

WOODLAND SCRIBE

By Justin Bauer

April 9, 2009

FADE IN:

INT./EXT. MOVING VEHICLE/COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

DRIVER'S P.O.V.

Through the windshield of a moving vehicle is a long narrow stretch of dirt road bordered by tufts of tall grass.

The car's radio is barely audible. The faint sound of classic rock can be heard in the background.

A snake slithers out of the way of the oncoming vehicle and into the protective abyss of the field.

INT. MOVING VEHICLE - NIGHT

A shot of the interior of the vehicle centers on the radio, but we can't see the driver.

Inside it is filthy; garbage on the passenger's seat, stains on the dashboard, a mountain of cigarettes in an ashtray. A lonely and overpowered air-freshener dangles from the cup holder in front of the passenger's seat.

The shaking hands of a MAN enter the picture and reach for the radio controls to lower the volume. His hands exit the frame and we hear a CLICKING.

A cloud of smoke enters the picture by the radio.

INT./EXT. MOVING VEHICLE/COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

DRIVER'S P.O.V.

The road is unkempt. All of the inconsistencies—bumps, dips, weeds—are visible.

A wolf comes into focus, standing in the middle of the road, eerily illuminated by the glow of the oncoming headlights. It looks up toward the vehicle then journeys calmly to the left into the field.

The wolf trots through the long grass. Behind it, the silhouette of a house in the moonlight is revealed.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The vehicle, a well-used Ford pickup truck, continues up the road. It turns left toward the property and we see the road, which seems to stretch for miles into darkness.

The isolated property consists of a long driveway leading to an old house and a dilapidated shed to its left. A forest stands well past the house and into the background.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

"July 1992"

A lone black car sits motionless on a desolate stretch of rural road. The car, still running with its lights on and radio BLARING with music, is pulled off slightly to the side with no signs of an accident.

Smoke billows from the exhaust in the cool night air. We slowly move toward the open driver's side door.

The radio, struggling to maintain a decent signal, is playing an old song, then cuts to a news report.

REPORTER (V.O.)

Another murder in downtown
Toronto this afternoon makes
it the third in as many days.
The vic-

Static from the radio SCREECHES. We continue to creep toward the car.

REPORTER (Cont'd)

...year old male, was
rushed to hospital after
being shot fifteen times
in an alleged case of gang
retaliation. He died en route,
while the gunman remains at
large. The shooting occurred
in broad daylight and marks a
growing trend of violence in
the city, characterized by an

(MORE)

REPORTER (Cont'd)
 increase in brutality and
 boldness on the part of the
 criminals. In local news,
 Petri Point residents are
 reminded of the Dansbys'
 garage sale beginning bright
 and early tomorrow morning.
 Mrs. Dansby has asked me to
 announce that her antique
 china will be up for grabs,
 contrary to earlier rumours.

Another OLD ROCK SONG begins to play over the radio. Blood
 is splattered on the driver's seat and the ground. A cross
 hangs from the rearview mirror.

CUT TO:

CREDIT SEQUENCE:

WOODLAND SCRIBE

EXT. PETRI POINT. MAIN STREET - DAY

A street straddled by small shops and businesses typical of
 any small town. It is a crisp, clear summer morning.

There is little activity.

EXT. MAIN STREET. FITZGERALD'S FIX-IT - MORNING

An older brick building with large windows and a faded sign
 above: "Fitzgerald's Fix-It."

Three teenage boys approach the store, leaving their bikes
 outside before entering. RICHARD is the unofficial leader,
 DRAKE the obnoxious loudmouth, and the diminutive EDDY, who
 appears not yet to have hit puberty.

The little bell RINGS to signal their presence. They are
 chatting on the way in.

INT. FITZGERALD'S FIX-IT - CONTINUOUS

The store is cramped with a wide assortment of materials:
 automotive, home repair, outdoor adventure—even snacks.

The boys walk toward the bike repair section off to the side, away from the prying eyes of a YOUNG FEMALE CLERK and OLDER MALE CLERK.

RICHARD

I don't care what you say,
man, no one deserves that
kind of treatment.

He fondles a large flathead screwdriver, then they continue walking a few feet to their right, where a manual tire pump has caught Richard's attention.

The older clerk, Grover Fitzgerald, stares over at them disapprovingly from the behind the register, uncertain of what they're saying, but sure it can't be good.

DRAKE

To be fair though, we never
really knew Mrs. Callahan.
For all we know she coulda
been a sick pedophile or
something. Trolling the
streets for young blood
after dark.

(sarcastic)

Best to get all the facts
first before jumping to any
conclusions.

The first two smirk, but Eddy, the youngest looking of the bunch, is visibly offended by the last comment.

EDDY

(to Drake)

Are you shitting me, man!?

He takes a second, in obvious distress.

EDDY (Cont'd)

(whisper)

Jimmy said her head got
bashed in like it was a
friggin' tomato. If it wasn't
for that tacky jewelry she
always wore they wouldn't have
been able to ID her.

They all pause, the other two noticeably skeptical.

DRAKE

(condescending)

That a fact? The same Jimmy who ate glue in Turnstein's class because he thought it was mayonnaise?

EDDY

Okay, so he's no Einstein. Well, he's borderline brain-dead, but he's the one who found her.

(calm)

And I still say a little respect for the dead is in order.

(beat)

She had a good heart—bake sales, charity drives—

RICHARD

Must've tainted one too many apple pies with chloroform.

The first two break into LAUGHTER while Eddy shakes his head, half smiling, half trying to maintain his composure.

As the laughing winds down to a giggle, a man in his late twenties walks in. BENJAMIN MOSBY is wearing a baseball cap, which largely conceals his face. His blue jeans and plaid shirt make him look like a farmer.

He's conspicuous in his timing—the group now glancing toward him—but he is either unaware of, or unwilling to acknowledge, them.

Benjamin acknowledges Mr. Fitzgerald—a heavy-set man with bad posture and thick glasses—with a subtle nod, before making his way to the back of the store.

DRAKE

Well if this fucker is still on the loose, he better watch who he messes with next time.

RICHARD
 (smiling, to Drake)
 What the hell's that supposed
 to mean? You got shit-kicked
 by Edwin here...
 (indicating Eddy)
 ...and he's a little faggot.

Eddy is again confused, unsure of whether to be proud of besting his friend or offended by being belittled.

RICHARD (Cont'd)
 (examining more
 merchandise)
 What makes you think there'd
 even be a next time? I think
 you watch too much CNN.

Benjamin is visible in the back examining various tools. He is within earshot of everything being said.

DRAKE
 (disappointed)
 Man, why do you gotta be such
 a damn realist all the time.
 This town needs a little
 action for a change, something
 to remind us we're not fucking
 Amish.

Richard is still holding the tire pump. He motions to the cash, indicating he wants to leave.

RICHARD
 Come on, put your dick back in
 its holster and let's get the
 hell out of here. Old man
 "Fatzgerald" is giving me the
 creeps.

Mr. Fitzgerald is a few aisles down and glares over at the boys as if he heard them.

The group walks to the cash register, where the young woman is now working. She is plain-looking but not unattractive.

In the back Benjamin drops a handful of long nails, making a loud CLANG. Everyone looks back curiously, but he just sends a look of embarrassment and starts picking them up.

The boys exit the store, the bell RINGING on cue.

Benjamin makes his way to the cash to make his purchase.

BENJAMIN

You guys wouldn't happen to have any spark plugs in back? There's none on the shelf, and my truck's been clunking out on me pretty good lately.

The cashier glances toward the automotive section, as if she doesn't trust him, then back to Benjamin.

FEMALE CLERK

Sorry. Nothing we can do until our next shipment in a few days. Have to hold tight till then.

BENJAMIN

(wry)

Guess I'll have to take my business elsewhere.

He shoots her a slight smile, but she makes no effort to return it.

FEMALE CLERK

That'll be six-fifty, please.

EXT. MAIN STREET. FITZGERALD'S FIX-IT - CONTINUOUS

The restless teens look out at the town, struggling to adjust their eyes to the bright sun. They stand by their bikes parked just outside.

DRAKE

So what's the deal then?

RICHARD

I dunno, man. Just enjoy the freedom while it lasts.

DRAKE

Come on, it's the first week of summer vacation and we're already out of ideas?

RICHARD

The whole point of being off school is to give our brains a rest. Enough with the pop quizzes already.

Eddy throws a stone down the deserted road.

INT. FITZGERALD'S FIX-IT - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Fitzgerald walks up behind Benjamin as he is getting his receipt. The owner catches him by surprise, putting his hand on Benjamin's shoulder in a consoling fashion.

MR. FITZGERALD

Benjamin, how you holdin' up?
Listen, I'm sorry about what happened between you and Alice—

Benjamin nods "thanks."

MR. FITZGERALD (Cont'd)

I hope you've got enough painting to do out there to keep your mind off of everything.

Mr. Fitzgerald looks at the ground, deep in thought.

MR. FITZGERALD (Cont'd)

Lord knows it was all I could do after Jolene left to keep from going crazy.

He looks up at Benjamin with comically magnified pupils.

MR. FITZGERALD (Cont'd)

Thank God for this store.

Mr. Fitzgerald pats him on the back and gets back to work. Benjamin is visibly uncomfortable but appreciative of the

gesture. He grabs his purchase from the counter and heads to the exit.

BENJAMIN
 (backing out of the
 door, to
 Mr. Fitzgerald)
 My advice: think about
 instituting a nineteen-plus
 policy.

Benjamin continues through the door.

Mr. Fitzgerald looks up and flashes a subtle smile.

EXT. MAIN STREET. FITZGERALD'S FIX-IT - CONTINUOUS

The boys are talking outside and turn their attention to Benjamin when he walks out.

DRAKE
 (to the others,
 loud enough for
 Benjamin to hear)
 Yeah, I hope when I get
 married I know how to satisfy
 a woman.

They laugh but a focused Benjamin continues walking across the street with his head down.

Eddy doesn't seem to have entirely gotten the joke.

EDDY
 (to Drake)
 Shit Drake, you got nothing
 to worry about. I mean,
 considering that truck-stop-
 toilette-seat of a girlfriend
 you got.

Richard laughs, but Drake is not so amused and punches Eddy hard to show it.

Drake
 Fuck that, she's hot.

He indicates Richard's backpack.

Drake (Cont'd)
Just pass me the damn hooch.

Richard grabs a mickey of cheap whiskey out of his backpack and the boys pass it around.

Each takes a sip, followed by a grimace.

CUT TO:

INT. VEHICLE. STATIONARY - CONTINUOUS

The interior of a messy vehicle. A set of hands throws a package of six-inch-long nails onto the passenger seat.

EXT. MAIN STREET. VEHICLE - CONTINUOUS

A man leaning through the driver's side door stands up and closes the door. It's Benjamin. It's the same truck as the night before.

He walks down the sidewalk, throwing a disapproving glance to the boozing group of boys across the street.

Benjamin continues about twenty-five feet along the virtually empty sidewalk.

He enters another establishment to his right.

EXT. MAIN STREET. JIFFY'S DINER - CONTINUOUS

An overhead shot just outside the diner.

A tow-truck enters the picture. It's hauling the black car from last night.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

A crew of police officers and coroners gathered along the side of the road. They hover over a body cloaked in a white sheet. The body is lifted on to a stretcher by TWO CORONERS.

CORONER #1
 (to his partner,
 trying to navigate
 the uneven terrain)
 Easy, now.

It is transported to a waiting ambulance and loaded in without difficulty.

A young cop stands off to the side with a puzzled, sickened look on his face. OFFICER JAMES DeMOURNEAU is a rookie cop from the big city. This is his first murder investigation and it shows.

Over DeMourneau's shoulder is a LONE COP feverishly taking photographs where the body had lain in the long grass just off the road.

THREE OFFICERS converse on the gravel road. One of them, Chief Benny Sinclair, is leading the chat. He is a lifelong Petri Point resident close to retirement and is none too pleased--this case could jeopardize his future plans if not taken care of quickly.

He finishes with them and makes his way over to DeMourneau.

CHIEF SINCLAIR
 Must make you feel at home.

He looks away down the road and then back to his rookie.

CHIEF SINCLAIR (Cont'd)
 I want you back at the station manning the phone lines for any leads. So far it doesn't look like we have a lot to go on, besides some smudged foot and tire prints.
 (beat)
 Car's gonna' get a good look over, see if it's got any problems. Maybe she had engine trouble, pulled over and was a sitting duck for some sicko. I want you to keep an ear out
 (MORE)

CHIEF SINCLAIR (Cont'd)
 for anyone who might have
 driven by while another
 vehicle was parked by
 Mrs. Callahan's, is that clear?

A deflated DeMourneau takes a second to wrap his head
 around his complex assignment.

DeMOURNEAU
 Sit by the phone, play
 secretary—got it Chief.

CHIEF SINCLAIR
 Pay special attention for any
 descriptions of a second
 vehicle. We can't afford to
 fuck up and get behind on
 this. If it was a stranger
 passing through we're already
 behind the eight ball. And if
 it was a local we can knock on
 every damn door should the
 need arise.

(beat)
 Now, I'll be back after a
 visit with the coroner, at
 which point I'll expect a full
 update.

He turns and rejoins the other two cops, leaving DeMourneau
 to stew.

INT. JIFFY'S DINER - MORNING

A classic-style diner with booths and a long counter
 running up the middle. It's one step above a highway truck
 stop eatery. There are a few patrons scattered throughout.

Benjamin is sitting in a booth next to the wall. He's just
 finishing his breakfast, when in walks a younger man who
 recognizes him. JEFFREY LUDWICK is a part-time wood carver
 and full-time screw-up. He's slightly taller and thinner
 than Benjamin with medium-length blonde hair.

He makes his way over to Benjamin's booth after spotting
 him, and sits down across from him.

JEFFREY
(leaning in)
So, have you heard yet...?

He continues to lean, anxiously awaiting a reply, but is met only with puzzlement from Benjamin.

JEFFREY (Cont'd)
...about Mrs. Callahan...?
(staring
expectantly)
What, you living under a
rock or something?

BENJAMIN
(annoyed)
No, of course I heard—it's all
I heard on the way over on the
radio. And it didn't stop when
I stepped into reality either.

Jeffrey leans back.

JEFFREY
Pretty insane, eh? Can't think
what she coulda done to have
earned that—

BENJAMIN
How the hell does word spread
so fast, anyway. Her blood's
probably still coagulating on
the fucking gravel as we
speak.
(stares intensely
across the table)
Listen, can't we just change
the damn subject. I'm trying
to eat my breakfast and I'd
prefer to go about it without
making the mental associations.

He indicates a ketchup-drenched meal on his plate. A
WAITRESS comes over to the table.

WAITRESS
(smiling, to Jeffrey)
What'll it be stud-muffin?

Jeffrey smiles back, almost blushing.

JEFFREY
(pointing across the
table)
I'll have what he's having. No
coffee though, doll. Oh, and
could you bring some mustard
over please?

She smiles and nods. Jeffrey looks back to Benjamin.

Jeffrey (Cont'd)
So what do you wanna talk about
then?
(enthusiastic)
Hey, I heard the Gainsbys are
calling it quits—after fifteen
years, no less.

Benjamin stares at him with intensity again, not needing to
add to his body language. Jeffrey winces in embarrassment.

JEFFREY (Cont'd)
Right. Sorry, I didn't get
much sleep last night.

Benjamin gets up to leave and puts some money on the table.

BENJAMIN
I swear if you didn't already
fry every brain cell in your
head you'd a made a fine
tabloid journalist.

