

REDWOOD: A UFO STORY

screenplay by

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INT. JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - COURT HOUSE - DAY

DANNY MCKELROY (30s), off the rack suit, cheap neck tie, sits next to ex wife DENISE RABIN (30s), stern business suit, two-hundred dollar haircut. They both sit before --

JUDGE SANDERS (60s), gray, full beard, thick glasses. Judge Sanders shakes his head with utter disgust as he reads the third and final page of Denise's deposition.

DENISE

Your honor, the truth is, ever since his son was born, Danny's checked out emotionally. The responsibility of actually staying home and being a father was too much for him to handle.

Danny scoffs out loud. Denise shoots him a hard stare.

DENISE (CONT'D)

All of the sudden he's spending less and less time at home and taking jobs two hundred miles away with his little painted up, ready made whores.

DANNY

They're called clients, Denise. Clients who keep food on the table.

DENISE

How would you know what was on the table? That would require you being home sometime in the last five years.

Judge Sanders, bored, pours himself some water.

DANNY

Did I forget to mention she's using again?

Denise's jaw drops with shock.

DENISE

How dare you. Says who?

DANNY

I have my sources.
(to Judge Sanders)
Gees. You'd think after almost killing our child, she would've learned her lesson.

DENISE

That was a long time ago, Danny.
I've changed. You obviously
haven't.

DANNY

Leaves her vicodins in a tic tac
box right there on the dining room
table.

(to Denise)

Why didn't you just color a red
arrow on a piece of notebook paper
with a little message. "Please
swallow me".

DENISE

Sonofabitch.

DANNY

Takes one to know one, Denise.

JUDGE SANDERS

Okay then. So there's no love lost
between the two of you, that much
is certain.

Danny and Denise both scoff, roll their eyes.

JUDGE SANDERS (CONT'D)

As certain as your mutual love for
young Danny. And, I must say,
you've both presented some
compelling arguments.

(to Danny)

Unfortunately for you, Mister
McKelroy, you did violate a court
order by taking Danny out of state.

DANNY

It was one week. Not even. A five
day job.

(to Denise)

What've you been saying for years
now? I should spend more quality
time with the kid, so I took him on
a job.

DENISE

You took him out of school a week
before finals without telling me
and then lied about it. What if
this little five day job turned
into ten days? Or two weeks?

(MORE)

DENISE (CONT'D)
 You promised me you'd stay local,
 Danny. You promised.

JUDGE SANDERS
 (to Danny)
 One of the provisions of joint
 custody was that neither of you
 leave the state. A provision that
 you all but insisted on, Mister
 McKelroy. Now I hear that not only
 did you leave the state, you
 coached your nine year old son into
 lying to his mother for almost a
 week.

Danny slumps in his chair with defeat.

JUDGE SANDERS (CONT'D)
 Now, whether or not this would be
 considered a true violation of your
 custody agreement, that's
 debatable. But it's enough for me
 to grant Miss Rabin temporary
 custody.

EXT. COURT HOUSE PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Denise struts toward her shiny new SUV parked away from the
 other cars and near the rear of the lot.

A CAR ALARM BEEPS

- as Denise opens the driver's door, crawls in.

INT. DENISE'S SUV - AFTERNOON

Denise fixes the rear view mirror before turning the key.
 The engine coughs a bit.

DENISE
 Are you kidding me?

She tries again. Another cough and the click of a dead
 battery.

DENISE (CONT'D)
 Come on. Not today.

Denise checks the rear view mirror. Danny's car blocks her
 way. He steps out, all smiles, walks to her side.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Great.

Danny leans on the driver's door.

DANNY

Sounds like you need a jump.

DENISE

I needed a jump a long time ago,
Danny.

Danny cracks a grin.

DANNY

Touche.

Danny pokes his head in, stares in the backseat.

DANNY (CONT'D)

You got any cables in this thing?

DENISE

Let me guess. You don't?

DANNY

Sure. I got some cables. Back in
the garage.

Denise smiles and nods.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Come on. I'll give you a lift. We
can put our mutual disgust with
each other on hold and talk about
our wonderful son.

Denise stares at him, unsure, but not having much choice.

EXT. TWO LANE BLACK TOP - NIGHT

Denise watches Danny with a sly smirk as he keeps his eyes on
the dark road before him.

DENISE

Wow. When I got up this morning,
the last thing I saw myself doing
was having dinner with you.

DANNY

Yeah, well. Life is full of
surprises, isn't it?

DENISE
Yes, it certainly is. Kind of like
you.

DANNY
What's that?

DENISE
You're handling this a whole lot
better than I expected.

DANNY
Yeah, well. I figure we can make
this work and do what's best for
Danny or make each other miserable
and continue to take it out on him.

Denise hangs her head in shame. Nods in agreement.

DENISE
I want that too.

Danny turns to her.

DENISE (CONT'D)
What's best for Danny. Sometimes
doing what's best means making
sacrifices.

Danny smiles, shakes his head.

DANNY
Yeah, I get it, Denise. You won.
I don't need a recap.

DENISE
That's not what I mean.

DANNY
Oh?

DENISE
Danny misses you. What would you
say to maybe...taking some time
off? And maybe...the three of us
going somewhere?

Danny is caught by surprise.

DANNY
The three of us?

DENISE

It's almost summer vacation. We've put Danny through a lot this year and...I thought maybe...

DANNY

What exactly are you asking me?

DENISE

I just think things would be a whole lot easier if we just...

DANNY

Just what?

DENISE

I don't know. Started over, maybe.

Denise stares earnestly into Danny's eyes. He takes his eyes off the road a few seconds too long.

And then --

The NIGHT SKY turns a BLINDING WHITE LIGHT which floods the car immediately.

Danny and Denise squint and cover their eyes.

Something takes control of the STEERING WHEEL as WE --

FADE TO WHITE:

EXT. CLEMENTINE FARM - NIGHT

An unmarked police cruiser parks on the front lawn as --

EARL CLEMENTINE (40s), farm bred, thin, strong as an ox and two small children, HUEY and DEWEY, await his arrival.

Out steps JIMMY "JW" WILLIS (40s), tall, lean, chiseled jaw, sharp eyes. He rocks a fleece shirt and a police badge clipped to his belt. He chews what's left of his snickers as he takes his time toward the home.

EARL

How goes it, JW?

JW

What's wrong, Earl? Those kids setting off fireworks again?

JW notices the two kids are scared to death as they grip their father's legs.

He shines a FLASHLIGHT on them. They are both whimpering and bleeding from the ears.

EARL

The kids need to tell you something.

EXT. TWO LANE BLACK TOP - NIGHT

A pick up truck darts along the bending curves of the secluded road at an uncomfortably high speed.

INT. PICK UP TRUCK - NIGHT

EDDIE (17) behind the wheel as his girlfriend LISA (17) hugs his waist and stares out into the night sky.

LISA

What the hell was that?

EDDIE

I didn't see anything.

LISA

Yeah, I know you didn't. Because you keep playing with the radio instead of paying attention. You know how many people have died on this road because they were busy dicking around with the stereo?

Eddie looks up.

EDDIE

No. How many?

Lisa looks straight ahead and jumps up in a panic.

LISA

Look out!!!

The boy looks up and spots --

DANNY'S CAR

In the middle of the road with smoke pouring from the exhaust.

They SWIRVE to miss and end up on the soft shoulder.

Out jump the teen couple as they stare at Danny's car with LIGHTS ON and ENGINE RUNNING.

EDDIE
What the hell?

LATER THAT NIGHT

JW's police cruiser blocks the road with RED and BLUE LIGHTS FLASHING.

JW inspects the inside of the truck with his FLASHLIGHT. The keys still in the ignition. He tries to open the driver's side door but is still locked.

JW
What the hell's going on here?

Eddie and Lisa still on the side of the road.

JW (CONT'D)
It doesn't make any sense. The doors are locked from the inside.

LISA
Maybe they saw it too.

JW shines his light on Lisa's face.

JW
Saw what?

EXT. DEEP WOODS - LATE NIGHT

An OLDER MAN in an orange vest grips a leash holding TWO SEARCH DOGS as they maneuver through fallen trees and other forestry.

JW stays a short distance behind with his flashlight. About fifteen yards away is JW's trainee DEPUTY CHARLIE MOORE (20s), baby face, handsome.

The dogs sniff out something in the dark hollows of an old dead tree. The old man orders them to heel as

JW races over and shines his flashlight on --

Danny, nude from head to toe, hiding in the belly of the rotted tree. His eyes are open as he stares blankly at nothing. In a state of shock.

JW
Good God.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - EARLY MORNING

Pacing near a small waiting area is Denise's younger sister TERRY RABIN (20s), tall blonde, sexier Ann Coulter but an even bitchier disposition. She is hopping mad, whispers angrily to herself.

Charlie steps out of a nearby room, quietly shuts the door behind him. He greets Terry halfway.

TERRY

What's happening? I wanna talk to him. I wanna talk to him, right now!

CHARLIE

Yeah, so do we. But he hasn't said a word since we drug him out of those woods. It's like he doesn't even know we're in the room.

TERRY

Did you tell him his son was here? Asking about his mother? Crying his eyes out for the last three hours?

Charlie looks over Terry's shoulder at DANNY JUNIOR (7), toe head blonde, sound asleep on a set of chairs.

CHARLIE

Terry, I just watched the doctors shove a flashlight not even an inch from his eyes and he didn't so much as twitch. It's like he's in a trance or something. He's not hearing or seeing anything. Not yet.

Terry throws up her hands in defeat.

TERRY

So now what? We just sit around and wait until he feels like talking? What about Denise? She's still out there someplace!

CHARLIE

I know she is. And they're looking for her. We found Danny. She can't be far.

Terry cries. Covers her mouth, tries to hold it together but just can't.

TERRY

What did he do to her? This boy
has nobody now. Do you know that?
Nobody.

Charlie stares down at Danny Jr with a sad, tired look about
him.

CHARLIE

We don't know what happened yet.
But you have to remain calm.

TERRY

Please. Just find her.

CHARLIE

We will.

INT. DANNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Danny lay in bed with three defensive scratches on the side
of his face. His bloodshot eyes begin to wink and twitch.
He blinks and stares up at --

CHIEF MIKE PHIPPS (50s), aged face, hard as nails, ex marine.
Phipps sits backwards in a cheap chair with his chest leaned
against the back rest.

PHIPPS

Danny. I take it you can hear me?

Danny stays quiet. A bit startled. Scared.

PHIPPS (CONT'D)

Tell you what. I'm gonna talk.
Unless I hear otherwise, I'm gonna
assume you can hear me.

Danny stares to his left and spots JW standing by the window.

PHIPPS (CONT'D)

By the way. Danny Junior is fine
in case you were wondering.

DANNY

Where am I?

PHIPPS

(to JW)
It's alive.

Danny checks with JW who gives him the thousand yard stare.

JW

I see that.

PHIPPS

In the hospital. Nice hearing from you, Danny.

DANNY

Where is he? Where's my son?

PHIPPS

Safe. Other than worrying sick about his Mom and Dad he's doing alright. Now that you seem to be doing okay, that just leaves his mother.

Danny slowly sits up in bed. He winces in pain.

PHIPPS (CONT'D)

We were hoping you could help us out on that one. Whadd'ya say?

Danny is out of it. Confused.

PHIPPS (CONT'D)

Your sister in law's here. I'd hate to see her run in here all foaming at the mouth with your boy in tow. Asking you all kinds of crazy questions about Denise. Making accusations and so forth.

JW

Things could get pretty messy if you know what we mean.

PHIPPS

So we're giving you the option of talking to us first. We can keep her and your boy out of this room as long as you like but you're gonna have to give us something first.

DANNY

If I knew what happened, I would've told you by now.

PHIPPS

Well. Maybe you can tell us what you do remember.

Danny tries hard to think back.

DANNY
Driving. Talking about Danny. A
vacation. Then...

Danny shuts his eyes. Squints as he struggles to remember.

DANNY (CONT'D)
I don't know. It's like everything
stopped. All at once. There was
this...light. A white light.

JW squints at the thought. Phipps notices.

DANNY (CONT'D)
The old cliché is you see a light
before you die. Well, I thought
that was it. We were dead. But
then the light was gone. And there
was nothing but black.

