

THEY NEVER LEFT

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - 3RD FLOOR - NIGHT

A narrow hallway leads to APARTMENT 3B, a slow, ROMANTIC OLDIES SONG playing from inside. The apartment number on the door has an upside-down "B".

INT. APARTMENT 3B - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A modest, simplistically decorated abode. Hardwood floors, high ceiling. Neat and organized. Immaculately clean.

A framed wedding photo of STEVEN RAY (early 30s - handsome, piercing eyes) and ANNIE RAY (early 30s - warm, innocent, blonde hair) sits on a shelf by...

An antique RECORD PLAYER, the ROMANTIC OLDIES SONG playing as the vinyl spins hypnotically beneath the needle.

BATHROOM

Steven Ray, wearing his wedding suit, adjusts his tie in front of the mirror. He stops. Looks at his reflection gloomily. Then opens the medicine cabinet.

Bottles of prescription drugs crowd the small shelves inside; "Zyprexa", "Seroquel" and "Risperdal" just to name a few.

Steven nabs lipstick, shutting the medicine cabinet. He uses it to write something on the mirror before returning it to its exact spot. But he seems peeved, eyeing the cabinet.

He carefully organizes the items inside so that everything is symmetrical. Just right. Moving items more than once.

Finally satisfied, he shuts the mirror and leaves.

WRITTEN ON THE MIRROR

In sickness and in health

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Steven gazes sadly at his wedding photo with Annie. He takes a deep, wistful breath. Hangs his head for a few moments.

But snaps out of it, suddenly determined. Marching to the WALK-IN CLOSET with purpose, he drags a chair with him.

Without breaking stride, he props the chair in the closet directly beneath a noose hanging from the ceiling. He steps onto it, looping the noose around his throat. Tightening it.

And, like that, he kicks the chair out from under him --

CRACK! His neck snaps. No struggle. His limp feet dangling a few feet from the floor. Dead eyes still open.

The MUSIC STOPS. A nearby grandfather clock reads - **2:08**. TICK-TOCK. TICK-TOCK. TICK-TOCK. Cutting through silence.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK:

THEY NEVER LEFT

FADE IN:

INT. MADELINE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dark. Nearly pitch black. Dead silence.

MADELINE (early 30s, punk-rock attractive, laid-back hippie demeanor) lies asleep under the covers.

She rustles, rolling to her side, feeling around the spot next to her. She opens her eyes - there's nobody there.

Madeline sits up, squinting her eyes as she peers into darkness, her attention drawn to the corner of the room...

She gasps at the sight of a DARK FIGURE. Still. Quiet.

MADELINE

Hello?

A tense hush.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Darwin?

The DARK FIGURE doesn't move. Or respond. Madeline quickly flicks on the light --

DARWIN (early 30s, disheveled, scruffy, thick-rimmed Buddy Holly glasses) stands, facing the closet. His back to her.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Darwin? What are you doing?

He turns to her, glasses crooked, eyes glazed over. Drunk.
Madeline's eyes shift down - she grimaces in disgust.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
What the fuck, Darwin!

Darwin is urinating into the closet.

INT. MADELINE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Darwin wakes up on the couch, the bright sun piercing through the room. He groans, the sunlight not helping his hangover.

He sits up, finds his glasses on the coffee table next to a bottle of coconut water and two Ibuprofen pills.

Slipping into his glasses, he just notices Madeline watching from the other side of the coffee table, arms crossed.

DARWIN
(clears his throat)
Hey.

She stink-eyes him as he pops the Ibuprofen, guzzling the coconut water desperately. But he feels her look.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
What's up?

MADELINE
You pissed in the closet again.

He scratches his head, still half-asleep.

DARWIN
Did I?

Madeline flicks on the TV, showing Darwin tail-end footage of last night's incident - a drunken Darwin tripping and falling over his pants around his ankles.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
Okay, okay...

He exhales, looks to her.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
That's not going on Youtube, is it?

She shuts the television off.

MADELINE

When's the last time you've been to a meeting?

He pretends to give it some thought.

DARWIN

I dunno, not too long, I don't think...

SLOW CLAPPING breaks out from OS until...

ED (30 year-old, Alpha male, too cool for school) steps in from the next room, clapping mockingly as he joins Madeline.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

(under his breath)

Fuck...

ED

Not too long, that's good. Try a fucking month. At least.

DARWIN

(feigns delight)

Hey, Ed. Nice to see you, too.

ED

Shut up. And thanks for returning my calls, by the way, I appreciate the courtesy.

DARWIN

(gives a thumbs up)

Hey, no problem.

ED

Cut the smart guy stuff, I HATE that. So, what's this I hear about you falling off the wagon?

Darwin shrugs, disinterested, angering Ed.

ED (CONT'D)

You made it eleven months without a fucking drop. Eleven months! That's almost a whole year!

DARWIN

I'm well aware of how many months are in a year, Ed...

ED
Everything you worked for, right
down the fucking toilet!

Darwin looks to a heartbroken Madeline. Back to Ed, annoyed.

DARWIN
I appreciate your concern but do
you mind giving us a moment alone?

MADELINE
I called HIM.

Ouch.

DARWIN
So, what is this? Like... an
intervention?

Her eyes cast down.

Darwin nods sadly, humbled. He gazes up at Madeline, as if
about to say something important when...

BLUH! He vomits all over the coffee table, Madeline and Ed
jumping back, repulsed.

Darwin exhales a few times, wiping his mouth.

MADELINE
Jesus Christ, I can't do this
anymore...

She hurries off, to the next room.

Ed just shakes his head at Darwin, disappointed. Then follows
after Madeline, leaving Darwin alone.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

An inner-city neighborhood, a HOMELESS LADY (mid 30s, dirty
face, blonde hair) loiters out front with a shopping cart
full of blankets and clothes, begging PASSERSBY for change.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - THIRD FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

On the door to APARTMENT 3B, the "B" now straight.

SCOTTY (V.O.)
It's not exactly Club Med, but the
rent's hella cheap. Especially for
the city...

INT. APARTMENT 3B - CONTINUOUS

On the WALK-IN CLOSET, the door shut.

SCOTTY (O.S.)
And everything's hella close;
laundromat, subway...

Darwin steps into frame, pulls the closet open and jumps, startled --

FRANK (mid 30s, wearing only boxers), crouched down inside the closet, clutches onto an armful of clothes. Staring at Darwin with wide eyes.

SCOTTY (mid 20s - classic hipster) peers over Darwin's shoulder, concerned.

SCOTTY (CONT'D)
Everything cool?

The WALK-IN CLOSET is empty. Frank no longer there.

Darwin pretends to peruse the closet, as if he hadn't seen anything at all.

DARWIN
Big closet.

SCOTTY
Yeah. Hella space.

Darwin wanders off, Scotty shutting the closet, unsettled.

LIVING ROOM

Connected to the kitchen area, the space barren. Except for an antique record player. Darwin gravitates towards it.

DARWIN
This part of the deal?

SCOTTY
One of the previous tenants left it behind. We can toss it if you want.

DARWIN
Looks like an antique.

