

The Killer Role

FADE IN

INT. CASEY APARTMENT - NIGHT

PETER CASEY sits at a weathered, wooden desk, picking at the skin around his blood-soaked thumbnails. The sole light from an antique lamp illuminates a trio of vertical scars atop his lower neck. He's 50 y.o. 6 ft tall. Dark brown eyes. Medium length blonde hair despite a receding hairline.

Peter adds one final line to a hand-written note. Closes the viewing window of a beat-up camera facing him. Tosses it in a red travel bag along with a thick stack of papers.

Peter rises from his seat. Glides through the bedroom doorway.

A woman in her early-40s, LINDSEY, lies asleep on the bed. Her long blonde hair dangles off the frame.

Peter admires her for a long moment.

Peter returns to his desk. Opens a drawer. Keys in the lockbox code. Removes a handful of disks from inside. Places one in an envelope addressed to "L.A. Police Department". Another notated "Santa Barbara Police Department". He distributes the other disks into separate envelopes addressed to police departments spread across California and the United States.

Peter reaches back in the lockbox. Returns with 2 SIX-INCH BLADES. One's covered in blood. The other clean.

Peters pockets the clean one. Throws the other in his bag.

Envelopes and bag in hand, Peter heads towards the door. He slides on a hoodie on his way out his apartment.

EXT. STREETS OF L.A. - NIGHT

The busy L.A. nightlight moves past Peter as he drops the envelopes into a street-side mailbox.

EXT. L.A. THEATER - NIGHT

Peter purchases a movie ticket.

INT. L.A. THEATER - NIGHT

Peter smiles before the seductive light of the picture.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF L.A. - NIGHT

On a quiet, dimly lit street, Peter raises a bloody thumb in the air. A car pulls to a stop. The driver gestures him in.

Peter hops inside.

INT. CASEY APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lindsey wakes up. Reaches for the other side of the bed. Her hands come up empty.

She jolts out of bed and into the living room. Finds the note. Her eyes swell as she scans its words. A horrific scream escapes her.

EXT. BACK ROAD - NIGHT

An 18-wheeler SCREEETCHES to a stop on a dark country road.

Peter hops out. The 18-wheeler pulls away.

Peters carries his bag down a long driveway. The full moon overhead lights his path.

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

Peter stands outside an old, two-story farm house. A 2nd story light flickers on. A WOMAN'S silhouette appears in the window frame.

Peter ducks into the backyard. Wanders down a path between dying, overgrown crops. Passes a beat-up shed.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Peter stops where the crops end and woods begin. On the ground, a homemade wooden gravestone reads, "Nick Casey September 17 1981 - October 20 1984". Another gravesite lies just beyond, too dark to make out its engraving.

A shovel leans against a nearby tree.

INT. SHED - NIGHT

A dirt-covered Peter steps inside the beat-up shed tucked among the backyard crops. Peter's eyes move from an old incinerator to a cracked, box TV. He stares at his shattered reflection, picking at his fingers.

He sets down his red bag. Lowers himself onto the shed floor.

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

Peter emerges from the shed. Removes the blade from his pocket. Brings it to his neck. Looks to the moon. Takes a breath...

Peter slits his own throat.

He drops onto his back as his blood empties into the soil below.

There is no struggle. Only death.

EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

A mahogany casket is lowered into a six-foot grave. The cemetery grounds are packed with attendees in expensive black suits and dresses.

News vans litter the surrounding cemetery sidewalks. Their cameras fixed on the funeral.

Next to the gravesite, a portrait of MARY ZIMMER giving a half smile. Even in her late 60s, her brown haired, blue eyed image glows. In the front row, her widowed husband STEVEN ZIMMER wipes the tear from his eyes. He's in his early 70s but doesn't look it. Dashing. Flowing gray hair.

Steven Zimmer wraps his arms around the younger man beside him, LEO ZIMMER. Mid-30s. Handsome like his father. Pulled back, long blonde hair. Tall. Dark brown eyes.

Leo Zimmer struggles to hold in tears of his own. SAM BENNETT grabs his hand. She's in her late 20s. Petite. Medium-length blonde hair. Attractive.

Leo's tears come anyway.

INT. ZIMMER MANSION - AFTERNOON

Many of the same funeral attendees mingle around the foyer of the extravagant Zimmer Mansion. Photos of Maryanne on various movie sets and award stages are on full display. In her 20s and 30s, we see the stunning brunette actress of a generation in her prime. Under the pictures, three golden "Best Actress" Oscars.

Leo takes a sip of his drink. Sam by his side. JOHN BOYD makes his way towards them. Greased back, black hair. Mid 60s. Looks like he's from another time.

Leo opens his arms. John embraces him.

JOHN BOYD
I'm so sorry, Leo...

LEO ZIMMER
Me too...

JOHN BOYD
This world will never forget her.
She made that about impossible.

Leo breaks from the embrace. His eyes follow his father Steven making his way up the winding foyer staircase.

JOHN BOYD (CONT'D)
And good luck tonight, son. We are
all rooting for you.

One side of Leo's mouth curls to a smile. John nods in Sam's direction before walking away.

Steven reaches the 2nd floor. Clutches the banister overlooking the foyer. The funeral attendees shift their attention to him.

STEVEN ZIMMER
I've gone my whole life with my
sole job responsibility being to
remember my lines... but somehow,
that hasn't prepared me for today..
Many of you knew Maryanne from her
life on the screen. For her
dedicated performances. Rightfully
so. She was much better than I ever
dreamt of being.

(crowd laughs)

When she gave up acting after Leo
was born, I saw that same love and
dedication, only funneled into a
new part of her life.

Steven makes eye contact with Leo.

STEVEN ZIMMER (CONT'D)
Her legacy will live forever on the
screen, but also in you, Leo. I
love you, Maryanne.

(beat)

(MORE)

STEVEN ZIMMER (CONT'D)

That being said, I think I can speak for her in saying, go win the damn thing tonight.

The crowd bursts into applause. Steven makes his way down the stairs. Leo meets him halfway. Father and son embrace.

Leo takes his father's place at the top of the balcony. All eyes are drawn to Leo's larger-than-life presence.

LEO ZIMMER

One of the first memories I have of Mom is when I was trying out for my first play. We were living up in New Hampshire at the time, and I was maybe, 4, 5. She told me something along the lines, "We don't choose to become actors. We don't choose our roles. The roles choose us."

Leo gathers himself.

LEO ZIMMER (CONT'D)

I may not have known exactly what she meant, then, but I certainly grew to know... how cliché that was.

(crowd laughs)

No, but, she was right. Every role I have ever taken, I identified with in some way. Maybe too much in some cases... But like her roles weighed on her, so did life... After she was recently diagnosed with dementia, she was faced with a decision: to let her mind slowly implode on itself or to find peace on her terms. She made the decision that only she could. I can't fault her for her way of being strong, even in the end.

Leo smiles to his father.

LEO ZIMMER (CONT'D)

Without her, I wouldn't have become an actor. I wouldn't even be a decent person. Every success I have had, or ever will have, is because of her. Win or lose tonight, it's for you Mom. It's always been for you.

The funeral attendees clap their hands in THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE. As Leo makes his way down the steps, every attendee within arms reach lays a hand on him.

EXT. DOLBY THEATER - NIGHT

Leo and Sam exit a limo and step onto the red carpet. Steven Zimmer and John Boyd exit after them. Celebrities in glamorous attire litter the path ahead. "THE 2017 OSCARS" is written on seemingly everything.

The media swarms Leo and Sam, sticking microphones and cameras in their faces as the two traverse the red carpet.

MEDIA MEMBER 1

First off, I'd like to offer my condolences to you. We all loved Maryanne.

LEO

Thank you for the kind words.

MEDIA MEMBER 1

Besides the initial weight gain, what was the most difficult part of preparing to play an American film icon like Orson Welles?

LEO

Well the weight loss was actually the hardest.

The media laughs.

LEO (CONT'D)

The hardest part was trying to find that respectful balance between the man he was and the man others saw him as. He wanted to be the best, the best at his craft and didn't care who stood in the way of his vision. I related to that part of him. I'll have a piece of Welles in me for as long as I'm around.

Leo and Sam stop in front of an Oscars backdrop as the cameras take pictures. They continue on.

MEDIA MEMBER 2

How do you feel about your chances of capturing your 1st Oscar win in three tries?

LEO
 It's another tough category.
 Whoever wins, will deserve it. But...
 I feel as good as I ever have.

The media circus follows Leo and Sam as they reach the end of the red carpet.

MEDIA MEMBER 3
 (to Sam)
 Do you ever see yourself working
 with Leo professionally, again?

SAM
 If the right project ever comes
 along, I would love to. We make a
 pretty good team.

Sam playfully nudges Leo.

LEO
 Thank you all.

Leo and Sam enter the theater among the herd of other celebrities.

INT. DOLBY THEATER - NIGHT

In the middle of the massive stage, our OSCARS HOST stands behind a translucent podium, holding an envelope.

Leo and Sam sit near the front of the star-packed theater. Steven Zimmer and John Boyd a row behind.

HOST
 And the Oscar for Best Director of
 an Independent Film goes to..

The host opens the envelope.

HOST (CONT'D)
 Russell Williams, "The Fixture"

RUSSELL WILLIAMS rises from the crowd. In his mid-30s. Long, well-kept beard. 6'4". There's genuine surprise on his face as he approaches the stage.

Oscars officials hand Russell his trophy. The host backs away from the podium. Russell takes his place. Inhales. Exhales. The crowd quiets.

RUSSELL WILLIAMS

Wow... I, a... I've dreamt about this moment for a long time... but I never thought it would actually come...

Russell stares into the packed theater.

RUSSELL WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

I... I'd like to dedicate this award to my older brother, David. Man, David was everything a brother should be and then some. You see, David loved everything film. Watching it. Critiquing it. Making it. He passed that love onto me pretty early. He was even trying to make it as an actor himself. He would've done so many great things, if his life wasn't taken by a murderer.

RUSSELL WILLIAMS (CON'T) (CONT'D)

(the crowd murmurs)

Today, I have some answers after Peter Casey's confessions last year, but back after it happened, I had nothing but questions. Why my brother? Why was he brutally tortured and mutilated? I-I was so angry. All the time. I bottled everything up. Dropped out of film school. Started drinking heavy. I got on to the harder stuff after that... Any kind of opioids I could get my hands on. Then, one day...

Russell drops his head. Scratches his beard. Lets out a long exhale.

RUSSELL WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

I numbed the pain too far. Doctors said I was dead for 4 and half minutes.

(beat)

I couldn't go down any farther. I finally knew I couldn't do it myself. I needed help. It took time, therapy... therapy... but I uh, I began to accept the hand I was dealt. I decided to transform my life experiences into something else.

Russell glances behind him at a still on the screen from his movie, "The Fixture".

RUSSELL WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

One word on a script, one shot at a time, I learned to cope with the loss of my brother.

Russell raises his Oscar into the air.

RUSSELL WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

I'm up to say to all the wannabe filmmakers out there: pick up a camera, tell the story you, and only you, can tell. Tell your truth. What better way than through the big screen? Thank you all.

Leo, Sam and the entirety of the theater rise in another round of applause.

Russell Williams steps off stage. The host returns to their place behind the podium.

HOST

What an incredible story from an incredible filmmaker. Can we get another round of applause?

The audience willingly obliges. The host smiles as the crowd roar eventually decrescendos.

HOST (CONT'D)

2017 will be remembered as another great year to live and breathe cinema. It will also be remembered as the year we lost one of our own. One of the most influential actresses of all time, Maryanne Zimmer.

The lights dim. The giant screens display a beautiful headshot of Maryanne Zimmer alongside the text, "1949-2017".

Images begin flowing from the decades of Maryanne's onscreen performances. One image is of Maryanne and Steven Zimmer (in their 20s) sharing a passionate kiss in the crowded Peruvian streets.

Leo smiles as his mother's most renowned scenes flow into one another. We see an image from of Maryanne and Steven Zimmer (in their 40s) traversing a dark tunnel. Lights flicker on to reveal a den of bodies- many of them children.

Maryanne's character falls to her knees. She crawls between the bodies, turning them over one by one. Underneath the scene, the film's title, "The Land of the Godless".

A teary-eyed Steven glances at the back of his son.

The screen fades to black before displaying Maryanne's opening headshot. The lights turn back on.

Not a dry eye in the theater, the audience rises, clapping as they look in the direction of the Zimmer's.

Leo stands. Faces the crowd. His eyes move from person to person before wandering to Russell William's Oscar. Leo snaps his attention back to the adoring crowd. He sits down with the rest of the theater.

HOST (CONT'D)
Our next category, Best Sound
Design, is for the unsung..

The host's voice fades. Leo taps his foot. Closes his eyes.

INT. DOLBY THEATER - NIGHT

HOST
... the next Marlon Brando, Daniel
Day Lewis, Robert Redford. And
without further ado, here are the
nominees for Best Performance by an
Actor in a leading role..

Leo straightens his back. Takes a breath.

HOST (CONT'D)
Daniel Rodriguez, "Smoke of the
Fire"

The giant screens play a clip of DANIEL RODRIQUEZ, in cop attire, raiding a home.

HOST (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Barry Gore, "Collusion"

Leo glances at Sam. She gives an optimistic smile.

HOST (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Desean Valentine, "Grey Bridge"

Steven places his arm on his son's shoulder.

HOST (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Quentin Sparrow, "Dove Season"

Leo looks around him, taking in the moment.

HOST (O.S.) (CONT'D)
And Leo Zimmer, "Welles"

A clip plays of Leo, over 50 pounds heavier, gazing into a camera viewfinder.

On stage, the host is handed an envelope.

HOST (CONT'D)
And the winner is..

The host opens the envelope-

Leo awaits his fate.

HOST (CONT'D)
Daniel Rodriguez, "Smoke of the
Fire"

Leo face drops- only for a second, before shifting to a smile. He rises in applause with the rest of the theater.

Daniel Rodriguez saunters down the aisle, accepting hugs and congratulations from the crowd. Leo meets him in the aisle. Pats him on the back. Returns to his seat.

Daniel is handed his trophy on stage.

DANIEL RODRIQUEZ
First off, I'd like to thank my
mother. Without her..

Daniel's voice trails off. Leo smiles, continuing his act.

His gaze follows the golden trophy as its winner's lips silently move.

TITLE CREDITS: THE KILLER ROLE

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - DAWN (MONTAGE)

Leo wakes up. A thick, light brown, matted beard covers his face. Sam sleeps next to him. He creeps out of the bedroom.

Leo enters his study. Takes a seat at his desk. The morning sunlight pours in the windows behind him, illuminating the Golden Globes and various other awards lining his surrounding shelves.

Leo opens his laptop. Presses play. A movie plays where we see a slightly younger Leo step out of a red and white super hero suit. Bloody and broken, his character collapses on the pavement.

Leo scribbles a note as he watches his own performance.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - MORNING (MONTAGE)

In his study, Leo reads the passage, "Although a great performance, Zimmer comes across theatrical as Welles in the emotional climax of the film."

Leo pulls out a sheet of paper. Writes in big letters, "Comes across theatrical". Places it in a binder behind other handwritten criticisms, like "doesn't allow supporting characters to thrive" and "appears lost in the role".

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - MIDDAY (MONTAGE)

Leo sits on his living room couch, flipping through a script.

In a t-shirt and shorts, Sam gives Leo a long glance. Grabs her purse. Exits the apartment.

Only a few pages in, Leo tosses down the script. It joins the tens of others.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON (MONTAGE)

Leo watches a movie on his TV of his mother and father on opposite sides of an on-screen police interrogation.

In the bedroom, Sam puts on a pair of red earrings to go with her red dress. Gestures towards Leo at an invisible watch on her wrist. Leo remains seated.

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

A room of rich donors sit facing the charity speaker on stage. Banners cover the room, reading, "Films for Famine".

Sam sits with an empty chair next to her.

CHARITY SPEAKER (O.S.)

And although he couldn't make it tonight, we'd like to thank Leo Zimmer for another generous donation. How about a huge round of applause?

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

Leo watches a scene from Daniel Rodriguez's Oscar winning performance. His cop character is surrounded by 3 armed men, pointing their guns at him.

Leo's apartment door opens. Sam enters wearing the same red dress.

Leo meets her in the doorway. Kisses her.

Sam frowns. Doesn't kiss back.