Phipps throws an unconvinced look at JW who hangs on every
word.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Darkness. Cold. I can't see a
thing. Only I can hear Denise
screaming. Calling out my name.
It's like I'm running in circles.
Only I'm not getting anywhere cause
I can't see where I'm going.

(beat)

I must've blacked out or something
cos I don't remember anything after
that.

PHIPPS
You said Denise was screaming.
What was she screaming about,
Danny?

DANNY
Calling me. Like she was begging
me for help. Only I can't find
her. And she can't find me. It's
like the more I run, the quieter
her screams get. I'm just running
farther and farther away.

JW motions to the side of his face.

JW
Where'd you get those scratches
from, Danny? Must've been when you
blacked out, huh?

Danny touches his bloody face, acts surprised. He stares back at JW and Phipps as the realization of his situation quickly sets in.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - DAY

Terry keeps a close eye on Danny Junior as he crawls in the back seat of her car.

TERRY

Remember to put your safety belt on.

She is still mad, arms folded as Charlie breaks the latest news on Danny.

CHARLIE

Somehow he lost consciousness and woke up in the woods. How he got there is a mystery.

TERRY

And ever so conveniently left the engine running and his car in the road?

CHARLIE

Look. I wish I knew more.

TERRY

You know something. Something you're not telling me. I can always tell.

Charlie avoids eye contact, checks to see if he's being watched.

CHARLIE

You know, I shouldn't even be telling you this. Not that it would make a difference. But apparently he's confirmed that they were together before she disappeared.

Terry scoffs.

TERRY

What the hell does that even mean? Disappeared? Into what? Thin air?

CHARLIE

Look. That's all I know. Right now, his story's not making a whole helluva lot of sense. But it is his story and he's sticking to it.

TERRY

Yeah. And meanwhile she's still out there.

CHARLIE

That's right. And we're not gonna stop looking until we find her. Now do you need me to make any calls on her behalf? Family, boyfriend?

Terry gives Charlie a nasty stare.

TERRY

Nice try, Charlie. Very subtle.

Charlie huffs with exhaustion.

TERRY (CONT'D)

And I've already called our mother. She's on her way.

Charlie looks past Terry and into her backseat at Danny Junior.

CHARLIE

Look. If you'd like, I can get with the Chief. See if we can make some calls on your behalf with regards to little Danny. Maybe see about granting you temporary custody.

TERRY

Is the Chief thinking Danny might try to split town or something?

CHARLIE

After hearing Danny's story, I think the Chief's thinking the same thing we all are. That being around his father may not be the...

(beat)

...healthiest place for Danny Junior. Not until we get a handle on what went down last night.

Terry nods in agreement.

TERRY
Make it happen.

INT. POLICE STATION - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Earl stands before a cheap conference table as a very bored looking Chief Phipps and JW are barely awake. Across from them sits MAYOR CHRISTINE FARNSWORTH (40s), glasses, Sarah Palin without the glitz and glamour.

EARL
It's been four days. Four days and I haven't seen a damn thing going on out there. It's like case closed with you guys. Meantime, this McKelroy woman still ain't come home.

JW
Rabin.

EARL
Whatever. Seems to me with her old man still out there, free as a bird, you guys ain't got much else to go on as far as this whole murder investigation goes.

PHIPPS
Just because he ain't behind bars yet don't mean he didn't kill his wife.

JW
(to Phipps)
Ex wife.

EARL
Do you know my kids got twenty percent hearing loss in both ears?

Farnsworth is saddened by this news. As is JW. Phipps isn't phased and down right cold.

EARL (CONT'D)
Twenty percent. Not to mention their eyes are still bloodshot as hell from whatever the hell they saw out there. The fact that this McKelroy fella's wife disappeared not even a quarter mile up the road doesn't seem to interest nobody.

FARNSWORTH

Nobody said we weren't interested,
Earl. Or what you and your kids
saw was real.

Earl gets in Farnsworth's face, mad as hell.

EARL

Oh yeah? So how come you're not
doing anything about it?

Farnsworth looks away, unsure, intimidated.

PHIPPS

Only one problem with your theory,
Earl. Danny McKelroy never
mentioned hearing any loud noises.

EARL

That don't mean nothing.

(to JW)

Hell, you even said so yourself his
windows were up and the stereo was
blasting.

Farnsworth and Phipps both slowly turn to JW, shocked and
unpleasantly surprised.

JW

That's true. His windows were up.
You're right, Earl. And we're
taking that into consideration.
There may very well be a
connection. But it's gonna take us
more than four days to figure it
all out.

EARL

(to Farnsworth)

You're new here, but this ain't the
first time they've done this.

Farnsworth checks with JW and Phipps. They both smile and
roll their eyes.

FARNSWORTH

Done what?

EARL

Covered up what's really going on
out there. I've seen things.
Lights. Helicopters. There's
stuff going on in those woods he
don't want us to know about.

(MORE)

EARL (CONT'D)
 Top secret military shit. Both of
 them were marines.
 (to Phipps and JW)
 Go on. Tell her.

PHIPPS
 Okay, Earl. You've figured us
 out. I was afraid you might.

JW squints, confused, tries to conceal a grin. Phipps slowly
 stands, walks the room as he confesses the full story.

PHIPPS (CONT'D)
 We've got some folks looking into
 what happened. Top secret types.
 Military. We didn't say before
 because...well...we're trying to
 keep certain elements out of town.

Farnsworth rolls her eyes.

JW
 He's talking about the media,
 Earl. TV news types. People who
 will try to pervert what happened
 into some bullshit front page
 story.
 (to Farnsworth)
 Pardon my language.

PHIPPS
 Total bullshit. We all know
 they're not interested in the
 truth. They're interested in
 making a fool out of you. Out of
 all of us.

EARL
 Yeah, I hear ya. It's all fake you
 know? The news? Mainstream media?

Phipps throws an arm around Earl, squeezes him close.

PHIPPS
 That's right. And we can't afford
 types like that running around
 messing up our investigation.

EARL
 Yeah, I hear ya.

PHIPPS
 Right. Great. So, you do
 understand.

Earl doesn't follow.

EARL
Understand what?

PHIPPS
Understand that we all have to lay low on this one. Let them investigate. But it's gotta be low key. Quiet. But I want you to do me a favor, Earl.

EARL
What's that?

PHIPPS
Keep your phone on. We're gonna be calling you. Very soon. But in the meantime, I need you to do me a favor. Keep all this between us, okay?

Earl checks with the others. Farnsworth and JW return with a smile and a nod.

EARL
I'll be expecting that phone call. Very soon.

Earl lets himself out. Phipps exhales in relief.

PHIPPS
What a nut bag.

FARNSWORTH
Wow. Pretty insensitive, Michael.

PHIPPS
What am I supposed to do? The guy's ready to go to the press with this crap.

FARNSWORTH
Right. And how exactly is it bullshit again? You heard what happened to his kids. To Danny McKelroy. I mean.

(to both)
Whether we like it or not, we have some explaining to do, fellas.

PHIPPS
Okay, so what do you suggest, Christine?

(MORE)

PHIPPS (CONT'D)

You want us to drop our
investigation against McKelroy so
we can chase little green men?

Farnsworth walks to an open window, stares down at a long
line of people waiting to talk with Chief Phipps.

FARNSWORTH

The line's gotten longer. Just in
the last ten minutes.

PHIPPS

Everybody's looking to join the
act. Stupidity is contagious I
guess.

JW

I got an idea.

Phipps and Farnsworth turn to JW.

FARNSWORTH

What?

JW

Earl's gonna run his mouth all over
town, no matter what we do, right?

PHIPPS

I think that's a pretty safe
assumption.

JW

Okay, so. What we wanna do is keep
him and everyone else who saw those
lights from going to the press.
Right?

FARNSWORTH

Right? So?

PHIPPS

What is it, JW? Spit it out.

JW

What I'm saying is this. The best
way of keeping them from going to
the press...

(beat)

...is bringing the press to them.

FARNSWORTH

I'm confused. I thought we wanted
to keep the press out of this.

JW

I'm not talking about the news.
I'm talking about a quack. A local
nut job, just like Earl who
believes in alien abductions.
Ghosts, Bigfoot. All that crap.
We bring him here, interview some
folks. Make it look totally legit.

PHIPPS

What would be the point of that,
JW?

JW

Because. If the real press
actually gets wind of this story,
forget about it.

PHIPPS

He's right. Strange lights, child
custody cases, the ex wife and
mother missing. It could make
national news.

JW

The news influences juries. All
the sudden, Danny McKelroy has an
airtight alibi. He was abducted
right alongside his wife.

Farnsworth isn't buying it.

FARNSWORTH

Good God. You don't think people
are that stupid, do you?

JW checks with Phipps who stares down at the long line
outside.

JW

I think if people hear something
enough times, they believe it to be
true. No matter what the evidence
says otherwise.

PHIPPS

Get somebody here. Do it fast.

EXT. REDWOOD DINER - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

NICK BLACK (30s), unkept hair, scruffy, untucked fleece shirt
and jeans, rests his long arms on the back of a bench as he
snaps some chewing gum.

Customers walk in and out of the diner.

JW (O.S.)

His name's Nick Black. Hosts a podcast called Creepy Crawlies. Kind of an after hours show for conspiracy theorists, insomniacs and nut cases.

INT. JW'S PATROL CAR - NIGHT

JW behind the wheel of his car. Charlie rides shotgun. They keep a close eye on Nick.

JW

His last show was about Bigfoot being a governmental crossbreed between skunk apes and humans. Not exactly enlightening but very entertaining none the less.

CHARLIE

People actually listen to this crap?

JW

He's got Two thousand plus followers. Just enough of an audience to make some noise. Come on. Let's go say 'hello'.

JW and Charlie step out.

INT. REDWOOD DINER - NIGHT

JW and Charlie sit at a high top across from Nick who swills a tall beer and nibbles at some boneless wings.

NICK

Let me get this straight. You want me to set up shop in your town. Interview these people. Do a three part series on strange lights and alien abductions. All because you're afraid some of the more 'sane' people might take this story seriously?

JW and Charlie share a dumb look.

JW

That's right.

Nick laughs.

NICK

I don't know whether to be flattered or completely insulted.

JW

It's very simple, really. Your program attracts a certain...audience. People see it simply as entertainment. Something to stare at. Or laugh at in some cases. Not real, for a lack of a better word.

NICK

No, I get it. But thanks anyway for clearing that up for me.

JW

What I'm saying is this. Dan McKelroy was the last known person to be seen with his wife. Not even twenty minutes from a court hearing in which he lost full custody of his son, Danny Junior. Even though we can't prove it, he killed his wife.

NICK

So much for due process.

JW

Meanwhile, we got people in the dozens coming to the station with stories about white lights and UFOs. Next thing you know, Mister McKelroy has himself a fan club. Some of those same people might end up on a jury if you know what I mean.

NICK

Right. And as soon as people see him on my show, they'll know he's a kook and a fraud.

JW and Charlie nod appropriately.

JW

Exactly.

CHARLIE

No offense.

Nick scoffs with the disgust of someone truly insulted.

NICK

Gentlemen, I'm afraid you've got the wrong impression of what it is that I do.

JW

Exploit people who are desperately lonely or clinically insane?

NICK

Okay, okay. So maybe I've taken creative license from time to time, but it's a thirty minute show. We got a lot of time to fill.

Charlie slaps the table, impatient.

CHARLIE

(to JW)

We're wasting time. Let's get out of here.

JW motions to Charlie to keep calm.

JW

So you're not a complete fraud. That what you're telling us, Mister Black?

NICK

You think I'm a joke. Just like those people back in Redwood. Well let me tell you something. The people who listen to my show do it because they want answers. Something happened to them along the way that they can't explain. So they come to me.

CHARLIE

Or they're looking to kill some time and get some much needed attention.

NICK

Sometimes. Okay, most of the time. But I didn't get in this to exploit anybody.

Charlie laughs, shakes his head.

NICK (CONT'D)

I got into it cause I've seen some shit. Some serious shit I still haven't completely come clean with. You want me to abuse the purest thing in my life to make this McKelroy look insane. Well, I can't do that.