SCOTTY
Yeah, you can probably sell it on
Ebay or something.
(casually)
(MORE)

SCOTTY (CONT'D)

Hey, listen, do you believe in the paranormal?

DARWIN

What's that?

SCOTTY

You know? Ghosts?

Darwin thinks about it, a little thrown off.

DARWIN

No.

Scotty nods.

SCOTTY

Cool.

He turns, leading Darwin to the next room.

SCOTTY (CONT'D)

So, this is the kitchen...

DARWIN

Whoa, wait...

Scotty stops, looks back casually.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

Did someone... die here?

SCOTTY

Kinda, yeah.

DARWIN

Oh. Okay.

He thinks to himself, unsure.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

Don't you think you should've told me that earlier?

SCOTTY

I thought you didn't believe in that kinda stuff?

DARWIN

What kinda stuff?

SCOTTY

The paranormal.

DARWIN

I don't.

SCOTTY

So, what's the problem?

DARWIN

It's just a little weird.

SCOTTY

I got other places I can show you.
But I'm not gonna tickle your
taint, the rent might be a little
north of what you can afford.

Darwin gives it some thought, on the fence.

SCOTTY (CONT'D)

Up to you. But I got hella people
who want to see this place.

Darwin cocks an eye at him.

DARWIN

You like saying that, don't you?

SCOTTY

Saying what?

EXT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

A small MOVING TRUCK sits parked at the curb, the back open.

TWO BURLY MOVERS haul a massive desk into the front entrance.
Darwin follows them, carrying an old typewriter.

DARWIN

Hey guys, that desk used to be my
mother's, just be --

The desk bangs into the door as the BURLY MOVERS bring it
inside, Darwin wincing.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

Careful.

HOMELESS LADY (O.S.)

Excuse me, sir?

Darwin turns to Homeless Lady behind him.

HOMELESS LADY (CONT'D)
 Can you spare a dollar for a cup of
 coffee?

He looks to the moving truck, back to Homeless Lady.

DARWIN
 I actually have a cup of coffee in
 the truck, I didn't drink it yet --

HOMELESS LADY
 (explodes)
 Just gimme a fucking dollar!

DARWIN
 Jesus, okay!

Cradling the typewriter with one hand, he fishes into his
 pocket with the other. Hands her a wrinkled bill.

HOMELESS LADY
 Gee, thanks. Fucking jerk.

Darwin, appalled, watches her shuffle off with her shopping
 cart as he follows the BURLY MOVERS inside.

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - 1ST FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

As the MOVERS haul the desk upstairs, one of their hands
 slip, losing their grip on the desk --

WHAM! The desk hits one of the stairs hard, sending a crack
 through the cheap marble, pieces of it crumbling off.

DARWIN
 Come on, guys...

As Darwin passes APARTMENT 1A, he catches BERNADETTE (early
 60s - African American, deep and haunting eyes) peeking out
 through the cracked-open door.

Darwin stares back at her on his way upstairs. Nods. But
 Bernadette quickly shuts the door.

CUT TO BLACK:

OVER BLACK.

DAY 1

FADE IN:

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Darwin, in bed, gazes yearningly at his cell phone.

DARWIN'S CELL PHONE

Madeline's Facebook page. He scrolls through her statuses and photos - many of them with him. Happier times.

BACK TO SCENE

Darwin takes a swig from a Jack Daniels bottle.

DARWIN'S CELL PHONE

He finds a Youtube page titled "**MADDY THE HORROR GIRL: HORROR MOVIE REVIEWS**", Madeline's photo in the thumbnail.

Darwin clicks on the latest video posted, hitting play.

Madeline sits in front of her camera, horror movie posters lining the wall behind her. She appears chipper.

MADELINE

Salutations, Youtube, I'm Maddy the Horror Girl and today I'll be reviewing the fourth installment in the Insidious franchise, Last Key. It stars Leigh Whannell and...

She leans in, reading something on her screen.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Lin Schaye, from the first three Insidious films and...
(surprised)
Oh, Barbara Hershey's in this one.

Madeline falls silent for a few moments, as if something were bothering her. Triggered by mention of Barbara Hershey.

BACK TO SCENE

Darwin watches, morose expression until a THUD-THUD-THUD interrupts the moment. He looks to the ceiling, pausing the video. Muffled FOOTSTEPS from above.

Annoyed, he looks to his clock - **2:08**. THUD-THUD-THUD, stuttering FOOTSTEPS above continue. He sits up, perturbed, listening to the continuous THUDDING.

Fed up, he stands on his bed, pounds on the ceiling. The THUDS stop. Darwin eyes the ceiling for a few moments...

His CELL PHONE BLARES, giving him a jolt.

DARWIN

Jesus!

Darwin plops down to the bed, looks to his cell phone - **ED**.
He stares at his phone, contemplating. But answers.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

Yeah?

ED (V.O.)

Just checking in. We're worried
about you.

DARWIN

We?

ED (V.O.)

You know, me? Madeline?

DARWIN

What are you guys, like best
friends now?

ED (V.O.)

We both care about you, man.
You drink tonight?

Darwin looks to a half-empty bottle of Jack Daniels.

DARWIN

No.

ED (V.O.)

Don't lie, man, not to me. It's so
not cool...

DARWIN

What do you want?

ED (V.O.)

There's a meeting tomorrow. I want
you to be there.

DARWIN

I got things to do tomorrow.

ED (V.O.)

Like what?

DARWIN

Things.

ED (V.O.)
No you don't. I know for a fact you
don't have work...

DARWIN
Ed...

ED (V.O.)
How am I supposed to help you if
you won't let me? I'm your fucking
sponsor man, you're making me feel
like I'm not doing a good job,
here. Did I do something wrong?

DARWIN
Come on, man...

ED (V.O.)
I just don't understand why you're
doing this to yourself. Your
girlfriend left you because of this
shit, I'm just trying to help you
get your fucking life together...

DARWIN
I know, Ed, I know...

ED (V.O.)
You know how important these
meetings are, you need the support.
You can't do it alone, Darwin, you
need fucking help and I'm trying
like a motherfucker to be the best
sponsor I can be...

DARWIN
(exhales)
Fine! I'll be there.

ED (V.O.)
Okay, cool, see you tomorrow.

CLICK. Darwin looks to his phone, perplexed.

BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Darwin flicks on the light, immediately jumping back at the
sight of COCKROACHES scurrying around on the floor.

Disgusted at first, Darwin shrugs it off and enters, letting
the COCKROACHES scurry around his feet as he takes a leak.

KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Darwin opens the fridge, shoving a gallon of water to the side en route to a six-pack of beer behind it. He nudges the water to the back, keeping the beer in the front.

Peeling a can from a plastic ring, he struggles to fit his finger underneath the tab to open it.

DARWIN

Come on, you fucker...

Unable to open it, he hastily yanks a drawer open and grabs a knife, fitting it under the tab and popping it open.

He leaves the knife by the sink.

As Darwin savors a long gulp from his beer, a shadow moves behind him, causing a light RUSTLE.

Darwin quickly turns to the dark living room behind him; the furniture set up crooked, cardboard boxes cluttered everywhere. The place a mess.