Leo kisses Sam again. Her frown stretches to a smile. She kisses him back.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

Through a slightly ajar bedroom door, we see Leo atop Sam, thrusting in and out. Their vanilla lovemaking reaches its climax.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

Leo lies awake, staring at the ceiling. Sam lies passed out beside him. Leo gets out from under the covers.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

In his study, Leo watches a scene from "Welles" where we see himself as a heavy-set Orson Welles kissing Sam, playing the beautiful actress, Rita Hayworth.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - DAWN (MONTAGE)

The morning sunlight pours into Leo's study, washing over him and his flowing beard. The light of his laptop screen illuminates his face.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - DUSK

As the sun lowers outside, Leo remains in front of his laptop. He watches a scene of his mother crawling across a cave floor, overturning the bodies of children in various states of decay.

A DVD of "The Land of the Godless" lies on his desk. The cover reads, "Winner of 3 1985 Academy Awards, including 'Best Editing', 'Best Makeup', and 'Maryanne Zimmer for Best Actress'".

Leo skips to scene 3 of 30. Fast-forwards several seconds. Presses play. Maryanne, Steven and their 3 y.o. child character walk through a small, deserted town when a TRIO OF

HOODED FIGURES WEARING RED ROBES AND MASKS ambush them from a nearby alleyway- The figures grab their child- Run down the road- Maryanne and Steven sprint after them- A van SCREECHES to a stop- The hooded figures hop in with the child- Maryanne and Steven futilely chase the van down the street- Their child places their hand against the back window before the van turns out of sight. Maryanne collapses in the middle of the street.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

Leo pauses the movie.

LEO

Come in.

Sam enters the study dressed in a black party dress.

SAM

We're going to John's thing. Let's go.

LEO

Go without me. I gotta a lot of work to do.

SAM

You've barely left this place in months. You're coming.

Leo's eyes wander back to the screen.

SAM (CONT'D)

Leo..

Leo shuts the laptop.

EXT. BOYD MANOR - NIGHT

Party goers mingle in and around a large pool with waterfalls and slides. Music BLARES. Servers stand idly, balancing trays of drinks.

A freshly shaved Leo and smiling Sam enter through the backyard gate. The party goers stop and stare as the two walk among them.

JOHN BOYD

Leo!

Leo turns to see John quickly approaching, rocking a Hawaiian shirt.

JOHN BOYD (CONT'D)

Glad you could make it out. I was beginning to think you were prepping to play some kinda backwoods hermit. HA HA

Leo humors him with a chuckle.

LEO

If that opportunity ever comes, I'm sure you'll be the first person I hear from..

John turns to Sam. Kisses her hand.

JOHN BOYD

And how are you today, beautiful?

SAM

Great, thank you. Thanks for having us.

JOHN BOYD

Anytime, dear. Anytime.

(to Leo)

Any thoughts on the latest batch?

LEO

Nothing really stood out.

JOHN BOYD

Not even Spencer's sci-fi, existential shit?

LEO

Definitely not.

JOHN BOYD

Fair enough. You know I'll keep 'em coming. You give me a shout if you wanna move forward with any of them. Enjoy the party.

John wanders away. Leo turns to Sam. Raises his eyebrows high into his forehead. She laughs.

Leo and Sam grab a drink from a waiter's tray. Sam grabs Leo by the arm. Leads him into a group of other actors and actresses.

EXT. BOYD MANOR - NIGHT

Crescent moon high in the sky and a large chunk of the party gone, Leo and Sam sit on the patio. Empty drink glasses piled up around them.

Sam tries to stand before falling back to her seat. She lays her head in Leo's lap.

LEO
We should probably go.

SAM
I'm fine..

Leo looks at her, unconvinced. Sam breaks into a laugh.

SAM (CONT'D)
I'll call an Uber..

Sam buries her face in her phone. At the edge of the patio, a tall, bearded man lurks. Leo notices him.

LEO
Do I know you?

The man steps closer. It's Oscar winner, Russell Williams. Leo stands up. Extends his hand.

LEO (CONT'D)
Sorry, I didn't recognize you at first. Have we formally met?

Russell shakes his hand.

RUSSELL
I don't think we have. It's a pleasure to..

Leo playfully shoos off Russell's next words.

LEO
Nice to meet you too, Russell.

Sam looks up from her phone. Waves at Russell with an inviting smile.

RUSSELL

And you must be Sam.

SAM

That is me.

LEO

I really like what I've seen of your work, Russell.

RUSSELL

Wow, look... I... that means a lot coming from you, Leo.

(beat)

You enjoying the party?

Leo scopes out the dwindling number of people remaining. Nods at the apparent conversational standstill. Sam goes back to her phone.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

So, look, uh. This is kinda awkward for me so I'm just going to go for it. I sent you my script a couple months back, and I was just wondering, uh, what you thought about it? If you hated it, or whatever, that's cool. I would much rather hear it from you. I just-

LEO

I would have remembered a script with your name attached. What's it about?

RUSSELL

Peter Casey.

Leo leans back against the patio wall.

SAM (O.S.)

Our Uber will be here in 5!

LEO

(to Russell)

John, that son of a bitch, sends me all kinds of garbage you wouldn't believe, and he didn't send me this..

Leo looks around. No sign of the host.

LEO (CONT'D)
 So's is it like a murder mystery,
 "Zodiac", "Silence of the Lambs"
 kind of narrative or...?

RUSSELL
 I want you to play my story's
 protagonist, Peter Casey.

Leo can't conceal his visual surprise.

LEO
 You wouldn't have a copy with you?

Russell smiles. Starts towards the backyard gate. Leo follows.

As Sam gets up, her phone falls off her lap and onto the patio. She fails to notice as she catches up with Leo.

Out front, Russell pulls a thick manuscript from his car. Hands it to Leo.

Sam digs in her purse.

SAM
 Shit. I'll be right back.

Sam heads back into the backyard.

Leo thumbs through the script.

RUSSELL
 It's already in pre-production. The studio has a couple lead actors in mind, but uh, I wrote Casey's part with you in mind. And I think Sam would make a great Lindsey.

LEO
 Lindsey Grinich?
 (Russell nods)
 I don't want to promise you anything, except that I'll read it.

RUSSELL
 That's all I'm asking, Leo.

Back on the backyard patio, Sam grabs her phone. Turns around to see RICHARD GLENNER, a greasy, lumbering man looking down at her. 6'5". 350 plus pounds.

Sam looks down and away from the monster-sized man.

RICHARD
Sam... Long time no see.

Richard brushes her arm.

SAM
My ride's waiting on me.

Sam walks past him. Richard follows a step behind her.

RICHARD
Let's work together again, soon. We
made a great team.

Sam's eyes water as her pace quickens.

Out front, Russell hands Leo back his phone.

LEO
We will talk soon.

Leo and Russell shake hands. Head down, Sam rejoins them.

SAM
Our ride's here.

An Uber awaits outside the gates of the Boyd Manor.

RUSSELL
Just think about it... Both of you.

Leo and Sam head down the driveway.

Russell gazes at the script in Leo's grasp.

INT/EXT. UBER - NIGHT

Leo and Sam hop in the backseat. Sam dabs her eyes. Leo touches her hand. She pulls back.

LEO
What's wrong?

The Uber starts down the L.A. streets.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sam heads straight into bedroom. Closes the door behind her. Leo starts to follow. Stops. Looks down at the script. Enters his study instead.

Leo clicks on the lamp. Plops the script down on his desk. Title page reads, "'The Editor', written by Russell Williams".

Leo flips to page 1. He begins to read aloud-

LEO

Fade in... Int. Movie Theater. Night. Peter Casey watches a series of flashing images. The screen cuts to black. Peter picks at the skin around his thumbs as he eyes the departing moviegoers. His eyes lock on one. Ext. Movie Theater. Night. Peter follows his target to their car. He glides into the backseat as his target enters the front. Peter unsheathes a blade. Holds it to his target's throat. Peter, 'Drive'. The car starts off into the night.

Leo turns the 1st page facedown. Continues-

LEO (CONT'D)

Int. Garage. Night. A mounted camera captures Peter Casey standing over his target's corpse. The lacerations on the neck of the lifeless body match Peter's hardened scars.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

With more pages added to the read pile, Leo continues-

LEO

Ext. Casey Farm. Day. A preteen Peter Casey rips small crops from the field behind the Casey house. A pair of vertical scars are visible on his sweaty neck. He places his hands on his knees, catching his breath. His father, Earl Casey, slaps the back of his head, knocking Peter to the ground.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LEO

Int. Casey Farm. Day. Earl Casey raises a kitchen knife on his son. Deborah jumps between them.

(MORE)

LEO (CONT'D)

Earl shoves her to the side. Steps towards Peter. Peter charges his father. Reaches for a knife of his own. Earl lunges across the kitchen at Peter. Cuts his neck parallel to the other two scars. Peter clutches the fresh wound as blood spills down his torso. Earl shoves Peter inside the adjacent spare room. Inside, two grown men unbuckle their pants as they shuffle towards him. Peter pushes one man back. The other man holds him down. Ties his hands together with rope. The door shuts from the inside. Earl counts a stack of bills.

Leo shakes his head. Disturbed.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LEO

Int. Casey Farm. Night. Peter shakes in the bedroom corner. He presses his pointer fingers into the sides of his thumbs. Blood trickles out his freshly opened wounds.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LEO

Int. Casey Farm. Night. Peter's mother, Deborah Casey, sits on the bloody bathroom floor, cradling a newborn. Earl stands over her with the hint of a smile. A late teenage-aged Peter joins them. Deborah hands Peter the child. Deborah, 'His name is Nick.'

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leo reads on as mounted analog clock TICKS further into the night-

LEO

Ext. Casey Farm. Day. On a patched-up camcorder, Peter records himself and 3 y.o. Nick walking through the crops in the backyard. They smile and laugh.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LEO

Int. Casey Farm. Shed. Day. On a beat up tv, Peter and Nick watch "King Kong". Plastic burns in the incinerator beside them.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LEO

Int. Casey Farm. Shed. Day. Peter holds what's left of Nick's burned body. Ash smolders the ground in the shape of his small body.

Leo stops reading for a moment. Presses forward.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LEO

Ext. Woods. Night. Rain pours. The life drains out of Earl's eyes. A blood-soaked Peter stands over his father. Bloody knife in hand.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LEO

Ext. Highway. Day. Peter stands on the side of the highway. Bag in his hand. Thumb in the air.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LEO

Ext. Movie Theater. Night. Peter stands in line for a Midwestern movie theater out in the country.

(MORE)

LEO (CONT'D)

He scans the crowd, picking at the side of his thumb with one hand and fidgeting with a pocketed knife with the other. His eyes land on middle-aged movie goer. His next victim.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LEO

Int. Basement. Night. Peter stands before the movie goer roped to a chair. A mounted camera records the horror. Peter, 'You're going to die here.' Peter steps closer. Peter, 'If you struggle, it will be over quick. If you don't...' The movie goer spits in his face. Wiggles out of the loose knots. Makes a break towards the staircase. Blade in hand, Peter calmly pursues. They have made their choice.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LEO

Int/Ext. Car. Night. Hitchhiking with a stranger at the wheel, Peter's eyes go wide as they approach the busy streets and rolling hills of L.A.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LEO

Int. Diner. Morning. Posters of yesteryear's movie stars plaster the old school diner walls. Sitting alone at a booth, Peter stares at a menu, pressing into the mangled skin around his thumbnail. A beautiful stranger with long blonde hair slides across from him. He stares at her, uncomfortable. Stranger, 'You ever see Pulp Fiction?' Peter, "What?" Stranger, "The movie. Last year. Samuel Jackson. Royale with cheese?" Peter, 'I know, but who are you?' Stranger, 'Lindsey Grinich.'

Leo takes his eyes off the script. Glances at a candid photo of himself and Sam on the red carpet of the "Welles" premiere.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LEO

Int. Motel. Night. Lindsey lies bound by rope to the bed post. Peter thrusts into her. She moans. The two climax simultaneously. Tears fall from their eyes.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LEO

Int/Ext. Car. Suburban Neighborhood. Night. A blood-soaked Peter hustles into the backseat carrying his camera. Lindsey's the driver. She punches the gas.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LEO

Int. Soundstage. Day. On the set of a hospital surgical unit, a middle-aged Peter watches the organized chaos of the film production. Mesmerized. His ID badge reads, "Production Assistant". The director, Quentin Miller, rises from his chair as he checks his 1st generation iPhone. Peter hands him a coffee. Quentin takes it with a smile.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leo flips to the next page.

LEO

Int. Casey Apartment. Night. Peter stares at a blank sheet of paper. Writes, "FADE IN".

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LEO

Int. Police. Station. Night. Peter sits across from two detectives. They slide him a photo of a hooded figure following someone through a movie theater parking lot.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LEO

Int. Casey Apartment. Night. Lindsey sits across from Peter. Tears in her eyes. Lindsey, 'If you aren't more careful...'

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LEO

Int. Casey Apartment. Night. Peter writes, "FADE OUT" on the last page of his script.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Only a handful of pages left, Leo continues-

LEO

Int. Garage. Night. Peter stands before another bound movie goer. They remain still. Calm. Peter raises his blade to their throat, slower than in his prime.

LEO (CON'T) (CONT'D)

Peter, 'I'm giving the opportunity I was never given. If you don't take it...' Movie goer, 'I'm not afraid to die'. Creeping above his victim's neckline, a trio of scars, much like Peter's.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The final script page trembles in Leo's hand.

LEO

Ext. Farm. Night. Peter puts his blade to his own throat. He joins his brother, Nick, in the void.

Leo sets the page down. Exits his study.

Leo crawls into bed next to a sleeping Sam. He stares at the ceiling.

MARYANNE ZIMMER (V.O)

Being an actor isn't something we choose to be...

INT. MANCHESTER (NH) ACTING ACADEMY - NIGHT

In a low, wide angle P.O.V., we are just off-stage of a crowd of costumed children surrounding a play instructor.

Maryanne Zimmer is crouched before us. Ball cap overtop her blonde hair. Bags under her eyes. No makeup. She brushes our hair to the side.

MARYANNE ZIMMER

The roles, the parts themselves, call out to us. Sometimes, we have no choice but to listen. It is our single, greatest burden, Leo.

Maryanne embraces our P.O.V. Stands up. Backs away from us.

We wander out to join the other kids on stage as Maryanne watches our every step.

And we are-

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - DAWN

Leo shoots up in bed, struggling to catch his breath. He gets up. Hustles out the bedroom.

Sam awakes.

Leo turns on his study lamp, illuminating the script. Raises his right hand to eyelevel. Presses his pointer finger into the side of his thumbnail. Hard. Blood rises to the surface.

A drop spills onto the title page of "The Editor".

Sam slowly pushes in the study door. Leo tucks his bloody thumb behind his other fingers. Picks up the script. Gestures it to her.

INT. RESTAURANT - MIDDAY

Leo, Sam and Russell sit together at the lone occupied table within a large, fancy restaurant.

RUSSELL
What convinced you?

A waiter fills Sam and Leo's glasses with red wine.

LEO
Last year after news broke of who "The Editor" was, I remember hearing about Peter's "tragic past" and being legitimately angry people were trying to humanize a man who killed 18 innocent human beings.

The waiter tops off Russell's glass of water.

LEO (CONT'D)
But his story within the context of your script...

RUSSELL
Paints a different picture.

LEO
Exactly. And after everything he did, especially to you and your family, it would have been really easy to give moviegoers a blood-seeking psychopath. Instead, you gave him an almost... redemptive arc.

Leo takes a sip of his wine. A bandage covers his right thumb.

RUSSELL
And I didn't want just any actor to have that burden of humanizing a killer.

(to Sam)
Or to humanize a killer's girlfriend.

SAM
I appreciate you for giving me this opportunity. Lindsey's a complex person, but I'm going to give it everything I have.

RUSSELL
I know you will.

SAM

Did she ever end up getting jail time or...?

RUSSELL

Lindsey admitted to picking Peter up at their homes, but police haven't been able to prove she knew what he was up to or that she even was willing.

SAM

Is there anyway I can contact Lindsey? That would really help me understand her.

RUSSELL

You can try. I've had no luck. She doesn't want anything more to do with the Casey story.

Russell pulls out his phone. Copies down a number on a napkin. Hands it to Sam.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

(to Leo)

You know he actually worked on "Welles" as a PA.

LEO

I don't remember him.

RUSSELL

He wouldn't have been on set at the same time as you for more than a few days. That detail didn't quite make the final draft though.

LEO

You've done your research.