JW rests a check on the table. Nick spots it.

NICK (CONT'D)

What's that?

JW

This was your money. But since you're not doing the show, I guess you won't be needing it.

CHARLIE

Or the much needed publicity you'll most likely get with McKelroy on your program. That's okay. I'm sure you've got plenty more bigfoot stories burning up your laptop. We won't get in your way.

Charlie stuffs the check in his coat pocket. He and JW stand to leave.

NICK

If I do this. If...I were to do this. We do it my way.

JW and Charlie share a brief glance.

NICK (CONT'D)

I write the scripts, I interview who I want and I run what I want. Deal?

JW

We wouldn't have it any other way, Mister Black.

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - DAY

A small herd of TV CREW and some PICKETERS occupy the front lawn and sidewalk as --

DANNY and DANNY JUNIOR

peak out the front window from behind a curtain.

A NEWS REPORTER and her CAMERAMAN get set up for a shot.

CAMERA'S POV:

REPORTER

We're at the home of multi award winning music video and television commercial director Danny McKelroy. It's been exactly five days now since the sudden and mysterious disappearance of his ex wife Denise. I'm very sorry to report that Mister McKelroy is still refusing to speak with members of the press regarding the night in question. Although, we have recently received word that he is planning on turning over custody of his son Daniel to his sister-in-law Terry Rabin. Now, we just learned of this news very early this morning through an anonymous source. Although we have yet to verify that report, we were hoping to speak with McKelroy regarding this supposed agreement, but, it's been several hours now and there's been no sign that Mister McKelroy will be speaking with any members of the press today.

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - DAY

Danny and Danny Junior watch the crowd behind the safety of a curtain.

DANNY JUNIOR

Daddy, I'm scared. Are they gonna break in and kill us?

DANNY

No, son. They just wanna help Daddy find Mommy, that's all. You got nothing to worry about.

Danny Junior stares out the window.

PICKETER #1

Burn the house down!

PICKETER #2

Murderer!

DANNY JUNIOR
They sound mad.

DANNY
Yeah, well. Maybe they're a little mad. That's because they want answers. Answers your Dad can't give.

DANNY JUNIOR
Why not? Don't you know where Mommy is?

Danny can't answer. He just looks over his boy's shoulder, unsure, nervous.

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - DAY

An SUV maneuvers its way through the crowd of onlookers, picketers and press. Out steps Terry as she frantically races for the front steps.

PRESS #1
Miss Rabin! Miss Rabin! Can we get a statement?!

TERRY
Excuse me, please!

PRESS #2
Are you here to pick up little Danny?!

PRESS #3
Have you been granted temporary custody of Danny Junior?!

Terry fights her way to the door. BEATS her fist on it hard as she hides her face from the press.

Danny opens the door as she races inside. Danny looks over the crowd and at --

JW waiting by his squad car at the curb. The two share a cold, hard stare.

Danny shuts the door behind him.

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Danny cracks open a rear porch door, checks to see if he's being watched, then makes a run for it.

He darts across his sprawling back lawn and --
 -- over his neighbor's chain link fence.

He is chased by a chained up dog as he barely makes it to a second fence. He quickly climbs over and onto --

A private dirt road where he is instantly greeted by a SQUAD CAR with LIGHTS FLASHING. Out steps --

JW with a shit eating grin.

JW

Goin' somewhere, Danny?

DANNY

Are you gonna shoot me and dump me in the trees?

JW

Wasn't planning on it, no.

DANNY

For the last time. I don't know where she is. If you're gonna charge me, charge me. Otherwise, leave me alone.

JW

No need to get defensive, Danny. We wanna get her back, just like you.

DANNY

So do it. Go find her. I can't help you.

Danny turns his back, heads up the road. JW follows behind.

JW

So quick to give up. You know, for someone who wants his wife back, you sure seem like a guy who isn't interested in helping.

Danny stops, turns back. His look could burn a whole in JW's stomach.

JW (CONT'D)

Where the hell were you going?

DANNY

Nowhere.

JW

Oh yeah?

JW struts toward him. A cocky grin.

INTERCUT:

We notice what looks like a LIPSTICK CAMERA attached to his police radio.

JW (CONT'D)

It sure seems like you were taking a shortcut to State Road Thirty Three. Any reason?

DANNY

You're the police. You tell me.

JW

I don't know. I figured maybe there's some evidence out there you forgot to get rid of.

Danny is visibly nervous.

JW (CONT'D)

You got two choices, Danny. You can make this difficult or you can cooperate.

DANNY

I suppose you came out here for a reason. What is it?

JW

Come on. Let's go for a ride. There's someone I want you to meet.

INT. POLICE STATION - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Nick Black sits behind two computer monitors as he's busy editing an episode. The title "MY WIFE WAS ABDUCTED" fills the screen.

He re-plays some footage of Danny leaping over his neighbor's chain-link fence.

NICK (V.O.)

Danny McKelroy is a man desperate for answers...

Danny spots the squad car and stops in his tracks. A look of pure disgust on his face.

NICK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 A man who will stop at nothing
 until his wife is returned safely.

The footage cuts to Danny talking to JW.

DANNY
 For the last time. I don't know
 where she is. If you're gonna
 charge me, charge me. Otherwise,
 leave me alone.

The footage cuts to Danny walking away from JW, down the lone
 dirt road.

NICK (V.O.)
 Yes. Danny McKelroy is a man on a
 mission.

The footage cuts to Danny speaking with JW.

DANNY
 Go find her. I can't help you.

It cuts back to Danny walking away. And then --

Danny flipping the bird to a crowd of reporters on his front
 lawn as he dips inside his home.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 Have a nice day, ass *****

The footage FREEZE FRAMES.

BAR PATRON (V.O.)
 Oh, he's guilty as hell.

The footage cuts to two heavy set MEN bellied up at a local
 bar.

BAR PATRON
 It's just like the OJ thing. He's
 not gonna stop until the real
 killer is caught. His ass ain't
 done nothin in twenty years. How
 you gonna find the killer out there
 on the golf course?

BAR PATRON #2
 Right. This guy's doin the same
 thing. He don't remember nothing.
 Like he's got permanent memory loss
 all the sudden.

NICK

Yeah, like he remembers everything up until the point she disappears. Real convenient, right?

BAR PATRON #2

Exactly. And I'll tell you right now. They was coming from a custody hearing. There ain't no way she willfully got in his truck without him taking her. No way.

BAR PATRON

Yeah, that alone is enough to tell you something wasn't right.

NICK

What about the rumor that she was abducted by aliens? Have you heard this one going around town?

BAR PATRON #2

Ya know, I've heard some crazy defenses before but nothing that crazy.

The two men share a good laugh. The footage cuts to a young couple in their twenties at a restaurant.

NICK

Do you believe in aliens?

YOUNG WOMAN

Yes.

YOUNG MAN

Absolutely not.

NICK

Wow. Complete opposite opinions. So you don't believe? Why not?

The Young Man thinks it over a sec.

YOUNG MAN

Well. I've never seen one. Have you?

NICK

Good point.

The footage cuts to Nick slowly strutting his way up the same TWO LANE BLACKTOP from the opening of our story: STATE ROAD 33.

NICK (V.O.)

So there you have it. The people of Redwood are split on their belief in aliens. But whether they believe or not isn't important. Not everyone is so quick to judge Danny McKelroy.

The camera follows Nick as he strides along the soft shoulder.

NICK

There are some who claim to have shared a similar experience the night Denise Rabin disappeared without warning. A young couple was traveling this same road where McKelroy's truck was found abandoned with the engine still running.

The footage cuts to our young couple from the beginning of our story: Eddie and Lisa. They stand with Nick on the side of the road where their pick up crashed.

NICK (V.O.)

For sixteen year old Lisa Trainor, life will never be the same again.

LISA

As usual, he wasn't paying attention, so he didn't see it, but I saw it.

Eddie rolls his eyes.

EDDIE

You didn't see shit.

LISA

I did see it. Shut up.
(to Nick)
Honestly, I thought it was an asteroid falling to earth or something cuz we get meteor showers out here all the time. Then I heard what was like a giant crash, and I thought that was it.

EDDIE

How did you hear a crash and I didn't hear anything? How is that possible?

LISA

The same reason you block out the sound of my voice. You hear what you wanna hear.

EDDIE

You're right. I didn't hear a giant meteor crashing to earth. Because I have problems paying attention.

Eddie shakes his head. Lisa shoots him a disgusted stare.

LISA

Do you mind? I'm telling a story.

EDDIE

Go ahead. Don't let me stop you.

The footage cuts to Lisa's front porch. She swings on an old country swing. A glass of lemonade in hand.

NICK (V.O.)

I could see we weren't getting anywhere with Eddie, so I agreed to meet with Lisa at a later date. She invited me to her home where she offered me a tall, cool glass of lemonade. Which, to tell you the truth, hit the spot after a long and trying day.

LISA

Ya know, everyone wants to say he killed his wife, but...where's the body? I mean, where is she?

NICK

Another good point. They've searched every inch of those woods and nothing.

LISA

Right. And I was there. They had the search dogs out. The entire force was out there looking. They find him in, like, twenty minutes but where is she?

NICK

So what do you personally think happened to her?

Lisa smiles, a bit unsure. She looks away, bashful.

LISA

I know what you're trying to do.

NICK

Oh yeah? What am I doing?

LISA

You're trying to get me to say it was aliens. Well, I'm not gonna.

NICK

Okay, so if it wasn't aliens then what happened to her?

Lisa exhales with a deep and tired sigh.

LISA

All I know is what I saw and what I heard. And...what I saw and heard sounds a lot like what Danny says he saw and heard. Take from that what you will.

The footage cuts to Nick exploring the colorfully decorated rooms of Lisa's home. She has photos and news clippings of UFO stories, strange lights, tales of abduction all over her walls.

NICK (V.O.)

I'm so conflicted. Part of me wants to believe Lisa's being honest about her experience. The other part believes she's remembering what she wants to remember because she wants to believe in aliens. She's so obsessed with the idea that we're not alone that it may be clouding her judgement.

The footage cuts to Nick standing in front of Lisa's home. He stares back and forth between the home and the camera as if he's afraid of being caught.

NICK

(into camera)

But is she just lying to herself? Or did she, in fact, see the same white lights Danny McKelroy claims to have witnessed right before he supposedly blacked out.

Nick stares back at the home and shakes his head.

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Eddie and Nick sit at a round dining room table as Eddie's slovenly father sprawls out in a nearby recliner, watches television.

EDDIE

She's gonna tell you what you wanna hear because she wants to be on the news. Like anybody wants to hear her bull****.

EDDIE'S FATHER

Watch that language out there!

EDDIE

Sorry, Pop.

NICK

So you're saying she doesn't actually believe in what she saw? She's just making this all up?

EDDIE

Every time we're on that road, she's like... 'did you see that?' Did you see that? Whether it's a falling star or a weird light, or whatever. Every time we're on that damn road. So you're telling me... every time we're on that road she sees aliens?

Eddie throws his hands in the air.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Come on, now.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - POLICE STATION - DAY

JW escorts Danny into the cold, white room. It's almost empty if it weren't for Nick parked next to what looks like a polygraph machine. A white lab coat on and the camera pointed down at an empty chair.

Nick's cameraman, JOHNNY (20s), long haired hippie, aims a high def Sony at Danny who instantly shoots him a nasty stare.

DANNY

What the hell is this?

JW

Your way out, Danny. Now's your chance to clear your name.

Danny feels the camera on him, slowly stares back at it.

DANNY

Is this some kind of sick joke?

JW

Don't worry, Danny. Polygraphs are inadmissible in court. Consider this more of a search for the truth.

DANNY

I'm leaving.

Danny moves for the door.

NICK

Danny, do you know who I am?

Danny stops, stares down at Nick.

DANNY

Yeah. I hear you're making some real noise around town. Trying to up your fan base?

NICK

I've talked to what must be half of Redwood these past few days. There's a few folks here and there that believe something weird happened on that road. But the general consensus is that you killed your wife and dumped her in the woods.

Danny fights the urge to slug Nick. He takes a couple steps closer. Nick holds up a guarded hand.

NICK (CONT'D)

But. I wouldn't be here if I didn't think there was a chance you might be innocent.