He starts to walk away.

BENJAMIN (Cont'd)
Too bad no one gives a shit
about the lives of a bunch of
insignificant hicks.

Jeffrey just stares back as if he's used to such talk, and turns back around to marvel at his arriving plate of food.

EXT. MAIN STREET. SIDEWALK - MOMENTS LATER

Benjamin walks toward his parked truck. He looks to his right, squinting under the bright sun.

He opens and slams the truck door emphatically.

INT. BENJAMIN'S TRUCK. STATIONARY - CONTINUOUS

Benjamin pauses briefly in his truck. Without warning he goes ballistic.

He smashes the steering wheel and dashboard with his clenched fists.

After he appears to tire, he targets the radio, not sparing it any punishment because of its value.

He leans back in his seat and looks up, then begins to tremble.

Benjamin lights up a cigarette to ease the mild panic attack and looks out his side window with angry eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL. CORONER'S OFFICE - DAY

A sheet-covered corpse presided over by Sinclair, a middle-aged WOMAN in a lab coat, and Sinclair's sidekick RADIVICH. The woman is lifting the sheet. We can't see the contents, but Chief Sinclair and Radivich can.

They all look on blankly. An overhead light can be heard BUZZING and cutting in and out periodically.

WOMAN

(cold, looking down)

I'd say a blunt object.

(beat)

Possibly an aluminum baseball bat or crowbar.

RADIVICH

(puzzled)

Who the hell carries a
baseball bat in their car? I'd
say we're looking for a shovel
or tire iron.

WOMAN

(still looking down)

Unlikely. Given the damage to
the skull--there's nothing in
my garage that could do that.

CHIEF SINCLAIR

(irritated)

Well unless we know for sure
we're on the hunt for a
disgruntled baseball player,
I suggest keeping all
considerations open.

Sinclair looks up to the woman as she replaces the sheet.

CHIEF SINCLAIR (Cont'd)

Let me know if there's
evidence of a sexual assault.

(looks down at body)

Monetary gain sure as shit
wasn't a motive.

He storms out of the room, his sidekick in toe.

INT. PETRI POINT POLICE STATION - DAY

A small police station abuzz with activity in the heat of
the afternoon. REPORTERS from outside of town have made the
trek, making life hectic for the understaffed force.

A disinterested DeMourneau sits at his desk SCRIBBLING in a
notepad.

The phone RINGS. DeMourneau answers it unenthusiastically.

DeMOURNEAU

Bingham Regional Police,
DeMourneau here...

(MORE)

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)
 (becoming agitated)
 ...no, honey. You know I can't
 talk about an ongoing case,
 especially when I'm at work.
 Now please quit tying up the
 line and let me get back to
 it. I've got important stuff
 to do.

He looks up at the ceiling as if praying for the patience
 to deal with his wife now.

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)
 Yes. I love you too...Okay,
 bye...Yes!

He slams the receiver down in frustration

His boss greets him at his desk.

CHIEF SINCLAIR
 Anything good yet? I know word
 is spreading fast around town,
 someone's got to have seen
 something.

DeMOURNEAU
 No sir, but I did get a report
 of a UFO and some crop burns.

Sinclair turns away frustrated. DeMourneau gets serious.

DeMourneau (Cont'd)
 Sir, if I may say, I think we
 ought to be more proactive
 here. Instead of waiting for
 the evidence, we should be out
 there uncovering it—

CHIEF SINCLAIR
 We are out there DeMourneau.
 Don't think for a second we're
 not exhausting every resource
 on this one. The last thing
 any of us here wants is a
 (MORE)

CHIEF SINCLAIR (Cont'd)
 zero percent batting average.
 We need people in here too,
 people to filter out the
 garbage. We're understaffed at
 the switchboards, so I'd
 settle in if I were you. It's
 gonna be a long week.

Sinclair is pestered by a heavy-set FEMALE REPORTER and her PHOTOGRAPHER. She waddles to catch up with him as he makes his way out the door, but he waves off her attempts.

FEMALE REPORTER
 Chief! Chief Sinclair! Any
 suspects yet?

Her effort is futile. Sinclair is already long gone.

EXT. DeMOURNEAU'S HOUSE - DAY

DeMourneau pulls into the driveway of his tiny white house with his black sedan. It is late afternoon now. The house has a patchy front lawn and a tiny garden.

He gets out and makes his way to the door. We can see a sour look on his face—it has been a long, unpleasant day.

INT. DeMOURNEAU'S HOUSE. FRONT ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Inside it is a different story: through the living room and kitchen we see an assortment of bright knick-knacks and decorations. When his perky wife ADRIENNE walks toward him it becomes apparent who is responsible for the decorating.

She looks at him cheerfully a few feet away from the kitchen but he is too tired and frustrated to reciprocate.

ADRIENNE
 Jim, hon. What's the matter?
 Did you catch him yet?

Still standing at the front door, he takes his glasses off and cleans them methodically.

DeMourneau

(looking down)

I wouldn't know. That's not my department anymore. I've decided to pursue my lifelong dream of becoming a switchboard operator.

(he looks up at Adrienne)

And you're gonna have to stop calling me at work. I know it's tough for you on maternity leave right now, but I can't be splitting my attention between you and work during the day. You'll just have to find a hobby while Jacob naps.

Adrienne is silent after being scolded. She walks into the living room out of view.

INT. DeMOURNEAU'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

DeMourneau joins her and their infant son JACOB. He is sitting in a playpen.

Adrienne picks him up and cuddles him. DeMourneau takes a deep breath.

DeMourneau

I'm sorry. Just that, things haven't been going as smoothly as I had hoped lately.

She is rocking the baby in her arms, then grabs her husband's arm softly and looks him in the eye.

ADRIENNE

It's just a matter of time. You're good at what you do, and at the end of the day, that's all that matters. They'll see it eventually, don't you worry.

He sits down in a heap on the couch.

DeMourneau

It's enough to make me wonder
if I made the right choice for
us.

ADRIENNE

But it was never your choice
to come here in the first
place, Jim—

DeMourneau

(agitated)

It's not that. Being a cop—
(calm, deep in
thought)

Somehow it's not what I
expected.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

A sparsely populated forest with the setting sun peeking through. There is green all around thanks to recent rain.

We hear an oddly beautiful DRONE coupled with a dissonant organ-like sound as we gradually hone in on the source.

The tune becomes louder as we cross the forest floor.

There are no signs of animals or humans.

The music is a folk-type ballad with an eastern European tinge to it.

The source becomes clear as an image of a man with his back turned enters the picture. He is sitting on a tree stump, completely alone.

Now right behind him, we can see over his right shoulder as he continues to play. The topography reveals a dramatic drop, which eventually plateaus into more trees as far as the eye can see.

A view from in front of the player reveals it to be Benjamin, his face completely expressionless as he works an odd-looking instrument.

He is winding a crank with his right hand, which produces the DRONING sound, and using the other to play a built-in set of keys like a piano. It is a hurdy-gurdy; a wooden instrument small enough to be played on someone's lap.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELDERLY COUPLE'S HOUSE. PORCH - DAY

A middle-aged male newspaper REPORTER is standing at the doorstep of an elderly couple's house during the late afternoon. He is holding a microphone attached to a tape recorder. The OLD WOMAN stands hunched over next to her HUSBAND at the door.

REPORTER
(to the old
woman)

In light of last night's incident, how would you rate your sense of safety? Would you say that the migration of crime northward from the cities is a viable concern?

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Benjamin is still playing as the sun continues to wane, but we can't hear him. Only the interview (OVER) is audible.

OLD WOMAN (V.O.)
(timid)

I would say definitely yes, I do feel threatened now. Very much so. It's easy to distance oneself from the goings on of another world when you see them on TV—and such horrid things—but it just proves that violence is infectious.

EXT. A MAN'S HOUSE. DOORSTEP - EVENING

The same reporter, this time grilling a RAGGED MAN in his late thirties. His house is small and dilapidated. A dog BARKS in the background. It is noticeably darker now.

REPORTER

Would you attribute the rise
in rural crime to the
subculture of violence being
cultivated in cosmopolitan
areas?

The question is an example of media sensationalizing at its
finest. The man fumbles for the appropriate answer

EXT. FOREST. - EVENING

Benjamin is trekking through the woods, his instrument
carried in a hard case. Again, the interview plays (OVER).

RAGGED MAN (V.O.)

Of course. Without a doubt. If
I had nickel for every
goddamned news story about
gang violence I'd be a wealthy
man, my friend. I've already
beefed up the home security
system with Elvis here because
of it.

More BARKING in the background. Benjamin is still walking.

RAGGED MAN (Cont'd)

The way I see it, a lot more
reliable than a gun, ya know.

Benjamin is nearing the tree-line.

EXT. FRAIL WOMAN'S HOUSE - EVENING

The reporter stands at another house, interviewing a FRAIL
WOMAN in her fifties as she sits on a plastic chair on her
lawn. The reporter has to crouch down to address her.

REPORTER

Considering the lack of an
apparent motive, at least
at this early stage in the
investigation, how fearful
are you that you could be
next?

EXT. FOREST EDGE - EVENING

Benjamin walks past the tree-line and through a thick field of overgrown grass. It is even darker now. Only the interview is heard (OVER).

FRAIL WOMAN (V.O.)
 (emphatic)
 Fearful? Heck no—are you kidding me? People like that just pick on the weak. Wolves in sheep's clothing. They're really just pussies.

EXT. FRAIL WOMAN'S HOUSE - EVENING

The reporter looks frazzled.

REPORTER
 Are you saying a person who murders in cold blood doesn't elicit even the slightest response—

FRAIL WOMAN
 (seated up in her chair)
 I didn't say he doesn't deserve a response, but I sure as hell ain't gonna play into your little fear-mongering game. I'm telling you, this is the kind of guy who never got disciplined as a child.

FADE TO BLACK

FRAIL WOMAN (Cont'd)(V.O.)
 All he needs is a swift smack in the face and a spank on the ass. I'll show him what's what.

FADE IN

EXT. FOREST EDGE - EVENING

"Fifteen years later"

An older-looking Benjamin has emerged from the protective cocoon of the forest and makes his way through a thick grass field. He has a thin beard now and slightly more modern clothes. It is summer, everything is green and lush.

Behind him he drags an old sled towing chopped up firewood.

He is heading toward a dark house about a hundred meters away. It is barely visible in the early evening sky.

EXT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

As he gets closer we see a puzzled look on his face. Now in his gravel driveway the source of his bewilderment is evident: A young destitute-looking girl stands alone with two packed bags. LYLAH BRIGGS has a subtle beauty with long light-brown hair. Her over-sized sweater envelopes her.

Benjamin stops right in front of her, refusing to say anything until she explains herself.

LYLAH

(meek)

I was told you might be able to help me.

(beat)

My name is Lylah.

Benjamin can only stare coldly, being no further aware of the reason behind her presence than before.

BENJAMIN

Whoever told you that doesn't know me any more than you know about manners.

LYLAH

I'm sorry. I'm not used to asking for help.

BENJAMIN

Well this isn't a bed and breakfast, and since I don't know you...

He turns to walk away.

LYLAH

But I know you. Or, about you.
(she perks up, more
casual)

And besides, you can learn a
lot about a person through
subtle observations.

Benjamin is still looking at her, willing to play along.

LYLAH (Cont'd)

Well, for example, that truck
of yours over there; it says
you love country music. And
the plaid says you're content
to let your personality do the
talking. I'd bet you've even
got an old hound running
around here. He probably
fetches your clothes for you
every morning too, but you
don't have the heart to look
him in his sad eyes and tell
him you're ready for a change.

She smiles, proud of her powers of deduction. Benjamin
remains unimpressed though, merely throwing her a
dismissive wave and continuing toward the house.

At the front door though, he looks back and sees her still
standing there, dejected.

Benjamin gives in and motions for her to come inside.

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

His house is small and austere, devoid of all the
superfluties of the average home. Lylah takes everything
in, studying her new surroundings.

They settle down, Lylah on an old couch and Benjamin on a
loveseat across the room. He leans back and begins the
interrogation.

BENJAMIN

Well?

Lylah looks confused, then clicks in.

LYLAH

Oh. It's a lovely home you have here. Very cozy.

BENJAMIN

Let's not waste each other's time. You said you knew about me. How? I know it's not because I donated a million dollars to the local school and you caught my bio in the paper.

She smiles uncomfortably and exhales.

LYLAH

We have a relative in common. To be specific, your ex-wife. I'm your daughter.

(beat)

I thought now would be as good a time as any to catch up. Maybe you could teach me to ride a bike, threaten my boyfriends.

BENJAMIN

Boyfriends?

LYLAH

(embarrassed)

You know what I mean.

Benjamin's face becomes serious.

An awkward pause echoes between them.

BENJAMIN

Why don't you just cut the crap. When Alice left the only thing she was carrying was her luggage—

LYLAH
(enthusiastically)
She was only a few weeks
along at that point. She
said...

She pauses, leaning back on the couch.

LYLAH (Cont'd)
She said she didn't want to
raise a child with an
emotionless prick like you.

Benjamin is not offended in the slightest.

BENJAMIN
Look, normally I'd keep the
details of my private life
just so. But the reality is
that we tried for years to
have a child, failing
miserably every time. That's
one of the reasons she left.
And now you're telling me the
opposite is true?

Lylah nods "yes."

LYLAH
She would mention you now and
then. Usually as she vented
about some other grievance.
We never really got along.
And last night was the
beginning of the end for us, I
guess. She said she was sick
of my attitude—not in so many
words—and I knew then that I
had to get away.

BENJAMIN
At least things ended on your
terms.
(stands up to leave)
Listen, I'm too tired to
argue. You can stay down here
(MORE)

BENJAMIN (Cont'd)
 on the couch tonight. We can
 figure things out in the
 morning. I only have one
 bedroom, and I don't get a lot
 of company out this way, you
 understand.

LYLAH
 (looking up at him
 with confusion)
 Don't you wanna catch up?
 Share stories?

Benjamin shakes his head with disinterest.

BENJAMIN
 Bathroom's down the hall. I'll
 grab you some blankets.

Lylah is disappointed. After all that she is rejected.

We watch Benjamin from below as he walks up the stairs into
 complete darkness. The wooden stairs CREAK all the way up.

Seconds later he reemerges at the top.

EXT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Utter silence as the solitary house is illuminated only by
 the stars.

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lylah is sound asleep on the couch. There is dead silence
 until we hear a CREAK.

She wakes to the sound and turns over, only to be met with
 a horrific sight. A gun is COCKED.

A lamp is CLICKED on.

Benjamin is standing over Lylah as she sits up still under
 the protection of her blanket. She is terrified.

BENJAMIN

Who are you and what the fuck
do you want?

She is too frightened to reply.

Benjamin shows no pity toward her.

BENJAMIN (Cont'd)

(cold)

Every good relationship is
built on a foundation of trust
and mutual respect. Now start
building.

Lylah begins to cry.

LYLAH

What do you mean? I told you.
You're my father and I've got
nowhere else to go.

He COCKS the shotgun again. It is still pointed at her from
only three feet away.

LYLAH (Cont'd)

(hysterical)

I'M PREGNANT!

Benjamin is surprised but he doesn't lower his weapon.

LYLAH (Cont'd)

(wiping tears from
her eyes)

She kicked me out. When she
found out she snapped and told
me to go and never come back.
She didn't care where or how I
got there. My Boyfriend
freaked too, and you were the
only person I thought I could
count on.

BENJAMIN

There you go being judgmental
again.

Another wave of SILENCE passes through.