The restaurant doors open. JESSE TROUT enters. Wearing an expensive sports coat, he's in his 50's but he looks 20 years younger. He saunters over to their table.

RUSSELL

This is Jesse Trout, an executive producer over at Night Light Productions.

Russell shakes his hand. Jesse joins them at the table.

JESSE

I'm so glad you two are going to be a part of this. The other producers are pushing this pre-production schedule that I didn't think we had any chance in hell of making, but hey...

LEO

How soon do we start?

RUSSELL

Everything cast and crew wise is now set. The onsite preparation begins in three weeks. Filming the week after that.

SAM

On set here in L.A.?

RUSSELL

Some scenes will be at Pinewood in Atlanta.

JESSE

Cheaper there. Lowers our risk.

RUSSELL

But the first chunk of filming will be on location in McVay, Georgia.

JESSE

You're familiar with McVay, aren't you, Leo?

Leo nods as he sips his wine. Under the table, he presses into his bandage. Fresh blood soaks through its fabric.

LEO

When you say on location...

Russell and Jesse share an awkward laugh.

JESSE

So, Russell wants to shoot in Casey's hometown, on the land he grew up, in the house he was born. The house Peter's mother still lives...

LINDSEY

She's letting us do that?

JESSE

She will if... she meets the actor
playing her son.

Leo laughs. Jesse and Russell don't join in.

LEO

Are you screwing with me?

RUSSELL

We're not... I want to be as true and
respectful as possible to David and
the other victims but also to the
Casey's.

Leo sits on this.

LEO

Got it. No problem. I want to make
the best film possible.

JESSE

That's why you were always our guy.
A true fucking pro. The terms of
both your contracts are being
finalized as we speak. Leo, I'll
send yours to John to review, and
Sam, I'll also get in contact with
your agent. I'll worry about all
that technical shit and leave the
art to you three.

Russell raises his glass in the air.

RUSSELL

To making a movie...

The director, producer, lead actor and actress CLANK their
glasses together. "The Editor" has officially begun.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Casey crime scene photos spread across his study desk. True-
crime novels of Casey's murders stacked on the floor. Leo
watches old Peter Casey news coverage-

NEWS REPORTER

The killer, dubbed "The Editor" for
his signature mutilation of his
victims, has claimed another
innocent life...

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Scripts in hand, Leo and Sam sit across from one another on their bed.

SAM

Can you show me more?

Tears form in Leo's eyes. Sam begins to smile. Leo does not break character-

LEO

More?

SAM

Of your scars.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

In his study, Leo opens an email from Russell. Clicks on the folder attached, "Casey's Films". Inside, 27 videos, each titled after his different victims. The dates go as far back as 1985 and as recent as 2016. One reads, "David Williams".

Leo clicks on Russell's brother's video. A video plays of the young man roped to a chair, crying and hyperventilating.

Peter steps into frame. Raises a blade to David Williams' throat.

PETER

Tears won't save you. Fight back and-

DAVID

Please... please... I... my brother...I need my brother...

Peter cuts David's forearm- David SHRIEKS-

In the reflection of Leo's eyes, we see Peter carve up David, cut by cut.

Leo presses into the side of his left thumb. Blood spills onto the study floor.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

In the bedroom, Sam types the number from Russell's napkin into her phone. It RINGS and RINGS...

Sam hangs up. Turns off the lights.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - DAWN

Leo clicks on another video. Same setup as before, a man, YOHAN TATE, sits bound to a chair. Emotionless.

Wielding a knife, Peter approaches-

PETER
If you struggle-

Yohan pushes forward in the chair, unwinding the loose knots with ease- hurls himself toward Peter-

Peter lunges forward with his blade- Yohan knocks it away-

Peter and Yohan grapple with one another- Peter lands a punch to Yohan's gut, sending him to the ground-

Peter grabs his knife- sits atop Yohan-

PETER (CONT'D)
Thank you.

Peter slices Yohan's throat in one fluid motion-

Yohan clutches his wound as blood oozes between his fingers.

Leo fast forwards. Stops. Yohan lies dead, face-up. Peter lifts up his head. Makes three vertical cuts perpendicular to his corpse's fatal wound.

Leo slams his laptop shut. The morning sunlight illuminates the fresh cuts covering the sides of both his thumbs. Droplets of blood have stained the carpet beneath him.

Leo looks up at the clock. He hustles out of the study.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Leo sets a packed travel bag on the bedroom floor. A plane ticket balances on top. In bed, Sam sets down her script.

LEO
I'll text you when I get there.

SAM
Just promise you'll be on your best behavior for mama Casey.

LEO
Not funny.

Leo kisses her.

SAM

What did that producer mean the other day when he said you were familiar with McVay?

LEO

That's where they shot my mom's last film.

SAM

I'm sorry, Leo.

LEO

Don't be.

Leo exits the bedroom, bag in hand. Sam returns to reading.

EXT. CASEY FARM - AFTERNOON

An Uber pulls to a stop on a back Georgian road. Leo steps out. A two-story farm house looms before him.

Leo walks up the dirt driveway. Nik knacks and pieces of old machinery litter the front yard. The backyard crops stand withered and unkept. A barn with a caved-in roof sits abandoned beside the house.

Leo glances at his phone. Dismisses the notification, "(5) missed calls from Dad".

DEBORAH CASEY (O.S.)

Leo!

Leo turns to her voice. DEBORAH CASEY emerges from the crops. She's in her mid-60's. Frail. Matted gray hair. She tosses her working gloves on the ground as she approaches.

DEBORAH

So great to finally meet you, Leo.

Deborah opens her arms wide. Leo has no choice as she smothers him with a more than welcoming hug. Leo politely slips out of her grasp.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

Well don't be shy. Come on in. I'll give you the grand tour.

Deborah steps onto the porch. Disappears through the doorway. Leo runs his fingers atop his bandage covered thumbs. Steps inside behind her.

INT. CASEY FARM - AFTERNOON

Leo follows Deborah through the living room, navigating between the ceiling-high stacks of miscellaneous objects.

She stops at a pile of books. Picks one up.

DEBORAH

"The Editing of a Killer: The Peter Casey Story", how do you think they got all that fancy information?

LEO

Is there... good money in that?

DEBORAH

Look around you- It ain't about the money. It's about making sure they do my son right. I even sent back them directors' pages several times before he got it right.

LEO

And what's the biggest thing people get wrong?

DEBORAH

That Peter wasn't a person, like me or you.

Deborah continues into the kitchen. Newspaper clippings of Peter's confession are displaced on the table and counters.

She grabs a framed picture. Hands it to Leo.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

This is one of the only pictures I have left of the boys.

In the photo, a smiling 3 y.o. Nick balances atop his older brother's shoulders. Peter's a young adult with longer, wavy blonde hair. His 3 scars are visible along his neck. Nick shares his older brother's dark eyes and blonde hair.

LEO

Who took this?

DEBORAH

Peter. He had patched up an old camera he found in town and took a liking to it, even though Earl didn't.

LEO
Why's that?

DEBORAH
Earl was a proud man- a proud man
of the past. He wanted nothing but
to maintain the land of his
father's father and to provide for
us. Anything else, he saw as a
distraction.

(beat)
Let me show you their room.

Leo follows Deborah up the stained carpet stairway, passing a
photo of Earl working in the yard. He's balding. A thick
mustache.

Deborah and Leo head down the 2nd floor hallway.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
Tell me about yourself, Leo.

LEO
Well, I'm an actor, I-

DEBORAH
I didn't ask what ya do. I asked
who you are.

LEO
That's also who I am.

DEBORAH
You're gonna have to give me more
than that, Leo.

Deborah faces Leo outside a closed bedroom door. Leo presses
into the covered cuts on both his thumbs. Looks behind her: A
LARGE CHUNK OF WALL IS MISSING, alongside a long-forgotten
blood stain.

Leo takes a mental screenshot. Looks back to Deborah.

LEO
I guess I'm not sure how to answer
that.

DEBORAH
And you think playing my son will
help you figure that out?

LEO
I think I'm the only one who can
play your son.

(MORE)

LEO (CONT'D)

Peter was molded into a monster,
not born one. I understand the
struggle of becoming the one thing
the world has always pushed you to
become.

DEBORAH

You didn't want to be an actor?

LEO

Not that I didn't want to, I... I
just found it easier playing parts
other than myself.

Deborah opens the door. Leo follows her inside.

A neatly made bunkbed. A fresh, blue coat of paint on the
walls. It's like her boys are still here.

DEBORAH

Peter always let Nick have top.

LEO

Was Peter a good brother?

DEBORAH

The best brother there could be.
Peter did everything he could to
protect Nick and our family.

Leo peers out a large, rectangular window behind the bunkbed,
overlooking the entire Casey Farm. His eyes land on the
wooden shed hidden within the crops.

EXT. CASEY FARM - AFTERNOON

Behind the house, Leo and Deborah arrive at the shed.

DEBORAH

The boys used to love watching
movies together. Peter had fixed up
an old tv and generator, and they
would sneak out here at night to
watch.

Inside, a cracked tv and an old incinerator. On the floor, a
CHARRED OUTLINE OF A CHILD'S BODY.

Deborah keeps her distance.

LEO

And this is where...?

DEBORAH
Yeah... this is it.

Deborah heads farther away from the house. Leo follows.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
It was Nick's chore to clean out the incinerator after it gone done burnin'. Even back then, the damn thing was old as shit. He must have fallen in while it was still on. The door had been known to get stuck.

LEO
Was Nick still alive when Peter found-

DEBORAH
He was almost ash... That was the only time I ever saw my son break.

LEO
Did Peter think Earl was responsible?

DEBORAH
Peter had more than one reason to want to kill my husband.

EXT. CASEY CEMETERY - NIGHT

Deborah stops at the edge of the forest. Three graves. "Earl Casey, December 15 1950 - October 21 1984". "Nick Casey, September 17 1981 - October 20 1984". "Peter Casey, June 11 1966 - November 25 2016". A shovel leans against a nearby tree.

DEBORAH
That was it for Peter. After Nick, he had nothing left here. It tore Earl up too, though Peter would have never believed it.

LEO
You miss your husband?

DEBORAH
He was a grade A piece of shit. But, yeah, I miss him in a fucked up kinda way.

LEO
 You're the one who found Peter,
 aren't you?

Deborah stares at the graves of her husband and sons.

DEBORAH
 Yeah... Let's go.

Leo follows Deborah away from the cemetery.

EXT. CASEY FARM - DUSK

On the porch, Leo and Deborah rock in rocking chairs, looking out into the Georgia sunset.

LEO
 Not many would have made it through
 what you have. You're strong.

DEBORAH
 This world will have no problem
 swallowing you up if you let it...
 But you already know that, don't
 ya?

Leo nods. Deborah places her hand on Leo's shoulder.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 I think they picked the right one.

LEO
 I will do your son proud.

Leo places his hand atop Deborah's. She notices the bandage covering his thumb.

DEBORAH
 I know.

A car pulls up along the road in front of the Casey farm.

Leo rises. Deborah joins him.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
 You sure you don't wanna stay? You
 can stay in their room or the
 spare.

LEO
 Thank you, but I have a room back
 in town.

Deborah hugs Leo. Leo squeezes back.

DEBORAH

I'll see you in a few weeks.

Leo breaks from the hug. Nods. Starts towards the car.

Deborah's legs shake as she lowers herself back onto her chair. Her tears run overtop her smile.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Sam re-dials the number from Russell's napkin. It RINGS and RINGS...

INT. DINER - AFTERNOON

Lindsey Grinich sits at a booth of an old school diner.

Stained clothes. Unkept hair. She looks like hell. 1950's movie posters decorate the walls. She watches her phone VIBRATING on the table. The call goes to voicemail.

Lindsey stares at the empty seat across from her.

INT. MOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Leo steps in a small motel lobby. An overweight, elderly clerk, RON WADE, perks up behind the counter.

RON WADE

Mr. Zimmer! Great to have another movie star back in McVay. Name's Ron Wade.

LEO

Glad to be here.

Ron fumbles behind the counter.

RON WADE

Ya know, I remember seeing your mama and daddy here back 30 somethin' years ago. Still the biggest thing to ever happen here. Those old sets are basically historical monuments around here.

Ron returns with a key. Gestures it at a framed newspaper clip on the wall.

On it, a photo of a younger Maryanne and Steven Zimmer. Its headline reads, "McVay in the Movies: 'The Land of the Godless' Begins Production".

LEO
Very cool.

Ron hands Leo the key.

RON
What brings you back?

LEO
Another film.

RON
And what's this one about?

LEO
Peter Casey.

Ron drops to his seat as his face loses color.

LEO (CONT'D)
See you in the morning.

Leo exits the lobby.

INT. CASEY FARM - NIGHT

FROM A LOW, WIDE ANGLE P.O.V., we are down the 2nd floor hallway from Earl as he BANGS on the boys' bedroom door.

Deborah stands just behind him.

EARL
Peter, you better get out here
right now, boy!

DEBORAH
Please, don't make him do this. I
can-

Earl punches Deborah in the face- she falls back- smashes her head against the wall, leaving a gaping hole. She slides to a sitting position. Blood drips from the head-sized hole above her. Earl steps overtop her.

EARL
Don't' fucking speak to me unless
you're spoken to.
(MORE)

EARL (CONT'D)

If you had scrapped that little fuck out of you like I told you, we wouldn't be doin' this.

Earl BANGS on the door again.

EARL (CONT'D)

Get out here, or your brother gets the next one!

The door opens. Peter steps into the hallway, clawing at the sides of his thumbs. Earl points down the hall- TWO ADULT FIGURES step into view, holding coils of rope.

EARL (CONT'D)

Do whatever they say, no questions. You hear me?

Peter nods. Walks down the dark hall. Steps inside the spare room. The two adults follow Peter inside...

The door SLAMS shut. Locks.

A bright light flickers before our P.O.V. three times-

And we are back-

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Leo awakes atop the floral motel bed covers. He removes the bandages from both his thumbs. Begins to viciously claw at the sides of them.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Leo steps inside his apartment, carrying his travel bag and a tool bag. Sam runs and jumps into his arms.

SAM

Ahhh, I missed you, Leo!

LEO

Missed you, too.

Sam drops back to her feet.

SAM

How'd it go?

LEO

Different than expected.

SAM
Is that all I'm gonna get?

Leo smirks. Winks.

LEO
For now.

SAM
What's in the other bag?

Leo reaches in the tool bag. Pulls out a coil of rope.

SAM (CONT'D)
Why...?

Leo steps towards her, slowly uncoiling the rope.

SAM (CONT'D)
Leonard Malcolm Zimmer... I did not
know you were into-

LEO
Let's go to the bedroom, Lindsey.

SAM
Hmmm, okay, Peter..

Sam grabs Leo's hand. Leads him into the bedroom.

They jump on the bed. Leo crawls atop her. Kisses her neck.
Grabs one of her arms. Fastens a loose knot around her wrist
and the bed post.

Sam smiles as he ties up her other arm.

Leo takes off his shirt, revealing a scar from an incision
along his spine. He slips off her panties. Enters her. Sam
gasps.

Leo closes his eyes. Rocks in and out. Sam gyrates in rhythm
with him. They speed up-

LEO
Lindsey..

Sam opens her eyes- glances from one restrained arm to the
other- her face drops- Leo continues blindly thrusting-

SAM
Leo... can we-

Leo MOANS as he climaxes. He opens his mouth- can't get out
the words.

Leo's fingers tremble as he unties her. He takes a seat at the edge of the bed, his back to Sam.

Sam stares at the uncoiled rope.

LEO
I'm sorry, I-

SAM
No, I thought I was into it, too,
but...

Leo brings Sam close. Kisses her on the forehead.

SAM (CONT'D)
I just don't think I can prepare
the same way as you. I'm sorry.

LEO
I understand. Sorry I-

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

Sam jumps out of bed. Scrambles for her clothes.

SAM
Fuck, that must be your father. He
called this morning about coming
over.

Leo throws on his shirt and slides into his pants.

A fully-clothed Leo opens the front door. Steven Zimmer steps inside. Hugs his son.

STEVEN
I've been trying to get ahold of
you for weeks, son.

LEO
I've been really busy. I just back
from-

STEVEN
McVay. I heard.

Father and son take a seat in the living room.

LEO
You should come visit once we start
filming. They still worship you and
mom there.

STEVEN

Yeah... maybe.

Steven taps his foot.

LEO

What's up, Dad?