Danny smirks at Nick. Unconvinced.

DANNY

Yeah, I just bet you wouldn't.

NICK

Now, sure, I laugh and joke and make fun of most people but, believe it or not, I did get in this business for the right reasons.

DANNY

(to JW)

What the hell is this? A circus?

JW kicks his leg up on a chair, swigs a cold bottle of soda and stays quiet.

NICK

When I was a kid I saw something I couldn't even begin to explain. Something I couldn't even tell my parents.

Nick stands, approaches Danny with the confidence and ease of a true bullshit artist.

NICK (CONT'D)

Maybe. Just maybe, I can share that experience with you. If I feel I can trust you enough. To be honest, I'm not real sure about you yet, Danny.

Danny laughs it up.

DANNY

(to JW)

You can't be serious with this guy. Is this what you've been doing? Instead of looking for Denise? Tell me this is a joke.

JW

If you've got nothing to hide, Danny, I'd be willing to hear what you have to say. You saw something weird that night. You had nothing to do with your wife disappearing.

JW shrugs his shoulders.

JW (CONT'D)

Okay. So you say. Let's get it on record.

DANNY

You could've rigged that thing.

NICK

You know, that camera's been pointed right at your face since you walked in here. You could've turned right around and ran like hell, but you stayed. To me, that's the action of a man who wants to talk. Who's dying to get something off his chest.

Danny checks with JW.

JW

You pass this polygraph, I'll make sure Terry hears about it. Or maybe even that judge who's presiding over your kid's case.

JW steps closer to Danny.

JW (CONT'D)

If I were you, I'd take as many life lines that were thrown me. Last I checked, you don't have too many friends in Redwood.

DANNY

And if that thing says I'm lying, then what? You gonna see to it I get locked up forever? Never see my kid again?

NICK

Danny, I've interviewed hundreds of people who believed they were abducted by aliens. Possessed by demons. Or claimed they've seen a ghost. The mere mention of the subject at hand put them right back at that exact moment it happened. Now, I don't care how good a liar you are, you can't fake those kind of emotions.

Danny thinks it all over. He nods in agreement.

DANNY

Alright. What the hell. Let's do it.

LATER

Danny is wired up to the polygraph. The camera pointed right at him as he does his best to ignore it.

Nick stares down at a list of questions with a pen in hand. JW watches from behind the camera with Johnny.

NICK
Is your name Danny McKelroy?

DANNY
Yes.

NICK
Do you have a son named Daniel?

DANNY
Yes.

NICK
Do you have a wife named Denise?

DANNY
Yes. I mean...

The needle on the graph moves a bit.

DANNY (CONT'D)
She was my wife.

NICK
Do you love your son, Danny?

DANNY
Of course. Yes.

NICK
Do you still love Denise?

Danny pauses. JW leans in closer.

DANNY
Yes.

Nick checks the graph. All is well as he stares up at JW. He gives him a thumbs up.

NICK
Did you kill Denise?

DANNY
No, I did not.

Nick gives a thumbs up to JW.

NICK
Did you hurt Denise?

DANNY

No.

Another thumbs up.

NICK

Do you know what happened to Denise?

Danny pauses.

DANNY

Yes.

Nick and JW share a glance.

NICK

Do you know where Denise is?

DANNY

No.

Nick gives a thumbs up.

NICK

One more question, Danny. Was Denise abducted by aliens?

Danny pauses.

DANNY

No.

The needle almost jumps off the graph. Nick gives a thumbs down to JW.

NICK

Okay, Danny. I'm gonna ask you one more time. Only I'll ask you a bit differently.

(beat)

Do you believe Denise was abducted by aliens?

Danny beads with sweat as he fights to say the words. JW watches him closely.

NICK (CONT'D)

Danny. Please answer the question.

DANNY

I'm done. Game over.

Danny pulls the wires from his hand and arm, tosses them aside as he heads for the door.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 If we're done playing games here,
 I'd appreciate you finding my
 wife.

Danny jets out the door. Nick slumps in his chair, defeated.

JW
 Oh my God.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR AND GRILLE - NIGHT

Nick and Johnny sit in a corner booth and enjoy a basket of wings and some beers.

In walks Phipps and JW. They take a seat across from them.

PHIPPS
 Okay, what is it? It's late and
 I'm missing dinner.

NICK
 I take it JW didn't mention our
 little experiment today?

PHIPPS
 He told me all about it. So what?

Johnny laughs out loud as he shakes his head. Nick nudges him to stay quiet.

NICK
 So this changes everything. I hate
 to break it to you, but your little
 plan just backfired, Chief. It's
 gonna change everything people
 think they know about Danny
 McKelroy. Whether they believe in
 aliens or not is immaterial.
 They're gonna know he's telling the
 truth. That's what's most
 important.

PHIPPS
 Yeah. Maybe. Or maybe they'll
 think you and McKelroy are secretly
 working together on this
 documentary.

(MORE)

PHIPPS (CONT'D)

As some kind of lame, desperate attempt to save his name and increase your audience.

Nick slowly figures it out. He gives JW the stink eye.

NICK

Oh, I get it.

(to JW)

It's like you were never there. You know, I don't get you guys. You were there. He beat the polygraph. I mention aliens, he starts sweating so bad he almost short circuited the damn machine.

PHIPPS

I don't think you understand your significance here, young man. Or why it is we brought you here.

NICK

This guy experienced something. But none of you wanna go on record that something happened. Because Redwood might be the new butt of jokes on the eleven o'clock news. Let me tell you something. I'm going back there. I'm gonna finish this thing. And I'm gonna talk to the farm hand and those kids.

(to JW)

When did you say he'd be back in town?

JW

Friday.

NICK

(to Phipps)

Let's not forget who invited who here. You know, to tell you the truth I'm beginning to wonder who's hiding what around here. From what I hear, this wasn't the first time the folks of Redwood have seen strange lights in these skies.

Phipps leans in nice and close.

PHIPPS

(angry)

This woman is still missing.

(MORE)

PHIPPS (CONT'D)

To even entertain the idea it wasn't McKelroy is just plain wrong. Her family deserves better.

NICK

And his little boy deserves to know what happened to his father. I'm gonna make sure he hears the truth.

Nick stands to leave. Johnny grabs his coat. Phipps also stands.

PHIPPS

Now you listen to me. You're gonna be a good boy, finish your project. When you're done, you're gonna hand over your footage. And you're gonna forget today ever happened.

(to JW)

We bury the polygraph. End of story.

Nick smiles. Johnny also grins.

NICK

You can't do that, Chief. It's already on record.

PHIPPS

Okay. You go do your little home movie. As if anyone cared. We're gonna solve a murder. Give some closure to this family. If that's alright with you guys.

Nick nods with appreciation. He and Johnny leave.

Phipps stares them both down all the way out.

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Danny tosses and turns. Overtired. Too stressed to sleep. He opens his eyes. But something is wrong.

EXT. REDWOOD FOREST - LATE NIGHT

Danny is now standing in the woods. He stares in all directions as we get the feeling we've seen all of this before.

The same hollowed out tree where Danny was found sits just a few inches from his feet.

DANNY
Denise!!!

DENISE (O.S.)
Danny!!!

Danny runs toward the sound of her voice.

DENISE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Danny, help me!!!

Danny runs like hell through the dense forestry. He sees a BRIGHT ORANGE GLOW in the far reaches of the trees. The BEAMS OF LIGHT shoot out like lasers between the long redwoods.

The light becomes so blinding that Danny trips face first into a tree trunk. Unconscious.

LATER

Danny wakes up on a farm with a white picket fence and a large barn. The ORANGE GLOW comes from within the barn and shoots out the side windows.

DANNY
Denise!!!

Danny moves closer. But before he reaches the barn --

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Danny awakens. He jumps up in bed. He slowly slides his legs to the floor, rubs his weary face.

A KNOCK at the door startles him.

DANNY
What the hell.

Danny checks his alarm clock: 3:30 AM

Another KNOCK at his door.

Danny moves for the bedroom door and hears a deep GROWL behind him. He stops in his tracks, stares behind him.

He is still in bed, asleep. A figure in a DARK CLOAK stands over him. He wraps his demon like claw around Danny's neck as --

Dream-state Danny watches.

The figure squeezes tight as --

Dream-state Danny also grabs his throat. He chokes and gasps for air.

The dark cloaked figure presses a PILLOW over Danny's face as his legs frantically kick the bed.

Dream-state Danny loses his footing and stumbles backward --

Out of his room --

Into the hallway --

Tumbles all the way down the stairs.

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - FOYER - LATE NIGHT

Danny lay knocked out near the front door welcome mat.

Night slowly morphs into early morning as the SUN'S RAYS beam through the front window blinds.

A loud KNOCK at the door startles Danny out of a deep sleep. He sits up. Grabs his aching head.

DANNY

Ouch!

Another KNOCK at the door.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I'm coming!

Danny unlocks and opens. Terry quickly enters, hopping mad and out of patience.

TERRY

I've been knocking on the damn door for nearly thirty minutes, Danny. I know you don't feel like talking to me, but your son's been asking about you. You haven't called since I picked him up. That was three days ago.

Danny locks the door behind him. He stares into the front lawn, checks the property.

DANNY

Looks like all my fans finally went home.

TERRY

What's this I hear you've been doing interviews with this Nick Black character. Charlie told me all about it. He's against the whole thing.

DANNY

Charlie's against anything you tell him he's against. He's trying to get in your pants.

Danny rubs his sore head on the way to the kitchen. Terry follows behind.

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Danny pours some day old coffee into his mug. He takes a huge belt and winces from the taste.

TERRY

I can see you through the window, Danny. What were you doing on the floor?

DANNY

I don't know. I must've fallen down the steps and knocked myself out.

TERRY

Let me see it.

Terry grabs at the side of Danny's head as he pushes her hand away.

DANNY

I'm fine. Don't concern yourself. It's not your strong suit.

Terry folds her arms, stares at Danny with contempt.

TERRY

Have you been to a doctor?

DANNY

I just woke up. How could I have been to a doctor?

TERRY

I mean since you were released from the hospital. Did they run any tests that I should know about?

Danny scoffs.

DANNY

You wanna know if I'm crazy? Is that it?

TERRY

No. But if you blacked out behind the wheel of a car like you claim you did, there must be a reason.

DANNY

They ran some tests. CAT scan came back clean. It wasn't a stroke or a seizure. And, no, I'm not crazy.

TERRY

Have you talked to an attorney?

DANNY

I already have an attorney.

TERRY

A criminal attorney. You're in a lot of trouble. In case you haven't figured that out.

DANNY

I didn't kill her, Terry. I wish I could tell you more about what's going on but I don't even know what's going on. But I need you to watch Danny for a few more days.

Danny pours the horrible coffee down the sink. Terry helps herself to a jug of orange juice from the fridge. She pours a small glass.

TERRY

Yeah. I think that would be best. But you do need to call him. Today.

DANNY

In case you try to call, I'm gonna be off the grid for a couple days. Two at most. I got something I gotta go do.

TERRY

You can't run from your troubles, Danny. It never worked before.

Danny dumps his dirty mug in the sink and heads for the stairs.

DANNY

Tell Danny I love him. You can see yourself out.

Terry rolls her eyes.

TERRY

Nick Black is a joke, Danny. Just in case you were looking for an ally in this fight, I'd look elsewhere.

Danny rubs his sore eyes. She's giving him a real headache.

TERRY (CONT'D)

He's making you out to be a joke. So, whatever you're thinking about doing, think twice. This isn't just about you. Think about little Danny.

Danny nods politely and heads for the stairs. Terry watches him climb the steps.

INT. NICK'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Nick chugs a tall iced coffee while a printer shoots out one document after the next. Headlines read: BAY AREA SIGHTINGS...LIGHTS OVER REDWOOD FOREST...CROP CIRCLE PHENOMENON.

Johnny picks at his guitar with his feet kicked up.

NICK

Did you know that between Two Thousand and Twenty Seventeen, there have been more reported sightings of UFOs in Cali than any other state? Over three thousand.

JOHNNY

Of course. Didn't you?

Nick shoots him an ugly stare.

NICK

No. I was thinking Kansas or Iowa.