Benjamin lowers his gun slowly, then turns and SMASHES the lamp by Lylah's head to the ground.

He retreats upstairs into darkness.

Lylah is still shaking on the couch.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The next morning Lylah wakes to the sound of birds CHIRPING outside. It is a bright summer morning.

She gets up slowly and walks only a few feet before stepping on a shard of glass which imbeds itself in her foot. The remnants of the lamp are still scattered everywhere.

Lylah rips it out before making her way out of the room.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Benjamin is walking through the woods. He appears much calmer surrounded by unadulterated nature. The leaves and twigs are CRUNCHING beneath his feet as he maneuvers over and around fallen trees.

Something on the ground catches Benjamin's eye. He leans in to get a closer look. A closeup of a mangled animal corpse lying on its side. It looks like a fox.

Benjamin kneels down and examines it closely. He moves his hand toward it and begins to poke it.

Eventually the poking turns to caressing. He feels the rigid corpse with the back of his hand in a soothing manner. He turns it over to reveal a horrific expression punctuated by two missing eyes.

Benjamin stands up and looks around. A mass of random materials in the distance catches his attention now.

He walks toward it with a curious look.

A makeshift home: scraps of metal, wood, and cardboard. Garbage is strewn all around. No one is inside. Benjamin does not look pleased.

BENJAMIN
(muttering to
himself)
Fucking drifters.

He continues on his way. The edge of the forest is visible about thirty meters up ahead.

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE. WASHROOM - DAY

Lylah rinses her foot and the blood in the bathtub.

She takes a bunch of Kleenexes to the wound.

Rummaging around in the medicine cabinet, Lylah notices two bottles of pills. One is labeled 'Buspirone,' the other 'Valium.' She examines them for a few seconds before finding band-aids and antiseptic.

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY

Lylah manages to find a broom and dust pan in the corner of the cramped room. She leaves, making her way toward the living room.

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

On the wood floor near the couch Lylah gathers as much of the broken lamp as possible.

With the loaded dust pan in her hand she hears a CRUNCHING outside. She looks up and ventures over to the window.

Through the window we see Benjamin approaching the house, now feet away.

Lylah heads back to the broken lamp when the front screen door CREAKS open and SLAMS shut. Benjamin walks into the living room.

BENJAMIN

I'll make a few calls for you...
find you a more comfortable
place to stay in town and set
up a doctor's appointment.

LYLAH

(surprised)

But I thought I could stay
here. I'm fine on the couch,
and you don't have to look
after me like I'm a little
kid-

There is a KNOCK on the front door.

JEFFREY (O.S.)

(yelling)

Benjamin!? Hey you gotta check
out this clanking-I think it's
the carburetor...

Jeffrey walks into the room and is surprised to see Lylah.

JEFFREY (Cont'd)

(to Benjamin,
looking at Lylah)

...Oh shit! Sorry, you have
company.

Jeffrey's eyes examine Lylah up and down. He is impressed.

JEFFREY (Cont'd)

Wow. Are you sure she's
eighteen though?

Benjamin doesn't even care enough about him to look at him.

BENJAMIN

Wait for me outside.

Jeffrey obeys, still gazing at Lylah on his way out.

BENJAMIN (Cont'd)

(to Lylah)

I'm not fit to be a father,
(MORE)

BENJAMIN (Cont'd)
 let alone a grandfather.
 You're better off with someone
 who can help you.

LYLAH
 (serious)
 I need this. I have to get
 away for a while and think-
 away from anything that will
 remind me of my old life.

She looks Benjamin in the eye with sincerity.

LYLAH (Cont'd)
 (soft)
 Please.

Benjamin takes a second to think it over.

As the two continue to look at each other, a sad-looking
 basset hound named Satchel waddles up to Lylah. He rubs his
 head against her leg.

She looks down and gasps. A smile jumps to her face as she
 begins to pet him.

BENJAMIN
 I guess...if it's okay with
 him, it's okay with me.

She stares up at Benjamin.

BENJAMIN (Cont'd)
 But I hate country music!

INT. PETRI POINT POLICE STATION - DAY

An older-looking DeMourneau presides over a heavily-used
 ashtray at his desk. The station is much quieter now.

He is greeted by his partner FEVVERS, a young comedian with
 a permanent smile pasted to his face.

FEVVERS
 Looks like a 211 in progress
 (MORE)

FEVVERS (Cont'd)
 at the Valley Way First
 Financial. We're looking at
 one guy with a knife, possibly
 a helper in a getaway vehicle.

DeMourneau smiles and shakes his head in disbelief.

DeMOURNEAU
 How much do these guys expect
 to lift from a second-rate
 lemonade stand like that?

FEVVERS
 Especially considering
 yesterday was pick-up day.

DeMOURNEAU
 Well, we have to look at it as
 a potential serial. That'll
 make three goes at it in the
 past three months by a knife-
 wielding crazy.

DeMourneau stands up and puts his jacket on. He still has a
 smile on his face, excited to finally get some action

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)
 Something about the allure of
 free money that digs its claws
 in us. Let's end this shit-
 today.

The two walk toward the exit.

FEVVERS
 Let's make an honest man out
 of him.

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lylah sits alone on the couch with a cup of coffee. The
 tiny TV with rabbit ears across the room is playing as she
 watches.

The commercial is over and we hear a news report being given by a man. Lylah becomes transfixed to the screen as the TV REPORTER speaks.

LYLAH'S P.O.V.

The reporter is in his early fifties with graying hair.

TV REPORTER

Where are they now? That is the question that looms large in the minds of Petri Point residents. Fifteen years ago today we witnessed the brutal and untimely passing of a pillar in our community.

BACK TO SCENE

A focused but not wholly surprised looking Lylah.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)(Cont'd)

Ruby Callahan was only the fifth murder victim in the town's one-hundred-and-fifty year history—her savagely beaten body a grim reminder of the limitless reach of evil.

LYLAH'S P.O.V.

On the TV is a DOWNTRODDEN MAN sitting in a chair in a secured facility.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)

Mrs. Callahan's assailant, now forty-nine year old Clyde Vincent Shale, continues to be rehabilitated in a maximum-security mental facility in Hopewell. Many people strongly doubt that he can ever return to normalcy, as we struggle to do so ourselves. For now, though, Shale, the father of two and
(MORE)

TV REPORTER (Cont'd)
self-described ice cream
connoisseur will remain under
strict supervision just north
of the infamous slaying.

The program returns to the television newsroom.

TV REPORTER (Cont'd)
Here in town residents are
preparing to hold a
community-gathering and
fundraiser to honour the
fallen mother. Adam Callahan,
her teenage son, will be
awarded the money raised by
tomorrow night's concert to
help in his effort to become a
college student.

BACK TO SCENE

Lylah walks up to the TV and turns it off.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTRE - DAY

A small GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS is working in the out-dated
community centre to prepare for the occasion.

Banners are being erected, tables and chairs set up, and a
makeshift stage built.

Everyone is too busy to talk. The breadth of their task is
enough motivation.

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE. BENJAMIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Benjamin is alone in his room. He is trying to pick out
clothes to wear to the event, but is visibly hesitant at
the same time. He can sense the challenge ahead of him.

He is rummaging around in his closet when Lylah KNOCKS and
walks in. She is wearing a conservative purple dress with a
sweater. She is only two months pregnant at this point, the
lump not noticeable.

Lylah looks at her father's selection laid out on the bed.

LYLAH

Really? Is that it?

BENJAMIN

(surprised)

How the hell did you get ready so fast?

LYLAH

I'm guessing it's been a while since you've had to wear something that didn't include jean or plaid.

She walks over to his closet and examines her options.

The look on Lylah's face suggests slim pickings, but she is undeterred.

LYLAH

Hmmm...this looks like your best shot.

She pulls out a beige dinner jacket, a white-collared shirt, and navy blue pants, throwing them on the bed.

LYLAH (Cont'd)

Not exactly red carpet material, but you see what I have to work with.

Benjamin examines her choice and appears unimpressed. He is clearly out of his element.

BENJAMIN

(scrutinizing his new image with a sour look)

How formal are we getting here? I thought this was just a fundraiser, not a wedding.

Lylah laughs and walks away.

She turns as she is about to make it out the door.

LYLAH
 You're worse than an old
 woman. Let's go.

She is gone now, but Benjamin still seems to be struggling with the transformation.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTRE - NIGHT

A SWARM OF RESIDENTS trickles into the hospitable comfort of the two-storey brick building. The parking lot is at capacity.

The look on people's faces is one of modest celebration. We see attendees of every generation, from the littlest babies to the oldest most arthritic seniors.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTRE - NIGHT

People are still filing in through the gymnasium-style doors.

The atmosphere is lively and the place is packed. Tables are set up in the middle of the room with plates and casual dinnerware. Nearby are long tables with food of all kinds arranged as a buffet.

Pleasant jazz-style music sounds from the speakers in the background as people mingle in small groups all over.

A small stage is set covered with various pieces of musical equipment: drums, guitars, a keyboard, and amplifiers.

Benjamin is next to Lylah standing in the corner. They have just arrived and no one has noticed them yet. Lylah is smiling but Benjamin looks nervous. She looks over to him.

LYLAH
 You look tense. You ought to
 lighten up, we're here for a
 good cause.

BENJAMIN
 (looking around)
 Yea, but I've never been into
 (MORE)

BENJAMIN (Cont'd)
social gatherings. I guess I
never realized how out of
touch I am.

LYLAH
Well it's easy to be a hermit.
Being a social butterfly—now
that's a commitment.

BENJAMIN
When did you get to be so
wise? I thought you were only
seventeen?

Lylah glows with smiling pride.

A slender pretty woman in her early forties walks up to the
two of them with a pleasantly surprised look. DENIA ADLER
is wearing a classy yet provocatively low-cut dress.

DENIA
(to Benjamin)
Benjamin Mosby—it's been a
while.
(her eyes divert to
Lylah)
Who is this pretty young lady
you're with tonight?

Lylah extends her hand.

LYLAH
(shaking Denia's
hand)
I'm Lylah. We're not on a
date.

DENIA
(smiling)
I should hope not. No, you're
much too pretty for him.

The two laugh at Benjamin's expense.

BENJAMIN

You can't recognize the wit?
She's my kid.

LYLAH

(to Denia)

He means daughter. Once I
turned thirteen I ceased to be
a kid. Anyways, I'm going to
get more fruit punch. Please
excuse me for a sec.

She leaves Benjamin and Denia to catch up.

DENIA

So what have you been up to
all the way out there? We
don't see you in our neck of
the woods so often these
days.

(sips her drink)

Thought maybe you'd
forgotten about me.

BENJAMIN

You? No. But a man needs
his sanctuary.

DENIA

Sanctuary, or prison?

They stare into each other's eyes.

DENIA (Cont'd)

You should really come by. I
have some more room on my
wall, and another Benjamin
Mosby original could really
bring the place together.

Benjamin smiles, blushing.

DENIA (Cont'd)

And I could always use
someone interesting to talk
to. For example, we could
(MORE)

DENIA (Cont'd)
 chat about how, completely
 out of the blue, you have
 a teenage daughter.

Benjamin takes a sip of his stiff drink.

BENJAMIN
 Believe me, that's just as
 new to you as it is to me.
 She has an uncanny ability
 to surprise people.

They both look across the room. Lylah is talking with a sharply-dressed Jeffrey. They are laughing and smiling.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTRE. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

DeMourneau is talking with an older man by his car. JACK HOLLIWELL is his colleague, another cop who was there fifteen years ago. Jack is a straight-shooting old-timer.

HOLLIWELL
 Some party in there, eh.

DeMourneau smiles and shakes his head.

DeMOURNEAU
 Sinclair would be proud.
 (throws cigarette to
 the ground)
 Sack of shit.

The two laugh.

HOLLIWELL
 Yea but he knew how to get
 things done. Whether we got
 the right guy or not, you
 knew he'd get em.

DeMourneau looks at Holliwell, his smile fading.

DeMOURNEAU
 The sad thing is people look
 at that and see a protector of
 (MORE)

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)
the public interest. Fact is
he had one foot in his damn
fishing boat when he found a
guy that could be crucified,
no questions asked.

Holliwell looks around with a smile pasted to his face,
then refocuses on DeMourneau.

HOLLIWELL
That's right, he never was
exactly a warm father figure
to you, was he?

DeMOURNEAU
At least he gave it to you
straight. No building you up
before kicking you in the
balls. Just kicks you in the
balls and keeps you down.

HOLLIWELL
To be honest, I never really
felt confident with how that
case went down.

(nods toward
community centre)
Too much of a rush job, ya
know. Even though the
evidence pointed one way he
went another. Like asking a
guy for directions, then
pissing in his face before
going the opposite way.

(beat)
Like the whole alibi thing—you
must have heard that bullshit?

DeMourneau nods slowly in agreement.

DeMOURNEAU
I heard a lot of shit. Mostly
coming from the top.

HOLLIWELL

If you asked him, making the drive from the bar to the hospital was possible in about five minutes.

(beat)

Course, I bet Shale wasn't exactly obeying the rules of the road on his way over. But he'd have had to have been flying like a bat out of hell to have stopped half way, and do in Callahan like that. And as you know, it wasn't a quick 'bang bang' thank you ma'am we're talking about.

DeMourneau

So I heard. I actually did a little reenactment on my own time, to put things into perspective; would have put a NASCAR driver to shame.

(shaking his head in disappointment)

Hell of a time trying to pinpoint his timing leaving the bar though. I remember Benny losing some sleep over that one.

Holliwell shakes his head casually in disagreement.

HOLLIWELL

We knew—give or take five minutes. Word from the hospital and his pregnant wife was a bit unsure on the arrival, but a statement from his bar buddies that night swears by the time. Problem is the word of a bunch of drunks tends to lack any sort of credibility, as you know from that liquor store fiasco last year. Benny pounced all over

(MORE)

HOLLIWELL (Cont'd)
that. Apparently the jury did
too.

The two look at each other, then away again, DeMourneau thinking hard. Holliwell pats the younger cop on the shoulder and walks away.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTRE - NIGHT

Later in the evening an OLD WOMAN with glasses and a flower dress is making a speech on the stage.

OLD WOMAN
(into microphone,
with a lisp)
My, my, what a turnout. I just
want to say what a beautiful
thing it is to see all of you
concerned citizens out here
tonight.

OLD WOMAN'S P.O.V.

The large crowd of residents young and old sitting around dinner tables.

BACK TO SCENE

Benjamin squirms at his table. He is fidgeting with his napkin under the table as he looks on with wide eyes.

OLD WOMAN (Cont'd)
Ruby was a compassionate
individual, and today we have
a chance to honour her in a
special way.

Benjamin is still clearly uncomfortable, his hands now shaking under the table.

OLD WOMAN (O.S. Cont'd)
Most importantly, we must
learn to forgive the man
responsible in order to move
on. Mr. Shale is paying his
(MORE)

OLD WOMAN (O.S. Cont'd)
debt to society—to us—and we
must accept that.

Finally Benjamin can take no more and stands up to leave.

BENJAMIN
(whispering to
Lylah)
I'm feeling a little under the
weather. Would you mind
getting a ride home with
Jeffrey?

Lylah is so engrossed in what is being said on stage, she hardly registers what Benjamin is saying.

LYLAH
(surprised)
What? Oh, yea, no problem.
Feel better.

Benjamin goes to leave, throwing a wave to Denia and Jeffrey at his table. They look confused and disappointed.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTRE - NIGHT

Benjamin speed walks along the walkway to the parking lot. It is still packed with cars.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTRE PARKING LOT. BENJAMIN'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Benjamin reaches his truck and begins scrounging around inside.