LIVING ROOM

His gaze fixated, Darwin moves to the edge of the living room, poring over every inch, uneasy. On edge.

Thinking it's probably nothing, Darwin crushes his beer can, tosses it to the floor. As he heads back to bed...

SHUFFLING suddenly grabs his attention. From the front door.

FRONT DOOR

Darwin tiptoes towards it. Slowly looks to the peephole --

An EYE stares right back at him! Darwin jumps back, startled!

Gathering himself, he takes a deep breath. Trying to be calm.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

Hello?

No answer, he reluctantly unlocks the dead bolt and cracks the door open - but there's nobody there.

Confused, he unlatches the chain lock, opening the door all the way --

Bernadette stands there wearing a faraway look.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
 (jumping back)
 Mother fuck!

Hand over his heart, he takes a few deep breaths.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
 Can I help you with something?

BERNADETTE
 (in a daze)
 I'm sorry. I thought I heard a
 noise.

Befuddled, Darwin watches her disappear down the stairway. He shuts the door, confounded.

LIVING ROOM

En route to his bedroom...

DARWIN
 (mutters)
 Yeah, just hanging out at my door
 in the middle of the night... not
 weird at all...

He moves past the record player and WALK-IN CLOSET. But stops. Backpedals.

The closet door cracked open, he slowly reaches for the knob... very slowly...

And gently pushes it shut.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK.

DAY 2

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

An ALARM BUZZES. Darwin opens his eyes, clearly hung over. Blinded by sunlight, he slaps the alarm silent.

BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Darwin, towel over his shoulder, hits the lights.

He stops cold, looking down at DEAD COCKROACHES lying upside down on the floor. He just tiptoes around them to the shower.

AT THE SINK - MOMENTS LATER

Darwin finishes up brushing his teeth, the faucet still running. But as he returns his toothbrush, he eyes the shaving razor on the sink.

Finally, he nabs the shaving razor, removing the blade. He promptly slides the blade across his wrists, blood dripping down his forearms and into the sink as he peers in the mirror. But...

It was all in his head. He continues to stare at the shaving razor, the blade still locked into it. No blood.

He looks into the mirror for a moment, beside himself. Then shuts off the sink and leaves.

KITCHEN - LATER

Darwin stares into the refrigerator, confused - the gallon of water back to the front, the beer behind it.

Still suspicious, he nabs coconut water, shutting the fridge.

As he pops an Ibuprofen and chases it with coconut water, he looks to the sink - the knife is gone.

Bewildered, he slowly turns, spotting the crushed beer can on the counter instead of the floor where he left it.

A RUSTLING from the living room draws his attention, focusing on the WALK-IN CLOSET, cracked open again.

LIVING ROOM

Nervously inching towards the WALK-IN CLOSET, he reaches for the knob... slowly pulling it open...

Frank stands inside, half-naked, clutching his clothes. Staring directly at Darwin with wide, anxious eyes.

FRANK
(finger to his lips)
Ssshhh...

Darwin shuts his eyes. Takes a few deep breaths. Then opens them again - Frank no longer there.

Darwin nervously grabs his jacket, shuts the door.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

ON A HEADSTONE--

DEBORAH UPCHURCH
OCTOBER 12, 1963 - OCTOBER 12, 2002

Darwin gazes somberly at the headstone.

INT. UBER CAR (MOVING) - DAY - LATER

Darwin gazes sadly out the window from the back seat. He looks ahead, through the windshield, his eyes widening --

A RED-HAIRED WOMAN stands in the middle of the street, the Uber car headed right for her! She just sits there with a hauntingly bleak expression on her face.

DARWIN

Look out!

Darwin braces himself in his seat for impact, the UBER DRIVER hitting the brakes hard. But, after a few moments...

Ducked down in his seat, Darwin looks up, the UBER DRIVER glaring back at him.

UBER DRIVER

What the fuck, man?

Confused, Darwin looks up. Sees no Red-Haired Woman anywhere close to them. Just his imagination.

DARWIN (V.O.)

I think I've been sleepwalking
again...

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY - LATER

Madeline sits across from Darwin at a window booth.

MADELINE

You do that when you're drunk.

DARWIN

I wasn't drinking.

MADELINE

You look hung over.

DARWIN

(indignant)
I'm tired.

An awkward silence.

MADELINE
So? How's the new place?

DARWIN
Oh, it's a complete shithole. Other than that, it's great.

MADELINE
What's the rent like?

DARWIN
Seven-fifty.

MADELINE
A month? In New York?

Darwin nods. Madeline seems confused.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
Is it a room share?

DARWIN
Not that I'm aware of.

MADELINE
How are you only paying seven-fifty a month?

DARWIN
Somebody died there.

MADELINE
(aha moment)
Ohhhh...
(intrigued)
How'd they die?

DARWIN
I didn't ask.

Madeline smiles, a genuine excitement in her eyes.

MADELINE
Shit, it's probably haunted. You think it's haunted?

Darwin sees the glimmer in her eye and softens.

DARWIN
If you wanna swing by sometime, see for yourself...

Madeline, looks into his eyes, a brief moment of warmth and longing. But, trying to be strong, she looks away. Dips into her bag. Slides a few VHS tapes across to him.

MADELINE

That's the rest of them.

Darwin frowns, shuffles through the VHS tapes, stopping at "**The Entity**".

DARWIN

Nah, that's your favorite.

MADELINE

You have the VHS player. And I already have it on Blu-Ray.

Darwin nods, silently crushed. Madeline flashes a hint of guilt, noticing his despair.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Are you gonna be okay?

Darwin looks up at her, defeated.

DARWIN

Why did you have to call Ed?

MADELINE

Because he's your friend.

DARWIN

He's my sponsor. If it weren't for AA, I wouldn't even know the guy.

MADELINE

You need him in your life right now. He's here to help. Both of us.

Darwin raises an eyebrow.

DARWIN

What's that mean, both of us?

MADELINE

This hasn't exactly been an easy transition for me either, Darwin. He's been very supportive.

DARWIN

He's MY sponsor. I'm the alcoholic, remember? Not you. How's he supporting you?

MADELINE

He's been through a lot...

DARWIN

Is there something going on I should know about?

MADELINE

Darwin...

DARWIN

I think it's a valid question. After all, he IS my sponsor. If you guys have something going on, that can't be healthy for me, can it?

MADELINE

There's nothing going on with anybody, Darwin. I'm too busy with work right now...

DARWIN

You make Youtube videos for a living. Way to grind.

MADELINE

And what are you doing with your life? How's the new book?

Darwin shuts his yap for a moment. Good point.

DARWIN

Is THAT why you broke up with me? You think I'm a loser?

MADELINE

You're an alcoholic. And that's never gonna change if things keep staying the same. We gave it another try and it didn't work out.

DARWIN

Weren't you the one who said alcoholism was a disease? Would you leave me if I had Polio or penile hematoma or something fucked up like that? I just think it's weird how Ed suddenly shows up and next thing you know, I'm moving out.

MADELINE

I called Ed because there was nobody else I COULD call.

She glances at his wrists, nasty scars across them.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

And I don't want you to do anything stupid. Like last time.