JOHNNY

Yeah, for crop circles maybe.

NICK

No. Actually, it's Ohio. Iowa comes in second and guess who's third?

JOHNNY

Cali?

Nick chews at a pen like a corn cob. He rocks in his swivel chair, in deep thought.

NICK

Which is weird since it's the most populous state and covered in mountains. Totally goes against the theory they like wide open spaces. Like Ohio. It just doesn't make any sense.

JOHNNY

What's the matter? Didn't you see Close Encounters? They parked behind a friggin mountain.

NICK

Yeah, that was out in the middle of the desert. That, plus it was a movie and not reality.

JOHNNY

(scoffs)

Since when do you care about reality?

NICK

Huh?

JOHNNY

Come on. You haven't taken the show seriously since we started this thing. Everybody knows you're more interested in youtube hits than real research.

NICK

Everybody, huh?

JOHNNY

Come on. You totally let the audience decide the format.

(MORE)

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Whatever's the most popular opinion, you run with it. If the audience thinks your subject is bullshit, you totally poke fun of it.

NICK

Yeah, maybe. But this time is different.

Nick stands, dead serious.

NICK (CONT'D)

You didn't see this guy's face. No way he's lying. He has no idea where his wife is.

JOHNNY

News flash. Neither do we.

NICK

No, not yet.

JOHNNY

And we're the ones who are gonna solve this big mystery?

Nick thinks it over.

NICK

Somebody has to. One thing's for sure. It won't be the cops.

Johnny smiles and nods in agreement.

EXT. CLEMENTINE FARM - AFTERNOON

Nick and Johnny park their car near the front of this large, two story farmhouse.

Earl and his two kids Huey and Dewey step out of the barn. The two kids eyes still bloodshot from their encounter.

Nick and Johnny step out, meet Earl and the kids halfway.

NICK

Afternoon, sir.

EARL

Took you guys long enough. I've been calling Chief Phipps for almost a week now.

Earl looks in their car, stares down the road a bit. Nick and Johnny stare at each other with confusion and then behind them.

EARL (CONT'D)
Where's the rest of it?

JOHNNY
The rest of what, sir?

EARL
Your equipment. Meters, graphs.
Cameras and stuff. Ain't you even
gonna check for radiation? Look at
my kids eyes.

Johnny stares down at Huey and Dewey. Something out of a bad horror film. He recoils.

NICK
Yeah, well. The rest of our crew
is on the way. Turns out they had
some car trouble outside of
Barstow.

EARL
Barstow, huh?

JOHNNY
Yeah. Busted axle. Equipment
dumped all over the highway.
Meters, graphs. All of that.
You should see it.

Earl isn't quit sure about these two as he sizes them up. Johnny can't help but stare at the two creepy kids gawking up at him.

EARL
I see. Come on inside, I guess.

Nick and Johnny sigh in relief as they follow Earl inside.

INT. CLEMENTINE FARM - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

From the dinner table, Nick and Johnny watch Huey and Dewey plopped in front of the television. The bright screen illuminates their black and creepy eyes.

Earl brings them both a can of beer. Johnny stares over at the camera hidden on the kitchen counter top. The record light is on.

EARL

This happened once before, ya know?

NICK

Yeah, that's what I hear. We were hoping we could talk more about that. You know. Before we examine the kids.

EARL

Eight years ago. These same woods here. Must've been a meteor or something. Lit the whole sky up just like the other night.

Huey and Dewey both notice the camera on the kitchen counter. They stare over at Johnny who watches them like a hawk. He gives them a friendly wink.

EARL (CONT'D)

We hear this huge crash, like an airplane or helicopter or something. So I grab me a beer and wait out there on the porch. Listening for the cops and fire department to show.

Early points out the front window. Nick and Johnny follow his look.

EARL (CONT'D)

You could see the smoke in the air. I knew something had crashed out there. It's just a matter of what at this point. So we're waiting...and waiting...and finally we hear the sirens in the distance. Fire engines. All that.

Nick and Johnny share an intrigued look.

EARL (CONT'D)

This was Ten something, so we figure it might be on the news later. We're watching, waiting to hear about what happened. And nothing.

NICK

Really?

EARL

Next morning, I head down to the station to talk to Mike and Jimmy.

(MORE)

EARL (CONT'D)

You know what they told me? Told me I was hearing things. There was no accident. That I needed to quit drinking so much.

Earl crushes his can of beer, walks to the fridge to grab another. Nick smiles at Johnny.

NICK

They did, did they?

EARL

That's right. They lied right to my face. Said I was just hallucinating.

Earl points at his kids.

EARL (CONT'D)

Now you tell me. Is that a case of me hallucinating?

Nick watches them closely.

NICK

No, sir, it is not.

(beat)

Say. Maybe you'd like to move this outside. Maybe the kids can show us what they saw.

Earl nods.

EARL

How bout it, boys?

Huey and Dewey look up.

EARL (CONT'D)

You ready to be on tv?

EXT. CLEMENTINE FARM - NIGHT

Nick stands with Earl as Johnny points the camera down at Huey and Dewey. All of them standing in an open field.

EARL

Go on, son. Show the men where you grabbed the basketball.

Huey walks a couple feet forward and snags up a dirty basketball.

EARL (CONT'D)
So, you grabbed the ball and then
what?

Huey points up at the sky.

HUEY
The sky split opened.

NICK
The sky split open? And what was
inside?

Huey shrugs his shoulders as he kicks at the dirt.

NICK (CONT'D)
And what color was the sky?

HUEY
There was no color. Just bright.

NICK
No color. Like white? A bright
white light? Is that what you're
telling me?

Huey nods his head.

EARL
Show the man what happened next?

Huey presses his hands over his ears and balls up in a fetal
position on the ground.

Johnny ZOOMS IN on Huey. He PANS OVER and catches Dewey also
on the ground with his hands over his ears.

Nick spots Dewey just behind him.

ON THE PORCH - LATER

Nick and Earl stare up at the night stars, sip some beers as
Johnny records their conversation.

EARL (CONT'D)
Whatever it was was loud. Really
really loud. Doctors say they got
twenty percent hearing loss. Both
of them.

Nick watches them shoot hoops on a homemade basket.

EARL (CONT'D)

You know what the crazy thing is?
I was inside when it happened. I
didn't hear a damn thing.

Nick squints. He shakes his head. Not believing this.

NICK

I don't understand. How is that
even possible?

EARL

I thought I was the one looking for
explanations here.

Earl crushes his beer can, tosses it over the porch rail.

NICK

I'm sorry, Mister Clementine. I'm
just trying to make sense of all
this.

EARL

For years, I've been going to
Phipps about that plane crash. And
for years, he's been dodging me.
After the other night, I'm owed an
explanation. For what happened to
my boys. What does he do? He
sends JW out here.

NICK

Jimmy Willis?

EARL

That man knows something. About
what's going on out there. So I
told him he can either tell me or
I'll go find out myself.

NICK

What do you mean?

EARL

Told him I was heading out that
direction. The evidence is still
out there someplace. Whatever's
left of that crash.

Nick and Johnny share a quick glance.

EARL (CONT'D)

You know what he tells me? Tells
me to keep away from there.

(MORE)

EARL (CONT'D)

That's private property. If he catches me anywhere even close to it, he'll lock me up.

NICK

No kidding?

EARL

Hell. Old man Keller kicked three years ago. Nothing on that farm but an old abandoned house and a busted up horse stable. So I say...the hell with it. I'm going out there. Took the kids with me.

(beat)

We don't come but within fifty yards of The Keller Farm and someone starts taking pop shots at us.

NICK

They shot at you?

EARL

Way I see it, they could've killed all three of us. But they let us go, like they were just warning us to keep away.

NICK

Mister Clementine, I wanna get this straight. You're implicating Chief Phipps in this cover-up of what exactly?

EARL

Oh, come on. Read between the lines, son. If it was a plane crash, why not tell people about it? Why all this secretive shit?

NICK

I wanna go on record with you. Do you believe your children were visited by an alien spacecraft?

Earl stares dead into the camera.

EARL

Yes, sir, I do.

CUT TO:

INT. NICK'S CAR - NIGHT

Johnny behind the wheel. Nick rides shotgun, arm out the window. His mind preoccupied.

JOHNNY

You look like you've just seen an alien yourself.

NICK

You remember that 'I Trapped An Alien' special we did back in February?

JOHNNY

How could I forget that one? It's our highest rated video.

Nick hands Johnny a photograph.

NICK

So take a look at that and tell me what it reminds you of.

JOHNNY

You know, I am driving a car.

NICK

Just take a look.

Johnny glances at the photo: Huey/Dewey with bloodshot eyes and a sideways pic of blood streaming from their ears.

JOHNNY

There's blood coming out their ears.

NICK

Exactly. Just like our mystery caller Mister White. You remember him?

JOHNNY

Mister White. He's the guy who supposedly trapped an alien in his barn. You know, I still get emails about him. People think the video's real.

NICK

Yeah, the video may be fake but Mister White could very well be real.

JOHNNY

What are you saying?

NICK

I'm saying the 'I Trapped An Alien' segment was based on a real phone call. This guy called me at home at One o'clock in the morning. Talked for almost two hours. When I asked what his name was, he said call me Mister White. As in white lights.

Johnny is still confused.

NICK (CONT'D)

As in white lights in the sky.

JOHNNY

What does he have to do with these kids?

NICK

The blood in their ears. This Mister White's story is identical to Earl Clementine's. He described a beam of light so bright, his eyes burned for three weeks. A high pitched siren so loud, blood poured from his ears. He's got hearing damage just like these kids.

JOHNNY

Gee. That's quite the coincidence. Why the hell didn't you mention this back at the farm?

NICK

Are you kidding? This Clementine fella never would've let us leave.

JOHNNY

Okay. So now what?

INT. NICK'S HOTEL ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Nick and Johnny lean in close to the computer monitor as they fast-forward the 'I Trapped An Alien' segment.

JOHNNY

Stop.

Nick stops the footage.

ON THE MONITOR

Our subject MISTER WHITE (40s) walks the cameraman toward his barn. The large barn door is chained and locked.

WHITE

Here we are. So where were we?

JOHNNY (O.S.)

You had just managed to escape the alien spacecraft.

Nick winks at Johnny from behind Mister White.

WHITE

Right. So. After I fell back to Earth, I realized that the aliens had taken my clothes.

NICK

Your clothes? Like all of them?

HOTEL ROOM

Nick and Johnny share a look.

JOHNNY

Oh-my-God.

NICK

Exactly.

ON THE MONITOR

Mister White moves to the side of the barn where a strange ORANGE LIGHT beams from inside a window.

A low, guttural GROWL from within the barn.

NICK (CONT'D)

Sounds like he wants out.

Both Nick and the camera move closer to the orange light. Mister White holds out his arm, stops them.

WHITE

You don't wanna get too close.

NICK

You know, you have the front door all chained up and locked. Why would you leave this window wide open? Can't he just bust the glass and escape?

White thinks it over as he stares at the window and back at Nick.

WHITE
How the hell else am I gonna see
inside?

NICK
You're right. Guess I didn't think
of that.

HOTEL ROOM

Johnny laughs.

JOHNNY
I forgot how funny this one was.

NICK
Shhh.

ON THE MONITOR

Nick and Mister White watch the barn from a safe distance.

NICK (CONT'D)
How long have you had him...it...in
your barn? You know. Before you
decided to call me?

WHITE
He's been in there just shy of
eight years.

Nick stares ever so slyly into the camera. And then back to Mister White.

NICK
You're kidding. You waited eight
whole years to tell someone you've
been harboring an alien? Why is
that?

Mister White stares back at the camera and then Nick. He looks very uncomfortable.

WHITE
I'm starting to regret this.
Having you here. This is making me
uncomfortable. If you don't mind,
I'd like you to leave.

Nick points down at the barn.

NICK

But there's an alien in your barn.

The camera PANS to the barn. The ORANGE LIGHT now pouring out of the window.

WHITE

Please leave. Thank you.

Nick freezes the footage as Mister White heads back to his back porch.

HOTEL ROOM

Nick leans back in his chair, arms behind his head. Consumed with thoughts. Johnny watches him closely.