Within seconds he pulls out a pack of cigarettes and lights one up, his hands still shaking.

Benjamin delves into the glove-box once more and fishes out a tiny bottle of pills. He pops one right away.

As he leans into the truck to replace the pills, DeMourneau comes up from behind him.

DeMOURNEAU
(talking to his
back)
You can't stomach Mrs. Ellis'
lisp either, eh?

Benjamin resurfaces, surprised. He tries to put on a calm face for DeMourneau, and produces a fake laugh.

BENJAMIN
Just needed some fresh air.
Pretty stuffy in there with
all those people.

DeMOURNEAU
(puzzled)
I get the feeling we've met
before, but for the life of
me I can't remember your name.
I'm detective DeMourneau.

He extends a hand to Benjamin, who reciprocates. They shake briefly.

BENJAMIN
Yea, I'm Benjamin. I think we
met a while back at the
gallery downtown.

DeMOURNEAU
Oh, that's right! My wife and
I have some of your work in
our living room. I especially
like the one of the winter
forest, with the little paw
prints. Amazing how someone can
present something so mundane
in such a beautiful way.

They smile at each other.

BENJAMIN
Just a way to pay the bills, I
suppose. People eat that
nature stuff up. No offense.

DeMourneau glances subtly at him taking a drag from his cigarette. Benjamin's hand trembles slightly.

DeMOURNEAU

Could I steal one of those off you? These little community get-togethers always put me on high-alert.

Benjamin reaches into his pocket and hands DeMourneau a cigarette and a light.

BENJAMIN

I hear that. If you're not doing your job it's nights like this you're gonna hear about it.

DeMourneau returns the lighter and takes a long drag, as if he knows all too well what Benjamin's talking about.

BENJAMIN (Cont'd)

I'd better head out. Egg salad gets me every time.

He throws his cigarette onto the ground beside his truck and nods to DeMourneau, "see ya".

BENJAMIN (Cont'd)

Be careful, it's a jungle in there. Only the strong survive.

DeMOURNEAU

That's why I'm out here.

DeMourneau watches him get in the driver's seat.

Benjamin reverses the truck and leaves in a hurry.

DeMourneau, now alone, glances down at the ground. We can see mud-covered pavement with clear impressions of tire treads. DeMourneau looks at them blankly for a second.

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE. PAINT ROOM - NIGHT

A tiny room used to create his art. Paintings both finished and unfinished are scattered throughout, some on the walls, others on easels. Some pieces are beautiful landscapes and wildlife, while others feature dark abstract figures.

Benjamin is pacing back and forth in the dark room. A faint lamp in the corner is the only light source. He paces back to the draped window and parts the curtains.

BENJAMIN'S P.O.V.

A lifeless green field leading to the ominous forest. There is a thin layer of fog rolling over the grass.

BACK TO SCENE

Benjamin moves away from the window and toward an old record player.

The needle descends and it begins to play. The SOUND of an early 20th century recording emanates from the speakers. The quality is poor and sporadic SKIPS and SCRATCHES are heard.

Benjamin takes a seat on a tiny wooden chair in the corner opposite the lamp. He begins to paint at an easel.

He is almost completely engulfed in darkness. His intense focus is barely visible as he dabs at the canvas.

INT. JEFFREY'S CAR. BENJAMIN'S DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Jeffrey and Lylah are in the car. They are laughing as he pulls to a stop outside Benjamin's house.

There is an awkward silence. Lylah looks him in the eye.

LYLAH

Thanks. I know it's out of your way. He's just not one for big crowds.

JEFFREY

I guess it skips a generation.

She laughs and he smiles at her with a deep gaze. Lylah opens the door to make her way out.

LYLAH

You should come over tomorrow,
we'll fix dinner for you. You
like spaghetti?

JEFFREY

Love it.

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE. PAINT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The SLAM of the car door outside causes Benjamin to stir. He stands up and removes the needle from the record, while it continues to spin.

Benjamin walks to the window and peers out to see Jeffrey's car pulling away and Lylah walking toward the house.

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE. STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

Benjamin emerges atop the staircase and looks down coldly. At the opposite end Lylah is closing the front door behind her. She still has a smile on her face.

She looks up toward Benjamin and becomes visibly concerned.

LYLAH

Are you okay? You left in such
a hurry, I didn't get a chance
to ask what's wrong.

Benjamin snaps back into reality.

BENJAMIN

Oh, yea. I'm fine. Just the
onset of a stomach virus I
think. Nothing serious.

LYLAH

Well, you'll be happy to know
Jeffrey was a true gentleman.
(surprised)
He's not as slow as I pegged
him to be.

BENJAMIN

(with a slight
smile)

That's how it starts. But
trust me, his is not a
lifestyle to be emulated. An
ex-carnie, you know?

LYLAH

But that's how he was led to
you. Like me...Minus the whole
circus thing. Besides, he
looks up to you, for more than
your professional advice.
Sometimes I think he needs you
more than me.

Lylah smiles up to her father as he remains at the top of
the stairs, and she still by the front door.

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE. LYLAH'S ROOM - NIGHT

A small makeshift bedroom with a brand new bed, headboard
and all. Beyond that there is only a nightstand and an old
dresser in the corner.

Lylah sits on the bed with books piled all around her. From
the pictures on the covers we can see they are all related
to motherhood and parenting. She is studying when Benjamin
KNOCKS on the open door and walks in.

BENJAMIN

Planning on going back to
school someday? Give your kid
a proper future?

She smiles at the thought.

LYLAH

I wish I could think that far
ahead. It's everything leading
up to that keeping me up at
night.

BENJAMIN

Look, I'm the last person to
(MORE)

BENJAMIN (Cont'd)
 be giving you advice on this.
 But it seems to me if you know
 your kid's alive, you'll
 already be off to a good start.

His attempt at a joke evokes a smile from her. Lylah shrugs her head as if to suggest it wasn't his fault.

BENJAMIN (Cont'd)
 Just follow your instinct.
 Take the good with the bad.
 And keep him away from
 people like Jeffrey.

LYLAH
 (smiling)
 First of all, we don't even
 know yet, it could be a girl.
 And I don't think anyone who
 crafts little elf figurines
 can be considered anything but
 harmless.

BENJAMIN
 When I said instinct, what I
 meant was logic.

They both smile as he leaves the room. Lylah is left to continue leafing through her many guides.

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE. BENJAMIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Benjamin sits in a chair at his desk along the bare wall.

From the side we see he is writing on a pad of paper at a feverish pace. His rapid-fire pen is moving all over the page.

He sips on a glass of whiskey intermittently between bursts of writing, too engrossed in his work to even look up.

INT. DeMOURNEAU'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - MORNING

A flurry of activity. A frying pan SIZZLES on the stove. The sound of water RUSHING is almost deafening.

INSERT: The sink basin

Blood starts to mix in with the water, swirling down the drain.

BACK TO SCENE

Adrienne is standing over the sink holding her hand that is the source of the blood. Her irritable-looking husband stands at the fridge next to the stove.

DeMOURNEAU

How many times are you gonna
make the same mistake before
equating knives with danger.

Adrienne doesn't look at him. She has a dejected expression on her face, still standing over the sink.

DeMourneau grabs some paper towels and places them next to the sink for his wife.

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)

If you were a surgeon we'd
have lost everything in
lawsuits by now.

He opens the fridge to grab a carton of milk, which allows us a look at a family photo pasted on the door: Two smiling parents, Jacob, who looks to be in his late teens, and a new edition, EVEY, who looks about twelve. She is pretty with short blond hair and a big smile.

The door closes.

ADRIENNE

(meek)

Evey wants to make the trip
to Hopewell with Jacob this
morning. I told her it
probably wasn't a good idea if
he was going to visit his
friends.

DeMourneau is leaning against the counter with a coffee in his hand.

DeMOURNEAU

Of course she should go, it's Saturday. What's she gonna do around here all day?

ADRIENNE

It's not that. I just don't know if it's a good idea for her to be hanging out with kids almost out of high school. Plus I don't think Jacob would be thrilled about her tagging along.

DeMOURNEAU

Well it's either that or he can't take the car at all. There, I just simplified his life by removing one more difficult choice for him.

DeMourneau takes a long sip of coffee.

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)

Besides, Evey can entertain him on the way with the power of song.

Jacob comes rushing past his parents.

JACOB (O.S)

Kay, bye guys, I'll talk to you later today.

He continues on his way. His father doesn't even have to look up as he sips from his coffee.

Jacob comes walking back in with a bemused look on his face.

DeMourneau fishes a set of keys from his front pocket and reaches toward Jacob, pulling his hand back at the last second.

DeMOURNEAU

Where's your passenger?

Jacob looks toward the ceiling in disappointment, then quickly devises a plan.

JACOB
I thought she slept over at
Susie's last night?

DeMourneau isn't buying it though. Jacob cracks a smile, knowing his lousy attempt at a lie has been exposed.

JACOB
(yelling through the
kitchen)
Evey, hurry the hell up!
(to DeMourneau)
Be forewarned, when you're too
old and senile to dress
yourself—I swear, the first
retirement home I see...

DeMOURNEAU
Just make sure the nurses are
cute.

A smiling Evey strolls into the room.

JACOB
(to Evey)
Finally. And you look just as
ugly as before you did
yourself up.

He smiles at Evey, but she frowns. DeMourneau acts as her bodyguard, delivering a slap to the back of Jacob's head.

EVEY
(looking up at her
dad)
Thanks dad, but I can take
care of myself. They've been
giving self-defense classes at
school.

She turns away from him and toward her brother, kicking him in the leg. Jacob bends over in pain, grabbing his shin.

EVEY
(smiling with pride)
That's called a strategic
point.

Jacob limps out of the room, his little sister in tow.

The parents watch them leave. DeMourneau looks to Adrienne with disappointment.

DeMOURNEAU
I thought I was her defense.

Adrienne stops running the water and wraps her hand in the paper towel.

ADRIENNE
You're not always going to be
around when things get tough.
Still, I can't imagine having
a self-defense class when I
was a kid. Let alone the need
for one.

DeMOURNEAU
Times, they are a changin,'
honey.

He looks up at the clock and cringes.

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)
Speaking of which...

He puts the cup down and reaches for his jacket on a chair, putting it on in a hurry.

DeMOURNEAU
(to himself)
...shit, and now I'm gonna be
late... Fuck.

DeMourneau storms out of the room in a huff. Adrienne remains at the sink, blood seeping through her makeshift bandage. She watches him go with sad eyes.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Benjamin's red truck flies down the unpaved road. It is a foggy, bleak-looking day. The sun struggles to shine through the thick blanket.

INT. BENJAMIN'S TRUCK. MOVING - DAY

A tired Benjamin moves restlessly in his seat. The truck is still dirty. It is much nicer than the old beater he used to drive, but it is as if he recreated the homely feel of the old by transferring his garbage to the new.

A sign flies by, visible through the windshield: "Hopewell. 15 km." Benjamin doesn't appear to pay any attention to it.

INT. PETRI POINT POLICE STATION. DeMOURNEAU'S OFFICE - DAY

When DeMourneau arrives in the tiny one-window room there's already a message on the machine on his desk.

DeMOURNEAU
(muttering to
himself)
Too early for you psychos.

Before he can sit down and play it there is a KNOCK at the door. Fevvers invites himself in.

FEVVERS
(condescending)
You know there's a protocol to
be followed in dealing with
people like you?

DeMourneau is rifling through the stack of papers on his desk.

DeMOURNEAU
Yea, well, when you've got a
family to look after, maybe
you'll cut me some slack.

FEVVERS
Hey, some people would call
goldfish family. And somehow I
find a way to manage both.

DeMourneau looks up at him bemused.

DeMOURNEAU
If you can flush em, they
don't constitute a family.

FEVVERS
(smiling)
Fair enough. I just wanted to
bust your balls. I fucking
hate fish.

With that he walks out of the room, having had his fun.

INT. HOPEWELL PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTION. FRONT DESK - DAY

Benjamin stands patiently at the front desk, checking in with a staff member. A FEMALE GUARD who doubles as the secretary hands him a clipboard from behind the desk.

FEMALE GUARD
If you could please fill out
these forms. It's mostly an
insurance issue.

Benjamin accepts the clipboard without even the slightest smile. He is too nervous.

He retreats to a seat a few feet behind him and begins to scribble down his information.

INT. PETRI POINT POLICE STATION. DeMOURNEAU'S OFFICE - DAY

DeMourneau is sitting at his desk working in silence. The mound of paper in front of him remains.

The phone RINGS, to his disappointment. He lets it RING a few more times before biting the bullet and taking it.

DeMOURNEAU
(into receiver)
DeMourneau here...

A look of horror flashes across his face.

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)
 ...Jesus. Adrienne, I'm on my
 way.

He SLAMS the receiver in a hurry, leaps up off his chair and rushes out of the room.

INT. HOPEWELL PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTION. CORRIDOR - DAY

A curious and nervous Benjamin is escorted by the female guard down a long, narrow corridor. It is quiet but for the loud STEPS of the guard's shoes and the JINGLE of her keys.

BENJAMIN'S P.O.V.

At the end of the hall a tall imposing man walks out of a door and waits. He is well-dressed. DR. GEORGES stands with his hands behind his back in an anticipatory manner.

A hospitable smile begins to lighten his previously intimidating appearance.

BACK TO SCENE

Benjamin and his escort have reached their destination.

DR. GEORGES
 (to Benjamin)
 Mr. Mosby, nice to meet you.

He extends a hand to Benjamin and they shake, exchanging smiles.

DR. GEORGES (Cont'd)
 Glad you could make it. We
 find that visitors always
 leave having debunked a number
 of common misconceptions.

He takes a serious tone, staring directly at Benjamin.

DR. GEORGES (Cont'd)
 Now, I'm sure you're already
 aware of Mr. Shale's
 condition. I should remind
 you, however, that his
 (MORE)

DR. GEORGES (Cont'd)
 various...manifestations, are
 part of a coping mechanism.
 Should you encounter Gary,
 Linda, Nathaniel or, god
 forbid, Brutus, just do your
 best to coax the real Clyde
 back out.

BENJAMIN
 (confused)
 How will I know who's who?

DR. GEORGES
 Body language, voice pitch,
 intonation, diction. With
 every individual—for lack of a
 better term—comes a complete
 storyline. A way of speaking
 and socializing unlike that of
 the next. Age, gender—there's
 very little that can't be
 manipulated. We attribute it
 to a traumatic childhood.
 We've made some progress
 through hypnosis but frankly,
 integration requires patience.
 There's nothing to worry
 about, though. Myself and
 Angela here will be with you
 the entire time.

(beat)
 Just keep the conversation
 casual. He can become a bit
 more unpredictable when
 certain memories are relived.

Benjamin glances over his shoulder to the short and stocky
 female guard, and back to Dr. Georges.

He nods to give them the ready signal. The group, led by
 Dr. Georges, makes its way through the door.

INT. HOPEWELL PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTION. VISITOR'S ROOM - DAY

They enter a large room with many white tables. The walls
 are various shades of off-white. It makes for a cold and

sterile environment, hardly a conduit for casual conversation.

A lone man sits up straight at one table across the room. CLYDE VINCENT SHALE has a smile on his face as he awaits a rare visit from the outside world.

His smile widens as he sees Benjamin enter the room. Benjamin's reaction is more contained. He is hesitant.

SHALE

Ben. My God, you're the last person I expected to visit me in here.

