dreams lately. Hearing voices. Probably just side effects of my injury. That's all.

Dr. Westwood notices something on Chris's wrist. It's a large bruise from where the bloody woman grabbed him.

WESTWOOD

What happened?

Chris pulls down his sleeve to cover the bruise.

CHRIS

Nothing.

INT. WESTWOOD'S OFFICE - HALLWAY - LATER

Dr. Westwood exits his office and meets with an anxious Patrick and Emily.

EMILY

How is he?

Dr. Westwood has a seat next to them.

WESTWOOD

He's not saying much. People that have experienced head injuries are usually the hardest to diagnose. Injuries such as the one Chris has experienced can result in changes in the personality.

PATRICK

What kind of changes?

WESTWOOD

How did Chris get the injury to his arm?

EMILY

He fell, I think.

Dr. Westwood looks a little worried.

WESTWOOD

I've read about cases where after a head injury, the patient began to show signs of psychosis. Hallucinations, paranoia, mood swings... and self mutilation. I think Chris may --

EMILY

Are you saying Chris is psychotic?

WESTWOOD

It'd be premature to say that definitively at this point. I'll recommend an increase in dosage of his medication. He needs to take it. I'm sorry, but that's about all I can do at this point.

INT. EMILY'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Emily, dressed in hospital scrubs, paces around the living room anxiously. Chris and Jacob sit on the couch watching her.

EMILY

I'm working tonight.
(thinking)
Maybe I can get Sara to cover. Or maybe Molly. She's always looking for more hours.

CHRIS

You don't have to skip work on account of me. We'll be fine. I promise I won't leave the house and Jacob here will call if he thinks anything is wrong. Which it won't be. Please don't worry.

EMILY

Did Patrick say he was working tonight? Maybe I can get him to swing by, check on you guys.

Chris approaches Emily.

CHRIS

I don't need a baby sitter. The medication seems to be working. We'll call if there are any problems. We promise.

Emily looks skeptical. Defeated, she finally relents --

EMILY

Just for tonight. I'll talk to my supervisor about switching shifts.

EXT. EMILY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Exiting the house, Emily climbs in her SUV.

Chris and Jacob wave from the front door as her vehicle pulls out of the driveway.

Emily passes a dark-colored PICKUP TRUCK parked across the street. Once she passes, a PERSON pops up from behind the wheel --

It's Steve.

He watches Emily's SUV turn the corner, leaving the neighborhood.

INT. EMILY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Chris meticulously types away on Emily's laptop. He has multiple windows open frantically looking for information.

Jacob sits on the couch watching cartoons. He notices a shadow pass by the window on the front porch.

JACOB

Chris!

Chris is so involved with the computer that he is only partially paying attention to Jacob.

CHRIS

We'll eat in a minute, buddy. Just gotta finish this really quick.

On the computer screen, we see Chris is studying up...

CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION, HOW TO SOLVE A MURDER, etc.

He hits PLAY a video marked "*Blood Evidence*".

On the screen: a CRIME SCENE TECHNICIAN SPRAYS LUMINOL on a table top. Holding a blacklight up to it, the doused table lights up like a Christmas tree.

VIDEO

Luminol can find traces of blood from crimes that are years old, even if the area has been cleaned.

Chris takes notes on the video. He underlines LUMINOL.

Jacob watches as the shadowy figure on the porch makes their way to the front door.

JACOB

Chris! Look!

Chris is still immersed in his video.

CHRIS

One more minute, Jacob.

The doorknob to the front door slightly begins to turn. Finding it locked, the knob is jerked harder.

Hearing someone at the door, Chris quickly turns off the computer.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Emily? Did you forget something?

Chris approaches and the front door. Opening it, he is surprised to see Steve standing there.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Steve? What are you doing here?

STEVE
I'm about to do you the biggest favor of your life.

Steve holds up a file -- Emily's medical records.

STEVE (CONT'D)
That bitch has been lying the whole time. I took her medical file from the hospital. I've got something to show you. Let me in.

CHRIS
I don't know what this is about, Steve. If you've got a problem with Emily take it up with her. Don't come to our home bothering our family.

Steve spots Jacob standing a few feet behind Chris.

STEVE
Family, my ass. You've got to see this!

Steve slams his shoulder into the door, forcing his way inside the home. Chris puts his weight against the door.

The resistance on both sides causes the frame to splinter. A window on the door breaks, spilling glass to the floor.

CHRIS
Jacob! Go to your room and lock the door!

JACOB
I want to call mommy.

Steve gets his shoulder and head through the door way.

Jacob spots Iggy propped up on the couch nearby --

CHRIS
Jacob! Go upstairs now!

STEVE
(to Jacob)
Don't you move, you little shit! I
know all about you! If you thought
I was mean before --

Jacob makes a dash for Iggy. Noticing this, Chris loses his grip on the door --

Steve makes his way inside. Chris turns just as Steve PUNCHES him hard across the face, dropping Chris like a bad habit.

Steve kicks Chris a few times in the gut, and once more in the face. Chris is stunned, fighting his hardest to stay conscious.

Jacob watches in horror from nearby. The poor kid is frozen with fear, tears streaming down his cheeks.

Steve makes a move towards the kid. Chris, still weakened, grabs Steve's leg out of desperation.

CHRIS
(barely awake)
Stay... away... from... him.

Steve looks down at Chris. He tosses the medical file on the floor next to him.

STEVE
Trust me, I'm doing you a favor.
Read that.

Steve easily kicks his leg free.