JOHNNY

Wait a minute. Earl said this supposed plane crash happened exactly eight years ago.

NICK

Maybe it wasn't a plane. And maybe our mystery caller Mister White is really old man Keller.

Johnny doesn't follow.

JOHNNY

Who?

NICK

You never pay attention, do you? The guy. Old man Keller. The guy Earl said lived near the crash site. The same crash site Chief Phipps doesn't want anyone near.

JOHNNY

Whoa. This is crazy shit. So now what?

NICK

So, either Danny McKelroy watched this show and this is all some sort of sick joke or he's telling the truth.

A realization hits Johnny and sucks the air right out of his body.

JOHNNY

No way. So this Mister White was telling the truth the whole time?

NICK

Don't look so disappointed. It's still a funny segment.

JOHNNY

Wait a minute. Earl said old man Keller's been dead for three years. If it's not him, who is the real Mister White and why hasn't he come forward?

NICK

How the hell should I know? What's important now is getting McKelroy to talk.

INT. REDWOOD DINER - EARLY MORNING

Danny sips some morning coffee and waits. He spots Nick in the parking lot, headed for the door. He enters, quickly sees Danny and heads over.

DANNY

Okay, Mister Black. You said this was life or death. Here I am.

Nick tries to read Danny.

DANNY (CONT'D)

What?

NICK

How's your wife's case coming along?

DANNY

Still missing. Is that what you came here to ask me?

NICK

No. Did you know that most people who claim to have been visited or abducted by aliens have trouble remembering their experience? The experience itself is so overwhelming that their minds can't deal with it. They try to erase it. Like chalk from a blackboard.

DANNY

Is that what they say?

NICK

That's right. Only their minds won't let them erase it. Little by little, piece by piece, the whole thing comes back to you. In dreams. Nightmares so vivid they wake up soaked in sweat.

Danny nervously circles his coffee with a spoon.

NICK (CONT'D)

So how are you coming along?

Danny stares all around him, as if he's searching for something.

NICK (CONT'D)

There's no camera here. Just us. No more BS.

DANNY

Who says I was abducted?

NICK

You did. I saw the lie detector results to prove it. So let's stop screwing around and talk for real. Do you want your wife back or not?

DANNY

Is that a trick question?

NICK

Come on, Danny. We both know you're still in love with her. The guilt over what happened is so great you can't even face your son. You can't tell him the truth because you're afraid of facing the truth.

(beat)

You don't even know what the hell the truth is.

DANNY

Okay. Maybe you're right. So what? How is that gonna help me find my wife?

NICK

It might not. But it's at least a start. This thing you're hiding inside is killing you. Everyone can see that.

Danny stares down at his coffee, avoids eye contact. Nick throws down a stack of still photos: Huey and Dewey and their bloody ears.

DANNY

What's this?

NICK

Photos. Earl Clementine's kids. The sound was so loud they got permanent hearing loss. If you're saying you weren't visited, then you're calling him and his kids a liar. That all of you just hallucinated the whole thing.

Danny slowly comes around.

DANNY

Something happened.

NICK

What?

Danny rubs his face and temples. The stress is overwhelming.

DANNY

I can't remember.

NICK

What if I told you there was someone who could help you remember?

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Danny rests comfortably on a leather office chair. His eyes fixated on something.

Johnny rests on a footstool before him, swings a long stop watch in front of Danny's face.

JOHNNY

You're feeling yourself getting more and more tired. Nothing in the world would feel better than a nice, long nap.

Danny slumps his head a bit. His eyes quickly shut. Johnny and Nick share a smile.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
 You're falling deeper...and
 deeper...into a nice, peaceful
 sleep.
 (beat)
 I want you to clear your mind. And
 think only of Denise.

EXT. TWO LANE BLACKTOP - NIGHT

DANNY'S POV:

Denise smiles back at Danny behind the wheel.

JOHNNY (V.O.)
 It's just the two of you.
 Together. You're not fighting.
 For the first time, in a long time,
 you feel at peace.

WHITE FLASH TO:

JOHNNY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 And then. Without warning...you're
 blinded by the brightest light
 you've ever seen.

INT. SPACECRAFT - NIGHT

Danny stands upright, tied down on a flat table of some sort. His head and neck immobile and held in a vice.

DANNY
 Denise!!!

JOHNNY (V.O.)
 You wake up. You can hear her
 calling your name.

DANNY'S POV:

A BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT beams down from above like the head lamp of an interrogation room.

Darkness all around.

DENISE
 Danny!!!

JOHNNY (V.O.)
Only you can't find her.

Danny hears FOOTSTEPS coming toward him. Out of the darkness and into the space of white light are TWO ALIEN FEET.

DANNY
Oh my God.

JOHNNY (V.O.)
You see nothing but darkness...

The TWO ALIEN FEET disappear as the white space turns to complete DARKNESS.

DANNY
Denise!!! Where are you??

JOHNNY (V.O.)
Although you can't see, you have no choice but to try to find her.

Once again the BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT hits Danny in the eyes. He squeezes them shut.

A ROBOTIC ARM wraps a thin sheet of what looks like cellophane over his mouth. Danny gasps for air.

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Danny chokes for air and grabs at his throat. Nick and Johnny share a look of panic.

NICK
Get him out of there!

JOHNNY
Out of where?? He's just dreaming!

NICK
Snap him out of it.

Johnny slaps Danny across the face. Danny wakes up and tackles Johnny onto the carpet floor.

He reaches an arm back, ready to deck him.

DANNY
Where is she??

Nick grabs Danny's arm, puts him in a headlock and knocks him to the floor.

NICK
 Danny, it's us! Calm down!

Danny cries like a baby. Nick and Johnny look sorry for him.

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Danny packs a large flashlight in a backpack as Johnny loads a thermos with fresh coffee. All three are dressed in camp gear and hiking boots.

JOHNNY
 What exactly is the plan again?

NICK
 The plan? The plan is we go out there and find out what the hell's going on.

DANNY
 Sounds good to me.

JOHNNY
 You heard what Earl said. If they don't shoot us first, and we're lucky, we're just going to jail.

DANNY
 I'm going to jail anyways.

JOHNNY
 Okay. Good point.
 (to Nick)
 What about us? They have guns. We could get killed going out there.

NICK
 Johnny, johnny...

Nick grabs him by both arms.

NICK (CONT'D)
 Grow a pair, would ya?

Danny smiles. Nick lays out a large map on the center kitchen counter top. Points out a couple of circled spots near the road.

NICK (CONT'D)
 So, this is where Danny and Denise were taken. And here is where Danny was found...

Nick points at another spot on the map.

NICK (CONT'D)

And this is Earl Clementine's farm.

Nick points out a spot somewhere in the middle of all the action.

NICK (CONT'D)

And here is the general area of where Earl claims the crash site is.

DANNY

My God. It's dead center.

JOHNNY

They came back. Eight years later. For what reason?

NICK

Maybe they finally came back to collect.

Danny doesn't follow.

DANNY

Excuse me? Collect what?

NICK

It's a long story, Danny. I'll tell you all about it on the way. Let's move.

EXT. DEEP WOODS - NIGHT

Nick, Johnny and Danny all use FLASHLIGHTS to maneuver their way through the dense woods.

NICK

We should be getting close.

JOHNNY

What are we looking for? Little green men? Government guys in yellow outbreak suits with machine guns?

Nick gives him a dumbass look.

NICK

Just keep your eyes peeled.

JOHNNY

Yeah, I know. For what?

Danny shines his light in Johnny's eyes.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Hey.

DANNY

You two wanna quiet down? Could've sworn you said this guy takes pop shots at people.

NICK

He's right. No more talking.

JOHNNY

Yeah, right. Like I'm sure these bright ass flashlights aren't giving away our position.

NICK

You got any other suggestions?

JOHNNY

Yeah. We should've waited until morning. Worn some camouflage.

DANNY

No way. We're not going back. I can't wait any longer.

POW! A bullet strikes a nearby redwood as all three men duck for cover.

JOHNNY

Like I said. We should've waited.

DANNY

Shut up and stay down.

TWO MEN with LIGHTS on their hard hats move in on the three hidden men. Assault rifles in hand.

HAT #1

Alright! You in the grass! Let's see them!

Johnny raises his hands. Nick and Danny also stand with their hands raised over their heads.

NICK

Don't shoot!

The two armed men move out of the darkness and into the light. It is JW and Charlie in camo jackets.

DANNY

What the hell is this? What are you doing out here?

JW

You boys wanna know what's really going on? Come with us. But if you do, you keep your mouths shut until we tell you.

Danny charges toward him.

DANNY

Where's my wife?

Charlie kicks him in the gut as he tumbles to his knees.

NICK

What's your problem?!

JW

(to Charlie)
Back off!

CHARLIE

He was making a move!

Danny gathers himself. Tries to stand upright.

JW

You idiot. He just wants answers. Just like the rest of us.

DANNY

Where is she?

JW

Come on. Come with me.

JW retreats back into the woods. Danny and the others follow behind.

EXT. KELLER FARM - NIGHT

JW, Danny, Charlie and the others step out of the woods and onto the sprawling farm.

An old, white picket fence surrounds a two story home and the rest of the property. Some STADIUM LIGHTS are staged here and there as they illuminate A LARGE BARN.

Danny's jaw drops at the sight. He slowly walks toward it.

CHARLIE
Don't get too close.

DANNY
I've seen this. All of it.

NICK
Seen it where?

DANNY
My dreams. I was choking. Running away. I tripped and fell. Knocked myself out. When I woke up, I saw this barn.

Nick and Johnny join him as all three watch the barn closely.

JOHNNY
What's so special about this barn?

A BLINDING ORANGE LIGHT spills out the side windows like endless laser beams.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
Oh. The barn with the alien inside. That's right. I remember now. My bad.

Nick throws him another dumbass stare.

DANNY
(to Nick)
You were right. I remember this place. But I was never here. I don't understand.

JW walks in front of the three men. Blocks their view of the barn.

JW
You remember because they wanted you to remember. They've burned it into your memory. You see, this thing inside the barn. He wants your help. The others will do anything to get him out. Include use us to do it.

JOHNNY
You knew about this place the whole time?

JW
 (to Johnny)
 You're a real quick one. You know
 that?

DANNY
 Use us? Use us how?

JW motions toward the house.

JW
 Come on inside and I'll show you.

JW and Charlie head toward the house. The others are
 reluctant but follow his lead.

INT. KELLER HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

JW and Charlie lead the others into the living room. Terry
 paces the carpet as Chief Phipps tries to calm her down.

PHIPPS
 You call anyone and you'll never
 see her again! I promise!

Phipps and Terry both turn to see Danny watching them from
 the doorway.

DANNY
 Don't let me stop you.

TERRY
 I didn't know, Danny. You have to
 believe me.

She points at Charlie.

TERRY (CONT'D)
 Charlie said he knew where she was
 and brought me here. I swear.

Terry gives Phipps a nasty stare.

TERRY (CONT'D)
 They won't call them. They won't
 call the FBI. They're not even
 looking for her. They're as crazy
 as you are.

DANNY
 (to Phipps)
 You knew I wasn't crazy.

He motions to Nick and Johnny.

DANNY (CONT'D)

And you send them here to do what?
Make me look like some kind of nut?

PHIPPS

No one was supposed to know about
this place, Danny. You were
getting too close. I needed to
keep you and Earl away from here.
Too many people already know.

Phipps slowly approaches Danny with ease.

PHIPPS (CONT'D)

For years, we've managed to keep
this place contained. Just us.
No outsiders. No investigators.
No news crews. No tourists.

DANNY

And you send Nick and company here
to keep us all quiet instead of
going to the news.

PHIPPS

Earl Clementine threatened to go to
the media. The whole story. The
crash. Us threatening to arrest
him if he came near here. All of
it. We're talking national news.
I figured this idiot shows up with
a camera...

NICK

And nobody would believe it.
Because I'm a big, fat joke.

PHIPPS

You said it. I didn't.

DANNY

What is this place? Like some kind
of compound?

Phipps can't face him. He rests his hands on his hips and
turns away.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Hey. I asked you a question.

JW

They have his little girl, Danny.
They took Sarah.

DANNY

You've been hiding this from people
this whole time?