(beat)

It's been too long.

Shale gazes up at Benjamin with a nostalgic look, shaking his head in disbelief. Benjamin is standing by the table.

SHALE (Cont'd)

When they told me you were coming, I had to tell em to double check it was the right Ben.

Benjamin takes a seat now, sitting across from the excited Shale.

BENJAMIN

Well, it was only a matter of time.

(beat)

I've been doing a lot of reflecting lately and needed to get in touch with you.

SHALE

It's nice of you to have made the time.

Benjamin looks around the room with an awkward expression.

SHALE (Cont'd)

You still doing you're best impression of Van Gogh?

Benjamin looks back to the man in front of him.

BENJAMIN

Everything but the ear.

They smile at each other. It's been so long they could share stories for hours but time has also driven them apart. A long pause sits between them like an elephant.

BENJAMIN (Cont'd)

I can't help but feel like we turned on you—as a community.

Shale's expression quickly turns to one of confusion and dejection.

SHALE

It's not them. It's what you were all led to believe—what else could have been done?

Shale puts his hands to his face and begins to rub his eyes.

Dr. Georges sits in the background, his expression completely cold as he looks on.

Shale slumps back in his chair. He sits up again, now leaning over the table to have a closer conversation with Benjamin. His intensity has picked up considerably.

SHALE/GARY

Have you every felt the thrill of asserting your dominance? The adrenaline rush—like when you tower over a helpless girl and your body language is enough to make her cower in fear? She can almost smell the testosterone dripping from you.

Benjamin stares at him with confusion in his eyes.

Gary is now speaking for Shale. His mannerisms have changed from self-deprecation and weakness to confidence and assertion.

Dr. Georges remains calm in the background.

DR. GEORGES
 (stern, to Shale)
 Gary, we would like to speak
 only to Clyde. Please allow
 him his turn to talk.

SHALE/GARY
 (still looking at
 Benjamin)
 He'll have his turn when I
 see fit. As far he's
 concerned, I'm running the
 show. A flaming little pussy
 like that is lucky to get as
 much in as he does.

Shale looks back to Dr. Georges. Benjamin remains unsure of himself and tries to keep calm.

BENJAMIN
 (to Shale)
 Why do you hate Clyde so much?

Shale turns back to Benjamin with an intense stare.

SHALE/GARY
 What's admirable about a man
 who allows himself to be
 pushed around by women? He's
 disrupting the natural order
 of things. He took so much
 shit from that slut of a wife
 of his. Someone had to step in
 and break the cycle.

BENJAMIN
 What are you saying, Gary?

DR. GEORGES (O.S.)
 (to Benjamin)
 Don't play his game, Benjamin.

Still sitting down in the back of the room, Dr. Georges turns to Shale now with an authoritative manner.

DR. GEORGES (Cont'd)
Gary, we want to speak with
Clyde. You're not welcome
here.

SHALE/GARY
(turning his head
back to the doctor
in anger)
Fuck off, no one was speaking
to you, you fucking quack!

The female guard stiffens up and looks to Dr. Georges for guidance. The stone-faced doctor stands up and walks toward the two men at the table. Before he can reach them Benjamin stands up to plead his case.

BENJAMIN
Please, Dr. Georges. Let him
finish and I promise I'll
leave without a fuss. He was
a friend.

The doctor remains devoid of emotion, at least on the outside, and stares directly into Benjamin's eyes.

DR. GEORGES
(in a low voice)
I'm warning you, don't push
the issue. And he's not
your friend anymore. Never
forget that.

Dr. Georges returns to his seat at the back of the room while Benjamin sits down at the table again.

The man across from him has a devilish smirk on his face.

SHALE/GARY
(to Benjamin, soft)
Don't worry about him; he's
all talk and no action. Now
what was it you wanted to
know, friend?

Benjamin takes a deep breath.

BENJAMIN

I want you to tell me more about Clyde; about your relationship with him.

SHALE/GARY

Not much to say, really. I wear the pants in the relationship, if you want to call it that. Essentially I'm the 'S' he's the 'M'—

BENJAMIN

What about why he's in here— why you're in here.

Shale sits back in his chair and looks at Benjamin with inquisitive eyes. He's taken aback by Benjamin's forwardness.

SHALE/GARY

He's right where he oughtta be. Or so where he thinks he oughtta be.

(beat)

He didn't do it. But of course you already know that.

Benjamin leans closer to Shale, his elbows now on the table as he listens attentively.

SHALE/GARY (Cont'd)

You know him, almost as well as I do. Clyde was never capable of anything other than submission. He should have done it. He needs to know he did it, or else he'll never step out of the cycle of weakness. If I didn't tell him he was responsible, if I didn't make him see himself as a cold-blooded killer...

He leans in toward Benjamin who remains transfixed on his every word.

SHALE/GARY (Cont'd)
 Well, let's just say he'd be
 even more of a doormat than
 the man you saw earlier today.

Shale leans back from the table.

SHALE/GARY (Cont'd)
 (to the doctor,
 still looking at
 Benjamin, calm)
 I'd like to leave now. All
 these questions are making me
 hungry.

Shale stands up, Benjamin still sitting, staring with
 confusion at the man he thought he knew. Dr. Georges and
 the security guard escort Shale to the door.

At the last second Shale stops and turns to address
 Benjamin for the last time.

SHALE/GARY (Cont'd)
 I'm sorry about your friend.
 He just hasn't been himself
 lately. Too much led in the
 fish, I fear.

Shale exits with a stone-cold expression.

We see a dissatisfied Benjamin. He didn't know what he was
 looking for when he came, and now he leaves even more
 uncertain and troubled than before.

INT. HOPEWELL HOSPITAL. INTENSIVE CARE ROOM - DAY

A sullen DeMourneau and his wife stand over their young
 daughter who lies unconscious in a hospital bed.

Evey's face is swollen. She is hooked up to an IV.

A constant BEEPING sounds, in sync with her heart rate. The
 parents look on, holding each other as they try to cope.

A DOCTOR walks into the room and startles them. He motions
 for DeMourneau and his wife to come out into the hallway.

INT. HOPEWELL HOSPITAL. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Adrienne is on the brink of tears. DeMourneau is trying to put on a brave face but cracks in his façade are visible. He holds her close to try and comfort her.

DOCTOR

(in a low voice)

Mr. and Mrs. DeMourneau...I'm terribly sorry to have to inform you—Jacob didn't make it.

The two parents hug each other in despair, Adrienne not holding back any longer with her tears. Her husband holds her head to his chest in an attempt to calm her, but he knows it's futile.

DOCTOR (Cont'd)

I'm afraid the head trauma was just too much to overcome and he succumbed to his injuries on the operating table minutes ago.

(beat)

Please accept my condolences.

DeMourneau turns his head back toward the doctor.

DeMOURNEAU

(fearful)

What about Evey? Is she gonna make it?

DOCTOR

It's difficult to say at this point, but rest assured we're doing everything we can—

DeMOURNEAU

(angry)

What does that mean? You'll understand it's difficult to rest assured when so much is up in the air.

DOCTOR

Well, Mr. DeMourneau, she too suffered a head injury. I would list her chance of survival as fair. But people rarely walk away from such horrific car accidents without long-term debilitating effects. In Evey's case, there's a large risk of permanent damage and a lifetime of severely impaired cognitive functioning. At this point I often recommend that family and friends try to emit only a positive, loving energy. If not for her benefit then for yours.

He walks away calmly like he's done it before, while DeMourneau turns back to Adrienne.

INT. HOPEWELL HOSPITAL. HALLWAY - DAY

The exhausted and distraught parents wait outside their daughter's room later that afternoon. Adrienne looks completely lost as she sits slouched staring into space. DeMourneau is sitting hunched over in an uncomfortable-looking position.

DeMourneau stands up slowly, Adrienne not even noticing him as she stares in the opposite direction.

DeMOURNEAU

(soft)

I have to go make a phone call downstairs. I'll be right back.

Adrienne is despondent, barely turning to look at him as he walks away.

INT. HOPEWELL HOSPITAL. FRONT ENTRANCEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

DeMourneau walks through the busy front entrance with his head down. People are rushing all around him, but he doesn't seem to notice or care.

He reaches a private area just off from the main waiting room. He inserts a series of coins into a payphone and begins to dial.

DeMourneau looks around at the sad faces slumped in chairs just meters away, then turns away looking down a long corridor as someone answers on the other end of the line.

DeMOURNEAU
(into receiver)
Yes, this is detective
DeMourneau with the Bingham
Regional Police based in Petri
Point. Could I speak with the
officer who responded to the
car accident earlier this
morning?

While DeMourneau waits to be connected, he glances over again at the solemn faces in the waiting room.

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)
(looking at the
floor, into
receiver)
Hi, yeah, this is Detective
DeMourneau. I understand you
were first on the scene this
morning?

DeMourneau puts his fingers to his face and massages his forehead.

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)
Yes. So far people have been
sketchy on the details. I was
wondering what you've found
out so far.

As he listens DeMourneau takes a small notepad out of his shirt pocket and a pen from his pants pocket. He begins to scribble.

Something said on the other end causes a surprised and frustrated look to come to his face.

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)
 Are you sure? No signs of
 another vehicle at all? No
 paint, no skid marks from
 oncoming traffic?

His face relaxes but the response is not what he hoped for.

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)
 No, no. Thanks. When you find
 anything else please just give
 me a call. I'm over at the
 hospital here in town.

DeMourneau hangs up slowly in disappointment.

INT. JIFFY'S DINER - DAY

It is fairly busy this late in the afternoon. The counter is full of people sipping coffee, reading the newspaper, and sampling various low-quality delicacies.

Off to the side in a booth are Jeffrey and Lylah. They are sitting down to a meal, smiling and having a good time.

Lylah takes a sip from her drink, trying not to laugh in the process.

LYLAH
 To be honest, I've never
 understood the allure of the
 circus. I mean, okay, to do
 what you do requires a lot of
 talent and practice. But a
 man with a tail hardly seems
 like a blessing-

JEFFREY
 (enthusiastic)
 That's the thing of it; people
 don't come to these places to
 heap praise on the performers-
 we were never idolized. It's a
 form of therapy, really.
 People come to feel better
 about themselves. Nothing says
 (MORE)

JEFFREY (Cont'd)
'don't worry, be happy' quite
like comparing yourself to a
woman with a foot-long beard,
or an octopus-man.

He takes a sip of coffee, then relaxes.

JEFFREY (Cont'd)
Suddenly a pimple here or
there doesn't seem so bad. If
nothing else we put things in
perspective.

She laughs. Jeffrey stares at her, admiring her beautiful
smile.

LYLAH
And you gave it all up for
this. Carving wood probably
doesn't provide the same kind
of thrill.

JEFFREY
(smirking)
Only the fear of missing.
Somehow I had fewer miscues
with fire.

Jeffrey puts down his cup and rolls up his sleeve to reveal
his hand.

He holds it out to Lylah and we see a web of scars.

Lylah is both disgusted and intrigued. She grabs his hand
to examine it closer.

JEFFREY (Cont'd)
Sometimes I get a little too
into it, ya know.

While she looks it over we see Jeffrey's expression. He
stares at her with a lustful look.

Lylah catches him though and she makes an awkward face.
Jeffrey removes his hand and directs his gaze down to his
plate.

He is embarrassed, and Lylah a bit unsettled.

JEFFREY (Cont'd)

So how's your dad been doing?
I don't see him so much
anymore. Almost like he's
avoiding me. More than usual.

He laughs an awkward laugh. Lylah laughs too in an effort to comfort him.

LYLAH

He's been a bit strange
lately. But then, I haven't
known him for long—this could
be about as "normal"

(makes quotation
hand signs)

as he gets.

(beat)

I hardly see him paint
anymore. Frankly, I'm not sure
how he manages to get by at
all. I feel bad to have
burdened him like that, but—

JEFFREY

But you had nowhere else to
Go. And he's better off with
you. He's more stable—from
what I can tell. It's always
a guessing game with him
though. And you know, you're
always welcome to stay with
me. If you're ever
uncomfortable.

He's rambling now, making Lylah uncomfortable himself.

JEFFREY (Cont'd)

It's not much, but I've got—

LYLAH

(smiling)

I appreciate that, but it's

(MORE)

LYLAH (Cont'd)
not necessary. He's just a bit
unpredictable, is all.

(beat)
Would you mind dropping me off
at home now? I think I need to
lie down for a while.

JEFFREY
(worried)
Are you okay?

LYLAH
Oh yea, just feel a bit queasy
from time to time. Especially
around meals.

Jeffrey reaches into his pocket for his wallet and plants a
group of bills down in a hurry.

LYLAH (Cont'd)
Thanks so much. You're too
good to me, Jeffrey.

He helps Lylah get out of her seat.

JEFFREY
Anything to help a lady in
distress.

LYLAH
Discomfort, maybe. But I'm
no helpless damsel.

Jeffrey walks her out.

He throws a wave to the WAITRESS behind the counter, before
opening the door for Lylah.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE. WAITING ROOM - DAY

Benjamin waits for his doctor back in Petri Point. The room
is large with dark tacky wallpaper. It is empty besides the
SECRETARY at the desk. She has her head buried in work.

Benjamin is tense, fiddling his fingers as he sits up
straight in the rigid chair.

He checks the clock hanging above the secretary's desk.

DR. MANFRED finally sticks his head around the corner to call him back.

DR. MANFRED
Benjamin, come on back please.

Benjamin shoots up from his seat and walks to the back.

The secretary flashes an unenthusiastic glance after him as if she forgot he was there, and then quickly reverts back to her work.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The room has all the features of a typical doctor's office: diagrams on the wall, various medial supplies scattered about—an uncomfortable sterile environment.

Dr. Manfred enters first. He is in his sixties, short with glasses and white hair.

He motions for Benjamin to take a seat once he makes it in. He pulls a chair up to Dr. Manfred who sits on a stool.

DR. MANFRED
How have you been doing,
Benjamin? Keeping up with your
medication?

BENJAMIN
Well, Karl, that's what I was
hoping to be able to talk to
you about.

Benjamin takes his time and collects his thoughts.

BENJAMIN (Cont'd)
I'm in a new place now—
mentally, emotionally. I think
it's time we considered
discontinuing the medication.
I'd like to go cold turkey, as
of today. Start anew.

Dr. Manfred is visibly surprised and hesitant to grant him his wish. He turns away, thinking it over while he tries to put things as delicately as he can for Benjamin.

DR. MANFRED

Listen, Benjamin...there's nothing I'd love more than to close the book on that chapter of your life, especially since I consider you a friend. But professionally, I would be lying if I said I thought now would be the best time.

Dr. Manfred looks almost apologetic. He is not at all surprised to see Benjamin's disappointed reaction.

BENJAMIN

But how will we know? If we don't at least give it a shot on a trial basis this could go on forever.

Benjamin is becoming more and more agitated. Dr. Manfred is trying to stay calm but his cool exterior is only a façade.

BENJAMIN (Cont'd)

Things are much better than when I first came in here asking for your help. My panic attacks are less frequent, and it takes a hell of a lot more than it used to to trigger them.

DR. MANFRED

But Benjamin, we both know it's more complicated than that. It was never just one thing with you. Your anxiety, your unpredictable rage, your depression—they're ingredients for a much more toxic cocktail. To discontinue everything like that would be a mistake. It could nullify any progress you've made.

He takes a deep breath before continuing to address Benjamin. The doctor is calmer now.

DR. MANFRED (Cont'd)

If you want to talk about gradually decreasing dosage, on a trial basis, than I'll gladly listen-

Benjamin stands up in a rage now.