CHRIS
Jacob, run!

Steve leans down, slamming Chris's head into the floor, knocking him out cold.

Jacob tries to run for the stairs. Steve quickly counters, blocking his path.

STEVE
You're not getting away, you little
bastard! You're coming with me.

Steve grabs Jacob by the arms, lifting him eye-level.

JACOB

Let me go! You're hurting me!

STEVE

Tough! Mommy isn't here to help you now.

Steve suddenly freezes. As if somehow sensing something, or someone, behind him. He slowly lowers Jacob back to the floor.

He turns... and stands face to face with the BLOODY WOMAN. Her cold, black eyes staring right through him.

Steve tries for a moment to fully grasp what exactly he's looking at. The woman's dress hangs just a few inches from the floor, her legs not visible.

Blood stains soak her dress. Dried blood covers her stringy matted hair and face. She leans in close.

Jacob takes a few steps back, cautious, as if he knows what's coming.

Steve's eyes are as big as hen's eggs -- his mind can't possibly fathom what's floating directly in front of him.

STEVE (CONT'D)

(to himself)

What the fuck!!

The woman clutches Steve by the throat, lifting him off the ground --

The woman pushes Steve back... and begins to COMPLETELY FOLD HIM IN HALF BACKWARDS. Steve SCREAMS as his head inches closer to his heels.

His bones CRUNCH and CRACK as his spine is curled in the wrong direction.

Steve's screams fall silent and the woman drags his dead body through the rest of the living room, into the kitchen and towards the back door.

Jacob watches as the back door to the house opens on its own. The apparition carries the TWISTED CARCASS out, disappearing into the night.

The back door SLAMS behind her causing a gust of wind to blow through the house. The flurry hits the medical file Steve left next to Chris, sending it sliding under the couch nearby.

EXT. EMILY'S HOUSE - A LITTLE LATER

Patrick exits his vehicle in front of Emily's house.

Approaching the front porch, he notices the front door is ajar and fractured

Cautiously, Patrick makes his way inside --

He spots Chris out cold on the floor, Jacob crying next to him.

JACOB
Uncle Patrick!

Jacob rushes into the his uncle's embrace.

PATRICK
Jacob! Are you okay?

JACOB
Yeah.

Patrick scrambles to his brother's aid.

PATRICK
What happened to Chris?

JACOB
A man came into the house and hit him and kicked him.

PATRICK
What man? Where is he?

Jacob points to the back door.

JACOB
He's gone.

Patrick pulls out his cell.

PATRICK
I'm calling 9-1-1.

Chris's eyes flutter. He briefly sees his brother calling for help...

PATRICK (CONT'D)
(into radio)
There's been a break in. My brother's been hurt...

Before Chris passes out.

INT. AMBULANCE - LATER

Chris and Jacob sit in the back of an ambulance. Chris is being examined by a PARAMEDIC as Patrick and Jennifer approach.

PATRICK

So look who caught the case.

CHRIS

Jesus, Jennifer. I'm really sorry to drag you out here.

JENNIFER

Relax. It's my job.
(to paramedic)
How is he?

PARAMEDIC

Aside from a nasty bump on the head, he should be fine. Just to be sure, we should get him to the hospital for a ---

CHRIS

No, I'm fine. I'm not going to the hospital.

The paramedic shoots Patrick a concerned look. Patrick can only shrug in frustration.

Jennifer tries easing the tension. Nodding in Jacob's direction --

JENNIFER

And who's this handsome fella?

Blushing, Jacob squirms in his seat.

CHRIS

Where are my manners? Jennifer, meet Jacob, my son. Jacob, this is Detective Jennifer Delaney. She's a police officer.

JACOB

(softly)
Hi.

Getting a good look at the shy youngster, Jennifer smiles.

JENNIFER

It's nice meeting you, Jacob.

Chris hops out of the ambulance. Emily's home is now an active crime scene. Police cars line the street. A fire truck sits out front.

CHRIS

(to Patrick)

Is all this necessary? I don't think the guy took anything. Besides, I told you it was Steve Harper. Can't you just go pick him up?

JENNIFER

Yeah, Emily's ex-boyfriend. They're looking for him, but it doesn't look like anyone has seen him in a while. I don't think he'll get far without his truck.

Chris watches as a CRIME SCENE TECH carries a kit from his CSU van to inside the house.

CHRIS

What are they doing?

PATRICK

Police got forensics dusting for his prints inside. I guess they'll need them for a prosecution.

Chris watches as another tech takes photographs of the door.

CHRIS

(to Jennifer)

Do your guys have that thing they spray on blood to make it light up? I always thought that stuff was pretty neat.

JENNIFER

Luminol? Oh, yeah. We've got all the toys.

Jennifer sees the neighbors have begun to gather nearby. She notices a ripped CRIME SCENE TAPE flapping in the breeze.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

(to Chris)

Wait here.

(to Patrick)

Patrick, help me seal this place back off.

PATRICK
Sure thing.

As Jennifer and Patrick rush off...

Chris notices everyone around him is preoccupied with their work. No one is paying any attention to him. As casually as he can, he makes his way closer to the crime scene van.

He waits for his moment... then grabs a crime scene kit from the back of the CSU van.

As Jacob is getting examined by the paramedic, Chris hurries off into the night with the kit.

EXT. DONOVAN HOME - LATER

Chris stands outside of the Donovan home once again.