Darwin quickly conceals his wrists.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Ed can help you in ways that I couldn't. And to tell the truth, I can't go through that again. You don't understand how hard that was on me. It wasn't fair.

DARWIN

You just don't wanna feel bad.

MADELINE

Is that how you want me to feel?

Darwin falls silent, seeing her point. He nods.

DARWIN

Fine. If it makes you happy, I promise, I won't kill myself.

Madeline, exhausted, just accepts his answer.

MADELINE

Okay. That'll work.

INT. MADELINE'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

IN SLOW MOTION:

Darwin lies in the bathtub, neck deep in crimson-tinged water, his face sinking further below the surface.

EXT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Darwin turns his key, opening the door, nasty scars on each of his wrists.

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - STAIRWAY - MOMENTS LATER

On his way upstairs, Darwin flips through mail, stopping at a letter addressed to Annie Riley Ray. As he reaches the...

THIRD FLOOR

He looks up, stopping cold - Bernadette faces his door, murmuring nonsensical gibberish.

DARWIN

Hello?

Bernadette turns to him, caught off guard. Holding a casserole dish, she forces an uncomfortable smile.

BERNADETTE

Hello.

She stares at him for way too long.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)

We haven't had the chance to PROPERLY meet. My name's Bernadette. I live downstairs.

Darwin slowly nods, ill at ease.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)

I just wanted to come by and welcome you to our building.

She holds up the casserole dish, extending it to him.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)

I hope you like lasagna. Made it from scratch.

Darwin reluctantly draws towards her, accepting the dish.

DARWIN

Thanks.

Her lips curl into an unsettling smile.

BERNADETTE

Enjoy.

Holding onto the dish, he watches her disappear downstairs.

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Darwin dumps the casserole dish in the trash.

He turns to the living room, raising an eyebrow - the boxes now neatly organized, no longer cluttering the room.

BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Baffled, he stares at the floor. The dead cockroaches gone.

EXT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Darwin pokes his head out the door where WILLY (early 50s, haggard, in janitor uniform) sweeps the front stoop while whistling to himself.

DARWIN

You Willy?

Willy stops whistling, turning to Darwin, annoyed.

WILLY

Yeah, what?

DARWIN

You're the super, right?

WILLY

No, I just like wandering around with a fucking broom and sweeping shit. Yeah, I'm the super. How can I help you?

DARWIN

I imagine you have keys to the apartments?

WILLY

You with the realty company?

DARWIN

No, I just moved in. Three-B.

Willy's expression falls. A look of sheer dread.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

Were you in my apartment at all while I was gone?

After staring at Darwin for a few moments...

WILLY

Do you have any idea what happened in that apartment?

DARWIN

Yeah, someone died.

WILLY
 Someone didn't just die in there.
 He hung himself. In the closet. Did
 they tell you THAT?

DARWIN
 (uneasy)
 No.

WILLY
 Well. Now you know.

Darwin wonders to himself for a moment, unsettled.

DARWIN
 Do you know why, exactly?

WILLY
 Why, what? Why he hung himself?

Darwin nods.

WILLY (CONT'D)
 Why does that matter?

ANGLE ON Darwin's wrist. The scar. Then back to his face.

DARWIN
 Just curious.

WILLY
 Well, now that you know what
 happened in there, it's probably
 best if you pack your shit and get
 out. Before bad things happen.

Willy turns, continues sweeping.

DARWIN
 Hold up, what are you talking
 about, bad things?

Willy stops, turns back to Darwin.

WILLY
 Everything here used to be cool
 before that motherfucker decided to
 kill himself. Since then, no tenant
 has lasted more than seven days in
 that apartment. Seven. And people
 seem to think that it ain't no
 coincidence. See, nobody found his
 body until his wife decided to pop
 in. Seven. Days. Later.

A JARRING CHORD cues up...

INSERT FLASHBACK

Steven's rotting corpse hangs in the closet, flies buzzing.

BACK TO PRESENT

Darwin eyes Willy curiously. Almost smirking at him.

DARWIN

I'm sorry, are you suggesting that my apartment is haunted?

WILLY

Listen, nobody's lived there for about a year or so. But if I were you, I wouldn't try my luck.

He turns his back to Darwin, continues sweeping. Darwin ponders to himself, confused.

DARWIN

So, were you in my apartment or...?

WILLY

(while sweeping)
Seven days...

And he continues whistling as he works.

INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

CLASSIC ROCK plays in the background, Darwin sitting alone at the near-empty bar. Cocktail in front of him, he gazes sadly at his cell phone, scrolling through old photos.

DARWIN'S CELL PHONE

Darwin and Madeline at a party, arms around each other. A banner behind them reads - **CONGRATS ON SIX MONTHS SOBER**. Ed photobombs them in the background.

ED (O.S.)

Hey...

BACK TO SCENE

Darwin turns and sighs, disappointed.

Ed heads towards Darwin, finding a moment to wink at a passing ATTRACTIVE WAITRESS en route.

He sits next to him, still eyeing the ATTRACTIVE WAITRESS as she tends to a table.

DARWIN
How'd you know I was here?

ED
Closest bar to AA. Figured you'd
pussy out at the last second.

An ELDERLY BARTENDER stops by.

ELDERLY BARTENDER
(to Ed)
Can I get you something to drink?

ED
(without looking at
Elderly Bartender)
Fuck off.

Ed just glares at Darwin as Elderly Bartender vamooses.

ED (CONT'D)
I know life sucks right now but you
can't just sit around, being
negative, pissing away whatever
money you have left. I still don't
understand how you got your own
apartment without a job.

DARWIN
I still get residuals.

ED
What, from that "book" you wrote?

DARWIN
Did you even read the book?

Ed freezes for a moment, shrugs awkwardly.

ED
I skimmed through it.

DARWIN
Yeah? What's it about?

Ed freezes up again.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
Do you even know what the title is?

Ed quickly grows frustrated, fumbling with his words.

ED

How'd this suddenly become about your book? No offense, but your book can eat my dick for all I care. Your life's gone to shit and you're asking me for a fucking book report? What am I, twelve?

DARWIN

I'm fine, Ed.

ED

You keep saying that, yet here you are. Is it because you got laid off? Maddy said that might've triggered this whole thing...

DARWIN

Oh, it's MADDY now? Not Madeline?

ED

Don't be that guy.

DARWIN

What guy?

ED

The crazy ex-boyfriend. Don't be him. It's not like that. She still cares about you. A lot.

DARWIN

Did you know she was gonna break up with me?

Ed takes a solemn breath, dragging out his response.

ED

She told me that the last time you guys broke up, you didn't take it very well.

He looks to Darwin's scarred wrist.

DARWIN

You should've called me first.

ED

I tried a million fucking times.

Darwin hangs his head in defeat.

DARWIN

She isn't coming back, is she?

He looks up at Ed.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
 (desperate)
 Is she?

Ed sucks in air through his teeth, shrugging.

ED
 That ship might've sailed...

Darwin groans, hanging his head again.

ED (CONT'D)
 Or not, I don't know. But something
 had to change. It's not like she
 broke up with you and THEN you
 started drinking again.