BENJAMIN

That's not good enough! It's been fifteen damn years. When's this shit gonna end, Karl?... Huh?

Dr. Manfred looks down, unwilling to challenge him further. Benjamin is still standing over him, tense.

Finally, Benjamin waves a dismissive hand toward his doctor of over thirty years. He storms out of the office, while Dr. Manfred sits nervously in his chair.

INT. JEFFREY'S CAR. MOVING - DAY

The interior of Jeffrey's small car is fairly neat, but for a few items strewn along the back seat.

Lylah is looking out the window to her right, watching the scenery as they drive out of the small downtown core to Benjamin's house.

JEFFREY

So, do you know yet—boy or a girl?

LYLAH

No, but I should find out when I go to the doctor's next week. At this point I'll be happy to have a baby not destined for the circus. No offense.

She smiles, looking over to him. Jeffrey smiles but keeps his eyes on the road.

JEFFREY

Well, what are you thinking as far as names? Either way.

He looks over to Lylah again, this time with a more serious face.

JEFFREY (Cont'd)

Just nothing too hip; like Rory or Dillon. Or Madison.

He cringes at the thought. She laughs.

LYLAH

Don't worry, I was thinking something along the lines of Jeremiah, or Erma. You know, something timeless.

Jeffrey looks over again. He can't tell whether she's joking and she's not willing to show her cards. She just meets his glance and says nothing.

He smiles, shaking his head in disbelief as he reverts his eyes to the road.

Lylah begins to feel her stomach.

EXT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Jeffrey's car pulls into Benjamin's driveway on the left.

The sky is still bright, but it is thinking of turning into evening. There is a pink hue to it.

EXT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Benjamin's truck is not there. The property is dead quiet.

Jeffrey's car pulls to a stop in front of the house.

INT. JEFFREY'S CAR. STATIONARY - CONTINUOUS

Jeffrey puts the car in park and turns his attention to Lylah. He looks at her with a pleasant smile.

She smiles back, but is ready to leave.

LYLAH

Well, thanks again Jeffrey.
It's nice to get out every
now and then, even if it's
just the diner.

The smile begins to fade from her face as she turns to open the door and leave.

Jeffrey puts a soft hand on her shoulder, which causes her to turn toward him in confusion.

He leans in to kiss her, but she just backs away.

LYLAH (Cont'd)

Jeffrey, I don't think this is
a good idea.

JEFFREY

(calm)
Don't worry about that. Just
go with it.

He continues in again but this time she pushes him away.

Jeffrey doesn't like this. He loses his cool and tries to fondle her aggressively, while she flails her arms trying to repel him.

LYLAH

What the fuck are you doing?
Stop it!

The struggle continues for a few seconds, Jeffrey still trying to grab her chest.

Finally Lylah is able to break free and punch him in the face.

His hands rush to his face and we see blood immediately begin to drip from his nose. As he tends to his wound Lylah opens the door and exits the car as fast as she can, still cognizant of her stomach.

EXT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lylah speed walks from the car toward the house without looking back.

Jeffrey gets out of the car and pursues her.

JEFFREY
(yelling)
Fucking tease! Go cry! I would
have been there for you. Not
like that fucking prick who
knocks you up and runs.

As he finishes his sentence Lylah has already entered the house. She SLAMS the door.

Jeffrey continues toward the house. He reaches the steps and stops just shy of the door. He SLAMS it once with his hand, his nose still dripping blood.

JEFFREY (Cont'd)
(through the door)
Just watch yourself, slut!
You're not fooling anyone.

The sound of an engine RUMBLES in the near distance. Jeffrey turns to see Benjamin pulling up to the house in his truck.

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sitting with her back to the door, Lylah begins to cry, holding her head in her hands.

The house is completely silent; no one there to comfort her. All the lights are off and only patches of sunlight permeate through the drapes.

As she continues to cry, she moves her hands to her stomach again. Feeling it seems to calm her, if only slightly.

EXT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Benjamin stops next to Jeffrey's car and gets out. He has a suspicious look as he approaches Jeffrey, who is now walking back toward his car.

They stop to look at each other.

JEFFREY

(scared, smiling)
Benjamin, what's up? Just dropping Lylah off.

BENJAMIN

(emotionless)
She always thank you that way?

He looks to Jeffrey's bloody nose. Jeffrey puts his hand up to his face, picking up some blood.

Benjamin walks toward the house in a hurry. Jeffrey immediately becomes fearful. He follows him.

JEFFREY

(speed-walking,
nervous)
Benjamin, it's not what you think.

Benjamin reaches the front door and tries to open it, but it's locked.

BENJAMIN

(through the door)
Lylah, it's me. Open up.

Jeffrey is still behind. The door opens slowly, causing him to run back to his car.

Benjamin watches him then turns back to the door, looking at a crying Lylah.

That is all he needs to see. Benjamin runs after Jeffrey, who is getting into his car.

Benjamin reaches through the open driver's side window and PUNCHES Jeffrey hard in the side of the face. It is partially blocked but Jeffrey is still stunned.

Benjamin grabs at the handle, SWINGING the door open. Jeffrey is shielding himself with his hands. Benjamin grabs hold of him though, and pulls him through the door, throwing him onto the gravel.

Jeffrey is still shielding his face, rolling around helplessly.

JEFFREY

(yelling)

No, don't, Benjamin. It
was a mistake!

Benjamin takes no pity on him. Instead he begins to pummel him hard, struggling to make contact with him through his frantic arms.

Lylah looks on from the front steps. She is caught between fear and hate, not sure what to hope for.

Finally she can bear to look on no more, and she turns teary-eyed to go back into the house.

Benjamin is done punching Jeffrey now. He stands over his victim with a cold look.

He kicks Jeffrey hard in the midsection and walks away toward the house.

Jeffrey is writhing in pain on the dirty ground, beaten and bloodied.

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Benjamin stands in the doorway, breathing heavily.

Lylah walks toward him from the kitchen. She looks down in shame with a strong sense of vulnerability.

Benjamin just stares at her refusing to feel sorry for her.

BENJAMIN

I told you. I said he's shady,
but you're too damn naive.
There's a lot more to people
than what they look like, or
the garbage they spew to get
what they want. And if you
can't see past that—

He calms down, beginning to look more sympathetic now.
Lylah looks up with tears in her eyes.

BENJAMIN (Cont'd)

Well, I don't know how you're
going to be able to look after
that kid and yourself in this
world.

(beat)

It's not black and white.
Things aren't that simple.

She stares at the ground, letting the message sink in.
There is a cold distance between them.

INT. HOSPITAL. INTENSIVE CARE ROOM - NIGHT

DeMourneau sits slouched in a chair at his daughter's
bedside. Adrienne is sleeping in a chair next to him.

He gazes over at Evey with sad eyes while he fiddles with
his wallet in his hands.

DeMourneau opens it up to take out a picture.

DeMOURNEAU'S P.O.V.

A family photo taken recently. Evey looks slightly younger,
Jacob too. DeMourneau has Jacob in a playful headlock, but
he doesn't seem to mind.

BACK TO SCENE

A NURSE sticks her head into the room and points at her
watch. DeMourneau acknowledges this with a nod and gently
pokes Adrienne to wake her.

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE. BENJAMIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Benjamin sits at his desk writing away on his notepad. Next to him is a half-full glass of whiskey.

He sips on it periodically between spurts of scribbling.

On his bed lies his trusty canine companion Satchel. He looks over to Benjamin with soulful eyes, his ears spread out beside him.

The door is closed but a RUSTLING on the other side causes Satchel to stir.

He follows his nose off the bed and over to the door.

He howls to get his master's attention.

Benjamin walks over to the door and opens it to reveal Lylah on the other side. She is standing there, caught off guard by being discovered.

The expression on her face is one of surprise and sorrow.

BENJAMIN
(confused)
Lylah? What's wrong?

She looks down, trying to compose herself and think of a response.

LYLAH
Sorry, I was just passing by,
wondering what you're up to. I
didn't mean to bother you.

Benjamin watches her as she tries to conceal tears.

He stays there momentarily in limbo, then opens up his arms to embrace her.

They meet, hugging with passion. She doesn't have to say anything. An inherent paternal instinct brings him closer to her than he's ever been.

Tears start to develop in his eyes too, as he holds her head to his chest in a fatherly embrace.

BENJAMIN

Stay strong.

(beat)

For me.

He kisses her on the head as he continues to hold her close.

Satchel looks on from below, anxious for some affection of his own.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

EXT. DeMOURNEAU'S HOUSE - NIGHT

"Two Months Later"

The house is dark but for a dimly-lit room on the first floor. The leaves scattered all over the front lawn suggest the arrival of autumn.

INT. DeMOURNEAU'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - NIGHT

DeMourneau is sitting at the table with his back to Adrienne, who stands in the doorway. They both look stressed.

ADRIENNE

You just don't get it, Jim.

(yelling)

She's not waking up! It's been months.

He turns with a stone-cold expression to face his wife.

DeMOURNEAU

Are you a fucking doctor? No.
You barely qualify as a nurse.
The fact is we don't know, the
doctors don't even know. But
that doesn't mean anything.

DeMourneau stands up and walks to Adrienne.

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)

The only thing that matters is knowing that she can wake up— that she can come back to a family that never gave up on her.

ADRIENNE

Who are you to say I'm giving up, you son of a bitch? This is about being realistic. I can't keep putting myself through this; thinking that every day could be the day. It's too much. I can't.

(crying)

You heard what they said. She'll never be the same, anyways.

DeMourneau is infuriated. He grabs her arm forcefully.

DeMOURNEAU

Don't say that! She'll always be our daughter, just like Jacob will always be our son.

She rips her arm away from him.

ADRIENNE

(hysterical)

Stop it! You're talking like he's still here. He's gone!

Adrienne leans on the wall by the door to support her. Her eyes widen; she has hit the breaking point.

ADRIENNE (Cont'd)

(calm)

I'm calling my brother to pick me up. I have to get out of here, tonight.

They stare at each other. DeMourneau is speechless but doesn't look surprised.

He watches his wife leave the room.

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A dark, silent house. The living room, kitchen and front entrance—all devoid of activity. Everyone is asleep.

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE. BENJAMIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Benjamin lies deep in sleep in his bed.

A THUD outside causes him to wake. He sits up in his bed and makes his way to the window with a look of suspicion.

He looks through the window.

BENJAMIN'S P.O.V.

A dark car sits outside in the driveway.

BACK TO SCENE

Benjamin backs away from the window and grabs a pair of pants from the end of his bed. He puts them on in a hurry.

He reaches under his bed where he pulls out a shotgun.

From his nearby dresser Benjamin retrieves a handful of bullets and loads his gun, putting the others in his pants pocket.

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE. FRONT ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Up the stairs there is complete darkness. We can barely see Benjamin as he creeps down the steps.

He stops in front of the door, trying to adjust his eyes to the lack of light.

Benjamin takes a deep breath and gathers himself before slowly turning the handle.

EXT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The front door of the house begins to creep open.

There are no signs of life outside.

The shotgun is the first to appear through the doorway, followed closely by Benjamin.

He shuts the door with care and stops to look around.

As Benjamin creeps toward the car just in front of him he is still looking around in every direction. So far nothing has caught his attention.

He points his gun at the car but can't see inside because of its tinted windows.

He reaches for the driver's side door and begins to open it with nervous tension when he hears a CLANG coming from his left.

His attention is immediately redirected toward the shed. It is partly obscured by a large oak tree.

Benjamin proceeds with caution. The door of the tiny wooden shed is open. It stands about twenty feet away from Benjamin and the car.

As he nears the dark shed, something else catches his attention. He looks up toward the forest.

BENJAMIN'S P.O.V.

A stranger standing along the forest tree-line well off in the distance. It is too far to make out the details, but there is something unsettling about his distorted facial features.

He is staring back at us, unmoving.

BACK TO SCENE

Benjamin stares at the stranger momentarily, a mix of emotions.

More RATTILING from the shed snaps Benjamin out of the trance. He continues toward the source of the noise, becoming more and more anxious.

The shed is dark inside, but we can hear movement and whispering voices.

INTRUDER #1 (O.S.)
SHHH! Shut the fuck up. Let's
hurry up and get out of here.

INTRUDER #2 (O.S.)
Yea, just a sec. Almost got em
all.

Benjamin is now right outside the shed. The intruders are still unaware of his presence.

Benjamin raises his arms to a shooting position, but the gun shakes from side-to-side in his unsteady hands.

He stands there for a second trying to calm himself.

BENJAMIN
(yelling toward the
shed)
All right, on three I want you
to slowly get the fuck out of
my shed.
(beat)
One...two...three.

Right on cue TWO TEENAGE BOYS walk out.

When they see Benjamin they raise their hands above their heads in a flash, caught off guard by the gun.

TEENAGE BOY #1
Okay, man. Don't worry. It was
just a few paintings.

Benjamin doesn't respond. He's too busy thinking things over, trying to take control of the situation.

He begins to see the disproportionate nature of his response.

Benjamin looks back toward the forest, sweat beading on his forehead.

BENJAMIN'S P.O.V.

The strange-looking man with ghoulish facial features is still standing and staring.

The man turns and retreats slowly back to the forest.

BACK TO SCENE

Benjamin is breathing heavily, but trying not to show weakness. He shifts his attention back to the intruders.

Benjamin's shaking gun is still pointed at the two boys with their hands up.

A sudden SLAM from behind causes Benjamin to turn and quickly focus his gun on a frightened BOY coming from the car. As he is doing this the boy has his hands in his pockets and begins to reach into the air.

Before the boy can get his hands all the way out a deafening BANG echoes through the still night air.

We see Benjamin's reaction in slow-motion. He is immediately terrified.

Back to the boy whose lifeless body is in the process of crumbling to the ground in an awkward position.

Blood rushes from his torso.

SCREAMS emanate from the background as Benjamin drops the gun and falls to his knees in shock. His eyes are wide in disbelief.

TEENAGER #1 (O.S.)

Holy fuck!

(beat)

Oh my god!

A terrified Lylah rushes out of the house, visibly further along in her pregnancy than the last time we saw her.

She runs barefoot through the grass and gravel in her nightgown.

She stands behind Benjamin, looking over his shoulder with a hand to her mouth in utter shock.

LYLAH

Oh no! Jesus, no.

While Lylah is struggling to stay on her feet, Benjamin snaps back to reality and jumps to his feet.

He runs into the house without saying anything.

Lylah is still in shock.

Seconds later Benjamin reemerges with a handful of papers and his keys.

He opens the door of his truck in the driveway and pauses for a brief moment. Lylah is crying.

BENJAMIN
 (frantic, to
 Lylah)
 I'm so sorry, honey. Please
 forgive me.

Benjamin loads himself into the truck in a hurry.

He speeds out of the driveway and his daughter's life in an instant.

INT. DeMOURNEAU'S HOUSE. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The RING of the phone next to the bed wakes DeMourneau.

He reaches for it, rolling over disoriented.

DeMOURNEAU
 (into receiver)
 Hello?

POLICE OFFICER (V.O.)
 Yea, Jimmy, we got a dead kid
 at Mosby's place over on Quinn
 Side-road. When our guys got
 there he was gone, heading
 north according to witnesses.
 Now, we put out a call to the
 force in the next town, but we
 need our best people on this.

DeMourneau takes a second to process the information, still groggy.

DeMOURNEAU
(into receiver)
Gimme ten minutes.

He gets out of bed and turns on the lamp.