He places the crime scene kit down on the ground as he pulls out his phone and dials --

INT. DONOVAN HOME - SAME TIME

Inside -- the landline begins to ring. After a moment, Daniel enters from the other room. He picks up the receiver.

DANIEL
Hello?

Chris, on the other end, puts on a convincing performance.

CHRIS (O.S.)
Hello, Mr. Donovan? This is Detective Delaney. We've had a break in your wife's case and were wondering if you could come down to the station to answer a few question for us?

DANIEL
(voice cracking)
Oh my god! Lisa? You've found Lisa?

CHRIS (O.S.)
No, sir. Unfortunately, we haven't found her yet. We just need you to look over some photos and see if any of them jog any only memories. The sooner we get this straightened out, the sooner we can follow up on some new leads.

Daniel looks confused.

DANIEL
Detective Delaney? I thought the
case was being handled by Detective
Rivera.

EXT. DONOVAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

Chris paces back and forth on the phone.

CHRIS
(into phone)
Well, the captain thought a fresh
pair of eyes on the case would
breathe some new life into it. It's
standard procedure. So, listen, if
we could just give a few minutes of
your time --

INT. DONOVAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

A new sense of hope fills Daniel as he grabs his jacket.

DANIEL
Absolutely. I'm leaving right now.
And thank you, detective... for not
giving up on my wife.

EXT. DONOVAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

Daniel's last words give Chris pause. He looks a little
confused as he hangs up the phone.

Soon after, Daniel comes rushing out of the house. He jumps
in his car and speeds out of the driveway.

Chris, kit in tow, rushes across the street.

He tries the front door -- locked. Chris takes a look
around... no one is watching. Chris slams his shoulder into
the door a couple of times, each one harder than the last.

Finally, the door smashes open. Chris rushes inside.

INT. DONOVAN HOME - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tearing open the crime scene kit, Chris puts on the gloves,
goggles, and mask used to prevent exposure. He removes a
bottle of luminol, spraying it EVERYWHERE!

He covers the walls, floor, furniture, and bed.

Chris closes the curtains and then the bedroom door. He then removes a small wireless blacklight from the kit.

Turning it on --

The blacklight illuminates the room. Several small stains are present, but nothing pointing to a ghastly crime taking place.

Unimpressed with the outcome in the bedroom, Chris moves to another area.

Begin montage:

- Chris in the kitchen spraying luminol, using the blacklight. Only a few minor stains illuminate.

- Chris in the garage, again not many stains stand out.

- Chris in the bathroom, a few stains but nothing major. He grows frustrated.

- Chris in a room that looks like it would have been the nursery. No major pools or stains light up.

Chris, angry, flings his goggles across the room.

END MONTAGE:

EXT. EMILY'S HOUSE - PORCH - SAME TIME

The police are starting to pack it up and leave.

As Patrick watches the action from the porch, a frustrated paramedic shouts into the crowd --

PARAMEDIC

Hey! Is anyone gonna come get this kid?

Confused, Patrick scans the front yard. Chris is nowhere to be seen.

INT. DONOVAN HOME - HALLWAY

Chris moves to the main hallway. Frustrated, he throws the bottle of luminol down the hallway. It breaks open, spilling across the floor.

Chris catches a glimpse of himself in a hallway mirror.

Taking a hard look -- he's disgusted with what he sees.

CHRIS
 (breaking down)
 What am I doing? What the fuck is
 wrong with me?

Chris's cell chimes -- It's Patrick. Chris answers it.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 Patrick?

PATRICK (O.S.)
Where the hell are you, Chris?

Chris, almost in tears.

CHRIS
 (into phone)
 You gotta help me, man. I... I
 fucked up. I fucked up big,
 Patrick.

EXT. EMILY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Patrick's shoulders drop as he takes in his brother's
 confession.

PATRICK
 (into phone)
 Jesus Christ, Chris. Have you lost
 your fucking mind? Don't move!
 Don't fucking go anywhere! I'm on
 my way to get you!
 (disappointed)
 You're not going to be able to talk
 your way out of this one, Chris.

INT. DONOVAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

Trembling, Chris's legs finally give as his body sinks to the
 floor.

CHRIS
 (crying, on phone)
 I know. I know, Patrick. Just come
 get me.

INT. EMILY'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Jennifer is checking out the scene. Passing the couch, she notices an object slightly visible poking out underneath.

She bends down, sliding it forward -- the MEDICAL FILE.

Just as she cracks it open opens, a CSU TECH collecting evidence approaches.

CSU TECH
You want me to bag that?

JENNIFER
Make sure all this stuff gets to my desk.

Jennifer hands it over. The tech places the folder in an plastic bag, sealing it with evidence tape.

As she steps outside --

PATRICK
Chris needs us right now.

INT. DONOVAN HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Punishing himself, Chris bangs the back of his head against the wall over and over again.

With the blacklight in his hand, he begins flipping the POWER SWITCH back and forth -- half out of frustration, half just admiring the effect.

OFF... ON... OFF... ON... OFF... ON

After a moment, he notices something out of the corner of his eye.

A large pool of GLOWING SPOTS shimmering at the end the hallway. Pulls himself up --

He gazes at the radiant lights, everywhere the luminol spilled is now GLOWING BRIGHTLY under the blacklight.

Chris moves closer to the stains...

A LARGE POOL of bodily fluid was spilled there in the past.

Chris snatches a second bottle of luminol from the crime scene kit. He sprays it all over -- soaking the hallway, the walls. Even the ceiling gets doused.