STEVEN

Leo... I know what you're working towards, and how close you've come... but... why Peter Casey? There are so many better roles-

LEO

"Better"?

Sam reaches for the bedroom door knob. Stops. Leans her head against the bedroom door.

STEVEN

You're putting yourself inside the mind of a serial killer.

Leo smiles. Sarcastic as hell.

LEO

The part chose me.

STEVEN

Like the time "The Phoenix" called you to do your own stunts and you were nearly paralyzed? Or with "Spiderweb" when you intentionally became an alcoholic and had to check yourself into rehab?

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Or what about last year, when you put on and lost 60 pounds within less than a year for "Welles"? And now...

Steven looks at Leo's hands. Bloody bandages cover both his thumbs. Leo tucks them underneath closed fists.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Do you not see why I'm concerned?

LEO

I need to understand him, the only way I know how.

STEVEN

You're so much like your mother.
Too much...

LEO

What are you saying?

STEVEN

(sighs)

When we were preparing to film "The Land of the Godless", your mother was really struggling with the idea of her character having to lose a child. She was pregnant with you at the time, so the role was personal for her and... she ended up pushing herself too far. She gave her best performance, but after, she no longer wanted to act. She wanted to uproot our lives and move away from L.A. So, that's what we did... and I never got the Maryanne I knew back. Not really anyway. You never know that line until you cross it, Leo.

LEO

There is no line.

Steven looks down and away.

STEVEN

Think about Sam and what you're dragging her into.

LEO

She's an adult. She wanted the part.

STEVEN

I don't need to tell you how sick an individual Peter was. And I know you, Leo. You'll become him if no one stops you.

Leo's face reddens as he rises to his feet.

LEO

You son of a bitch. You stopped John from sending me the Casey script, didn't you?

Steven's silence confirms Leo's suspicions.

LEO (CONT'D)

Get out.

STEVEN

Leo, let me finish. I-

Leo opens his front door.

LEO

Get the fuck out.

Steven walks to the door. Lingers in the doorway.

STEVEN

I love you, son. Please, don't shut
me out.

Steven takes a step backward. Leo SLAMS the door.

Leo marches into his study. Stares at the script and crime
scene photos.

Sam cracks the study door open. They lock eyes but say
nothing.

EXT. THE TOWN OF MCVAY - DAY

A caravan of movie vans and trailers drive through the rustic
Georgia town. McVay residents watch from inside and outside
of their small shops and businesses.

EXT. FARM LAND - DAY

Down and across the street from the Casey farm, the vans and
trailers pull to a stop atop a large acreage of land. The
film crew begins to unload the props, sets, and miscellaneous
movie supplies.

EXT. CASEY FARM - DUSK

A modest SUV pulls to stop. Russell Williams steps out.

The film crew transports various equipment and props around
the house and farm. Deborah Casey rocks in her porch chair,
watching.

Russell smiles as his vision comes to life.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leo sits in his study, looking at a schedule on his laptop.

His phone is on speaker-

RUSSELL

Hey Leo, just checking in. I sent you and Sam the mostly chronological filming schedule. We're putting the final touches on getting setup over here. Principal photography on Peter's childhood begins tomorrow, so we won't need you until next Monday and Sam until the following Wednesday.

LEO

A 20-day shoot?

RUSSELL

It was a fight to get that many. Even with you signed on, the studio is worried about the film's "financial appeal". We have a great cast and crew though. We'll be fine.

LEO

Who's playing the younger Peter?

RUSSELL

Jeremy Wolf. He's a good kid. Very professional. He was in my last film. He has a lot of range for his age. He's got the look too.

Leo types "jeremy wolf" in his search bar. Clicks images. Dark eyes. Wavy blonde hair. Russell's right.

LEO

And Nick?

RUSSELL

Baker Noon. One of the producer's friend's kid. Anything else for me, Leo?

LEO

See you soon.

RUSSELL

Bye L-.

Leo hangs up. Stares at the shooting schedule alongside a headshot of child actor, BAKER NOON.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

In his study, Leo stretches his eyes open. Glances at the clock: 3:23 am. Looks down at the script. Reads an excerpt-

LEO

Int. Casey Farm. Day. Earl Casey raises a kitchen knife on his teenage son. Deborah jumps between them-

INSERT CUT: Earl punches Deborah in the face. Her head smacks against the hallway wall, leaving a large hole. She slides to the floor as blood pours from her head-

Leo re-reads the previous line-

LEO (CONT'D)

Jumps between them...?

Leo snaps out of it. Continues on-

LEO (CONT'D)

Earl shoves her to the side. Steps towards Peter. Peter charges his father. Reaches for a knife of his own-

INSERT CUT: In the dark hallway, two men appear in front of Peter-

LEO (CONT'D)

Earl lunges at Peter. Cuts his neck parallel to the other two scars. Peter clutches the fresh wound as blood spills down his torso. Earl shoves Peter inside the adjacent spare room. Inside, two grown men unbuckle their pants as they shuffle towards him. Peter pushes one man back.

INSERT CUT: Peter submits himself into the spare room. The two men close the door behind-

LEO (CONT'D)

(questioning)

Charges his father...? Pushes one man back...?

Leo leaves his study.

Leo enters the bedroom. Begins tossing clothes in a travel bag. Sam stirs awake.

SAM
Where are you going?

LEO
McVay.

SAM
Your scenes don't start till next week.

LEO
I want to be there for all of it.

Leo picks up his bag. Exits the bedroom. Sam stumbles out of bed.

Leo enters his study. Packs up his Casey materials.

SAM
Do you want me to come with you?

Leo zips his bag. Pauses a beat.

LEO
I'll see you next week.

Leo walks past Sam. Carries his bag out the front door.

Sam stands in disbelief.

EXT. CASEY FARM - AFTERNOON

Leo parks his rental car in front of the Casey driveway. He exits. Tents and trailers occupy the lawn. No cast or crew is in sight.

As Leo approaches the front porch, VOICES become louder. He steps inside.

INT. CASEY FARM - AFTERNOON

Cast and crew stand shoulder to shoulder, facing towards the kitchen. Leo shuffles between them. They notice him but don't say a word. A film slate CLACKS closed.

RUSSELL (O.S.)
And... Acton!

At the edge of the kitchen, the cinematographer looks into the camera display where our pre-teen Peter, played by JEREMY WOLF, stands across from Earl, played by ADAM MAYFIELD and Deborah, played by TESSA RODWELL. 2 makeup-crafted scars show atop Jeremy's neckline.

Russell sits in a director chair with the real-life Deborah Casey standing over his shoulder.

DEBORAH (TESSA)

Earl, stop!

Earl (Adam) grabs a prop knife. Deborah (Tessa) jumps in front of him. Earl shoves her aside. Steps towards Peter (Jeremy).

Leo shakes his head in disapproval.

Back on set, Peter grabs a prop knife of his own. Earl cuts Peter's neck, sending fake blood down his shirt. Shoves his on-screen son into the spare room. TWO NAMELESS ABUSERS pull him inside. Peter pushes the first back.

Leo grinds his teeth as he presses into his bandaged thumb.

The first abuser holds down Peter's arms. Ties his hands together with rope. The second unzips his pants. Closes the door.

Earl removes a wad of cash from his pocket. Counts it.

RUSSELL

And cut. Great job, everyone. I think that's the one.

Set decorators rush on set. Begin scrubbing up the fake blood. A script supervisor hands Jeremy a new shirt.

The authentic Deborah Casey spots Leo. Alerts Russell.

Russell approaches his star actor.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Well, everyone, as you can see we have a special guest, our adult Peter Casey, Leo Zimmer.

Jeremy Wolf and the other cast and crew, claps in unison.

Leo forces a smile.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

What brings you here?

LEO
Just wanted to see how the scenes
were going.

RUSSELL
And...?

LEO
It was...

The eyes of the entire cast and crew are glued to Leo.

RUSSELL
What is it?

LEO
This scene dynamic is all wrong.

RUSSELL
How so?

LEO
Here, Peter's a scared kid, who
doesn't want anything to do with
confrontation. He would rather hurt
himself than fight back.

In the crowd of cast and crew, Leo spots 3 y.o. Baker Noon,
our Nick Casey.

LEO (CONT'D)
That only changes after he loses
the one thing that matters to him..
Also.. I don't think Deborah would
have inserted herself between Earl
and Peter.

Deborah's face turns blood red. She turns away.

LEO (CONT'D)
This isn't the first time Peter's
been abused. Him and his mother
both know the consequences of
fighting back.

RUSSELL
Well, she was there.

Deborah faces Russell and Leo.

DEBORAH
He's... he's right.

Disbelief washes over Russell's face. He sits back in his director's chair. Gathers himself.

RUSSELL

So, uh... I guess let's try another one. This take, stand off during the confrontation, Tessa. Jeremy, uh, less anger, more pain.

Jeremy gives an uncertain nod. Takes his mark on set along with Tessa, Adam and the actors playing the nameless abusers. The set decorators hustle out of frame. The film slate CLACKS closed.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

And... action.

Earl (Adam) grabs the prop knife. Approaches Peter (Jeremy).

Deborah (Tessa) stands back.

Leo focuses on Peter who balls up his fists as tears stream down his face.

Earl cuts Peter's neck. Peter screams as the fake blood oozes out.

Leo presses harder into his shaking fingers.

Peter crawls into the spare room, sobbing. Leo walks on set.

LEO

NO, NO, NO.

Leo towers over Jeremy. A fearful Jeremy looks to Russell.

Russell remains seated with trepid silence.

LEO (CONT'D)

This... this is not Peter. Peter doesn't want anyone to see him break. We...

Leo takes off his bandages. Shows Jeremy his scabbed and bloody thumbs.

LEO (CONT'D)

He inflicts physical pain on himself to hide his real pain.

JEREMY

I'm sorry, I just don't know what exactly you want...

RUSSELL

Let's take 5, everyone.

Jeremy and the other actors wander off set. The crew files out the front door, leaving Leo and Russell.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

What the hell, Leo? You're scaring the shit out of him.

LEO

Maybe that will get you a more accurate performance.

RUSSELL

Is that why you're here? Where's this all even coming from?

Leo recovers his thumbs with the bloody bandages.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

I respect you so much as an actor, Leo, but not everyone is as... invested as you.

LEO

They should be.

Leo heads towards the front door. Russell sinks into his director's chair.

EXT. CASEY FARM - AFTERNOON

Leo passes a teary-eyed Jeremy standing by his mother.

Leo enters his rental car. Drives away.

Jeremy wipes away the tears. Breaks from his mother's side. Hustles towards the house.

INT. CASEY FARM - AFTERNOON

In the kitchen, Russell sits, deep in thought. Jeremy takes his mark on set.

JEREMY

I'm ready.

INT/EXT. CAR - AFTERNOON

Leo drives on a poorly paved back road. He pulls to a stop in front of a dilapidated church in the middle of an open field outside of town. A nearby sign reads, "Welcome to McVay: Home of 'The Land of the Godless'".

Leo takes a mental image of the church. Keeps driving.

INT/EXT. CAR - AFTERNOON

Leo drives through town. Stops at a single auditorium movie theater. Outside, a framed "The Land of the Godless" poster of Maryanne and Steven Zimmer facing the dilapidated church from outside town.

INT. CASEY FARM - AFTERNOON

Camera rolling, Peter (Jeremy) stands in the kitchen, clutching his bleeding neck. No externalized sadness. No screaming.

Earl (Adam) shoves him inside the spare room. Deborah (Tessa) quietly watches.

Peter lies on the floor, picking at the side of his fingers. Ready for what's to come.

The first abuser ties his hands together. The second unbuckles his pants. The door closes from the inside.

Earl counts his money. Deborah shudders by his side.

Off camera, Russell looks to the real-life Deborah. Her nod confirms the scene dynamic's depressing authenticity.

RUSSELL

And... cut!

INT. MOTEL - MORNING

Light spills through the grubby motel blinds. Leo lies on the bed, script in hand.

His phone RINGS- it's Sam. He doesn't answer. An unread text message from her reads, "Goodluck today. See you soon.".

LEO

Int. Shed. Night. Peter holds what's left of Nick's lifeless body.

INT/EXT. SHED - NIGHT

The camera focuses on Leo. His hair is cut shorter. Makeup-added scars bring Peter's violent history to life atop Leo's skin.

Zooming out, Peter (Leo) is holding a prosthetic child, burned and unrecognizable. He shakes his little brother-

PETER (LEO)
Wake up! Fucking wake up Nick..

Peter sets the prosthetic Nick down. Runs out the shed.

RUSSELL
And... cut.

Russell rises from his chair. The cast and crew look to one another in amazement. Several producers, including Jesse Trout, are among the stunned crowd.

Leo glances through the crowd. His eyes land on our Nick Casey, Baker Noon. They stay on him a moment.

LEO
Another one. With Baker.

Russell looks to Baker and his parents. Baker gives a thumbs up. His parents nod in agreement.

RUSSELL
Alright, slight audible, everyone.
Let's make Baker up like the
prosthetic.

The makeup crew scrambles to Baker's side. They begin applying thick, chunky coats of black body paint.

INT/EXT. SHED - NIGHT

Leo takes his mark outside the shed. Inside, a black and burned Baker lies motionless. The film slate CLACKS closed.

RUSSELL
And... action.

Peter sprints inside the shed. A trail of ash begins at the incinerator. Ends at Nick's burned body.

PETER
NICK!

Peter picks him up. Cradles his baby brother. He's on the brink of tears but the release does not come.

PETER (CONT'D)

Nick... I'm...

Peter runs his hands through what's left of Nick's hair.

Sets his body down. Presses into his thumbs.

Through teary eyes, he looks at the bloody product of his self-harm. Stops pressing. His hands curl to fists. He sprints out the shed.

RUSSELL

And... cut.

A ROARING ROUND OF APPLAUSE sounds from the cast and crew.

Jesse Trout gestures a goosebump-covered arm to Russell.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Great job, Baker!

Baker runs towards his parents. Gives Russell a big high five.

Leo watches Baker jump into his parent's arms, covering them in the black paint.

LEO

Next scene.

The applause dies down. Russell nods towards Leo.

RUSSELL

Let's keep it rolling.

Russell starts down the man-made path towards the forest.

The cast and crew follow him.

EXT. CASEY CEMEARY - DUSK

The crew finishes rigging the lighting around the grave of Nick Casey. A rain machine is positioned overtop the scene.

Eyes closed, Leo mentally prepares. Adam Mayfield gives him a playful nudge.

ADAM MAYFIELD

Try not to embarrass me too much out there.

Adam grins. Leo pays him no attention.

ADAM MAYFIELD (CONT'D)

How exactly do you think we should play it? Should there be more of a physical struggle? Should Earl fear you, or is it more he's ready to die after everything he's done? Whatever you think, I can-

Leo looks through him.

LEO

If you don't know those answers, you should get the fuck out of here.

Adam's mouth twists to an awkward smile as the color leaves his face. A crew member hands Leo a prop knife.

Russell lowers to his director chair. Deborah wanders behind him.

RUSSELL

Everybody ready?

A shaky Adam sits on the ground next to Nick's grave. A nearly empty handle of bourbon by his side. Leo takes his mark outside the forest. Simulated rain begins to fall.

The film slate CLACKS shut.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

And... action.

Earl (Adam) downs what's left of the handle. Hurls the bottle against a nearby tree. He BURPS, holding back a stomach of vomit.

Peter approaches his father, knife hidden behind his back.

EARL

The f-f-fuck you want? L-Leave me be...

Adam turns to Russell.

ADAM

Can we go again?

Russell nods. Adam takes a big breath. Everyone resets. A set decorator replaces the bourbon bottle. The slate CLACKS shut.

RUSSELL (O.S.)

And... action.

Earl gulps down the rest of the bourbon. Tosses the bottle at a nearby tree. BURPS as he fights back the vomit.

Peter steps into frame, hiding a knife behind his back.

EARL

The fuck you want? Leave me be.

Peter begins to pace around Earl.

PETER

Tell me why you killed him.

EARL

The fuck you accusing me of, boy? I loved that boy. Only one of y'all I did.

Earl whips his head around, trying to get eyes on Peter.

Starts to stand-

Peter kicks him back to the ground. Adam's face bounces off the wet dirt. No movie magic.

Off camera, Russell winces at the impact.

EARL (CONT'D)

You know that incinerator was broke. He musta gotten stuck.

Peter continues circling Earl.

PETER

You didn't want him anyway. Now there's one less mouth to feed. Might buy this place a little more time.