Ed slaps Darwin's shoulder to get his attention.

ED (CONT'D)
 Hey. Nobody's gonna love Darwin if
 Darwin doesn't love Darwin. You
 gotta take care of yourself. Try to
 stay positive.

Darwin scoffs, taking a sip from his cocktail.

ED (CONT'D)
 Listen, I had a few relapses near
 the beginning. Some BAD ones. I was
 a fucking train wreck, worse than
 you. But MY sponsor stayed on my
 ass. And once I got back on track
 and fully committed to the twelve
 steps again, life got so much
 better. I feel better, I look
 better. I met my wife, we bought a
 house, life is fucking awesome!
 You've seen her, she's hot! Sure,
 she can be a fucking bitch
 sometimes, but you get what I'm
 saying.

DARWIN
 Glad it's worked out for you.

ED
 (intensely)
 You can do this, Darwin. You almost
 made it a year. Do it again.

DARWIN
 (shrugs casually)
 I really don't want to.

ED
 Here we go with the fucking
 negativity. You're really starting
 to piss me off --

DARWIN
 I ever tell you about Frank?

ED
 Frank from AA? With the weird dick?

DARWIN
 What? No. Who the fuck are YOU
 talking about?

ED
 You know, the guy who had the lawn
 mower accident. Got drunk, cut his
 grass in the middle of the night?

DARWIN
 (deadpan)
 No, not Frank who cut his dick off
 with the lawn mower.

Darwin falls silent. Thinking back.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
 I was just a kid, maybe like eleven
 or twelve. I was sent home sick
 from school. They tried calling my
 Mom, but she wasn't picking up. So
 my Dad picked me up. When we got
 home, my Mom was already there.

INT. DARWIN'S CHILDHOOD HOME - HALLWAY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

TWELVE-YEAR OLD DARWIN (same thick-rimmed Buddy Holly
 glasses) languidly passes the LINEN CLOSET, backpack on.

DARWIN (V.O.)
 I knew something was off. She was
 acting weird. Then I heard
 something. In the closet.

He stops. Turns to a LINEN CLOSET. Tiptoes towards it, the
 door cracked open. Darwin opens it, revealing --

Frank inside in only his boxer shorts, holding his clothes.

DARWIN (V.O.)
And there he was. Hiding.

Finger to his lips, Frank hushes him. Desperate. Afraid.

Twelve-Year Old Darwin turns, sees his MOTHER, the same red-haired woman from before, at the end of the hallway staring at him with wide, petrified eyes.

INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

Darwin continues to gaze at his cocktail.

DARWIN
My Dad was in the shower. There's a good chance she could've snuck him out. If I hadn't said anything, my Dad wouldn't have ever known.

He sets his glass down.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
But I did.

ED
So, who was he? Like, a neighbor?

DARWIN
I dunno. Never found out who he was. But he looked like a Frank.

Ed leans forward, confused.

ED
What exactly is the point of this story, Darwin?

DARWIN
I came home early one day, after I got laid off. And Maddy was acting the same exact way. I thought I heard something in the closet. But I didn't look. I wanted to but I didn't. I couldn't.

Darwin finishes off his cocktail, Ed catching a glimpse of his scarred wrist.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
It was probably just my mind playing tricks on me. It happens from time to time. Not like it matters now, anyway, right?

He sets down his empty glass, grabs AA CHIPS from his pocket, sets them in front of Ed.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
I don't need those anymore.

And he leaves.

EXT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT - LATER

Dark and silent. A STEADY, SOFT THUDDING takes us to...

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Darwin fast asleep, the STEADY THUDS continue, causing Darwin to open his eyes. He looks to his clock - 2:08.

Darwin looks to the ceiling, annoyed.

DARWIN
(groans)
Come on...

He jumps up, pounds on the ceiling - the THUDS stop. A long silence until... THUD-THUD-THUD!

DARWIN (CONT'D)
Motherfucker!

Darwin darts out of bed.

LIVING ROOM

Marches through, on a mission. Completely unaware of SOMEONE or SOMETHING hiding in the shadows - or it could be nothing.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - THIRD FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Darwin storms out of his apartment, slamming the door shut and marching OS. As his FOOTSTEPS ECHO off, the "B" in "3B" slowly tilts on the door until completely upside down.

FOURTH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Darwin power-walks to a door, about to knock. But stops. The door reads - Utility Closet.

DARWIN
What the hell?

He slowly pulls the door open to indeed find a utility closet packed with mops, brooms and buckets. As he ponders...

A RAT comes darting out, causing Darwin to hop into the air!

THIRD FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Darwin dashes downstairs, to his apartment door.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
(shudders)
Fucking rats?! Are you kidding me?!

He goes for the knob, but it doesn't turn - locked.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
No.

Darwin tries again, no dice.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
Don't do this to me...

Jiggling the knob frantically, he stops. Something catching his ear from inside - the ROMANTIC OLDIES SONG from earlier.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
(puzzled)
Hello?

Darwin leans in for a better listen - silence. He pounds on the door, hesitant. Leans in again, listening...

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK from the other side of the door!

Heart pounding, he backs away, turning and running downstairs, full speed...

STAIRWAY

Halfway down, the edge of the damaged step crumbles under Darwin's foot, breaking off, almost causing him to trip.

But he keeps his footing, sprinting the rest of the way down.

EXT. PAY PHONE - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Darwin fidgets nervously while on the phone.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Nine, one-one, what's your emergency?

DARWIN
Someone broke into my apartment!

EXT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT - LATER

Bouncing his knee nervously, Darwin sits at the stoop when Homeless Lady pulls up with her shopping cart.

HOMELESS LADY
Excuse me, sir, can you spare a
dollar for a cup of coffee?

DARWIN
I'm sorry, I don't --

HOMELESS LADY
You're a dick.

She continues on with her cart.

DARWIN
You don't have to be mean.

Finally, a PATROL CAR arrives, parking out front.

TWO OFFICERS exit the vehicle, Darwin sarcastically looking to an imaginary watch on his wrist.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
Glad you guys could make it, I only
called an hour ago.

OFFICER#1
Yeah, yeah...

The TWO OFFICERS stop, looking up at the apartment somewhat intimidated, sharing an uneasy glance with each other.

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - THIRD FLOOR - LATER

As Darwin waits out in the hallway, the Officers hastily exit the apartment with Willy.

OFFICER#1
Nobody broke in.

DARWIN
No-no-no, there gotta be some kinda
mistake. I HEARD someone inside.

OFFICER#1

I don't know what you heard, but
you should probably reconsider your
living situation.

They hurry past Darwin, to the stairway.

DARWIN

What's that supposed to mean?

Willy gives Darwin a "told-you-so" shrug.

WILLY

Seven days.

They all head downstairs, FOOTSTEPS fading off.

Darwin, all alone, slowly turns to his apartment. He takes a
few steps forward, reluctant to go inside...

KATORAH (O.S.)

Hey!

Darwin jumps, nearly having a heart attack. He turns --

KATORAH, Tomboy in a wife-beater, baseball cap over her
dreads, laughs it up from the apartment across the hall.

KATORAH (CONT'D)

(pointing at him)

Gotcha!