With his back still turned, Phipps nods his head.

JW

She was with old man Keller's boy
the night they both disappeared.

DANNY

Your daughter?

Danny shakes his head.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I don't understand. How do you
know she was taken?

THOM KELLER (50s), white hair, restless, old before his time,
joins the group.

KELLER

I watched it happen.

The room all turn and watch Keller.

KELLER (CONT'D)

This thing came like a thief in the
night. I watched them from my
bedroom window. Aaron and Sarah.
Parking. Necking.

He smiles.

KELLER (CONT'D)

I was shutting the windows and
locking up, you see. And then, I
saw the brightest light I ever seen
before.

Keller grows sad as he reflects back.

KELLER (CONT'D)

Just hovering...right over my boy's
car. Like the spotlight from a
helicopter.

(beat)

(MORE)

KELLER (CONT'D)

So I run outside to see what was what. But they're gone. Nowhere to be found.

EXT. KELLER'S DRIVEWAY - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Keller slowly walks up on Aaron's car.

KELLER (V.O.)

The car's empty but the doors are still shut. I try to open but they're locked from the inside.

Keller tries to open the passenger door.

KELLER

What the hell?

INT. KELLER HOME - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

Nick stares at Danny who returns his look.

NICK

Sound familiar?

KELLER

I'm running around the property, screaming out their names. Yelling for my boy. Nothing. A few minutes go by...

EXT. KELLER FARM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Keller runs in circles, searches for Aaron and Sarah. All of the sudden, a BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT beams down from above.

KELLER (V.O.)

I stare up in the sky and there's another bright light. Even brighter than the last. Hovering right over the barn.

A very concentrated WHITE BEAM OF ENERGY covers the barn's perimeter.

Keller runs toward the barn. The front door wide open.

KELLER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I run over, take a look inside.

Aaron lay motionless and nude on the ground.

KELLER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 There's my boy. He's not wearing
 no clothes.

Something very large moves near the corner of the barn. It
 pulsates a BRIGHT ORANGE LIGHT.

KELLER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Just behind him. I see this orange
 glow. Pulsating glow coming from
 this things belly. I pulled my boy
 out of there.

Keller reaches for Aaron.

INT. KELLER HOME - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

Keller finishes his story. Everyone on the edge of their
 seats.

KELLER
 Shut and locked that door as fast
 as I ever moved.

Keller shakes his head.

KELLER (CONT'D)
 So long ago.

JOHNNY
 Eight years. It was eight years
 ago.

Nick rolls his eyes.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
 Not too quick my ass.

Nick motions for him to keep quiet.

NICK
 (to Keller)
 So this thing has been locked in
 your barn for eight years?

JOHNNY
 So that would make you Mister
 White?

SCOTTIE (V.O.)
 No, that would be me.

The whole room turns and spots --

NELSON "SCOTTIE" SCOTT (30s), white t shirt and fleece pajama bottoms, as he steps in with a bowl of ice cream. He's unshaven and his hair a mess.

SCOTTIE
Special agent Nelson Scott. But
you may call me Scottie.

He takes a big gulp of his vanilla ice cream.

SCOTTIE (CONT'D)
Won't you gentlemen follow me?

Scottie heads for the back door. Johnny, Nick and Danny follow his lead.

EXT. KELLER FARM - FRONT LAWN - NIGHT

Scottie, Johnny, Nick and Danny all stare up at the biggest, oldest satellite dish in television history planted in Keller's front lawn.

SCOTTIE
Gentlemen, to the untrained eye,
this might just look like an old
satellite dish.

JOHNNY
It's not?

SCOTTIE
No, it is not. Not anymore. This
is our ticket to the other side.

Nick, Danny and Johnny are unconvinced.

DANNY
Don't take this the wrong way,
but...who the hell are you again?

SCOTTIE
Agent Nelson Scott. National
Security Agency. Department of
Paranormal Research.

JOHNNY
But of course you are.

NICK
No offense but you don't look like
NSA to me?

SCOTTIE

Yeah, I'm sure I don't.
(smiles)
Sort of been here awhile.

NICK

How long's awhile?

SCOTTIE

Well. Ever since Chief Phipps
called in the incident. So that
would make it...

Scottie thinks back.

JOHNNY

Eight years.

SCOTTIE

That's right. Eight years.

NICK

So, you're Mister White? You
called me. You called the show.
Why?

SCOTTIE

My desperate attempt at finally
leaving this place and going back
to my family. Getting the word out
about what happened here. I
figured if I told you where
Keller's farm was, you'd blow the
lid about this place and I could go
home. Go back to my life.

NICK

So why didn't you?

JOHNNY

Yeah. Why didn't you?

SCOTTIE

I changed my mind. I decided that
we've come too far to let my
personal feelings get involved.

Scottie walks the lawn with sheer excitement. He's wired and
completely restless.

SCOTTIE (CONT'D)

Do you realize how close we've
gotten to actually making contact?
(MORE)

SCOTTIE (CONT'D)

I mean, God knows how many of us they have in custody. Not just The Chief's daughter.

(to Danny)

Or your wife. I'm talking hundreds, possibly thousands of us in captivity.

JOHNNY

Wait a second. You haven't seen your family in eight years?

Phipps and JW walk down the front door steps and join them on the lawn.

PHIPPS

I'm afraid we gave Agent Scott little choice but to stick around.

DANNY

You've held him here against his will for eight years.

SCOTTIE

Hey. It's okay, really. It's gone by pretty quick. Believe me. No worries.

Johnny leans in close to Nick.

JOHNNY

(whispers)

This guy's brains are scrambled eggs.

DANNY

Why keep him here like this? Just him. It doesn't make any sense.

PHIPPS

Please. You think NASA will be interested in getting back my Sarah? The United States Government. Hell no.

Phipps motions to the barn.

PHIPPS (CONT'D)

They'd take this thing and do God only knows what to it. There goes any chance of ever getting her back.

Danny walks to him.

DANNY

Chief. I hate to say this. But what makes you think you'll ever get her back?

SCOTTIE

Let me ask you a question, Mister McKelroy. Why you? Why do you think it took your wife and not you?

DANNY

Because I escaped. Just like Aaron Keller. I outsmarted it.

Nick shakes his head in disagreement.

NICK

Danny, you don't remember what happened. How do you know you escaped?

DANNY

What're you saying? They just let me go? What for?

SCOTTIE

I'll tell you why. Because we still have one of them. And you and your wife are their secret weapon to getting it back.

DANNY

You're losing me.

SCOTTIE

I'm saying that we have something they want and they have something we want. You're the key to making that happen.

DANNY

You're saying this whole thing is because...they wanna make a trade with us?

Scottie smiles and nods.

SCOTTIE

Precisely.

DANNY

No. I don't buy that. Why don't they just come and beam it back up or whatever they do?

SCOTTIE

Because they don't even know it's here, Mister McKelroy.

Danny squints, confused. He checks with Nick and Johnny who are equally lost.

DANNY

Okay. Now I'm definitely confused.

PHIPPS

He's saying their ship crashed. That loud boom Earl Clementine was talking about.

Phipps walks to a parked where around the same place Keller's son and his daughter were taken.

PHIPPS (CONT'D)

The same one that took my daughter. Must've been some kind of malfunction on board. As a result, they left one of their own here. My guess is, they didn't even know until they were halfway across the galaxy or wherever the hell they came from.

DANNY

And now they want it back.

PHIPPS

Right.

NICK

That's what all this is about? Trying to make a trade with these things? Wow.

JOHNNY

I don't mean to interrupt or anything. It's just that. I just realized I'm not recording any of this.

NICK

Shhhit.

Nick turns to Scottie. A truly fake smile.

NICK (CONT'D)

Hey, Scottie. Would you mind terribly repeating all of this again for the camera? Maybe start from the beginning?

Phipps sighs with exhaustion. Danny rolls his eyes.

A housewife type TAMRA PHIPPS (40s), The Chief's wife, blonde, sexy, opens a screen door with an apple pie.

TAMRA

Honey? Will our new friends be staying for dinner?

PHIPPS

Not now, honey.

She smiles and ducks back inside.

INT. KELLER HOME - MAN CAVE - NIGHT

Danny watches Scottie open an instagram page. Several still photos of random abductees from over the years. The clothes and hair styles change from pic to pic.

Johnny records them from the other side of the room. Nick stands by his side.

SCOTTIE

Now. What I've done is rewired the satellite dish to the computer's hard drive. Whatever I access from this computer goes back through the dish and into the air waves. Just like a cell signal.

NICK

Sounds easy enough.

SCOTTIE

Yeah. So easy it took me six years to figure it out.

NICK

And who are these people? It looks like instagram.

SCOTTIE

It is instagram. And these are all the people who have been reported missing in Humbolt County for the last thirty years.

He motions to Phipps standing in the door frame.

SCOTTIE (CONT'D)

Chief Phipps supplied me with their names, profiles, family photos. Anything and everything he could get a hold of.

Danny leans in to get a better look.

SCOTTIE (CONT'D)

Using basic laptop software I created a slideshow that plays on a constant loop. So whatever is out there will see these images constantly.

DANNY

How do you know this satellite feed actually works?

Scottie checks with Phipps who gives him a quick nod. The go ahead.

SCOTTIE

What I did was create a second account. A blank page. In hopes that we'd get some sort of sign that our alien visitors got the message.

NICK

Look. What's the short version? You guys make contact or not?

Scottie is reluctant but acknowledges with a quick nod.

SCOTTIE

It's our belief that...they've acknowledged the identity of one of the photographs.

DANNY

Which one?

Phipps steps inside. He looks a bit nervous for Danny.

Scottie opens a second screen. A still photo of Denise is the only visible photo on the instagram page.

DANNY (CONT'D)

You gotta be kidding me.

NICK

Come on, Danny. This is good news, isn't it? I mean...she must still be alive if they made contact.

Danny steps away for a moment. Johnny follows him with the camera as he slumps down in a chair.

DANNY

You know, I didn't wanna believe it. I was really hoping I was just crazy. Go get some therapy and I'm as good as new.

NICK

Hey. Everyone's gonna know the truth. This no longer has to be something you keep to yourself.

DANNY

How am I gonna explain this to Danny Junior?

The realization of Danny Junior hits him like a sack of bricks.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Danny. Oh shhhhit.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Charlie sits across from Terry. Tamra picks up what's left of their dinner dishes on her way to the kitchen.

TERRY

Thanks. I needed that.

TAMRA

You're welcome, dear.

TERRY

You can't hold us here, you know? I was supposed to pick up little Danny over two hours ago. If I don't show up by morning, mother will know something's wrong.

CHARLIE

Look. I've been meaning to ask you something.

TERRY

What?

CHARLIE

Why are you still giving Danny the cold shoulder? You just found out he didn't kill Denise and you almsot look disappointed.

Terry fidgets with her napkin.

TERRY

I'm embarassed, okay? About things I've said to Danny. I'm scared about...the things I have to tell mother. If I should tell mother.

Terry rolls her eyes.

TERRY (CONT'D)

God. That's just what I need. To bring her here and listen to her freaking out twenty four seven.

CHARLIE

You can't tell her. The Chief won't let you.

TERRY

(angry)

Oh, really? And you brought me here for what? Hold me hostage? Were you getting that lonely, Charlie? You needed someone to keep your bed warm while you chased aliens?

Terry throws her napkin aside with disgust, walks to a corner window and stares out at the glowing ORANGE LIGHT from the barn.

Charlie stands, walks up behind her.

CHARLIE

I brought you here because you needed to know the truth. Because I'm interested in you. If we're to make this work, I figured this was a good place to start.

Terry scoffs.

TERRY

By telling me my sister was abducted by aliens?!

CHARLIE

Would you have rather found out
some other way? You'd never
forgive me.

Terry rubs her sore temples.

TERRY

I don't even know what to think
right now. I honestly think you've
all lost your mind. That's what I
think.

CHARLIE

That thing outside is real. Look
at it.

Terry watches the barn closely.

TERRY

Okay. So it's real. Then you need
to call someone. Call the
government. You can't just hold up
here forever.

Charlie thinks it over.

CHARLIE

I can't do that.

TERRY

Why not?

CHARLIE

Because the Chief would kill me!