Taking a couple steps back, Chris waves the blacklight -- the hallway lights up like Time Square on New Year's Eve.

Something horrific definitely happened here...

Someone lost a lot of blood. Too much to still be alive. Chris even notices drops on the ceiling.

PATRICK (O.S.)

Hello?

Patrick has arrived. Chris rushes out to greet him.

EXT. DONOVAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

The brothers meet in the entryway. Patrick notices the busted door frame -- Chris's point of entry.

CHRIS

Hey!

PATRICK

Goddamn it, Chris! Do you know where Jacob is right now? Do you even care?

CHRIS

Huh? Oh, I left with him with the ambulance.

(excited)

Patrick, you gotta see this.

Stepping onto the deck, Chris turns to lead Patrick back into the house -- *CLICK*.

Chris attempts to move. Jennifer stops him, shoving him against the aluminum siding.

A second *CLICK* -- handcuffs bind both Chris's wrists now.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

JENNIFER

You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be provided for you. Do you understand the rights I have just read to you?

CHRIS
 (confused)
 No no no, just take a look inside!
 I got him!

Fed up, Jennifer jerks Chris even closer.

JENNIFER
 Do you understand your rights,
 Chris?

CHRIS
 I found it! I found the evidence --

PATRICK
 I'm sorry, Chris. This is for your
 own good. We're going to get you
 some help

Jennifer swings him around, leading Chris across the yard to
 a nearby patrol car.

CHRIS
 Patrick! Bro, you gotta believe me!

Slowly trailing after, Patrick stops mid-stride. Reluctantly,
 he turns his attention back to the Donovan house.

JENNIFER
 Just stop talking, Chris. Right
 now! I could see it in your eyes
 that day you just weren't gonna
 leave this alone.

Placing Chris in the back of the vehicle --

CHRIS
 (shouting)
 No! Go inside! Just look! Just
 look!

JENNIFER
 It's over, Chris.

She slams the car door.

PATRICK (O.S.)
 (shouting)
 Detective!

Jennifer turns to Patrick, standing in the broken entryway.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
 You have to see this.

INT. DONOVAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

Jennifer slowly makes her way through the home. A bright NEON GLOW illuminates from around the corner as she approaches.

Turning the corner, she stands in AWE as her face reflects the eerie glow from the hallway.

JENNIFER
(to himself)
Jesus Christ.

EXT. POLICE CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Exiting the house, Jennifer jumps in the driver's seat. She quickly pulls out her radio.

JENNIFER
(into radio)
Dispatch, I need extra units at 3245 Oak Street. And send the forensics team back out here. I think we got a murder scene. We need to put out an APB on a Daniel Donovan. Get his picture from the DMV records.

From the back seat --

CHRIS
He's at the police station.

Jennifer turns to Chris.

JENNIFER
What did you say?

CHRIS
He's already at the station.

JENNIFER
How do you know that?

INT. EMILY'S HOME - LATER

Emily, confused and frightened, slowly enters her home.

Shattered door. Furniture overturned. Multiple people having trampled in and out. The place is a mess!

EMILY
 (terrified)
 Jacob? Chris?

A POLICE OFFICER watching Jacob peeks his head out from around the corner.

POLICE OFFICER
 Ma'am, your son is back here. He's fine.

JACOB
 In the kitchen, mom!

Emily rushes into the kitchen --

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Scooping Jacob into her arms. She squeezes him tightly.

EMILY
 (to Jacob)
 My God, I thought the worst.
 (to officer)
 Thank you for watching him.

OFFICER
 My pleasure. Detective Delaney said you should meet her down at the station.

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER

Chris is seated uncomfortably next to Jennifer's desk in the middle of a busy station.

Uncuffing him, Jennifer leans over --

JENNIFER
 Don't think for a second you're off the hook. You're going to be booked for breaking and entering. And you better pray that this little stunt doesn't get the case thrown out by the DA. Hopefully we can claim exigent circumstances forced me to enter the house and find that evidence.

Chris rubs his wrists. He notices a furious Daniel Donovan in a holding cell in the back of the room.

DANIEL

I want my lawyer. I didn't do anything!

Jennifer sits down at his desk, begins typing out her report.

A UNIFORMED OFFICER places the box of evidence from Emily's home on her desk.

UNIFORMED OFFICER

Here's everything. It's already been logged into evidence. Forensics is running that blood sample you asked for.

JENNIFER

Thanks.

Chris motions to Daniel.

CHRIS

What's going to happen to him?

JENNIFER

We have a sample of his wife Lisa's DNA on file. We'll see if what you found is a match. He'll be questioned and then possibly booked for murder if it does.

CHRIS

(to himself)

Maybe then she can rest in peace.

JENNIFER

What?

CHRIS

What's going to happen to me?

JENNIFER

I going to have to explain to my C.O. your little role in all this. See how well I can bullshit. Maybe I can pull some strings, at least get you bail until I can speak with the DA about not filing charges.

CHRIS

But I was right! He killed her!

JENNIFER

But you could have been wrong, Chris!

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

What if Daniel Donovan didn't leave the house tonight? Would you have broken in while he was still home? What if he had shot you? You have Emily and Jacob to think about. Lately, it seems like you've forgotten all about them.

Jennifer's words cut deep. Chris lowers his head, ashamed.

From across the room --

OFFICER

Delaney, the cap'n wants to see you.

Moment of truth. Jennifer nods, straightens her suit.

JENNIFER

Keep your fingers crossed he goes easy on you. Wait here.

She heads for the captain's office. Chris watches her exit.