EARL

So help me God, I will goddamn-

Peter flashes the blade. Earl scoots backwards, arms in the air.

EARL (CONT'D)

Everything I did, I did it for our family.

Peter pulls down the neckline of his shirt, revealing his three nearly symmetrical scars.

Gestures at a scar on his arm. Takes off his shirt. A canvas of scars painted across his chest.

Earl backs against a tree.

EARL (CONT'D)

Please...

Peter closes the distance. Earl shields his face.

PETER

Look at me.

Through a gap between his raised arms, Earl locks eyes with Peter.

Peter brings the knife down against Earl's throat, ACTUALLY BREAKING ADAM'S SKIN- droplets of Adam's real blood mix with the avalanche of fake blood pouring down his neck-

Peter rears back the blade- stabs Earl in the chest, cutting Adam again-

Peter stabs Earl again and again.

Off camera, Jesse Trout looks on in horror along with the other producers. Russell opens his mouth- says nothing.

Peter stands over his father. The rain washes the blood off his blade.

RUSSELL

Cut! Wow that was... Adam, are you okay?

Adam rises to his feet.

ADAM

I'm good. Just a few scratches.

JESSE

What the hell, Leo? That was too far. That... wasn't acting.

LEO

You shouldn't be able to tell the difference.

The other producers whisper amongst themselves.

Leo turns to Adam. Adam dodges his co-star's glance.

JESSE

Leo, my trailer. Now.

Jesse leads the other producers out of the woods. Leo puts on his shirt. Follows them.

Adam runs his finger atop a cut on his neck. Blood paints his fingertip red.

INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

In a luxurious trailer, Jesse Trout and the other producers face the seated Leo. Russell lingers near the front.

JESSE TROUT

Leo, you know more about acting than any of us ever will. I can appreciate the lengths you will go to stay in character, but... we're already taking a huge financial risk making this movie, and I'm not risking a fucking lawsuit or negative press about you hurting Adam.

LEO

I barely broke his skin.

RUSSELL

You weren't even supposed to make contact with him. The blocking was choreographed so that-

LEO

He killed my fucking brother.

Awkward silence splits the trailer.

PRODUCER 1

To play devil's advocate, Adam did seem okay with scene. He's a trooper. I don't think he will take any sort of legal action.

JESSE

What about the next actor or crew member he pulls that shit on?

LEO

They know what they signed up for. If anything happens, use my check. I'm not here for the money.

JESSE

You won't be here at all if you do it again.

Leo rises from his chair. Steps within a foot of Jesse.

LEO
This is my part. No one's taking it
from me.

Leo exits the trailer.

EXT. CASEY FARM - NIGHT

Leo enters his rental car. Heads in the direction of McVay.

INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

Blood rushes to Jesse's face as he paces the room.

PRODUCER 2
He knows we have no bargaining
power. We've already invested too
much time and-

JESSE
Fuck!

Jesse throws a chair against the trailer wall.

RUSSELL
We'll move on to Pinewood tomorrow.
Return here for the final scene.
That's it, then, we're done. We
have to remember we are making
something special here.

The other producers flank Jesse as he exits the trailer.

Russell looks out the window. In another trailer, medical
personnel apply a bandage to Adam's throat.

Russell drops his head.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

In the bathroom mirror, Leo runs his hands along the makeup-
added scars atop his skin.

The motel door opens. It's Sam. She sets down her luggage.

Jogs to Leo. Hugs him. Leo puts one arm around her.

SAM
What the hell is going on?

LEO

What?

SAM

Some producer called my agent,
warning me about your "volatile
actions" on set.

LEO

It was nothing, really.

SAM

Leo, talk to me.

LEO

They want Peter Casey without his
scars.

SAM

What does that mean, Leo?

LEO

I got physical in the scene that
required me to murder someone.
That's it. No one got hurt.

SAM

Leo... whatever you do personally to
prepare...

Sam's eyes dart to his bloody fingers.

SAM (CONT'D)

...Is your choice. But when you put
that pressure on others to match
you-

LEO

It makes everyone around me better.
We only needed the one take.

SAM

Where does this-this motivation-
come from, Leo? Is it about
admiration? Respect? Living up to
your family name?

Leo turns his back to her.

SAM (CONT'D)

All I'm asking is for you to let me
in, Leo. Just a little. I want to
understand.

LEO
I... I don't know.

SAM
If you can tell me or...?

Sam stares at the back of his head. Sits on the bed. Runs her hands over her droopy eyes.

SAM (CONT'D)
Well I'll be here whenever the time comes... if ever...

LEO
Thanks, Sam.

Sam looks around the shithole room.

SAM
Why are you still staying here?

LEO
Wanted to sightsee a little longer.

Leo takes a seat beside her. Sam scratches his back.

SAM
You miss me?

Leo takes hold of her wrist. Guides her fingertips against the "scars" along his neck.

LEO
Of course I did.

Leo guides her hand farther down his scarred neck and chest. Lets go. She runs her hands farther down his torso.

SAM
Tomorrow is our big scene...

Leo backs against the bed post. Sam pulls off his pants. Crawls atop him. Leans down to kiss him.

Leo puts a finger to her lips. Tilts her head back upright.

Sam takes off her underwear. Takes off his. Lowers herself onto him. Begins rocking back and forth, resting her hands on his scarred chest.

Leo rocks with Sam WHEN-

INSERT CUT: A teenage Peter enters the dark room in the 2nd floor hallway with two adult figures-

Leo grips Sam's side. In one fluid motion, flips her on her back. Thrusts inside. Sam moans.

Leo grabs both of her hands. Holds them against the motel wall WHEN-

INSERT CUT: Leo holds Baker Noon's burned body-

Leo quickens his pace-

Sam looks up at him. His face is red. His eyes are closed.

She tries to move her arms- his grip is too tight-

INSERT CUT: Leo stabs Adam with the prop knife-

Leo thrusts harder- Sam struggles to move again- Leo continues, unaware-

Sam closes her eyes as Leo approaches his apex.

As we pull back, away from the bed and outside the motel, Leo and Peter finish together.

EXT. PINWOOD STUDIOS - MORNING

An aerial shot of the many soundstages and outdoor sets of Pinewood Studios. Ant-sized workers move between them, performing various tasks.

INT. MAKEUP TRAILER - MORNING

Leo and Sam sit side by side as makeup artists apply the finishing touches to Peter's scars and Lindsey's natural look. Sam stares ahead, out of it.

MAKEUP ARTIST

(to Sam)

You feeling okay, sweetie?

Sam says nothing.

INT. PINWOOD STUDIOS - MORNING

In the middle of a large indoor soundstage is an old motel room set. The set is mostly empty with only essential crew on standby. Russell huddles with Sam and Leo.

RUSSELL

I wanted to go ahead and get this scene out of the way, even though this isn't Lindsey's first scene chronologically. I'm firm on the dialogue here, but I want the sex itself to be whatever comes naturally to you both.

A crew member hands Leo a duffle bag. He takes his mark outside the motel door. Sam takes her spot behind him. The film slate CLACKS shut.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

And... action.

Lindsey follows Peter inside the motel room.

LINDSEY

(monotone)

What are you running from, Peter?

Peter dodges her glance.

PETER

Nothing good.

Lindsey robotically steps towards him. Places her hand on his.

LINDSEY

(flat)

You can tell me.

RUSSELL (O.S.)

Cut!

A dazed Sam looks to Russell.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Let's start again. More energy.
From the top.

Leo and Sam reposition themselves outside the motel set. Sam takes a big breath. Exhales. The film slate CLACKS shut.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

And... action.

Lindsey catches up to Peter inside the motel room.

LINDSEY

What are you running from Peter?

PETER
Nothing good.

Lindsey places her hand on his.

LINDSEY
You can tell me.

Peter pulls back his hand. Lindsey stares at the scars extending beyond the neckline of his shirt.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
From the ones who did that to you?

Peter raises a hand to shield his neck, exposing a scar atop his forearm.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
Or that?

Off camera, Russell nods at the rhythm of the scene.

Peter drops the duffle bag on the motel floor.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
Did you hurt the ones who did this
to you?

Peter picks at the cuts along his thumbs.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
That's really why you're running,
isn't it?

Lindsey closes the distance between her and Peter.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
Can you show me more?

PETER
More?

LINDSEY
Of your scars.

Lindsey gently takes ahold of the bottom of his shirt. Takes it off. Peter watches as her eyes ping-pong from one scar to the next. She places her fingertips against the scars atop his neck. Moves downward.

Lindsey reaches the scars on his lower chest. Bends down... Picks up the duffle bag. Her hands tremble as she opens it.

Lindsey removes several tightly bound coils of rope. Followed by a blade. They shake in her hands.

Russell steps onto set.

RUSSELL

This is really good you two. Just one thing: Lindsey's not scared of Peter or what he may be, at least on the surface. So, dial back the shaking, Sam. Peter's the one afraid of revealing his true self. Let's start back from when you're reaching into the duffle bag.

Sam's hands shake as she replaces the ropes and blade inside the duffle bag.

Sam inhales. Exhales. Wills her shaking hands to a stop.

She's ready.

RUSSELL (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And... action!

Lindsey bends down. Reaches inside the bag. Returns with several coils of rope and a blade. Peter's Adam's apple plunges in terror.

LINDSEY

You're him..

Peter claws at the sides of his fingers like a cornered animal. Drops of Leo's real blood fall onto the carpet.

Lindsey places her hands around both his wrists. Looks him in the eyes.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)

I'm not afraid of you.

Lindsey guides Peter onto the bed. She unbuckles his pants. Slides them off.

Peter grabs the bottom of Lindsey's shirt. Smiling, Lindsey shakes her head no. Moves his hands away.

Lindsey uncoils a rope. Ties one end around her left wrist.

The other around the bed post. Hands Peter another rope.

Peter's shaky hands tie her right arm to the bed post. He admires the entirety of her body, landing on her eyes. She gives him a smile and a nod.

Peter takes off his underwear. Lindsey takes off hers. He leans overtop of her. She guides Peter inside her.

On Russell's viewing monitor, we see a close up of Peter and Lindsey's faces as they simulate sex.

Peter picks up speed. Lindsey keeps her eyes fixed on Peter as she bites her lip.

As the sex crescendos, Peter and Lindsey moan in unison.

With one final thrust, Peter's face scrunches in release.

Lindsey lets out one final gasp.

Peter collapses on top of her. A stream of his tears run down her neck. Lindsey nuzzles her head close to his.

RUSSELL (O.S.)

And... cut. That was perfect. Let's take 15, then go ahead with the diner scene.

Leo wipes off his tears. Unties Sam.

Sam puts Lindsey's clothes back on. Wanders off set and out the soundstage.

EXT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - DAY

Sam drops her head against the soundstage wall. Tears swell in her eyes. They drip down the concrete wall.

INT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - DAY

On a diner set, a composed Sam slides into a booth across from Leo. The walls are covered with movie stars of the past. Off camera, the full cast and crew has returned.

LINDSEY

You ever see "Pulp Fiction"?

EXT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - DUSK

An older-looking Peter with a receding hairline approaches a movie theater. Outside it, a bulletin board with "Work Needed" fliers. He picks a random one reading, "PRODUCTION ASSISTANT". Stuffs it in his pocket. Enters the ticket line.

INT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - NIGHT

On a movie theater set, cameras capture Peter fully absorbed in a movie. His hands rest comfortably by his side.

EXT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - NIGHT

In a movie theater parking lot, a movie goer ducks inside their car. Peter enters the passenger side. Flashes his blade. The movie goer puts the car in drive. Heads off the lot.

INT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - DAY

On a garage set, Peter closes the lens of his camera. The movie goer's bloody body is cut with lacerations mimicking Peter's scars.

Peter reaches his bloody fingers in his pocket. Pulls out the flier from the theater.

EXT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - NIGHT

Peter enters a car. Lindsey's the driver. They speed off the lot.

INT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - DAY

On a set (of a set) of a hospital, Peter stands behind the seated director, holding a cup of coffee. The name on the cup and director's chair both reads, "QUENTIN MILLER". The production's name, "The Night Shift", is plastered over the nearly every piece of equipment not on camera.

Peter gazes at the actors, dressed as doctors, patients, and nurses, moving around on set. Mesmerized.

Quentin checks his 1st generation iPhone as he rises from his chair. Peter hands him his coffee. Quentin takes it with a smile.

QUENTIN MILLER

Thanks. What was your name again?

INT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - NIGHT

On a cramped apartment set, Peter sits at an old desk. Pen and a paper lie on top. The paper's only words read, "Written by Peter Casey". He taps his pen in frustration.

INT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - NIGHT

On the set of another movie goer's apartment, Peter stands before his latest victim. Cuts on their deceased body match Peter's scars.

Peter closes his camera lens.

INT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - DAY

QUENTIN MILLER

And... Cut...

On a set (of a set) of an abandoned hospital, Quentin Miller rises from his director chair. The cast and crew give a round of applause.

QUENTIN MILLER (CONT'D)

That's a wrap. I'm not much for sentimentality, or big speeches. But... great work everybody.

Quentin walks past Peter. Turns around.

QUENTIN MILLER (CONT'D)

What exactly do you want from all this, Peter?

Peter swallows his words. Picks at his thumb.

QUENTIN MILLER (CONT'D)

I mean, you're a great P.A. but you gotta want more, right?

PETER

Isn't it a little late for someone my age, in my position?

QUENTIN MILLER

Bullshit. Tell me what you want.

PETER

I... I want to create something... Something that'll be here after I'm not.

QUENTIN MILLER

Create what you know. Others will see their own truth in yours. I'll be happy to see your creation one day.

Quentin hands Peter a business card. Peter's mouth curls into what some would call a smile.

INT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - DAY

On Peter's apartment set, Peter traces the scars along his neck. Puts his pen to paper. The words begin flowing.

EXT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - NIGHT

On the Pinewood theater set, Peter walks past the "Now Playing" posters. Stops in front of one reading, "The Night Shift".

INT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - NIGHT

In the back row of the theater set, Peter watches the movie he was a part of come to life. His smile returns.

EXT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - NIGHT

Peter follows a movie patron through the movie theater parking lot. He stops in his tracks. Drops his head.

A camera perched on the side of the movie theater captures Peter standing. Thinking.

Peter lifts his head. Continues closing the distance between him and his next victim.

INT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - NIGHT

At Peter's apartment, Peter burns his latest victim's video onto a cd. Places the cd in his small safe.

Peter pulls out his ID badge from "The Night Shift". He hangs it on the wall.

Peter picks up his pen. Adds to what appears to be his workings of a movie script. The wounds around his fingers are beginning to scab over.

INT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - DAY

Inside a police station interrogation room, Peter sits across from two detectives. One slides a photo across the table. It's of a pixelated, shadowy figure (we recognize as Peter) standing in the movie theater parking lot.

DETECTIVE 1
L.A. Cinema 8. April 22nd. 2013.

PETER
That's not me.

DETECTIVE 2
Where were you that night?

PETER
Probably with Lindsey. At our
apartment.

DETECTIVE 1
Your girlfriend?

PETER
Am I under arrest?

INT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - DAY

In the open space surrounding Peter's apartment set, Leo and Sam sit across from one another, focused only on their scripts.

INT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - NIGHT

Peter steps onto his apartment set. A teary-eyed Lindsey rushes to his side.

LINDSEY
What do they know?

INT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - DAY

On set of Peter's apartment, Lindsey sits next to Peter. Her hand on his.

LINDSEY
My mom was mentally ill. She had more good days than bad but... on those ugly days, when she got fixated on something, there was no stopping her... One day, she... turned a knife on my father. He loved her too much too fight back... She... she ended up killing him. Tried to kill me.

Lindsey lifts her shirt. Multiple scars from stab wounds paint her torso's own grisly past.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)

I had to-to defend myself... and that meant only one of us getting out of that house alive...

(beat)

No charges were brought against me, but the police kept questioning everything I said and did. So, I panicked, and I ran. I ran as far west as I could go... where I found you...

PETER

Why did you sit at my booth?

Lindsey brushes her hands against the scars along his neck.

LINDSEY

We know what's it like to lose pieces of ourselves. I want to be there for you, and I know what you think you have to do... but if you aren't more careful... I will be alone here...

INT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - DAY

At Peter's apartment, Peter writes furiously at his desk. ID badges from other film productions hang on his wall. He flips a completed page atop a pile of the others. Grabs another piece. Continues.

A close-up of Peter's last words reads, "FADE OUT".