JOHNNY (O.S.)

Hate to break it to you but...the
cat's already out the bag, bro.

Charlie spots him filming them from a hallway.

CHARLIE

Shut that camera off!

Terry also spots him.

TERRY

Charlie, just leave him alone.

Charlie pulls his pistol, aims it dead at the camera.

CHARLIE

Turn it off!

JOHNNY

You're gonna shoot me on camera?
Pretty dumb if you ask me.

CHARLIE

No. I'm gonna shoot you and then
burn up that video in the
fireplace.

JOHNNY

Okay. Well. That makes sense.

CHARLIE

I'm not kidding, asshole!

Phipps ducks his head out of the office, spots all the
commotion in the hallway.

PHIPPS

Charlie, that's enough. He's
right. The cat's out of the bag.
No more secrets.

Phipps points to the back door.

PHIPPS (CONT'D)

If you want...you can all go home.

Charlie stares over at Terry. Awaits her answer. She stares
at Phipps with real pity in her eyes.

TERRY

No. That's okay. I wanna stay.

CHARLIE

Yeah, Chief. Count me in too.

JOHNNY

Shocker.

Charlie throws Johnny a hard stare but slowly holsters his
gun.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Yeah, I thought so.

CHARLIE

Don't press your luck.

SCOTTIE (O.S.)

Hey, guys! If you're done screwing
around, you might wanna come see
this!

Phipps, Charlie and Terry all run back to the office.

INT. KELLER HOME - MAN CAVE - NIGHT

Phipps, Charlie and Terry join Nick, Danny and Scottie by the computer. On the monitor, there is a new photo posted next to Denise Rabin. SARAH PHIPPS (8), blonde pigtails, cute dress.

PHIPPS
My baby. My Sarah.

Phipps wife Tamra also runs in. She spots Sarah as tears run down her face.

TAMRA
Can it be? Could it really be her?

Keller also walks in, quiet, passive, tired by the whole ordeal. Terry folds her arms. A pessimist as usual.

TERRY
(to Scottie)
How do we know you didn't just post that picture while we were out of the room?

And all of the sudden --

A BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT pours in from every window in the room. Everyone covers their eyes and looks away.

A loud, growling ROAR from the sky.

TERRY (CONT'D)
Okay. It was aliens. I'm sorry.

Johnny points his camera at everyone in the room and then at the bright white lights pouring in through the windows.

NICK
(to Johnny)
That battery better not be low!

Johnny gives him a thumbs up. JW runs in, all hopped up.

JW
Heads up. We got company.

TERRY
Oh, ya think?!

INT. KELLER HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Phipps and JW stand at the front window drapes, take a look outside and up at the sky.

PHIPPS POV:

A BRIGHT CIRCLE OF LIGHT on the front lawn.

Phipps ducks away from the drapes.

Everyone in the house now staring back at him. JW by his side. He slaps him on the arm. A giant smile.

JW

You know what? I think this is it,
Mike. I think she's coming home.

Phipps is overwhelmed with joy. Tears run down his face. Tamra runs over and hugs him tight.

Johnny gets a nice close-up on camera. Nick also smiles. Danny moves for the window.

CHARLIE

Stay back.

Danny stares back at him.

DANNY

Are we all forgetting that my wife
might be out there too? Excuse me
if I want a front row seat to the
show.

(to Phipps)

I'm going out there too.

PHIPPS

No, you're not. We're not gonna
scare these things off. And I'm
not gonna be responsible for
getting any of you killed. I'm
going alone. Just me.

Tamra peels the blinds back, spots something.

TAMRA

Oh my God, baby.

Phipps runs over to take a look.

PHIPPS POV:

Phipps daughter SARAH (16) stands at the base of the blinding white circle. She wears a white robe of some kind.

PHIPPS

By God, baby. It's her. It's Sarah.

Tamra cries like a little baby.

Everyone else quietly watches on. Also emotional.

NICK

You can't write this kind of shit.

JW gives Phipps a big bear hug as he sees him to the door.

PHIPPS

I wanna thank everybody. For getting me here. For helping me get my Sarah back. I won't forget this.

JW

Go on, boss. She's waiting.

Phipps gives one last smile as he heads out the door. Danny isn't so convinced.

EXT. KELLER FARM - FRONT LAWN - NIGHT

Phipps slowly walks toward Sarah. They catch eyes, both smiling from ear to ear.

PHIPPS

It's okay, honey. It's over. It's finally over.

Phipps takes another couple steps closer.

Danny, Terry, Tamra and Johnny at the window with the camera.

And then --

The white beam of light grows BRIGHTER.

Phipps stares into the sky. Sarah also looks up.

A very loud LASER BEAM shoots down from the sky and strikes her body.

Sarah SCREAMS seconds before EXPLODING into a dozen pieces.

The blast knocks Phipps backward. Onto the lawn.

INT. KELLER FARM - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tamra ducks away from the drapes. Hands over her mouth as she gasps in horror. Terry pulls her away from the grisly scene.

EXT. KELLER FARM - FRONT LAWN - NIGHT

Phipps struggles to stand as the white light now hovers directly over him.

A very loud HISSING SOUND is unbearable as Phipps covers his ears. He SCREAMS out in pain as the sound grows LOUDER and LOUDER.

And then --

His head EXPLODES and his body falls limp to the grass.

INT. KELLER FARM - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nick's jaw drops in horror. Johnny peeks out from behind the camera.

JOHNNY

I take it the deal is off?

Danny hears this as the realization of Denise sets in. He runs from the room, toward the front door.

NICK

Danny. What the hell's he doing?

JW grabs his shotgun from a coffee table, racks one into the chamber. Charlie holds a panicked Terry close.

JW

(to Charlie)

Get everyone and move it into the basement. You know the drill.

CHARLIE

You got it.

Charlie and Terry race for the basement stairs.

Nick grabs Johnny as they head back to the office.

INT. KELLER HOME - MAN CAVE - NIGHT

Johnny records Nick as he runs to Scottie at the window. They both look down at the barn outside.

The BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT now hovers over the barn.

SCOTTIE

Not good. This is not good at all.

NICK

Yeah, I figured that.

Nick runs to the other window, stares down at a dozen or so CLOAKED FIGURES moving toward the barn.

NICK (CONT'D)

Shit. I think I know where Danny went.

Nick runs back out as Scottie watches him. Johnny turns the camera on Nick, about to follow him down the hall.

SCOTTIE

(to Johnny)

Hey, Spielberg. Wanna get that camera over here or what?

Johnny stares down the hall and then back at Scottie. Unsure.

INT. KELLER HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nick bumps into JW who loads the last of his shells into a shotgun.

NICK

(to JW)

Where are you going?

JW

Don't worry about me. Just get your ass downstairs.

NICK

You gotta go get Danny.

JW

I would if it wasn't wasting my time talking to you.

Nick nods.

NICK

Right.
 (to Johnny)
 Yo, Johnny! Let's go!

Nick heads for the stairs as JW heads for the porch door.

INT. STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Nick opens the door for Johnny and Scottie as they hurry down the stairs. He shuts and locks behind them.

Terry and Charlie stare up the steps at Nick.

TERRY

Danny! Where's Danny?!

NICK

Where do you think?!

EXT. KELLER FARM - REAR LAWN - NIGHT

Danny carries a large GAS CAN toward the barn. The ORANGE LIGHT now beams brighter than ever as the spacecraft hovers overhead.

He throws spills of gasoline all over the perimeter of the barn. He looks up and spots --

DARK CLOAKS moving towards him.

He pulls a zippo from his pocket, lights and holds high in the air.

DANNY

Keep back!!!

JW steps off the back porch, shotgun in tow. He spots Danny with the lighter in his hand.

JW

Idiot.

DANNY

That light gets any brighter I'm gonna light things up for real! I mean it!

The DARK CLOAKS stare at one another. Confused.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 Not one more inch! I'll do it!
 And you have no idea what I'm
 saying, do you?!

Danny rolls his eyes. He spots JW come down the hill behind the visitors.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 (to JW)
 No! Stay back! We don't wanna
 scare them off!

JW points the shotgun in the air: POW! Fires one off.

The Dark Cloaks now face JW. He holds his weapon on the crowd.

JW
 Back off!
 (to Danny)
 Run!

DANNY
 No way. I'm not leaving without
 her.

JW
 You idiot! They're gonna kill you!

The Dark Cloaks move toward JW.

JW (CONT'D)
 (whispers to himself)
 Shhit. And now they're coming
 after you, asshole.

Danny watches them move for JW.

JW (CONT'D)
 (to Danny)
 Are you kidding me?! RUN!

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Charlie paces back and forth while talking to himself. Terry gives him a dirty look.

TERRY
 What're you doing down here? You
 should be up there with your
 partner. He could be in trouble.

CHARLIE
I'm just doing like I'm told!

JOHNNY
(to Nick)
She's right, you know?

TERRY
Thank you. Whatever your name is.

JOHNNY
We're totally not getting any
footage down here.

Terry rolls her eyes. Nick thinks it over.

NICK
You're right. Screw it. If we die
we die. At least we'll get it on
film.

Johnny smiles and runs up the steps. Nick follows.

TERRY
Hey!

EXT. KELLER FARM - REAR LAWN - NIGHT

The Dark Cloaks move in on JW who keeps his shotgun aimed and ready to fire.

JW
Get back! I'll do it!

DANNY
Drop your gun, Jimmy! They'll kill
you!

JW stares back at --

Johnny filming him from the porch. Terry and Nick on each side.

Charlie runs up behind JW and grabs his shotgun.

JW
What're you doing?!

CHARLIE
Shut up and trust me.

He walks away from JW as the Dark Cloaks turn the attention on him.

Charlie smiles back at Danny still by the barn.

Danny and JW share a confused look.

Charlie holds out the shotgun and drops it on the grass. He raises his hands in the air, presses against the back of his head.

Danny closes the zippo, tosses in the grass and puts his hands on his head. He nods to JW to do the same thing.

JW isn't so sure as he also puts his hands on his head.

The Dark Cloaks stare at one another. Having a sort of quiet meeting.

The BRIGHT LIGHT over the barn now moves slowly across the lawn. The tall, female figure of DENISE appears on the grass.

DANNY

It's working!

The BRIGHT LIGHT moves back to the barn where the interior ORANGE GLOW of the trapped alien sucks up into the light and into the hovering spacecraft.

Danny runs to Denise, grabs her arm as they run for the nearby woods.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Run! Go! Go!

As the spacecraft leaves -- the entire property is covered in a BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT which blinds JW, Charlie and the others on the porch.

The LIGHT slowly DIMS as the spacecraft leaves the atmosphere.

JW and Charlie open their eyes, reluctantly stare up at the sky. Nothing.

INT. KELLER HOME - BACK PORCH - NIGHT

Nick checks with Johnny.

NICK

Please tell me the battery's not dead.

Johnny checks. He gives Nick a thumbs up.

JOHNNY
We're good.

EXT. KELLER HOME - REAR LAWN - EARLY MORNING

The sun rises as Nick, Johnny and Terry meet Charlie and JW on the rear lawn.

NICK
You guys okay?

JW
I'm in one piece. I guess things could be worse.

NICK
How about you?

Charlie thinks that one over.

CHARLIE
No. Not really. Not for a long time, I'm afraid.

Johnny puts his arm around his shoulder.

JOHNNY
Relax, bro. You're gonna be famous. That took some serious big ones, my friend.

Charlie smiles.

CHARLIE
It did, didn't it?

NICK
Yes, it did.

Scottie has his arm around Tamra as he escorts her down the steps. She is still pretty upset.

Johnny slaps Nick's arm.

JOHNNY
Hey, look.

They all turn and spot Danny and Denise, hand and hand, as they walk back from the woods.

Terry laughs in celebration as she almost runs Denise over with the biggest hug ever.

CHARLIE

Well, I guess she didn't see me here.

Nick laughs.

NICK

(to Charlie)

Don't worry, big guy. You're in there for sure.

Johnny watches Danny and Denise makeout like school kids.

JOHNNY

Now, tell me fellas. Is that not the most beautiful sight you've ever seen?

Nick, JW and Charlie all turn and stare at Johnny like he's completely crazy.

FADE OUT.

THE END