Turning his attention to the holding cell, he watches as Daniel paces back and forth. His face -- a mixture of confusion, anger, and sadness.

Chris can't help but feel a little bad for him.

Chris notes the box of evidence on Jennifer's desk -- the folder Steve was carrying rests on top of the pile.

FLASHBACK:

STEVE'S VOICE (O.S.)

That bitch has been lying the whole time.

Chris's POV: we see Steve looking down at him. He tosses the medical file on the floor next to Chris.

STEVE

Read the file.

END FLASHBACK.

Jennifer approaches breaking Chris from his trance.

JENNIFER

So I think we may be in luck --

A DESK SERGEANT points Emily and Jacob in the direction of Patrick's desk.

Jacob slurps from a JUICE BOX as they make their way over.

EMILY

Chris, are you alright? They said Steve broke into the house.

CHRIS

I'm fine. I'll explain everything on the way home.

(to Jennifer)

Can I go?

JENNIFER

Sure, but I may have a lot more questions tomorrow.

CHRIS

I'll be around.

The family turns to leave. Jacob holds up a now empty juice box --

JACOB

Mom, I'm finished.

EMILY

Oh, ok. Uh...

Emily looks around for a trash can. Jennifer points to the wastebasket near her desk.

JENNIFER

You can toss it there, champ. You know, you were really brave tonight...

She playfully tousles the boy's hair, making an even bigger mess of it.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Now go home and get some rest, tough guy.

INT. EMILY'S SUV - NIGHT - LATER

Emily drives as her and Chris sit in silence in the front seat. Jacob stares out the back window at the passing scenery.

Chris turns to Emily. She can't bring herself to even look at him right now.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Jennifer, still at work, flips through Emily's medical record.

JENNIFER

Jesus.

Closing the file, she takes a moment to consider what she just read.

Nearby, a JANITOR collects her wastebasket. Turning it over to dump the contents --

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Wait!

Reaching inside, Jennifer pulls out an item --

The empty juice box.

INT. POLICE CRIME LAB - DAY

Carrying a box of donuts, Jennifer pops her head into a quiet office.

JENNIFER

Knock knock. I'm glad I caught you.

Inside, a portly LAB DIRECTOR is already putting on his jacket.

LAB DIRECTOR

You didn't. You never saw me. In fact, we're not even having this conversation right now.

JENNIFER

Aww, then who's gonna help me polish these off?

LAB DIRECTOR

For me? I'm touched.

JENNIFER

Don't be. They're leftovers from an earlier shift. But...

Jennifer raises the lid --

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
I saved you the cruller.

LAB DIRECTOR
Don't tell my wife.

JENNIFER
Your secret's safe with me. I
thought you could use the sugar
rush since we're both staying late
tonight.

Sighing, the lab director starts to remove his jacket.

LAB DIRECTOR
Beware of Greeks bearing gifts.
What's on your mind, detective?

JENNIFER
DNA match. Rush order?

INT. EMILY'S HOUSE - MORNING

Still weary, Chris shuffles his way up the basement stairs.

There, in the kitchen, an agitated Emily sits at the table
awaiting his arrival. Her eyes are filled with tears.

Cautious, Chris tests the waters...

CHRIS
Guess I missed breakfast.

EMILY
It's almost ten.

CHRIS
The medicine... it really knocks me
out sometimes.

An uncomfortable beat.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Hey, don't worry about the front
door. I can get it replaced
tomorrow. In the mean time, we
could stay at a hotel or I could
push the couch in front --

EMILY
No!
(furious)
(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

I can't believe you, Chris! You broke in that man's home --

CHRIS

It was something I had to do. Daniel Donovan murdered his wife. I had to find proof. The police are going to test the blood I found in the house. That man is going to pay for what he did to his wife. Her spirit was in this house. Now, she can rest in peace, and we can be a normal family.

EMILY

No, we can't.

Emily tries to hold back the waterworks, but she's failing miserably.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I can't have you living with us, Chris. I can't have you acting this way in front of Jacob. I have to think of him first. I've made an appointment for you at Woodview. I want you to stay there for a while.

CHRIS

The psychiatric hospital?

EMILY

You're sick, Chris. You need treatment. I think your injury did more damage than we thought. They have excellent doctors there who can --

CHRIS

I'm not crazy!

Practically jumping out of his chair, he rips Jacob's class drawing off the fridge door.

Holding it up for Emily to see -- THE BLOODY WOMAN.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

This woman, Lisa Donovan, was in our house! But she's gone now! I swear! I fixed it!

(pleading)

Don't do this, Emily! I need to be here. I need to be around you and Jacob.

Emily looks crushed.

EMILY

I'm sorry, Chris. Please don't fight me on this. I want you to pack your things. I'm dropping you off this evening.

CHRIS

And Jacob?

EMILY

You can say good-bye when he gets home from school. When you're feeling better, I'll bring him for a visit first chance I get. I promise.

Defeated, Chris accepts his fate.

INT. BASEMENT ROOM - AFTERNOON

Chris lays on his bed staring at the ceiling, a half-packed suitcase at his feet.

JACOB (O.S.)

Mommy says you're leaving.

Startled out of his pity-party --

CHRIS

Whoa Jacob, you scared me.

JACOB

Sorry.

Chris hugs his son tight.

CHRIS

It's ok, pal. Yeah, I'm going away for a little bit.

JACOB

But you're coming back?

CHRIS

I am. Absolutely. I promise.