Peter places his pen down. Admires his magnum opus for a long moment. The wounds on his fingers are nearly healed.

Peter approaches the bedroom. Watches from the doorway as Lindsey brushes her teeth. She doesn't see him.

Peter turns around. Grabs the blade off his desk. Tiptoes out the apartment.

INT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - NIGHT

On a bedroom set, Peter stands before his bound movie goer.

They sit still. No tears. No movement.

PETER

I'm giving the opportunity I was never given. If you don't take it...

MOVIE GOER
I'm not afraid to die.

Peter summons his blade, slower than his younger self-presses it's point into the side of the movie goer's throat-they don't flinch.

Peter looks to the spot his blade presses into their skin-it's touching a trio of scars, eerily similar to his own.

Peter rips their shirt from the neckline down. His eyes follow the downward trajectory of their branching scars.

MOVIE GOER (CONT'D)
Kill me.

Peter removes the blade from their throat. It shakes in his hands.

Peter runs out of the room.

INT. PINEWOOD STUDIOS - NIGHT

Back at his apartment set, Peter reads through his script as he furiously scratches open the wounds atop his thumbs.

Blood smudges onto the pages. Peter tosses the pages into a travel bag, along with his camera and knife.

Peter opens his safe. Takes out all the CDs. Puts them in different envelopes addressed to various counties across southern California and the United States.

Peter enters the bedroom. Lindsey is fast asleep. He walks towards her. Reaches out his hand. Decides against it.

Only carrying the bag and envelopes, Peter sneaks out of the apartment.

RUSSELL
And... cut. Final shooting day back in McVay tomorrow. Dial in, everyone. The finish line's in sight.

Sam walks off set. Fades into the back of the crowd of cast and crew. Grabs her things.

Leo watches as Sam exits the soundstage.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

And I'd like to give a special thanks to Samantha Bennett, as this was her last day on set with us today.

The crowd gives a round of applause as they look around for her.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Sam?

EXT. THE TOWN OF MCVAY - NIGHT

Leo parks in the motel parking lot. Gets out. Heads down the partially lit main street.

He glances between two small shops. There's a dark alleyway with a rusty red ladder halfway down it. The dilapidated church is visible out its other end.

Leo fixates on the location.

INT. SHED - NIGHT

Russell watches outside frame as Peter tosses his script in the incinerator.

The pages turn to ash. Peter tosses his camera into the flames.

EXT. CASEY CEMETERY - NIGHT

Cameras capture Peter standing before the gravestones of his father and brother. He runs his hands along the scars on his neck.

PETER

I'm so sorry, Nick.

Peter takes his knife out of his pocket. Brings it to his neck. Slits his own throat.

Off camera, Deborah Casey can't hold back an avalanche of tears.

Peter hits the ground. Blood squirts out his neck and begins to pool underneath him. He bleeds out with his hands resting by his side.

Through the camera lens, Russell watches the final drops of fake blood spill under Leo.

RUSSELL

And... cut!

Leo rises. Stares out into the cast and crew. Solemn looks shift to smiles and applause.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Principal photography for "The Editor" is officially done. Congratulations, everyone.

Russell approaches Leo. Extends his hand. Leo shakes it.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Thank you, Leo.

Deborah Casey makes her way between them. Squeezes Leo tight.

The cast and crew form an unofficial line leading to Leo.

Leo squints past them, eyeing McVay in the distance.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leo sets down his bag. Walks into the living room. Sam's reading a book on the couch.

LEO

Hey.

SAM

You're here earlier than I would guessed.

LEO

When'd you get back?

SAM

Last night.

Sam sets down her book.

SAM (CONT'D)

Night.

Sam heads to the bedroom. Leo takes her place on the couch. Closes his eyes.

EXT. TOWN OF MCVAY - DAY

3 y.o. Nick lags behind Peter as they pass the small shop, "Nate's Knicks and Knacks". A calendar in the window marks the date, "October 13th, 1984".

Nick catches up to Peter as he turns down an alleyway. Out the other end, there's a church surrounded by various trailers, crew members and film equipment. A casting director enters the alley, wearing a headset and holding a clipboard. They give the boys a wave.

CASTING DIRECTOR
(into headset)
He's here. Be over in a minute.

The brothers stop near a red ladder in the middle of the alley. Peter places his arms on Nick's shoulders.

PETER
Promise me you'll be safe.

NICK
I promise.

PETER
Can I get one last sneak peek?

Nick drops to the cement like a ragdoll. Lies completely still. Peter claps as Nick hops back to his feet.

NICK
Can't you stay?

PETER
Earl needs me back home. Go get 'em
movie star.

Nick skips over to the casting director, who guides him in the direction of the church.

A bright light flickers over the alleyway three times-

And we are back-

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leo rolls off the couch- his eyes jolt open- he snatches his phone- dials a number-

DEBORAH
(out phone)
Is this-?

LEO
Did Nick act in "The Land of the
Godless"?

DEBORAH
Act? I don't know nothing about
that.

LEO
But it is possible?

DEBORAH
I remember the movie was filming
around the same time... If Nick had
something to do with that, he would
have done it with Peter. And Peter
wouldn't of told me shit about it.

Sam awakes in the bedroom.

LEO
When was the last time you saw him?

DEBORAH
The same day he died, October 20th.
Where's this coming from, Leo?

Leo's hands shake.

LEO
I-I...

DEBORAH
You can tell me, son.

LEO
I don't know what's happening to me
anymore.

Leo grabs a photo of his preteen self in a theater costume
alongside a proud Maryanne Zimmer. He hurls it against the
wall.

Shattered glass litters the floor around the family photo.

DEBORAH
I still think about your brother
every day. If I could go back...

LEO
All I wanted was to keep him safe.
I'm so sorry, Mom.

In the bedroom, Sam shudders in disbelief.

Leo stares at his reflection in the tv. On the shelf below, his eyes find the "The Land of the Godless" DVD.

DEBORAH

I should have been a better mom to you boys. You deserved so much better...

LEO

I have to go.

Leo hangs up. Gets up. Inserts "The Land of the Godless" into the DVD player.

Leo kneels inches from the tv. Selects scene 28 of 30.

Presses Play. Maryanne and Steven Zimmer's characters walk behind the church we recognize from outside McVay. The two step inside a large, man-made tunnel. Inside, Maryanne and Steven grip the sides of the tunnel, guiding themselves further into the darkness. Mounted lights on the tunnel walls FLICKER ON, ILLUMINATING A DEN OF BODIES. Maryanne collapses to the floor.

Leo leans closer to the tv. Maryanne crawls between the bodies in various states of decomposition. Turns a child size body over-

Leo pauses the image- not Nick.

He resumes the film. Pauses the film on a wide shot of the many bodies surrounding Maryanne-

No Nick.

Leo presses play.

Zoomed in on Leo's eyes, we see the paused reflections of the ensuing dead bodies in the scene.

EXT. ZIMMER MANSION - NIGHT

Leo uses an open palm to BANG on the front door. A groggy Steven opens up.

STEVEN

What's going on, son?

LEO

That's why you didn't want me to play Casey? Because my brother was in "The Land of the Godless"?

STEVEN

Brother? Jesus Christ, Leo. What are you talking about?

LEO

Nick. Casey. "The Land of the Godless".

STEVEN

We casted all kinds of people from town, but I have no knowledge of any of the Casey's being in it. Was he even alive when we were-

LEO

Yes he was.

STEVEN

What gave you this idea?

LEO

I... saw it.

STEVEN

In the movie...?

LEO

No. In my... in my...

STEVEN

In your what?

Steven puts his arm around his son.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Come inside. I'll get us some coffee. We can talk through this.

Leo pulls away from his father. Walks back down the porch steps. Steven follows him.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Wait, Leo. Talk to me. Please.

Leo enters his car. Slams the door. Speeds away.

Steven watches the car turn out of sight. He drops his head. Goes back inside.

INT. ZIMMER MANSION - NIGHT

Steven approaches a line of family photos positioned chronologically on the foyer mantle.

On the far left, an 8 y.o. Leo on stage performing a play. Another near the middle of Steven, Maryanne and an 18 y.o. Leo posing in front of NYU. On the far right, a photo of Maryanne hugging a heavier-set Leo on the red carpet of "Welles".

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leo enters the bedroom. In bed, Sam closes her eyes as she sees the door open.

Leo stands in the doorway, staring at her. Sam breathes in and out, mimicking sleep. Leo closes the door.

Leo kneels in front of the tv. Restarts the tunnel scene from "The Land of the Godless".

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - DUSK

Leo stirs awake. He's on the living room floor. Unshaved. Stains cover his shirt. The last rays of sunlight of the day illuminate the piles of Leo's clothes distributed around the room. The DVD title screen from "The Land of the Godless" lingers on the TV.

Leo enters the bedroom. No Sam. Looks in the bathroom. No Sam.

Leo opens his bag from the Georgia trip. Peter Casey's clothes. Coils of rope. The prop knife.

EXT. L.A. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

A clean-shaved Leo stands in line at the box office, dressed in Peter's hoodie and jeans. A baseball cap casts a shadow over his face.

His phone BUZZES in his pocket. He checks it. A text from Russell reads, "First edit is almost done. Stop by my office if you want to see a rough cut."

Leo casually tosses his phone in a trashcan.

In front of the theater, under "Coming Soon", a simplistic poster of "The Editor" of Peter's three scars in front of a white background.

INT. L.A. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

In the back row, Leo uses the everchanging lights from the movie screen to scan the seats below. He zeros in on a solo male movie goer. 65 y.o. Gray hair.

EXT. L.A. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Leo follows the movie goer through the parking lot. Picks up a duffle bag hidden underneath a bush.

Behind Leo, an OUT-OF-FOCUS PERSON follows behind him.

The movie goer walks down the back row of the parking lot. Pulls out his keys.

Leo is several yards behind him, closing the distance-

The movie goer arrives at his car- grabs his door handle-

Leo reaches into the bag-

VOICE (O.S.)

Leo Zimmer?

Leo stops in his tracks. Turns towards the voice.

FAN

Holy fucking shit, it's you.

A young adult fan jogs towards him. Pulls out their phone.

FAN (CONT'D)

Can I get a quick pic? I'm a huge fan. The fact you haven't won that Oscar yet-

LEO

Get the fuck away from me before I kill you.

The fan lowers their phone. Eyeballs Leo's attire.

Leo's chosen movie goer backs out of their parking spot. Heads out of the lot. Leo presses into the sides of his thumbs.

FAN

Is this some kind of promotional thing or something? I just saw you in the trailer for the Peter Casey movie. It looks dope.

Leo reaches into the bag. Flashes a blade- could be the prop knife... could be something else..

FAN (CONT'D)
S-sorry, Mr. Zimmer...

The fan sprints away from him-

Leo runs the blade against his own finger. Blood trickles out the fresh cut.

The blade shakes in his hand. He chucks it into nearby shrubbery.

SAM (O.S.)
Leo..

SAM IS STANDING ACROSS FROM HIM. Eyes puffy, she scans Leo from head to toe. Hustles towards the road.

Leo jogs after her-

LEO
Sam.. Stop!

Sam hops in the backseat of a car waiting for her-

LEO (CONT'D)
SAM!

The car starts off down the busy L.A. streets.

Leo runs back to his car- jumps inside- speeds out of the parking lot-

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leo steps into the bedroom. Sam is pulling her clothes out of drawers and hurling them in a large suitcase.

LEO
What are you doing?

SAM
You were following that man through a movie theater parking lot, dressed like Peter, carrying a duffle bag. The only thing that stopped you was that kid-

LEO
I only wanted to feel what he did in the leadup to that moment.

SAM

And what if you liked what you felt? Then, what?

Leo has nothing.

SAM (CONT'D)

The movie's over, Leo. Your part is done.

LEO

It isn't that simple.

SAM

I wanted to be an actor my whole life. If this is what I've been working towards...

Sam continues dumping drawers of clothes into her bag.

SAM (CONT'D)

I refuse to do this anymore.

LEO

You knew who I was when this started.

SAM

Yeah, but...

LEO

You thought you could change me?

SAM

I thought I would know where a character ends and you begin.

LEO

There are no lines. Just me.

Sam zips up her bag. Steps inches from Leo.

SAM

Then, tell me what it's like to be him. To be abused. To be used. Tell me Leo. Tell me everything you know.

LEO

Those men from McVay... they...

SAM

Not to Peter, to you, Leo.

LEO
I saw what they did to me.

SAM
Saw? I can't believe I'm still
encouraging this bullshit.

Sam walks out the bedroom. Leo idly follows her.

Sam opens the front door. Looks back.

Leo stares at her. Says nothing more.

Sam slams the door behind her.

EXT. CHINESE THEATER - NIGHT

"The Editor Premiere" is written across an overhanging
outside the iconic Los Angeles movie theater. Russell
Williams patrols the expansive red carpet, taking it all in.

Jeremy Wolf, Baker Noon, Adam Mayfield and Tessa Rodwell pose
for a "family picture". Sam, in a beautiful purple dress,
answers questions with the media.

Down the street, Leo approaches the red carpet. Hands in his
pockets. Dressed in wrinkled tuxedo and an uneven bowtie.

Tourists approach him, snapping pictures.

Before Leo can step one foot onto the red carpet, media
members have surrounded him, jabbing their cell phones and
microphones in his personal space.

MEDIA MEMBER 1
Are the reports of you being
violent on set true, or was that
all to generate hype for the film?

MEDIA MEMBER 2
Can we see your hands?

Leo walks down the red carpet, ignoring them.

MEDIA MEMBER 3
Are you and Sam Bennett officially
broken up?

Ahead on the red carpet, Sam locks eyes with Leo. She turns
back to the media. Leo walks past her.

MEDIA MEMBER 4

Is your father going to be here tonight?

Leo glances off the red carpet at the stars of the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Maryanne and Steven Zimmer's stars lie beside one another.

Leo stands frozen as an image floods over him-

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

In a low, wide angle P.O.V., we pan from left to right. We are in a projection room, high above the back of a large movie theater. A young John Boyd stands beside us. Down below, a large, nicely dressed crowd waits before a black screen. Maryanne Zimmer (in her 30s or so) enters the projection room. She bends down in front of us. An out of focus movie begins behind her.

MARYANNE

I know you don't understand everything going on... but... after this, I'll just be mom. I'll be the best one I can be. I have to..

Tears form in her eyes as she hugs our P.O.V.

When she pulls back, HER FACE HAS CHANGED TO DEBORAH CASEY-

MEDIA MEMBER 5 (O.S.)

Where does Peter Casey rank on difficulty of the roles you've played?

EXT. CHINESE THEATER - NIGHT

Media members have completely encircled Leo. His hands shake as he presses into the sides of his thumbs.

MEDIA MEMBER 6

"The Editor" 's release date appears to indicate a push for the upcoming awards season. How do you feel about your performance, specifically in terms of Oscar potential?

Russell spots Leo. Heads his way.

Blood from Leo's thumbs add to the red of the carpet.

MEDIA MEMBER 7

Is it true you threatened a fan
several weeks ago?

Leo turns around. Shoves the closest media member out of the way, leaving a pair of bloody marks on their clothes. Heads back the way he came.

Russell stops. His eyes wander to a tray of drinks.

Leo passes Sam. Sam keeps her eyes on the media before her.

Leo steps off the carpet. Hustles a block over.

Leo dips into an alleyway that dead ends on the other side.

He leans against an old, rusty ladder. Lowers himself to the ground.

Leo turns to the dead end. Where a wall once was, there's AN OPENING- and in the distance, the DILAPITATED MCVAY CHURCH-

Leo grabs the ladder. Pushes himself to his feet. Looks at his grasp- the ladder is now a FRESHLY PAINTED COAT OF RED-

Leo sprints out of the alleyway. Flags down a taxi.

INT. CHINESE THEATER - NIGHT

In front of the black theater screen, Sam takes her seat alongside her co-stars. Russell sits one row ahead in the front. The anticipation in the theater is palpable.

The screen flickers on. The Night Light Productions logo appears. The crowd cheers. Sam looks at the empty seat beside her.

The opening shot slowly closes in on Peter Casey in the back row of a movie theater eyeing his auditorium's sparse crowd.

INT. LEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leo throws on Peter's old hoodie. Puts on a ball cap. Zips up his travel bag.

On his way out through the kitchen, Leo stops. Stares at a block of knives.

INT. CHINESE THEATER - NIGHT

On screen: Peter holds Nick's burned body.

The crowd sniffles and dabs their eyes.