As he roots around in the closet to get dressed, we see a framed photo of his two kids. The bed is empty.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

A straight stretch of highway in the middle of the night. Still somewhat isolated, but signs of civilization are visible: a motel, a gas station.

Benjamin's truck flies past going well over the speed limit.

INT. BENJAMIN'S TRUCK. MOVING - NIGHT

A pair of nervous eyes consults the rearview mirror. The headlights of the next closest vehicle are almost a mile behind.

It is quiet inside but for Benjamin's HEAVY BREATHING.

BENJAMIN'S P.O.V.

He is approaching another town. A sign "McFadden Township - Pop. 45,000," comes into view.

A thick constellation of lights and activity is visible in the distance.

BACK TO SCENE

Benjamin's intense eyes meet the rearview mirror once more.

EXT. McFADDEN SHOPPING CENTRE - NIGHT

Benjamin's red truck pulls into the parking lot of the local mall. It is nearly deserted with only a few cars and a pair of transport-truck containers.

He drives over to one of the big white containers and parks behind it, out of sight from the main road.

INT. BENJAMIN'S TRUCK. STATIONARY - CONTINUOUS

Benjamin sits in silence momentarily. His breathing is still erratic.

He rests his head on the steering-wheel.

Benjamin's breathing gradually calms.

He reclines the seat as far as it can go and lies awkwardly in his makeshift bed, facing the passenger's side.

His eyes are wide open, staring blankly through the window. It will be difficult to sleep; the adrenaline is still rushing through him.

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lylah is pacing back and forth in the living room. She is trying to figure out her next move. Flashing lights are visible through the drawn curtains.

Finally she bites the bullet and picks up the phone.

There is a long time between the dialing and a response on the other end.

LYLAH
 (frantic, into
 receiver)
 Mom!? It's Lylah. I need
 your help. Benjamin's on the
 run; there was an incident and
 the police are after him-

She puts a hand to her head trying to make sense of everything.

LYLAH (Cont'd)
 Please, you have to do
 something. Doesn't dad know
 some cops? They could make
 sure he stays safe-

She is disappointed at the response, SLAMMING the phone in frustration.

Lylah walks toward the window and peaks out through the curtains.

An ambulance and a police car are parked outside with their lights on. Lylah's concerned reflection is visible in the window.

INT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR. MOVING - NIGHT

Fevvers is driving the car. DeMourneau sits slouched in the passenger seat.

The interior is dark, but for a few lights from the dashboard. It is pitch black outside.

Fevvers looks over to his partner.

FEVVERS
(excited)

What's the matter, Jimmy?
Pursuing a suspect just
doesn't do it for you anymore?

He redirects his attention to the road. DeMourneau keeps looking ahead. He produces a slight smile, never averting his eyes.

DeMOURNEAU
(unenthused)

We both know he'll be out of
our jurisdiction by the time
we could catch up to him.

DeMourneau pauses to take a much-needed sip of coffee from a travel mug.

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)
But I suppose when you've got
some experience under your
belt, certain things just lose
their appeal. I'd trade in a
bloody stand-off for a by-the-
book take down any day.

His partner looks over at him, concerned.

FEVVERS

Jesus, Jim, we gotta light a fire under your ass. I'm thinking it would be in your best interest for this guy to be a gun-toting psycho, committed to sticking it out till the end.

DeMOURNEAU

You know, it takes a special kinda maniac to admit that.

Fevvers looks back to the road. His expression becomes serious.

He looks over to DeMourneau again.

FEVVERS

She can beat this thing, ya know.

DeMOURNEAU

(looking ahead)

I know that.

(turning to Fevvers)

It's her I'm worried about.

DeMourneau returns his gaze to the road and takes another sip of coffee.

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)

How many units we got on this anyway?

FEVVERS

I don't know but I've been assured we're casting a pretty wide net. We're part of the cavalry, or so I like to think.

DeMOURNEAU

(sheepish)

You're no John Wayne, kid.

Fevvers looks over with a wide smile.

FEVVERS
Giddy-up, big boy.

DeMourneau shakes his head smiling. He takes another sip of coffee. It could be a long night.

DeMOURNEAU
If John Wayne ever said that,
they'd a fucked him up pretty
good.

EXT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lylah sits on the front steps. She has just been questioned by a FEMALE POLICE OFFICER, who is finishing up the interview.

FEMALE POLICE OFFICER
(consoling)
I want you to know we're going
to do everything possible to
put an end to this in a
peaceful manner. You have our
word.

Lylah looks up at her with teary eyes and nods "thanks."

FEMALE POLICE OFFICER (Cont'd)
(soft)
I'm afraid though, we'll have
to ask you into the station
soon. Standard procedure,
unfortunately.

The officer turns and leaves with her notepad and an empathetic look.

Lylah is completely alone.

INT. BENJAMIN'S TRUCK. STATIONARY - DAWN

The sky is still dark, but at least the sun is thinking of rising in the early hours of the morning.

Benjamin stirs in his truck.

He opens his eyes and sits up with the same blank expression.

It is completely quiet as he looks around out the window.

BENJAMIN'S P.O.V.

A lone hatchback in the middle of the parking-lot.

BACK TO SCENE

Benjamin gathers a few things from his truck: a stack of paper, his wallet, and a crowbar on the floor behind the passenger seat.

He exits quickly and says goodbye to his truck without looking back.

EXT. McFADDEN SHOPPING CENTRE - CONTINUOUS

Outside we follow him to the black hatchback.

No one else is in a hundred-meter radius.

INT. HATCHBACK. STATIONARY - MOMENTS LATER

From inside the car we see Benjamin glance inside, and look around to make sure no one's watching.

He takes the crow bar and smashes the window in as carefully and quietly as one could do.

Benjamin reaches in to unlock the door, throws his stuff down on the passenger's seat and sits down.

It would be too lucky to find a set of spare keys; he has to hotwire it. Benjamin puts his mechanical skills to good use and gets the car to start after crossing the wires.

He takes a second to collect himself and decide his next move.

Benjamin puts it into gear.

EXT. HIGHWAY. SWEET DREAMS MOTEL - MORNING

DeMourneau and Fevvers approach the office of a seedy motel located just off the highway. Cars are WHIZZING by periodically in the background.

It is very early in the morning. The air is cool, but it looks as though it'll be a warm day.

DeMourneau
(walking)
So what do you think—is this
the needle?

FEVVERS
Looks fit for a scumbag.
Report says he went north,
we're going north.

Fevvers opens the office door for DeMourneau and the two proceed inside.

INT. SWEET DREAMS MOTEL. MANAGER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

DeMourneau makes it to the front desk first. The office is crummy and cramped. Smoke stains are visible on the white ceiling. To say the décor is outdated would be an understatement.

DeMourneau waits at the desk, his partner just behind.

FEVVERS
(looking around in
awe)
Motherfucker, I thought my
wife had bad taste.

Before he can finish taking it all in, a thin young man in his early thirties pops up from behind the desk. His name tag says "DAGOBERT." He has greasy, shoulder-length white hair that contradicts his otherwise youthful appearance.

DeMourneau is caught off guard and reaches for his gun—false alarm.

The man behind the desk has a sour expression.

DAGOBERT

(to Fevvers)

I'll have you know every item
in here is practically an
antique. This stuff is worth a
fortune on the market.

DeMOURNEAU

Well we ain't buying, so save
your bullshit for the treasure
hunters.

DeMourneau pulls a photograph out of his pocket to show the
man.

DAGOBERT'S P.O.V.

Benjamin is standing next to one of his paintings at the
gallery, a rare wide smile. It is an old picture.

BACK TO SCENE

Dagobert studies it closely.

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)

We need to know if you've seen
him. Most likely driving a red
pickup. Would probably have
paid in cash, maybe only
stayed a few hours.

DAGOBERT

For a police officer you seem
to do a lot of guess work.

FEVVERS

(sly, from behind)

Who says we're police?

Dagobert looks confused.

DeMourneau reaches into his jacket pocket to reveal a
badge.

He remains focused on the man behind the desk.

DAGOBERT

Well, I'm sorry guys, I can't say that I've seen him. We don't get so many guests; I'm sure I'd remember.

A disappointed DeMourneau takes the photo from him. He fishes a card from his wallet and throws it on the desk

DeMOURNEAU

If you do see anything though...

DAGOBERT

(smiling)

No worries, cowboy. You'll be the first to know.

DeMourneau turns to leave, while Fevvers nods "goodbye," tipping an imaginary cowboy hat.

EXT. HIGHWAY. SWEET DREAMS MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

It's a bit brighter and warmer now. The two detectives walk out together, sensing an uphill battle ahead.

DeMourneau turns to address his partner, so they are parallel to the motel and the road.

DeMOURNEAU

If we had any reason to believe he's been by here, that guy might seem pretty damn suspicious. Lucky for him I think he's just naturally fucked up.

FEVVERS

He's delusional. That stuff was one step below a rummage sale.

They begin to make their way to the car, walking parallel to the motel and the road.

The highway is quieter now, until a single black hatchback WHIPS past. It arouses no suspicion from the cops.

DeMOURNEAU
 There's gotta be a better way
 to go about this.

They reach the car and get in.

INT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR. STATIONARY - CONTINUOUS

DeMourneau gets the radio out.

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)
 (into radio)
 Dispatch, this is unit 0880.
 Any leads on our suspect yet?
 We're kinda in the dark here.

He lowers the radio and focuses all his attention on the response.

DISPATCH (V.O.)
 Unit 0880, we've just got word
 of an abandoned red pickup
 about twenty minutes southwest
 of your location. Registered
 to the suspect.

DeMourneau looks over to his partner, his interest piqued.

DeMOURNEAU
 (into radio)
 Any reports of a stolen
 vehicle being logged in the
 area—within the last few
 hours?

DISPATCH (O.S.)
 That's a negative. Will update
 accordingly.

DeMourneau places the radio back on the dash.

FEVVERS
 What do you make of it? We've
 gotta assume he's coming this
 way.

DeMOURNEAU

He's close, but we're at a major artery. We need to cut off all his options.

DeMourneau pulls out a map and spreads it out over the dash.

He points at the map for Fevvers to see. He circles their location with a pen.

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)

(looking down at the map)

I'm thinking we send out an APB to the blue in these three locales.

We can see a close-up of the map. He points with his pen to "Hawthorne" to the east, "Villibergh" to the west and "Beauporte" to the north of McFadden.

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)

Get some extra bodies to be a filter for all potential entrances into these three towns. If he's trying to get into any of them by car, we can grab him. If we don't, it'll allow us to bring in more reinforcements and squeeze him.

FEVVERS

And if he tries to bus it, or sneak in some other way?

DeMourneau looks up from the map and directs his attention to Fevvers.

DeMOURNEAU

Put out an alert to all bus depots, train stations—track his debit and credit cards.

(beat)

That's the only good thing

(MORE)

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)
about this goddamned technical
revolution: can't stay off the
grid for too long.

EXT. CORALEE CONSERVATION AREA. SOUTH ENTRANCE - DAY

Just off a main road we see the black hatchback make its
way toward us over a dirt and grass road.

It is driven to a throng of trees and bushes, and lodged
into it as much as possible. Only the driver's side door is
unprotected.

Benjamin gets out, collects his things once more—minus the
crowbar—and begins to jog toward a rough dirt trail.

INT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR. MOVING - DAY

DeMourneau and Fevvers continue to drive along, not quite
sure what they're looking for. They are excited to hear a
CRACKLING emanating from the dash.

DISPATCH (V.O.)
Unit 0880, this is Dispatch.
Come in Unit 0880.

DeMourneau grabs at the radio with enthusiasm.

DeMOURNEAU
(into radio)
This is 0880, go ahead.

DISPATCH (V.O.)
We've got a report of a stolen
96 Civic black hatchback from
the shopping centre parking
lot where we found suspect's
car. License plate on the
hatchback: KM5 7JT.

DeMOURNEAU
Roger that, Dispatch. We're on
the lookout.

DeMourneau replaces the radio and hurriedly reaches into his suit-jacket pocket to retrieve a notebook. He scribbles down the information.

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)
(writing, looking
down)
Hear that, our guy's traded in
his gas-guzzler for a tree-
hugger.

FEVVERS
(smiling)
Yea, he's either incredibly
smart or he's got horseshoes
up his ass. How many of those
little fucker go-karts you see
on the road? We'd have a better
chance with an SUV.

EXT. CORALEE CONSERVATION AREA. TRAIL - DAY

A winding nature trail enclosed by thick, green brush on both sides. The sound of BUZZING bugs and CHIRPING birds is all around.

Benjamin is hiking along the trail, looking for somewhere to go.

Everything looks the same though--no paths leading to an unoccupied nook. The brush is too thick to travel down into without a passageway.

He begins to hear RUSHING WATER in the distance.

Benjamin picks up his pace.

He is practically running now.

He finally comes to a stop and looks on at the sight in front of him.

BENJAMIN'S P.O.V.

A YOUNG BOY sitting on a rocky ledge overhanging a flowing river. He has his back to us.

BACK TO SCENE

Benjamin looks on for a second, then walks toward the young boy.

His approaching shadow catches the boy's attention and he turns. A young African-American boy no older than eight, dressed oddly in a full suit, complete with a bow-tie. The suit is terribly ratty and worn-out, draining it of all its charm.

The boy is fishing. He has a calm expression on his face as he looks up at the stranger behind him.

Benjamin sits down beside him without a word, still carrying his papers in his hand.

Benjamin gazes out onto the river.

YOUNG BOY
(looking at the
papers)
What you got there?

Benjamin looks down at his own hand.

BENJAMIN
Guess you could call it my last
will and testament.

The boy looks at him with bemusement. He reverts his attention to fishing.

BENJAMIN (Cont'd)
Can't imagine you can entice
too many fish with hotdogs.

The boy doesn't take his eyes off of the task at hand.

YOUNG BOY
My theory is they're looking
to try something different.
(looks at Benjamin
with curiosity)
You wouldn't eat the
same thing every day would
you?

Benjamin smiles upon his youthful innocence. He feels calm around him.

YOUNG BOY (Cont'd)
What are you doing all the way
out here in the middle of
nowhere anyways?

Benjamin looks back out toward the river, then down in shame.

BENJAMIN
Trying to run from my past.
Did some things I'm not proud
of.

YOUNG BOY
Like what? Did you kill
somebody or something?

Benjamin is surprised at the child's level of perception.

BENJAMIN
As a matter of fact...
(beat)
...Yea.

Benjamin has a cold expression on his face. The boy is not shocked in the slightest. He continues to fish.

Benjamin uses the opportunity to unburden himself further.

BENJAMIN (Cont'd)
Two people. Neither deserved
it.

YOUNG BOY
What did they do?

Benjamin exhales deeply.

BENJAMIN
Nothing more than running into
me, I suppose. This woman—
before you would have been
(MORE)

BENJAMIN (Cont'd)

born—she was very pretty.
Needed my help. Car trouble.
And I wanted to help her. But
I also knew her a bit, and I
think I could have loved this
woman.

(beat)

She wouldn't give me the time
of day, even after I helped
her. Having just lost my wife,
guess I just couldn't bear
another rejection.

The boy looks over again at Benjamin with his calm
demeanour and eyes completely devoid of judgment.

BENJAMIN (Cont'd)

I don't know what it was. I
can't explain it. Fear of
failure, abandonment? Just
snapped.

(throws a stone into
the water)

What a stupid reason to throw
it all away.

This last epiphany stirs something inside Benjamin and
causes him to come to tears.

He is trying to fight them.

The little boy's control is contagious. Benjamin regains
his composure, at least partly.