JACOB

Mom says I'm going over to Mikey's house later. His parents are gonna baby-sit me. I think we're ordering pizza!

Chris laughs.

CHRIS

That sounds awesome, buddy.

Jacob raises Iggy up, as if the doll is whispering something for his ears only.

After a moment, he hands the stuffed frog over to Chris --

JACOB

Can you hold on to him for me?

Chris is taken aback, stunned at the sight.

CHRIS

Uh... yeah. Sure, buddy. Thank you.

JACOB

I'll miss you, dad.

Fighting to keep it together --

CHRIS

I'll miss you too.

Jacob and Chris share a look. Chris beams with pride as he watches Jacob run up the stairs.

Collapsing at the end of his pull-out, he holds up Iggy and gazes into the marble eyes of his child's favorite toy.

Hurting, Chris embraces the raggedy frog, crushing it against his chest.

Puzzled -- Chris pulls the frog away from him, studying it curiously.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

(to himself)

What the hell?

Chris begins to run his fingers over the doll. Squeezing, he grips something solid.

Chris locates a zipper in the back. Unzipping the animal, Chris finds a MINIATURE BLACK BOX inside the back of the plush toy.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

An unexpected knock on the front door --

Emily approaches, opening the broken door. Standing outside, Jennifer... holding her medical file.

JENNIFER

Hi, Emily. Detective Jen Delaney, from last night. I was hoping we could talk.

EMILY

Uh, sure. Come on in. Did you find Steve already?

JENNIFER

No, not yet. Where's Jacob?

EMILY

Upstairs. Why?

Jennifer enters the house.

JENNIFER

And Chris? Where is he?

Emily notes the file in the detective's hand.

EMILY

What is that?

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT ROOM

Chris finds a tiny velcro patch on the bottom of Iggy. He opens it, discovering a small socket for an auxiliary cord.

Chris spots a tattered box of cables tucked away in the corner of the basement. Several loose wires spill out.

Chris wheels over an older model TV. Spotting a compatible wire for the frog, Chris plugs the cable into Iggy and connects it to the television.

He turns on the TV and fiddles with the settings. A live video image appears on the screen.

The image is Chris.

Chris waves his hand, his image waves back. It's live, and it seems to be coming from a camera in Iggy's eye. Suddenly, Chris realizes....

CHRIS
(to himself)
It's a nanny cam.

Chris turns Iggy over and flips a switch. A recorded image begins to appear on the screen.

ON TELEVISION:

Someone has turned on the nanny cam for the first time.

IGGY'S POV: we see an image of the floor. Iggy, being held facedown.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
I think I got it.

The image spins around. Iggy is now looking at the person just activated him -- too close to be made out clearly.

Iggy is now being carried across the room.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
At least I hope I got it.

Iggy is placed on a small endtable looking out at a large hallway. The woman, still too close to make out, takes a step back to admire her electronic skills.

It's LISA DONOVAN. A very much alive and pregnant Lisa Donovan. She wears a WHITE DRESS.

BACK ON CHRIS:

Chris is frozen. His eyes wide with SHOCK as he continues watching the screen.

CHRIS
(to himself)
Oh my God.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSTAIRS LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Emily holds the medical file. She reads over it.

EMILY

I don't understand. How'd you get my medical records, Detective?

JENNIFER

Steve stole it from the hospital right before he was fired. He brought it over here to show Chris what was in it.

EMILY

What do you mean? What did he want to show him?

JENNIFER

I think maybe you already know the answer to that.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT ROOM - SAME TIME

ON TELEVISION:

Lisa dances, showing off her pregnant belly to the camera. She's having a great time.

New baby supplies piled up nearby -- car seat, diapers, baby toys fill the hall.

An ABRUPT NOISE from the back room. Lisa turns to the sound.

LISA

(startled)

Honey, is that you?

A MASKED FIGURE appears from the darkness. Wearing a heavy coat and a ski mask, their identity is completely concealed.

A large KNIFE is in the person's hand.

Lisa screams and runs out of frame into the next room. The masked figure chases after her.

A struggle can be heard in the next room. Lisa reenters the frame... she's BLOODY from several stab wounds.

Holding her pregnant stomach and leaning on the wall for support, she struggles to exit the house.

The intruder creeps up, stabbing Lisa in the back.

Fighting for the life of her unborn child, Lisa KICKS the intruder in the stomach sending them flying across the hall.

The intruder CRASHES into the table where Iggy sits. The nanny cam falls off the table onto the floor. Only half of the hallway now in view.

The nanny cam only sees the struggling pairs legs and feet as Lisa falls to the floor. The intruder stands over her as she begs for her life.

LISA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Please! Please! Take what ever you
want. Please don't hurt me. I'm
pregnant!

Through Iggy's eyes, Chris watches as the intruder straddles the helpless woman. He hears the THRUST of the knife being brought down on to Lisa.

THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!

Lisa struggles at first but it's no use. The intruder overpowers her. Lisa barely moves now... but she still clings to what little life she has left. The intruder raises Lisa's white dress.

LISA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(barely audible)
Please... stop... my baby

The intruder slides the knife down Lisa's body... to her stomach. Chris hears what sounds like... CUTTING.

ON CHRIS:

Chris watches. His eyes filled with tears. He leans over to retch at the images on the screen.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSTAIRS LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Jennifer paces around the living room, eyeballing Emily the entire time.

JENNIFER
I came over here to give you a
chance to explain exactly what I'm
looking at in this file.

EMILY

I don't know what you're talking about.