DARWIN

Good God, what's with you people?

Immediately biting his tongue.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

I didn't mean it like that.

KATORAH

Like what?

(dawns on her)

Oh, you thought I'd be offended by
"you people". That's kinda racist.

DARWIN

My bad.

She narrows her eyes at him.

KATORAH

What?

DARWIN
Never mind.

Darwin turns back to his apartment.

KATORAH
Yo, fuck boy!

Darwin turns back to her, intimidated.

KATORAH (CONT'D)
Not you, pretty boy, my cat.

DARWIN
Cat?

He looks down, sees a BLACK CAT at his feet and jumps.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
Come on, man!

The BLACK CAT scurries across, through Katorah's legs, into her apartment.

KATORAH
(to Black Cat)
Get your ass in there!

Shakes her head, looking to Darwin's apartment.

KATORAH (CONT'D)
He loves trying to sneak in there
for some reason.

Darwin turns back to his apartment.

KATORAH (CONT'D)
Hey, pretty boy, you smoke?

DARWIN
What?

She holds up a lit marijuana blunt.

KATORAH
Do. You.
(exhales smoke)
Smoke.

DARWIN
No, I'm good.

KATORAH
 You should. It'll help you sleep
 better. No hangover.

Darwin looks back at her suspiciously.

KATORAH (CONT'D)
 Seen you stumble in the past couple
 nights.
 (shrugs)
 I see everything.

DARWIN
 Thanks. But I'm good.

He enters his apartment, about to shut the door. But he
 stops, turns back to Katorah.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
 Hey, did you see anyone go into my
 apartment at all while I was gone?
 Like, the super, maybe?

Katorah grins knowingly.

KATORAH
 Nah, bruh. Why do you ask?

DARWIN
 No reason.

As he closes the door...

KATORAH
 Bernadette stops by once in a
 while. From downstairs.

Darwin keeps the door open, intrigued.

KATORAH (CONT'D)
 But she don't go in.

DARWIN
 (spooked)
 What does she do?

KATORAH
 She talks. Bitch is crazy.

Darwin nods, uneasy while closing his door.

KATORAH (CONT'D)
 (grinning)
 Nighty-night.

The door shuts.

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Darwin eyes the creepy, old record player. Then looks to the WALK-IN CLOSET, the door cracked open.

He warily pushes it shut. Returns to his bedroom.

We linger on the WALK-IN CLOSET. The door slowly creaking open on its own.

But it's no longer the WALK-IN CLOSET.

INT. DARWIN'S CHILDHOOD HOME - HALLWAY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

It's now the LINEN CLOSET.

Twelve-Year Old Darwin cautiously heads towards it.

Slowly pulls the door open, revealing Frank, in his boxers clutching onto his clothes.

FRANK
(finger to his lip)
Ssshhh...

Twelve-Year Old Darwin turns, his Mother watching pleadingly.

TWELVE-YEAR OLD DARWIN
Dad!

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

BICKERING in the background as Twelve-Year Old Darwin gazes sadly out the window. Behind him, women's clothes and shoes are being tossed out into the hallway from a room.

Twelve-Year Old Darwin's MOTHER exits the room. Spots him in the living room. Marches up to him from behind.

He turns. Looks up at his Mother dolefully. Tears in her eyes, she stares back down at him. And WHAP! She smacks him across the face. Turns and storms down the hallway until OS, a DOOR OPENING and SLAMMING SHUT.

Devastated, he turns back to the window, spotting his Mother leaving the front of the building and marching into the middle of the intersecting street.

She stops, looks up at him before WHAM! A TRUCK comes out of nowhere and runs her over!

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Darwin gasps awake, catching his breath. He turns to his night stand, pops an Ibuprofen, swallows with a bottle of coconut water.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK.

DAY 3

FADE IN:

EXT. TALL OFFICE BUILDING - DAY - LATER

Heavy street traffic, YELLOW CABS everywhere, HORNS HONKING. Sidewalks packed with PEDESTRIANS, VENDORS at every corner.

Occupied with his phone, Scotty strolls towards the front entrance but stops when he sees Darwin waiting for him.

DARWIN

Hey, man.

Scotty immediately turns into the opposite direction.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

Hey!

Darwin catches up to him.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

We need to talk.

Scotty points to his phone, pretending to be in the middle of an important call. But Darwin snatches it away.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

(into cell phone)

Hello?

He listens then lowers the phone.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

There's nobody there.

Scotty grabs his phone back.

SCOTTY

Yeah, now.

Pocketing his phone, he smiles at Darwin.

SCOTTY (CONT'D)
 (overly cordial)
 So, what's up? How's the new digs?

DARWIN
 Oh, fuck you!

SCOTTY
 Geez, come on, man, hella early for
 this kinda hostility...

DARWIN
 I hear you say "hella" one more
 time, I swear to God, I'm gonna
 blow my fucking brains out!

SCOTTY
 Listen, guy, I'm just a junior
 agent. If you'd like to file a
 complaint, take it up with the main
 office...

He tries to brush past Darwin but Darwin blocks him from
 entering the building.

DARWIN
 The guy who died in my apartment.
 HOW did he die? Someone told me he
 killed himself. Is that true?

Scotty shrugs, remaining silent.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
 So, he DID hang himself?

SCOTTY
 Sure, so what? What's the
 difference? I told you people died
 there. And I do remember
 SPECIFICALLY asking if you believed
 in the paranormal.

DARWIN
 There's no such thing as ghosts.

Scotty raises an eyebrow, surprised.

SCOTTY
 (confused)
 Oh. Okay. So, what's the problem?

DARWIN

Outside of the cockroaches and the rats? I dunno, man. There's something funny going on. The people there are fucking nuts. And last night, someone broke into my apartment and everyone kinda just shrugged it off. Like it was normal. Any thoughts?

SCOTTY

So, this isn't about anything paranormal related?

DARWIN

I told you, no. I don't think. I dunno. You should've told me about the guy killing himself.

SCOTTY

Listen. If you have a problem with the place, just move.

Darwin thinks about it, defeated.

DARWIN

I don't have the money for that right now. I need time. Even if I get my deposit back, where else am I gonna go for seven-fifty a month?

SCOTTY

Plenty of room shares on Craig's List. Now, if you don't mind, I'm already running hella late...

He brushes past Darwin, into the building.

Darwin, deep in thought, has a moment of realization as Scotty walks away.

DARWIN

(to himself)
Wait a minute...

Darwin keeps the door from shutting all the way.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

What do you mean, people?

Scotty stops, turns back to him.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
You just said that PEOPLE died
there. Plural.

Scotty lowers his eyes for a moment. Back up at Darwin with a
hint of guilt. Busted.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

Sitting across from each other at a booth, Darwin slides a
cup of coffee to Scotty. Waits for Scotty to spill the beans.

SCOTTY
In the past three years, five
tenants have lived in your
apartment. First guy, as you
already know, killed himself. Lived
there for years. Every thing was
cool before that. But after he
died, weird things started
happening.

DARWIN
Like people dying? That what you
mean by weird?

SCOTTY
Yeah.

DARWIN
Okay, how?