INT. AIRPORT - NIGHT

An incognito Leo waits for his bag to be checked.

INT. CHINESE THEATER - NIGHT

LINDSEY

But... on those ugly days when she
got fixated on something, there was
no stopping her... One day, she...
turned a knife on my father. Killed
him. Tried to kill me.

On screen: Lindsey lifts her shirt. Multiple scars cover her abdomen.

In the crowd, a critic mouths "WOW" to another.

Near the front, Sam takes a big breath in and out.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Leo takes a seat in economy seating.

INT. CHINESE THEATER - NIGHT

PETER

I'm so sorry, Nick.

On screen: Peter sits in front of Earl and Nick's gravestones. He raises a knife to his neck. Slits his own throat. Hands idle by his side, Peter bleeds out in a puddle of his own blood. The screen fades to black. The text reads, "In loving memory..." as it cycles through the 18 victims and culminating in Nick Casey.

As soon as "Directed by Russell Williams" appears, the crowd rises to their feet in applause. As Leo Zimmer's name fades in, the crowd hoots and hollers. As Sam Bennett's name fades in, the crowd noise remains equally as loud.

Russell smiles as he faces the standing ovation. His eyes wander to Leo's empty seat. His face drops.

Sam smiles in quiet confidence.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Full moon overhead, Leo uses a flashlight to guide his path behind the dilapidated church. He finds the tunnel opening covered with faded "Do Not Enter" tape. Leo hops inside.

INT. TUNNEL - NIGHT

Leo shines his light ahead as he progresses deeper inside.

The tunnel opens into a den. Chipped and weathered prosthetic bodies of adults and children cover the dirt floor.

Leo picks up one that's made to appear 3 or 4 years old. He stares into its eyes. They almost look real.

EXT. THE TOWN OF MCVAY - NIGHT

Leo retraces Peter and Nick's steps into the alleyway.

Leo stops. Closes his eyes. Concentrates-

INSERT CUT: Peter watches Nick walk towards the casting director on the church-side of the alleyway-

Veins bulging atop his forehead, Leo shakes his head as he tries again-

INSERT CUT: Outside the alley, Peter walks several paces ahead of his little brother. Nick glances in the nearby store window of Nate's Knicks and Knacks. The owner, NATE WINSLOW winks at Nick-

Leo turns towards the town-side of the alley. The light flickers off within the still-standing Nate's Knicks and Knacks.

Leo reaches into his bag. Wraps his fingers around a blade handle. Slides it into his pocket.

INT. NATE'S KNICKS AND KNACKS - NIGHT

A welcoming bell RINGS as Leo steps inside the dark store.

NATE
(from the back)
We're closed. Come back tomorrow.

Leo runs his hands across the various miscellaneous junk atop the shelves. The lights flicker on. The anger on Nate's old, wrinkly face transforms to bewilderment.

NATE (CONT'D)

Mr. Zimmer, I uh, didn't know you were still in town. I reckon I can stay open a bit longer.

Leo walks between the shelves, inching closer to Nate.

NATE (CONT'D)

Can I help you find something particular?

Leo looks at Nate for the first time.

LEO

Maybe. You knew the Casey brothers, didn't you?

NATE

I-I did.

Leo steps closer. Doesn't break eye contact.

NATE (CONT'D)

Me and Earl were friends so I was around the farm a good little bit actually.

LEO

What kinds of things did you do around there?

Sweat drips out Nate's old pores.

NATE

What's this all about?

LEO

Answer the question.

NATE

Helped Earl out.

LEO

How exactly did you help him?

Nate wipes the sweat from his forehead. Leo reaches into his pocket as he steps closer-

NATE

I uh... funded his business.

LEO

What about the boys? Were you upset when Nick died?

NATE

Of course. He was like a nephew to me.

LEO

And Peter...?

Nate reaches underneath the counter.

NATE

I never saw that... side of the family.

LEO

What side did you see?

Behind the counter, Nate tightens his grip around a 22 MAGNUM-

Leo grips the handle of his concealed blade. He steps to the other side of the counter as Nick.

LEO (CONT'D)

Tell me what you did.

NATE

I didn't hurt him. I never hurt him..

Leo removes the blade, keeps it hidden beneath the counter-

LEO

You see, I don't know if I believe that.

Nate picks up his 22-

RING RING

Leo slips the blade back in his pocket- turns to face the store visitor- it's Ron Wade from the motel.

RON

The prodigal son has returned. What you doin' back around? Holdin' up me and Nate's drinking time, no doubt.

Leo walks past him and out the store.

Nate sets his gun back down as he lets out a winded exhale.

RON (CONT'D)

The fuck was that about?

EXT. THE CASEY FARM - NIGHT

Leo carries his bag onto the porch. Deborah Casey opens the door. Wraps her arms around Leo, squeezing him tight.

INT. THE CASEY FARM - NIGHT

Leo and Deborah sit on the bottom of the boys' bunk bed.

DEBORAH
Wasn't the premiere tonight?

LEO
It was...

DEBORAH
Why aren't you there?

Leo looks down at his mangled fingers. Pauses a beat.

LEO
Is there anyway it wasn't an
accident that Nick got into the
incinerator?

DEBORAH
What do you mean?

LEO
Were there any suspicions of foul
play?

DEBORAH
Not by me, or anyone else for that
matter.

LEO
There was an autopsy, right?

DEBORAH
The closest coroner is 50 somethin'
miles away. I didn't want to be
away from my boy a single second
when I already knew what happened.
What are you getting at?

LEO
Nate. From Town.

Deborah scratches her face. Slumps forward.

LEO (CONT'D)
What do you know about him?

DEBORAH

He was... a decent man. I... Earl and them really got along. He was kinda like an uncle to the boys.

LEO

Was he around the day you found Nick?

DEBORAH

Not that I remember...

Her face is turning red.

LEO

What are you hiding?

DEBORAH

I can't...

LEO

I'm your son.

DEBORAH

Nate never laid a finger on Nick. But you...?

LEO

What did he do?

DEBORAH

Don't make me say it... Please...

Deborah glances through the open bedroom door at the blood-stained hole in the hallway wall-

INSERT CUT: In the dark, 2nd floor hallway, our P.O.V. eyes Deborah on the floor. Above her, the bloody hole in the wall. Two adult figures step in front of us. We tilt up at one of them- it's NATE WINSLOW-

LEO

It was Ron too..

INSERT CUT: In the same P.O.V., we tilt up to the other adult figure- it's RON WADE-

Leo jumps from the bed- grabs his bag- heads into the hallway-

DEBORAH

Peter, stop... Please...

Leo obeys. Stares past her, out the rectangular window overlooking the property. His eyes return to the shed.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

Earl needed the money. That's how it started. Why it kept on...

LEO

Don't spit out Dad's excuses for being a piece of shit. You watched it happen.

Deborah collapses in front of him.

DEBORAH

I was scared of what the son of a bitch would...

Leo runs his fingers across the hole in the hallway wall.

Looks down at her- a jagged scar protrudes atop her scalp.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

No, you're right. I'm so sorry Peter.

Deborah wraps her arms around his lower body.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

Please don't go after them. I can be better. I will be better.

Leo lowers to her level.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

I can't lose another son...

Peter hugs his mother.

INT. SHED - DAY

A young adult Peter Casey watches TV alongside 3 y.o. Nick.

Charlton Heston's character, George Harris, collapses on the beach.

GEORGE HARRIS

You finally really did it. You maniacs! You blew it up! God damn you! God damn you all to hell!

Nick's mouth drops. Peter smiles at his brother's reaction.

NICK
They were here???

Peter gives Nick a slight smile. Nick mirrors his brother.

NICK (CONT'D)
It's all pretend, right?

PETER
Yes, just pretend, bud.

EARL
(in distance)
Goddammit where are you boys?

A fearful Nick looks to Peter. Peter ejects the VHS- hands it to Nick-

PETER
Just like we practiced.

Peter covers the TV with an old bed sheet- rolls the cart it stands on behind the incinerator- he disappears out the shed.

Nick crawls under the incinerator- pulls out a loose piece of wood flooring- puts the VHS inside a red bag within the small gap where other VHS's are hidden.

Nick inserts the wood piece back in place- remains underneath the incinerator-

From Nick's LOW P.O.V., we see Peter backing into the shed- Earl follows him in-

EARL
What are you hiding, boy?

Earl smashes Peter's head against the concealed TV- Peter smacks the ground-

EARL (CONT'D)
What did I fucking tell you about distractions?

Earl pummels both of Peter's eye sockets-

Nick covers his mouth as tears stream down his face.

Peter goes limp.

Earl picks up his eldest. Carries him out the shed.

Nick cowers under the incinerator.

A bright light flickers across the shed three times-

And we are back-

INT. CASEY FARM - NIGHT

Leo jolts awake on Peter's bottom bunk- steps over the fast asleep Deborah on the floor- creeps out of the room-

INT. SHED - NIGHT

Leo uses a flashlight to illuminate the shed. On the floor, the burned marks of where Nick's body once laid.

Leo drops onto his belly. Crawls underneath the incinerator-

Leo pats down the wood flooring- finds a LOOSE PIECE-

Leo reaches towards the piece- his hand trembles, hovering in the air above it-

He can't bring himself to do it...

Leo pushes himself to his feet. Shines his flashlight on the TV set. 3 vertical slivers of glass are all that remain of the screen.

Leo slams his fist through it, shattering the last of the screen.

EXT. L.A. THEATER - NIGHT

MOVIE GOER

Two for "The Editor", please.

A pair of movie goers takes their tickets at the Box Office.

A line behind the pair stretches down the block.

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

In her new up-scale, open floor apartment, Sam sits on a couch, scrolling through reviews of "The Editor" on her laptop. She clicks one. Her eyes scan its words meticulously. A passage reads, "Though the Robin to the serial killer Batman, Sam Bennett's performance as Lindsey Grinich gives much-needed humanity to an otherwise unrelatable and misunderstood piece of the Peter Casey saga."

She clicks on another from "The New York Times". A passage reads, "Samantha Bennett's transformation into Casey's enigmatic girlfriend is equally as captivating."

Sam glances around her new space. Exhales an audible sigh of relief.

INT. NIGHT LIGHT PRODUCTIONS STUDIO - DAY

In Jesse Trout's office, a studio worker hangs a framed newspaper clipping of the December 26th-28th Box Office numbers. "The Editor" is number one, having made over \$80 million.

EXT. CASEY FARM - DAWN

In the early morning hours, Leo Zimmer uproots rotten crops from the field behind the Casey house. Adds them to the rest of the pile.

INT. ZIMMER MANSION - AFTERNOON

Steven Zimmer reads a 4 out of 4 star review in the "L.A.

Times" paper. John Boyd reads from over his shoulder.

Steven tosses it aside. Picks up his cell phone. Dials Leo's number- it goes straight to voicemail.

INT. CASEY FARM - NIGHT

Trash bag in one hand, Leo scoops up an old coloring book off the now-somewhat visible living room floor. Deborah nods. He tosses the book in the bag.

Dozens of full trash bags pile up on the porch.

INT. NIGHT LIGHT PRODUCTIONS STUDIO - DAY

In Jesse Trout's office, a studio worker hangs a 2nd framed newspaper clipping of the January 2nd-4th Box Office numbers. "The Editor" holds strong at #1.

INT. CASEY FARM - DAWN

Leo tosses and turns in his sleep atop Peter's bottom bunk.

He jolts awake. Exits the bedroom.

EXT. THE TOWN OF MCVAY - MORNING

A disheveled Leo walks along the mostly-empty main street of McVay. Down the street, Nate unlocks and steps inside his store.

Leo runs his fingertips atop the exposed flesh around his thumbs.

INT. NIGHT LIGHT PRODUCTIONS STUDIO - DAY

In Jesse Trout's office, an office worker hangs a Box Office Leaderboard for the month of January. "The Editor" is far and away #1.

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Sam sits inches from the image on her TV of the Academy President standing in front of the 2018 Oscars backdrop.

ACADEMY PRESIDENT

The nominations for "Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role" are..

Sam leans in-

ACADMEY PRESIDENT

Tameka Restrepo, "A Cold Place".
Wanda Lin, "Trenches". Samantha Bennett, "The Editor".

Sam jumps to her feet. Does a little happy dance.

SAM

Yes! Yes! YES!

INT. CASEY FARM - MORNING

A shirtless Leo stands in front of the mirror, knife in hand. He raises it to left side of his neck- cuts vertically downward atop the top layer of skin- a steady stream of blood runs down his torso-

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - MORNING

ACADEMY PRESIDENT

The nominations for Best Performance by an Actor in a leading role are..

Sam removes her phone from her ear as she turns her attention back to the TV.

ACADEMY PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
Dennis Santiago, "The Temple". Jung Lin, "Shi". Demetrious Johnson, "Octogan". Ricardo DuPont, "Friday After Next".

INT. CASEY FARM - MORNING

Leo completes the trio of cuts atop his neck with a third downward strike of the blade.

ACADEMY PRESIDENT (V.O.)
And... Leo Zimmer, "The Editor".

EXT. CASEY FARM - MORNING

A shirtless Leo steps on the front porch. He dabs a towel against his neck. Deborah rocks in her chair.

DEBORAH
You were nominated. Samantha, too.

Leo sits on this, reactionless. Deborah notices his cuts. Pretends she doesn't.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)
I understand if you want to go back.

Leo puts on a pair of worn gloves. Heads towards the remaining dead backyard crops.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Steven Zimmer leans across Russell's desk, wagging his finger in the director's face.

STEVEN
I told you he couldn't take this part, Russell.

RUSSELL
That wasn't my dec-

STEVEN
He's not answering my calls. No one's seen him in weeks. He's... he's not coming back.

Russell drops his head.

RUSSELL

I wanted to show my brother wasn't
just another body.

(beat)

I thought your son would be the
best person to do that...

Steven storms out. Russell shudders in unison with the SLAM
of the door.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - AFTERNOON

The REAL-LIFE Lindsey Grinich walks through a mostly empty
movie theater lobby. Wearing dark clothes, she dips in an
auditorium playing a matinee of "The Editor". A poster of the
film outside the auditorium reads, "Nominated for 5 Academy
Awards".

INT. MOVIE THEATER - AFTERNOON

In the back row of a half-full theater, Lindsey watches her
on-screen counterpart slide into the diner booth in front of
Leo Zimmer's Peter Casey.

Lindsey smiles, lost in the past.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - AFTERNOON

Lindsey gazes at the image of a shirtless Peter admiring his
scars in the mirror.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - AFTERNOON

Lindsey silently sobs as she watches Peter kneel by Nick and
Earl's graves. She rises from her seat. Heads down the steps
and towards the exit.

On screen behind her: Peter slits his own throat.

INT. LINDSEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lindsey enters her apartment. Grabs a knife. Flips over a
crappy, pleather couch. Cuts a large diagonal hole in its
bottom. Reaches inside.

EXT. CASEY FARM - MORNING

Drenched in sweat, Leo chugs a cup of water on the porch next to Deborah. Yellowy scabs have formed over his neck wounds.

DEBORAH

You should be there tonight.

LEO

There's nothing left for me there.
Only Leo.

Leo heads into the backyard. The crops appear well maintained for the 1st time in a long time. Dark clouds loom on the horizon.

EXT. BACK ROAD - MORNING

Down the street from the Casey Farm, AN UNKNOWN PERSON IN A PARKED SUV watches Leo disappear into the field of crops.

EXT. CASEY FARM - MORNING

The shed looms before Leo.

He forces himself away from it. Grabs a bag of seeds. Pours it into a mad-made trough in the dirt.

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Wearing an eloquent, white dress, Sam stands in front of a mirror, adjusting her hair. Her nearby calendar counts down to today's one-word, handwritten note, "Oscars".

INT. HOTEL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Russell adjusts his bowtie in the mirror. Sweat glistens atop his forehead.

INSERT CUT: David's cut-up body on a metal coroner's table-

Russell leans down to a mini-fridge. Opens it up. Bottles of various liquors line its shelves.

Russell pops open a handle of vodka. He stares at its intoxicating contents.

INSERT CUT: Leo (acting as Peter) stabs the prop knife into Adam Mayfield, over and over-

Russell chugs half the bottle. Goes to his suitcase. Rips out the bottom lining- there's a HEROINE LOADED SYRINGE.

Russell yanks up his tuxedo sleeves- rips off a pillow case- ties off his forearm with it-

He inserts the needle into a vein on his wrist-

He crumples onto his back. His eyes roll halfway to the back of his head.