JENNIFER

I started thinking, why would Steve want your medical files, and why would he want Chris to see them. So I started looking through it. It had a lot of medical jargon in it. Stuff I didn't quite understand. But *one word* really stood out to me. One word that I figured had to be wrong. There was no way this was possible.

(angry)

Do you know what that one word was, Emily?

Emily's eyes are filling with tears. She's a deer caught in headlights.

EMILY

(softly)

Please... don't.

JENNIFER

Infertile. The word was infertile, Emily. Women that can't have children.

Emily's knees give. She sits down on the couch, burying her face in her hands, sobbing.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

So I brought Patrick into the station today. He painted a picture of a very angry woman and a very isolated pregnancy. Cutting yourself off from family and friends is no version of nesting I ever heard of. I had a sample of Jacob's DNA tested against Patrick's. Did you know DNA can tell if you're biologically related to anyone? Even an uncle.

(pause)

Guess what? It didn't match. But know who it did match?

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT ROOM - SAME TIME

Chris watches as the intruder finishes cutting Lisa's stomach open. The intruder stands and turns toward Iggy's camera.

ON TELEVISION:

The intruder rises to their feet. Suddenly, the sound of a baby crying can be heard. Iggy watches as the intruder rocks the baby in their arms.

After a brief moment, the intruder places the bloody baby in a bassinet nearby. All of the baby items Lisa had in the hallway are collected... including Iggy.

Iggy is picked up from the floor and spun around just in time to see the intruder remove the ski mask --

JENNIFER (V.O.)

Jacob's DNA matched the blood found
in the Donovan home. Lisa's blood.

Revealing EMILY as the intruder.

She continues to gather the baby items stuffing them into a bag. Iggy is thrown into the same bag.

Iggy lands on a baby sign in the bag. "Welcome Home, Oliver!" is the last image seen before the video cuts out.

ON CHRIS:

Chris is taken aback at the sight of Emily on the video. He covers his mouth in horror.

His rage building, he kicks the television over.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSTAIRS LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Jennifer hears the TV crash downstairs. She rushes to the basement doorway and calls down.

JENNIFER

Chris?

BANG! Jennifer is shot from behind. The bullet rips through her back launching her down the basement stairs.

As she plummets, Emily stands behind her, holding the smoking gun in her hand.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - AT THAT MOMENT

Chris jumps at the sound of the gunshot. He turns to see the detective tumble down the staircase to the basement floor.

Rushing to her side -- Jennifer is unconscious.

CHRIS

Jennifer!

Chris sees blood flowing from Jennifer's back. He looks up and sees Emily making her way down the stairs, gun in hand.

Chris quickly grabs the fallen officer and drags her across the basement floor to the other side of the room.

Emily makes her way down the stairs. Chris calls out to her.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I know everything, Emily! Iggy is actually a nanny cam. It recorded the whole thing. Lisa's spirit was never attached to Iggy. It was attached to Jacob, her baby!

EMILY

HE'S MY BABY!

Emily reaches the bottom of the stairs.

In the corner, Chris removes Jennifer's gun. He takes a defensive position.

A revolver -- he only has six shots.

CHRIS

What happened, Emily? You told me you were pregnant six years ago and had to follow through with the lie?

BANG! Emily shoots in the direction of Jennifer. The bullet misses.

BANG! BANG! BANG! Chris fires three rounds and misses.

EMILY

I knew you'd wake up. I never gave up hope.

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

Even when the doctors said there was little chance, I knew it! And when you did, you'd want a family! If I didn't have the baby, you'd just leave me again.

CHRIS

So you killed an innocent woman and kidnapped her child?

EMILY

I watched her for months. I wanted the very best baby for you when you finally woke up. I befriended her in yoga class.

FLASHBACK: Emily and Lisa walking out of yoga class together. Both women very much pregnant and chatting. The pair walk into a coffee shop.

EMILY (V.O.)

She told me she was having doubts about being a good mother. She didn't think she could do it. But I knew I could. I took her burden from her. She told me her husband was going out of town. So that's when I planned it.

FLASHBACK: Emily, in her bedroom, removes her shirt and a fake pregnant belly strapped to her stomach. She puts on the heavy jacket the intruder was wearing in the video.

EMILY

I cleaned the blood and purchased forged documents. Birth certificates, social security numbers. It's all there. It was easy.

BANG! BANG! Chris fires twice more, missing both shots --

Only one bullet left.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Chris, I did it for us. Patrick is the only one who knows. If he's gone, we can still make it work. You, me, and Jacob. We can be a family!

Emily advances even closer. Chris faces her, placing Jennifer's gun to his temple.

EMILY (CONT'D)

No, Chris! Don't! I don't want to live without you. I love you.

Chris shakes his head.

CHRIS

You don't know what love is. You're insane.

Emily is livid. She paces erratically around the basement. She knows what she has to do but doesn't want to accept it.

After a moment --

EMILY

Fine! If we can't be a family here we can still be one after death. I'll kill you, then Jacob. The last bullet will be for me. We can all be together forever!

JACOB

Mommy?

Emily spins. Spotting Jacob behind her, she yanks him over, forcing the barrel to the side of his head.

Her finger wavers dangerously over the trigger -- Chris drops his gun.

CHRIS

Emily! Don't!

EMILY

I'm doing this for us.

CHRIS

NO!

Emily begins to pull back, her grip quivering unsteadily --

Suddenly, items in the basement SOAR across the room towards Emily -- a pillow, lamp, a drinking glass. The broken TV lunges past Emily's head within inches of striking her.