SCOTTY
Natural causes as far as I know.
Sounds hella fishy but I guess they
choked it up as some strange
coincidence. Nobody got arrested.

DARWIN
No foul play? Nothing?

SCOTTY
As far as I know. I don't wanna
know anymore than I already do,
okay? Shit gives me the creeps.
Just being at that place sucks.

DARWIN
You ever see anything?

SCOTTY

Not really. But you know that feeling you get when you feel like you're being watched? And you get hella goose bumps?

Disappointed by the lack of anything solid, Darwin exhales.

DARWIN

You said three people died. What happened to the other?

SCOTTY

The tenant before you? Something happened. Think he got hurt or injured or something, I dunno. But he ended up suing the owner of the building. Shit made headlines, gave the building bad publicity. Since then, they kept the room vacant for a little bit. Had a priest come in, bless the place. I even heard Ghost Hunters tried coming by.

DARWIN

Ghost Hunters was at my apartment?
(cracks a grin)
My girlfriend loves that show, she'd freak out.

SCOTTY

The owner wouldn't allow it. Said it was disrespectful to the dead.

DARWIN

How do I get in touch with the owner?

SCOTTY

Just knock. She lives on the first floor.

A KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK takes us to...

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - FIRST FLOOR - LATER

Bernadette's apartment door. As Darwin waits for answer, he hears MUSIC inside - that familiar ROMANTIC OLDIES SONG.

Darwin KNOCKS again. No answer.

He fixates on the peephole. As if he were being watched. A little bit on edge, he leaves.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY - LATER

Darwin sits in front of a computer, clicking away.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

He searches on Google, typing.

278, East 133rd Street, Apartment 3B

And hits ENTER.

SERIES OF CLIPS AND ARTICLES:

Some of the words and sentences that stand out:

Joe Walsh, 64, died from cardiac arrest...

Then another article:

**Samuel Ross, 52, passed away from hypertrophic
cardiomyopathy...**

No foul play involved.

Another article:

Lawrence Krueger, 27, suffered a brain aneurism...

BACK TO SCENE

Darwin then finds another SERIES OF ARTICLES, the name **Oscar Scandrlick** prominent in most of them.

MAN FILES LAWSUIT, CLAIMS APARTMENT HAUNTED

Darwin clicks another article with the headline:

MAN ATTACKED BY "GHOST" LOSES LAWSUIT

Darwin then types into a search engine:

OSCAR SCANDRICK, CONTACT INFORMATION

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY - LATER

Darwin finds OSCAR SCANDRICK (early 40s, wheelchair bound, wearing thick-rimmed lenses similar to Darwin's) alone at a table with what looks like a chessboard in front of him.

Focusing on his game board, Oscar feels Darwin over him.

OSCAR
Take a seat.

Darwin obeys, sharing a long silence with Oscar.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
You play chess much?

DARWIN
Yeah, sure, once in a while.

He looks down, sees that it's a checker board.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
Looks like checkers.

Oscar glares up at Darwin, back to his checker board.

OSCAR
That's what they ALL say.

Looks up at Darwin.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
You with one of them TV shows?

DARWIN
No, I actually live there.

Baffled, Oscar stares at Darwin as if he were insane.

OSCAR
Apartment 3B?

DARWIN
Yeah.

OSCAR
Move. Like, now.

DARWIN
I'm kinda in between jobs right
now, I'm not exactly in the best
position financially...

OSCAR
You're better off in a cardboard
box, pal. Anything's better than
that house of fucking horrors. They
tried warning me. But, no, I just
wouldn't listen. Now I'm stuck in
this thing, playing pick-up Murder
Ball at the fucking Y. And I suck!

DARWIN
What EXACTLY happened?

OSCAR
I think the wheelchair is pretty
self explanatory, no?

DARWIN
I wanna hear it from you.

Oscar nods, lighting up a cigarette.

OSCAR
It was 2:08 a.m. That's when I
usually heard the noises.

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

His clock reading 2:08, Oscar wakes up to THUDDING above.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Oscar checks the WALK-IN CLOSET, finds it open. Spooked, he
shuts it closed.

MOMENTS LATER

He lights a cigarette, cracking the window open and sitting
at the edge of the sill. Behind him --

A DARK SHADOW emerges, lurking. Oscar, unaware, continues to
puff smoke out the window. The DARK SHADOW gets closer...

OSCAR (V.O.)
That's when I saw HIS face...

As Oscar blows smoke out the window, he catches a reflection
of SOMEONE behind him in the glass... Steven Ray's face!

OSCAR (V.O.)
The face of a dead man. The face of
the man who hung himself in that
fucking closet. Steven fucking Ray.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Oscar, lost in the memory, exhales a large cloud of smoke.

OSCAR
Next thing I remember, I'm waking
up in a hospital.

DARWIN

Are you sure you just didn't fall?

OSCAR

I know what happened, I was there.
And I FELT him push me.

DARWIN

Okay, maybe you felt SOMEONE push
you. Maybe someone broke in.

Oscar stares off, haunted.

OSCAR

I saw his face clear as fucking
day. It's something I'll never
forget. EVER.

Darwin sighs, frustrated.

DARWIN

Are you SURE you're remembering
everything correctly? That's a
three-story fall. I imagine you had
to have suffered SOME head trauma.

Oscar glares at Darwin, a thousand-yard stare.

OSCAR

What do you want me to tell you? I
slipped, fell? Someone broke in and
pushed me? Would that make you feel
better? Or do you want the truth?

DARWIN

We're talking about ghosts,
imaginary, fictional THINGS. Like
fucking unicorns and leprechauns.
You're talking about something that
simply doesn't exist.

OSCAR

What makes you so sure? Just
because you haven't seen it yet?
You will. Just like I did. Unless
you smarten up and scram. Before
it's too late.

Darwin, struggling for a logical answer, studies Oscar for a
few moments. Looking for the slightest hint of bullshit.

DARWIN

How long did you live there before
you were "pushed" out of that
window?

OSCAR

I dunno. A week? Six, seven days?

This sends a bit of a chill down Darwin's spine.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE CARD:

DAY 4

FADE IN:

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Darwin takes a long gulp from a bottle of Jack Daniels while sizing up the WALK-IN CLOSET.

He marches towards it, opening it emphatically and staring into it, immersed. Crouching down, he drags out a crate packed with old vinyls.

But he catches a glimpse of his old typewriter, stashed away at the back of the closet. A hint of melancholy, he takes the crate and shuts the door.

AT THE RECORD PLAYER

He removes the ROMANTIC OLDIES vinyl, replacing it with a James Brown record - the lively track "**Get on Up**" blares.

BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Darwin showers, the upbeat tune unable to rejuvenate him. But the MUSIC cuts off. Silence. Until...

The ROMANTIC OLDIES SONG plays instead. Confused, Darwin leaves the shower.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

He peers down at the record player, the James Brown record neatly set to the side, back in its cover. The ROMANTIC OLDIES vinyl now spinning on the record player.

Suspicious, Darwin gives his apartment a glance.

DARWIN

Hello?