INT. SHED - NIGHT

A sweaty Leo steps into the shed. He takes a seat by the incinerator. He stares underneath at the piece of loose flooring.

EXT. DOLBY THEATER - AFTERNOON

Celebrities and media span across the sprawling red carpet.

2018 Oscars logos cover every object within eyesight.

Sam strolls towards the theater entrance, posing for pictures along the way. Media members approach her.

MEDIA MEMBER 1

How are you feeling about your chances tonight?

SAM

You know, really good actually. The other nominees are obviously deserving, but why not me?

MEDIA MEMBER 2

I know you are no longer seeing each other, but any word on if Leo is making an appear-?

SAM

No idea. Thank you all. I really have to get going.

Sam heads back on her way when someone grabs her hand from behind- she whips around- IT'S RICHARD GLENNER. His lumbering figure towers over her.

RICHARD GLENNER

A time like this makes you remember what got you here.

Richard winks at her. Sam keeps her head high as she stares into his beady eyes. She smiles as she disengages and heads into the theater.

Richard stands behind, almost looking disappointed.

Further back on the red carpet, Russell uses the velvet ropes to stabilize himself. Jesse Trout approaches. Extends his hand to Russell. Russell ignores it.

JESSE TROUT

Russell, what's going on? You look like shit.

Several media members surround him. Russell gestures them away. Jesse Trout wanders away with them.

Photographers snap pictures of the developing scene.

Russell lets out a heaving sound. He closes his mouth as his cheeks fill with vomit. He swallows it down. Staggeres towards the theater.

INT. SHED - NIGHT

Leo drops onto his belly. Crawls underneath the incinerator-

Leo reaches towards the LOOSE PIECE-

Leo grabs it- pulls it out-

Leo looks down in the opening-

NOTHING'S THERE...

Leo backs out from underneath. Drops his head onto the floor. Outstretches his hand to where Nick once burned..

Leo rises to his feet. Hustles out the shed.

INT. DOLBY THEATER - AFTERNOON

In the heart of the packed hall of the most important people in the film industry, Sam Bennett closes her eyes.

The host is handed a sealed envelope on stage.

HOST

And the Oscar for "Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading role" goes to...

The host opens the envelope-

HOST (CONT'D)
Samantha Bennett, "The Editor".

Sam rises to her feet. The crowd stands in applause. She wipes away the tears as she approaches the stage.

The host hands Sam her Oscar. She admires it for a long moment. Takes her place behind the podium and microphone.

SAM
Thank you. Thank you... My heart goes out to all of the Casey victims' families. And to Deborah Casey and Lindsey Grinich, who hurt and lost so much...

A jittery Russell Williams tweaks in his seat.

SAM (CONT'D)
I'd like to thank Russell Williams and all the other great minds behind the making of "The Editor" and also the members of the Academy who voted for me. This is truly humbling..

The crowd's applause picks back up. Sam pauses a beat.

SAM (CONT'D)
There's something else I want to say...

The crowd noise deafens to a pen-drop silence.

SAM (CONT'D)
My story started out as the classic, "Hollywood" cliché: an aspiring actress who moved to L.A. with a dream and no plan. I did commercials, played background extras on smaller tv productions. Whatever it took. I knew it wasn't sustainable, but I loved acting, and I told myself it would be worth it one day. Well... one day, I got the call. My agent told me the Richard Glenner was interested in me playing a role in his next film.

In the crowd, those seated around Richard Glenner turn to him. He beams from the attention.

SAM (CONT'D)

I dropped everything and met with him the same day. Richard described the character and how he envisioned me playing her. I was... beside myself. I felt as if this was finally the validation for all my hard work. Richard told me this was my big break... that is, if I let him fuck me.

The crowd gasps.

Richard Glenner's face goes white.

SAM (CONT'D)

And I did. I got the part. Got bigger and better roles. And now I'm here. On this stage. An Academy Award winner. All because of a degrading act at the hands of a manipulative man in a place of power.

Richard Glenner scurries out of the theater.

SAM (CONT'D)

I've felt so much shame, for so long, as if I cheated or didn't actually deserve the success I was getting. So, I kept it all in, but... I'm done feeling guilty. I'm done protecting him and all the other abusers. I'm not at fault. We're not at fault. This award goes out to all those who have been told they don't have a voice, or whose voice doesn't matter. It matters more than anything.

Sam steps away from the podium. The crowd rises as one, cheering and howling for Sam. Russell sobs uncontrollably.

Sam walks off stage, clutching her Oscar. She can't contain her prideful smile.

EXT. CASEY FARM - NIGHT

Leo storms onto the porch. Deborah's face flashes concern as she slows her rocking to a stop.

LEO

Where did you move them?

DEBORAH

Move what?

LEO

He's my brother. I deserve to be able to see it.

DEBORAH

What are you talking about?

Rain begins crashing down over the Casey property.

LEO

The things under the floorboard. Where is everything?

DEBORAH

I don't know what you're talking about.

LEO

I'm not crazy... I saw it. I was there... I know it's supposed to be there...

DEBORAH

You saw it? Like a dream?

LEO

A memory.

Leo beats his fists against his forehead.

LEO (CONT'D)

I don't get it... it was all there... I was there...

DEBORAH

Peter, you're scaring me...

LEO

I saw it... Peter saw it... Nick saw it...

Leo's eyes go wide. THE PIECES HAVE COME TOGETHER...

Leo sprints off the porch and into the crops-

Deborah pushes herself to her feet-

EXT. BACK ROAD - NIGHT

In the parked SUV, the UNKNOWN PERSON watches Deborah pursue Leo through the rain.

SUDDENLY, ANOTHER CAR speeds past the parked SUV- drifts into the Casey driveway- its breaks SQUEAL as it pulls to a stop-

The driver gets out, impossible to make out their identity through the rain-

EXT. CASEY CEMETERY - NIGHT

Leo stands before the 3 Casey graves. He grabs the nearby shovel. Heaves it into the ground underneath the makeshift gravestone reading, "Nick Casey".

Leo tosses a pile of dirt to the side. Buries the shovel back into the ground. Adds to the pile of dirt.

DEBORAH (O.S.)
What the hell are you doing?

Out of breath, Deborah arrives behind Leo, who tosses another shovel of dirt to the side.

Deborah reaches for the shovel. Leo puts a hand on her shoulder. Shakes his head an authoritative "no".

Deborah backs up. Her legs turn to jelly as she lowers to the ground.

Leo lowers the shovel again- CLUNK.

He looks into his freshly dug hole- Nick's wooden casket.

Leo drops into the grave.

UNKNOWN VOICE (O.S.)
You already know...

Leo and Deborah twist their heads around. LINDSEY GRINICH STANDS IN THE FOREST OPENING. Red bag in hand.

DEBORAH
What the fuck are you doing here?

LINDSEY
I'm here for him.

Leo drops the shovel. Claws at the sides of his thumbs.

LEO

What do you think I know?

Lindsey points at Nick's gravesite.

Leo's hands shake as he brushes the dirt off the casket lid-

Leo opens it-

His eyebrows raise in horror-

Deborah crawls to the edge of the grave-

In the casket- THE BURNED BODY OF NICK CASEY-

DEBORAH

He l-looks... the same...

Leo grabs the shovel. Raises it above the body-

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

STOP!

Leo thrusts the shovel down, splitting a six-inch wide hole in the body's torso-

Leo pulls both sides of the hole away from each other- IT'S ALL RUBBER AND PLASTIC-

Leo collapses against the dirt wall.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

Someone tell me what is going on.

Lindsey sets down her bag. Unzips it. VHSs fill the top of its contents. "Planet of the Apes" is among them.

LINDSEY

These belong to you.

LEO

You're the one who moved...

LINDSEY

I didn't want to bring new life to this whole story. But... after I saw you- as him- I couldn't hold onto this any longer.

Lindsey reaches further into the bag. Returns with a camera.

She hands it to Leo-

Leo turns on the camera- opens the video display- presses play- IT'S PETER sitting at his apartment desk-

PETER

If you're watching this... Fuck...

Peter swipes a tear away.

DEBORAH (O.S.)

Where is my son!?

A tear of Leo's own drips onto Peter's image. All the surrounding noise drowns out-

PETER

When I saw you on set of "Welles", that was the first time I had seen the Leo Zimmer in person. It was the strangest feeling. I had seen all your movies and was a really big fan. So, I thought maybe I was starstruck. But... when the feeling didn't pass, I realized it was something else. Something I felt a long time ago. So, I went looking. Went back home. Dug up the body. What Steven and Maryanne did... became painfully clear. I thought about killing them. I thought about doing worse. But... those thoughts faded away... They had given you the kind of life I always wanted you to have. One I couldn't have ever given you... How could I blame the Zimmer's for that?

Leo wipes his eyes.

PETER (CONT'D)

You're probably upset I didn't just tell you. That I didn't meet you... I-I didn't want to put the weight of my sins, of my name, on your shoulders. I only wanted you to find the truth if you went looking like I did... I want you to know I loved you and there wasn't a day that went by that I didn't think of you and all the happiness you brought to my life... I wish there was time for more...

Peter smiles through his tears.

PETER (CONT'D)

Be Leo. Be Nick. Be whoever you want to. Just don't be me. I'm going away for awhile, bud. Maybe, I'll see you again one day. I'm so sorry.

The video cuts to black. Leo looks to Deborah as sound from the outside world floods back in-

DEBORAH

N-Nick...?

Leo examines his hands as if he's seeing them for the 1st time.

Lindsey backs away from the bag of the boys' things.

LINDSEY

I've made a lot of mistakes in my life. Trying to keep this from you is at the top. I can't apologize enough for my part in this. If you never want to see me again, that's okay. If you want to kill me, I certainly won't stop you. But if you ever need me, I will always be there for Peter's little brother.

Lindsey disappears into the crops.

Leo curls his hands into fists. Deborah raises a shaking hand to her son. Leo knocks it away.

DEBORAH

I've had the real thing this entire time... I love you Nick.

LEO'S P.O.V.: "Nick" echoes throughout Leo's head-

Leo covers both his ears as his face scrunches in agony-

STEVEN (O.S.)

Son...

Steven Zimmer arrives at the edge of the woods.

INT. DOLBY THEATER - NIGHT

HOST

Our final acting award of the night includes all the compelling storylines we long for in an award as prestigious as this. The previous Oscar winner. The newcomer. The one who's come so close, so many times.

The giant screens cut to an image of Leo as Peter Casey.

EXT. CASEY CEMETERY - NIGHT

Leo crawls out of the grave- approaches Steven-
Steven looks past his son, at the open casket-

STEVEN

What have you done, Leo?

Leo shoves Steven, sending him stumbling back several feet-
Steven eyes the scars along Leo's neck.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

I didn't want you to-

LEO

You were afraid I would find out
who I really am.

Steven blinks several times in rapid sensation. Swivels his head to see Deborah rushing him-

DEBORAH

You STOLE my son!

Leo signals Deborah to stop. She does.

Leo reaches into Peter's bag. Digs past the VHSs.

Underneath, PETER'S MANUSCRIPT.

PETER'S BLOOD-STAINED BLADE...

INT. DOLBY THEATER - NIGHT

HOST

The nominees for "Best Performance
by Actor in a Leading Role" are...
Dennis Santiago, "The Temple".

In the crowd, a comatose Russell struggles to keep his eyes
open.

EXT. CASEY CEMETERY - NIGHT

Leo picks up the blade-

LEO

Tell me what you did!

Leo steps closer to Steven- Steven takes a step back-

STEVEN

We heard horrible things about the
Casey's when we were filming in
town. Maryanne and I knew we could
give you a happy life...

LEO

She was already pregnant...

Steven backs against a tree- Leo takes a step closer-

STEVEN

She was...

LEO

Fucking say it!

INT. DOLBY THEATER - NIGHT

Jesse Trout taps his foot.

HOST (O.S.)

Demetrious Johnson, "Octogan".

EXT. CASEY CEMETERY - NIGHT

STEVEN

She wanted to prepare herself to
play the grieving mother. So, she-
she swallowed something she knew
would make her just that... That way
she no longer had to act...

Steven sinks to the muddy ground.

LEO'S P.O.V: A bright light flashes before him-

Leo shakes his head violently. Bangs his fists against the side of his head.

INT. DOLBY THEATER - NIGHT

A fidgety John Boyd sits several rows from the front.

Steven's seat lies empty beside him.

HOST (O.S.)
Jung Lin, "Shi".

EXT. CASEY CEMETERY - NIGHT

STEVEN
She immediately regretted it... and wanted to fill that void... So, when she saw you on the church set, that was it...

LEO'S P.O.V: A bright light flashes twice before him-

Leo tightens his grip around Peter's blade handle-

LEO
I was in the "The Land of the Godless"...

INT. DOLBY THEATER - NIGHT

HOST
Ricardo DuPont, "Friday After Next".

Russell's eyes roll to the back of his head- his head crashes against the seat in front of him-

EXT. CASEY CEMETERY - NIGHT

STEVEN
We burned all the film you were in frame. After shooting wrapped, John and I watched this place and came up with a plan... The body props from the church were so life-like, we thought if we burned one...

LEO'S P.O.V: A bright light flashes three times before him-
and we are-

INT. CASEY FARM - NIGHT

3 y.o. Nick lies awake in the boys' top bunk. A light flashes
three times through the bedroom window- Nick looks outside-
STEVEN ZIMMER IS THERE, holding a flashlight. He gives a
friendly way. In the distance, smoke rises from the shed.

Nick jumps off the bed. Shakes Peter.

NICK

Peter, it's the man from the
movies. He's out there. Peter wake
up.

Peter doesn't move. His face is discolored and beat-up.

Nick hugs his brother.

NICK (CONT'D)

Be back in a minute.

The flashlight flashes into the bedroom three more times-

And we are back-

EXT. CASEY CEMETERY - NIGHT

Leo runs the tip of Peter's blade against the tip of his
finger. Still sharp...

STEVEN

Maryanne wanted to keep you out of
the public eye long enough to where
there wouldn't be any questions...
So, she gave up acting, and we
moved up to New Hampshire...

LEO

The dementia...

STEVEN

She was diagnosed, but... a few
months before she killed herself,
Peter showed up at our door and
told us what he knew. Said he
wanted to see our faces to confirm
his suspicions.

INT. DOLBY THEATER - NIGHT

Sam clutches her Oscar.

HOST (O.S.)
Leo Zimmer, "The Editor"

EXT. CASEY CEMETERY - NIGHT

STEVEN
Her guilt had come full circle..
Maryanne was beginning to forget
everything around her except for
the one thing she actually wanted
to. That was too much for her in
the end..

The blade shakes in Leo's hand-

DEBORAH
Peter wouldn't want this..

STEVEN
Leo, I love you more than anything
in the world. I've only tried to
protect you.

Leo arrives above Steven-

INT. DOLBY THEATER - NIGHT

The host is handed an envelope on stage-

EXT. CASEY CEMETERY - NIGHT

STEVEN
I'm sorry, for everything. You're a
good person, Leo. Please. Come
home.

LEO'S P.O.V: "Home" echoes through Leo's head-

Leo raises the blade above Steven-

DEBORAH
I'm begging you..

Steven drops his head. Closes his eyes.

INT. DOLBY THEATER - NIGHT

The host opens the envelope-

HOST

And the winner for "Best
Performance by an Actor in a
Leading Role" goes to...

EXT. CASEY CEMETERY - NIGHT

The blade shakes above Leo's head-

HOST (V.O.)

Leo Zimmer, "The Editor".

We close in on Leo's face as he strikes the blade downward-

Blood splatters across Leo's face... Nick Casey's face...

We stay on Leo as he furiously stabs Steven-

Deborah stands behind. Watching. Crying. Frozen.

EXT. CASEY FARM - NIGHT

At her car, Lindsey shudders at the sound of Steven's screams. She hops inside- punches the gas, fleeing one last time.

EXT. CASEY CEMETERY - NIGHT

Steven lets out one final gasp. Drops dead.

The rain washes a stream of Steven's blood towards Earl's grave.

The man renamed Leo raises Peter's bloody blade. The rain washes Steven's blood off. The blood of Peter's past victims remains.

The man with Peter's scars lowers the blade to his side. Faces his birth mother.

Deborah reaches out a hand to her son.

The man given the birth name, Nick Casey, grabs the bag of his and Peter's things. He turns his back to the family cemetery.

The man carries his weapon into the dark night.

FADE OUT