Terrified and confused, Emily holds Jacob tighter as she backs up towards the stairs.

The end table slides across the floor past Emily, halting her escape.

Emily turns to Chris for an explanation.

EMILY

How are you doing this?

CHRIS

I'm not doing it, Emily.

The couch is heaved across the basement floor, smashing the end table to pieces. Her path is completely blocked now.

Chris notices a TATTERED RUG that was hidden under the couch bed on the floor. The design is a YELLOW AND RED FLOWER pattern. They're roses!

FLASH CUT: to an image of the bloody woman's arm bursting from the ground under the red and yellow roses.

Emily lowers the gun off Jacob. She struggles desperately to move the couch.

Chris seizes the opportunity and charges Emily. She raises her gun and shoots Chris in the shoulder as he tackles her across the room.

All three land in a pile on the floor. Chris wrestles Jacob from Emily's grasp.

She quickly gets to her feet first. Pointing the gun at them both --

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Emily!

EMILY

I'm sorry.

Rising from the floor under the flower-covered rug, a HAZY IMAGE quickly takes shape.

From across the room, Jennifer's eyes flutter open -- she watches what's about to happen.

Chris looks in horror as the BLOODY APPARITION of Lisa Donovan hovers behind Emily.

Emily sees the fright in Chris's face and turns. She sees Lisa's ghostly gaze staring back at her.

Lisa's eyes are black as coal but the rage in them can be clearly seen.

BANG! BANG! BANG! Emily fires her gun at Lisa. The bullets pass right through her, hitting the wall behind.

Lisa GRABS Emily by the throat and lifts her in the air. Her bloody dress begins to impossibly WRAP itself around Emily over and over, mummifying her.

Chris turns Jacob's face into his chest, not letting him witness Emily's gruesome fate.

The dress TIGHTENS and SQUEEZES as Emily struggles underneath it. Emily's blood gushes out, splattering as it hits the floor.

Jennifer and Chris watch as the dress suddenly begins TWISTING.

SNAP! CRUNCH! POP! Emily's bones are breaking from under the dress. She screams in pain just as the dress grabs her head like a vice and TWISTS it completely backwards.

Emily's body goes limp under the dress. It just hangs in the air under the bloody garments like a puppet with invisible strings.

Lisa looks down at Chris, almost as if saying good bye. She leans down and gently strokes the back of Jacob's head.

She gives one last look at the two before making her way up the basement stairs, dragging Emily's dead body behind her.

Chris and Jennifer share a look of complete disbelief to what they just witnessed.

EXT. EMILY'S HOUSE - DAYS LATER

Chris, his arm in a sling, waits outside Emily's house.

He watches as police and crime scene techs swarm the house like bees protecting a hive.

Chris looks down at Jennifer, resting in a wheelchair.

CHRIS

So they found her?

JENNIFER

Yeah. Right where you said she'd be.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT ROOM - EARLIER

The basement floor has been ripped apart. Digging equipment scattered amongst the rubble...

JENNIFER (V.O.)

In the floor, under the flowers.

The flower-covered rug lies crumpled in a wad nearby.

A FORENSIC TEAM, surrounded by uniformed officers, tear away at the concrete --

FORENSIC TECH

Found something.

A BURLY DETECTIVE steps closer.

IN THE HOLE --

A large, plastic storage bin. The detective lowers his gloved hand, removing the lid.

Inside, the decomposed remains of Lisa Donovan -- still wearing her blood-stained white dress.

CUT TO:

EXT. EMILY'S HOUSE - PRESENT DAY

As the back doors slam shut on a packed MOVING VAN --

Chris and Patrick pause to take in one last look at the house.

PATRICK

I guess there's only one thing left to do.

CHRIS

Yeah.

PATRICK

You want me to come with you?

CHRIS

Absolutely. But I think this is something I have to do on my own.

PATRICK

Can you do me a favor? Can you give this to him for me?

Patrick pulls out a new STUFFED FROG from his bag.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
I just figured... maybe he could
use a new friend.

Chris takes the toy.

CHRIS
So he's losing an uncle, but
gaining an amphibian? Good trade.

PATRICK
He ain't losing nothing. You tell
him as soon as I'm back on my feet,
we're all going for ice cream.
You're buying.

CHRIS
(smiling)
Sounds good, bro.

EXT. DONOVAN HOME - LATER

Hand-in-hand, Chris and Jacob stroll up to the house, which
looks better than we've ever seen.

Fresh paint. Mowed lawn. Blooming garden.

Completely rejuvenated. There is a new energy here that
didn't exist before.

Jacob hesitates -- holding his new frog, he turns to Chris.

JACOB
What if I don't like him?

CHRIS
You will. He's a very nice man. And
he's been waiting to meet you for a
long time.

Jacob lowers his head.

JACOB
What if he doesn't like me?

Chris chokes up, stifling a tear. He clutches Jacob's hand a
little tighter.

Putting a hand under the boy's chin, Chris raises Jacob's
gaze to meet his own.

CHRIS

Like I said before... what's not to
like?

Jacob smiles as the pair continue forward.

Before Chris has a chance to even knock -- the front door is swung open, revealing an excited Daniel Donovan in the entryway.

Dropping to one knee, he grips his son in an emotional embrace.

As we pan out away from the home, across the yard...

Where a pair of BRIGHT RED ROSES growing all on their own, away from the others, sway slightly in the gentle breeze.

FADE OUT.