YOUNG BOY

Love makes people do crazy
things.

(beat)

What about the other one?
You said two.

Benjamin laughs slightly with tears still in his eyes.

BENJAMIN

Stupidity. That makes people
do crazy things too.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a wad of cash.

BENJAMIN (Cont'd)
(holding a handful
of money out to the
boy)

Here. It's not much, but you
could at least buy some real
bait with it.

Even the sight of all that money cannot elicit an emotional
response from the young boy.

YOUNG BOY
Oh no, mister. I can't take
that. Besides, you'll need it
to start your new life.

With that the boy stands up with his fishing rod in hand.

He nods a goodbye and walks down the path in the opposite
direction from whence Benjamin came.

Benjamin watches him walk away.

He takes out his paper and begins to scribble away again.

EXT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Lylah sits on the front steps outside the house, rubbing
gently her protruding belly.

She is looking out into the blue yonder with distant eyes,
waiting for any confirmation.

EXT. DOWNTOWN McFADDEN. MAIN STREET - DAY

Benjamin walks along the sidewalk of the town's modest
downtown core. It is only slightly busier than Petri
Point's.

He is clutching his papers tightly.

Benjamin walks with his head down, as if not seeing his
pursuers would negate their existence.

He reaches a small shop along the main street, looking up to confirm it is in fact the business he wants. The sign says "Post Office."

INT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR. MOVING - DAY

Fevvers and DeMourneau drive along when the radio pipes up again.

DISPATCH (V.O.)
Unit 0880, this is Dispatch.
Come in 0880.

DeMourneau grabs the radio with an expectant expression.

DeMOURNEAU
(into radio)
Yea, go ahead, Dispatch. What
do you got for us?

DISPATCH (V.O.)
A couple of hikers just sent
in a report of an abandoned
black hatchback lodged in
some foliage. Location: about
twenty minutes back south of
your current spot. The report
lists the car to be at the
Coralee Conservation Area, just
off Shields Avenue at the south
entrance.

DeMOURNEAU
(into radio)
We're on our way.

Without wasting a second, Fevvers slows the car slightly and pulls a dangerous u-turn to head back the other way.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The police car speeds down the highway back to McFadden. The road is only sparsely populated with other traffic.

EXT. CORALEE CONSERVATION AREA. EAST ENTRANCE - DAY

Benjamin is walking through the thick brush back into seclusion. He enters from another side, far from where he left the car hours ago.

The grass is up to his knees in some spots.

He eventually makes it back onto the rough trail.

The path is thin and well hidden.

EXT. CORALEE CONSERVATION AREA. SOUTH ENTRANCE - DAY

From where Benjamin parked the black hatchback we see the unmarked cop car drive along the same rough terrain.

TWO WALKERS wait by the car for DeMourneau and Fevvers to arrive. Another car waits there as well, but it's not police. The side of the car says "BINGHAM REGION PARKS AUTHORITY."

A man with aviator sunglasses and a police-style uniform is waiting. His name tag says SHEPPARD.

The two detectives pull the car up to the small group and exit the vehicle.

They approach Sheppard.

SHEPPARD

You guys cops?

FEVVERS

Yes, sir. Based in Petri Point.

DeMourneau pulls out his badge to show to the man.

Together they walk about five feet over to the hatchback to look inside the broken driver's side window.

The stolen car is half lodged in the brush, but still examinable from the one side.

SHEPPARD

(pointing behind him
to the walkers)

Couple of hikers here spotted
the vehicle bout half an hour
ago. I was in the area at the
time, thought it'd be worth
giving you guys a call.

DeMOURNEAU

(studying interior
of the car)

Good idea.

He leans out of the car and looks at Sheppard.

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)

Any indication of the driver
around? Blood, clothing,
anything at all?

SHEPPARD

Well, sir, can't say that I
thought to look too hard, but
what you see is what you get
as far as I know.

DeMourneau begins to walk hurriedly back to his car a few
meters away.

DeMOURNEAU

(to Sheppard)

I'm gonna need a map of the
area. The trails, any bodies
of water, landmarks,
noteworthy topographical
features.

DeMourneau opens the passenger door of the unmarked car and
reaches for the radio.

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)

(into radio)

Dispatch, what's the status
on our back up? We're over at
the stolen car off of Shields.

DISPATCH (V.O.)

All available cars in the area
being diverted to you as we
speak.

He replaces the radio and moves back toward Sheppard's car where he has a map laid out on the hood of his car.

The map shows a system of trails and topographical variations indicated by degrees of shading.

Sheppard indicates the southernmost part of the map in the central section with his index finger.

SHEPPARD (O.S.)

This is us now. The south
entrance.

He indicates a long section that looks like a pipe running east to west. It is crosshatched to indicate water.

SHEPPARD (O.S. Cont'd)

That's the main river running
all the way through the area.

Sheppard then indicates a narrow line that looks like a train track running diagonally from northeast to southwest.

SHEPPARD (O.S. Cont'd)

And that's the railway line
that connects us to two other
towns. There's no station in
the immediate area though. The
rest are various trails that
lead to roads or dead ends.

The two look up at each other. Fevvers moves into the picture.

FEVVERS

(to DeMourneau)

You think he's hiding out
here?

DeMOURNEAU

That might help explain the
(MORE)

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)
lack of sightings. Besides
which we've got dick all else
to go on.

DeMourneau grabs the map and studies it closely one more
time.

He makes a tiny diagram on his notepad, recreating the more
important points.

DeMourneau scribbles away, switching his attention back and
forth between the real map and his simplified version.

He heads back to the cop car.

When he gets there he takes off his suit jacket and throws
it onto the passenger seat.

DeMourneau makes his way back to the group once more,
focusing on his partner.

DeMOURNEAU (Cont'd)
(to Fevvers)
I'm gonna head in there, check
things out for a bit. I need
you to stay here and
co-ordinate the help. Use the
map, set up a unit at each
main exit and get them to
search inward.

FEVVERS
This guy's dangerous, Jim,
possibly armed. What makes
you think he's gonna roll
over for you?

DeMOURNEAU
Well we sure as shit can't
wait to act and waste our
first real opportunity.
(looks out to the
trail)
Maybe if I can convince him
he's surrounded he'll act
sensibly.

FEVVERS

Sensible people don't kill,
Jim. If anything, killing
makes them more unstable.

DeMourneau has already made up his mind and begins to walk toward the path leading into the conservation area.

He does not appear at all fearful of his partner's warning.

Sheppard and Fevvers watch him go, DeMourneau with his gun at his side.

EXT. CORALEE CONSERVATION AREA. TRAIL - DAY

Benjamin strolls slowly toward the train tracks which lie about twenty meters ahead of him. There are signs marking the tracks' presence.

He is walking with an air of comfort, at ease in the midst of nature.

Benjamin glances to his left and right, taking everything in as he continues at a slow pace.

He kicks long weeds growing rebelliously in the middle of the dirt path.

Benjamin periodically throws stones from a cache concealed in his left hand, ever nearing the track.

EXT. CORALEE CONSERVATION AREA. TRAIL - DAY

DeMourneau is speed walking. He stumbles upon the river where Benjamin and his friend once sat.

He stops at the rock ledge, getting a good view of everything within a fifty-meter radius.

DeMOURNEAU'S P.O.V.

The scenery is alive—rushing water, tangled plants, overhanging trees—but nothing strikes him as out of place.

BACK TO SCENE

DeMourneau continues on his way, practically running now, gun still at the ready.

He jogs lightly down a trail. In the distance we can hear a CHUGGING sound, like that of a train.

Something on the ground catches DeMourneau's eye and he stops dead in his tracks. He kneels down and picks it up. It is a pen labeled "Jiffy's Diner." He stuffs it in his pocket.

DeMourneau is jogging quickly, nearing the source of the sound.

We follow him along the path, as he occasionally knocks overhanging branches and thistles out of his way. He is running faster now.

The CHUGGING becomes louder. Then we hear a WHISTLE. It is definitely a train. DeMourneau runs even faster now, not sprinting quite yet.

CUT TO:

EXT. CORALEE CONSERVATION AREA. TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

Benjamin is walking slowly, a stark contrast from his pursuer.

He too is fully aware of the oncoming train, but he doesn't acknowledge it, still looking around at the scenery.

Benjamin is at peace.

CUT TO:

EXT. CORALEE CONSERVATION AREA. TRAIL - DAY

DeMourneau is still running, not even sure why, but he senses a reason exists.

Suddenly he stops and we see his surprised and tired expression from the front. He tries to catch his breath.

Benjamin is standing in front of the tracks now, his back to us. The train is much louder now, the WHISTLE almost deafening.

He turns suddenly to see his pursuer.

The two stare at each other, Benjamin with a look of peace, DeMourneau with a shocked expression.

CUT TO:

EXT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE - DAY

A distressed Lylah sits on the front steps, continuing to look out at the scenery. She knows something is not right.

It is very peaceful outside. Birds are CHIRPING.

CUT TO:

EXT. CORALEE CONSERVATION AREA. TRAIN TRACKS - CONTINUOUS

We can hear the train ROARING down the tracks at a furious pace. Benjamin turns from DeMourneau who is almost twenty meters away, and faces the track.

The train is out of our sight, but the ominous sound indicates it is only seconds away.

DeMourneau begins to sprint toward Benjamin.

DeMOURNEAU
No, Benjamin!

Benjamin takes one step onto the track.

A deafening SCREECH sounds, the train still ROARING down the track.

DeMourneau is almost there. A loud WHISTLE blows. He reaches for Benjamin, as he tries to stay off the tracks himself. It is far too late.

DeMourneau comes up empty-handed as the train CRUSHES Benjamin in an instant. A blood-stained DeMourneau desperately tries to maintain his balance and prevent himself from falling onto the tracks.

He just manages to lean back far enough to fall into safety on the gravel behind him.

He stares at the train still ZOOMING by with wide, fearful eyes.

DeMourneau cannot bear to look upon the mangled remains. He leans all the way back now, lying on the rough ground, breathing heavily.

A group of people rushes toward DeMourneau from the direction he originally came: Fevvers, the backup, and the park ranger, Sheppard.

Everyone is in shock.

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Lylah is watching TV, constantly flicking channels for any potential information.

She has the radio on in the background as well, but it's difficult to make out.

The sun has already begun to set and she is visibly more tense and desperate.

Finally she can take no more and she picks up the phone. She dials furiously.

Someone answers quickly on the other end.

LYLAH
(timid, into
receiver)
Hello, this is Lylah Briggs.
I'm calling about my father,
Benjamin Mosby-

She is at once both anxious and a nervous wreck, fearing the worst.

LYLAH (Cont'd)
What happened, is he
O-

Lylah stops before she can even finish her sentence. She stands there listening intently to the report from the other end.

Tears begin to swell in her eyes as she learns more and more of the awful details.

Without responding she puts her hand to her mouth in shock and replaces the receiver.

Lylah continues to stand there at a loss.

Satchel waddles up to her with his characteristic sad expression.

He rests his head against Lylah's right leg.

EXT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE - DAWN

"One Week Later"

The sun is rising, ready to create another beautiful day. It is early October and the transition to winter is almost underway.

The morning air is cool and the trees have shed almost all of their leaves by now.

Lylah walks from the house, Satchel in tow.

She crosses the empty gravel driveway and continues toward the road.

She reaches a lone mailbox at the edge of the property.

Inside she finds a large envelope. She studies it, but there is no return address.

She continues back toward the house.

INT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAWN

Lylah enters the brightly lit room and throws the envelope down on the wooden table.

She reaches into the fridge and pours herself a glass of orange juice.

She takes a brief sip before her attention returns to the envelope.

She opens it with care, not the type of person to tear it aggressively, no matter how anxious.

She has a puzzled expression on her face.

It is a stack of paper with a note on it.

LYLAH'S P.O.V.

"Lilly, I'm sorry to say I can no longer be the anchor you need, but please, cherish motherhood and be strong for your child. Never doubt yourself. A wise man once said, 'love makes people do crazy things.' This is the profession of my love for you. Take it wherever you can, sell it for as much money as you can, and live happily. Your doting father, Benjamin. P.S. Take care of Satchel for me."

She removes the note and glances the title page "An Artist's Rendering By Benjamin Mosby"

BACK TO SCENE

Lylah caresses the page, undecided as to whether she will read it.

In the end she chooses, at least for now, to leave it.

Lylah takes a deep breath and rises slowly from her chair.

She walks out the room.

EXT. BENJAMIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lylah comes calmly through the front door and down the steps. Satchel follows suit.

As she walks in the direction of the forest to the left, she looks around, admiring the scenery.

At the same time we begin to hear Benjamin's voice (OVER).

BENJAMIN (V.O.)

She is wise beyond her years,
truly a credit to humanity.
Tragically though, she may
never realize the full breadth

(MORE)

BENJAMIN (V.O. Cont'd)
of her grace and the limitless
potential that is her future.

We watch from a distance as she trudges through the field.

BENJAMIN (V.O. Cont'd)
To say it is a mixed-blessing
that she is not of my blood
would be flawed. Not only can
I rest easy knowing she will
not have inherited my many
short-comings, but I can also
say that I loved her as my
own. As much as a father ought
to love a daughter.

Lylah reaches the tree-line.

Satchel is just behind, enticed by a different scent in
every direction.

INT. HOPEWELL HOSPITAL. EVEY'S ROOM - DAWN

DeMourneau sits next to Evey's bed. She is sitting up, weak
but conscious.

Her father holds her left hand and caresses it lovingly.

A framed photograph of Jacob sits on a night table next to
the bed.

EVEY
I don't know exactly. It's a
bit foggy.

DeMOURNEAU
That's okay, sweetie. Now's a
time for rest. When you
remember you can let us know.

Evey is wracking her brain for an answer, more for herself.

EVEY
I...I remember sitting next to
Jacob. He was distracted by...
(MORE)

EVEY (Cont'd)
something. The next thing I
remember...

(beat)

I see a dog, or a wolf, in
front of us on the road. We
swerved. And that's where it
goes dark.

DeMourneau strokes her hair lovingly.

Evey is still trying to recall things more clearly.

Something refocuses her attention. She looks at him with a
concerned expression.

EVEY
Is Jacob going to be okay?

DeMourneau has anticipated the question for so long, but he
freezes under pressure.

DeMOURNEAU
He should be fine, sweetie.
For now just concentrate on
your own recovery.

EXT. FOREST - DAWN

Lylah is now deep in the midst of the forest. It is well
lit by the still-rising sun.

She walks with Satchel at her side, his nose to the forest
floor like a vacuum.

She treks on until something startles her. We see her
curious expression, gradually turning to disgust as she
draws nearer.

To her left stands the shanty home Benjamin had stumbled
across earlier.

LYLAH'S P.O.V.

Ahead is a strange man leaning over what appears to be a
dead animal.

She proceeds with caution. Satchel is at her side until he is drawn to the strong smell and runs up ahead of her, stopping a few feet in front of the brutal scene.

The man, kneeling over the carcass, turns around and flashes a piercing gaze at Lylah. He has a freakishly disfigured, ghoulish face that droops down like a wet towel. We have seen him before, from a distance.

His eyes are partially obscured by sagging skin. He continues to stare at Lylah, at us, remaining hovered over his kill. His clothing is tattered and torn.

BACK TO SCENE

Lylah is frightened stiff. The man is holding a long hunting knife in his hand. He turns his head back to the carcass in a slow and methodical movement.

INSERT:

The dead animal. It is a grey wolf lying on his side. Blood trickles from his stomach.

FADE OUT.