Darwin cautiously searches his apartment, dipping in and out of his bedroom, the kitchen. Then the WALK-IN CLOSET, giving it an uneasy once-over, nobody inside.

He hurries to his front door and opens it to find nobody. Stumped, he shuts the door, looks over his apartment again, on edge. Trying to figure it all out.

Slowly moving further into his apartment, he eyes the bottle of Jack Daniels sitting on the kitchen counter. Lifts it, giving it a look. But doesn't sip. Only setting it back down.

INT. DAD'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY - LATER

A cramped space in desperate need of renovations.

Darwin, at the table, watches his Dad (late 50s, disheveled and languid) drop ice cubes into a glass at the counter.

DARWIN

You see Mom at all?

DAD

Nope.

DARWIN

It was her birthday a few days ago.

DAD

I know.

He pours scotch into his glass, joints Darwin at the table.

DARWIN

I need some money.

DAD

Nice to see you, too, kiddo.

DARWIN

I'm good for it. I get another check in a few months, for the book...

DAD

What do you need it for?

DARWIN

I'm moving.

DAD

Why don't you just ask your little gal pal to help you out, Melanie?

DARWIN

Madeline. We broke up. I moved out.

DAD

You lived with her?

DARWIN

Yeah, three years.

DAD

Huh. That sucks. Would've been nice to meet her.

Dad nabs his wallet, slides a twenty-dollar bill to Darwin.

DARWIN

Twenty bucks?

DAD

Don't spend it all in one place.

Defeated, Darwin takes the cash and pockets it. He looks across to Dad, something on his mind.

DARWIN

Do you believe in ghosts?

Dad just blinks at him, the question not registering.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

Never mind...

DAD

I saw your mother once, I think.

Surprised, Darwin waits for his father to continue. Dad ponders to himself, sipping his drink. Then shrugs.

DAD (CONT'D)

She mighta still been alive, though. I forget.

Still thinking about the question, Dad takes another sip.

DAD (CONT'D)

I'll tell you what, if ghosts are real, I sure as hell don't wanna see one.

He looks Darwin dead in the eye.

DAD (CONT'D)
 Sometimes, kiddo, the truth ain't
 worth knowing.

Darwin senses some subtext, Dad quickly looking away.

DAD (CONT'D)
 Can I get you something to drink?
 Scotch?

DARWIN
 (downbeat)
 Sure. Why not.

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The TELEVISION BLARING in the background, "**The Entity**"
 playing on his old, 80's style television...

Darwin urinates into the WALK-IN CLOSET, half-awake.
 Finished, he pivots, nearly falling over, clearly drunk out
 of his mind.

KITCHEN

Darwin rummages through the refrigerator, knocking items over
 as he snags a cold beer. He takes one swig, swaying, barely
 able to keep his balance.

Suddenly, his cheeks puff out, vomit dribbling from his lips
 as he tries to keep it in. He scrambles to the --

BATHROOM

On his knees, arms hugging porcelain, he vomits over the
 toilet. Phlegm hanging from his lip, he lifts his head only
 to realize the toilet lid was never lifted. Pink chunks
 splattered everywhere.

KITCHEN

Darwin stumbles over, grabbing his phone from the counter. He
 checks the time - **2:08**. The time feels familiar to him.

He slowly looks up, eyes widening - every cabinet and drawer
 hangs wide open.

DARWIN
 Huh.

He eyes the time on his cell phone again - **2:08**. His drunken
 mind slowly putting it together.

Suspicious, he looks up at all the cabinets again. Slowly turns to the WALK-IN CLOSET in the living room when...

WHAM! The WALK-IN CLOSET SLAMS SHUT!

Darwin jumps back, startled.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
What... the... fuck...

Staring at the door with bated breath.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
Uh, hello?

A long, tense hush... until... all the kitchen cabinets SLAM SHUT SIMULTANEOUSLY! Darwin immediately takes off and bolts with his cell phone, leaving his front door wide open.

APARTMENT BUILDING STAIRWAY

Darwin, in only his underwear, sprints down, his foot just missing the crumbled edge of the damaged step.

FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY

As Darwin sprints past APARTMENT 1A, Bernadette peeks out.

A CELL PHONE RINGS, taking us to...

INT. MADELINE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Darwin's CELL PHONE RINGS, lying on the floor, waking Darwin, also on the floor. Sunlight blinding him.

Discombobulated, he gingerly rolls to his side, peeling his face from the waxed concrete. He sits up, realizes that he's outside someone's apartment.

The door opens, Madeline poking her head out.

MADELINE
Jesus Christ, Darwin.

Slams the door shut in his face.

DARWIN
Maddy?

He leans back against the wall, very hung over.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
How the fuck did I get here?

His CELL PHONE RINGS again - **ED**. Darwin tries to think back, still in a daze.

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Darwin vomits onto the toilet lid, pink chunks bouncing off and spattering everywhere.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

WHAM! The WALK-IN CLOSET slams shut! Darwin jumps back.

DARWIN
What... the... fuck...

Fixated on the closet.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
Uh, hello?

All the kitchen cabinets SLAMMING SHUT SIMULTANEOUSLY, Darwin dashes out of his apartment, leaving the door open.

EXT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Darwin bolts from the front entrance in his underwear, Homeless Lady posted out front with her cart.

HOMELESS LADY
Do you have a dollar you can --

He blows past her, nearly knocking her over as he takes off down the street, scared shitless...

DOWN THE BLOCK

Darwin sprints along the sidewalk, confused PEDESTRIANS watching as he zooms past them, off into the distance.

A BUZZ takes us to...

EXT. MADELINE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

At the front entrance to the apartment building...

Darwin, drenched in sweat, vomit spatter staining his wife-beater, hits the buzzer desperately.

DARWIN
 (into intercom)
 Madeline! It's me, open the door!
 Please!

From the intercom:

MADELINE (V.O.)
 (sighs)
 What?

DARWIN
 Listen to me, Maddy, you gotta let
 me in, it's an emergency!

MADELINE (V.O.)
 (delayed)
 Are you drunk? You sound drunk.

DARWIN
 Come on! Just open the door!
 (softer)
 Something happened at my apartment,
 okay?
 (super desperate)
 Please?

A delay... then BUZZ!!! He opens the door, hurries in.

INT. MADELINE'S BUILDING - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Madeline stink-eyes Darwin from her doorway. Hands on his knees, he catches his breath, covered in sweat.

MADELINE
 You're drunk.

DARWIN
 (catching his breath)
 I'm not... drunk...

She sniffs the air, wincing.

MADELINE
 Did you throw up?
 (motioning to his
 underwear)
 And what is this? Why?

DARWIN
 Never mind that. Listen, I need to
 crash here tonight.

MADELINE
You're kidding.

DARWIN
I can't go back there, Maddy, some
crazy shit's happening. I swear,
it's just for tonight. I'll even
sleep on the floor.

MADELINE
No.

DARWIN
Why not?

MADELINE
You don't live here anymore.

DARWIN
So, it's gonna be like that?

MADELINE
Do you have any idea how ridiculous
you look right now? You come here
completely shit-faced, in your
fucking underwear, smelling like
pure shit... and you expect me to
let you sleep here?

Darwin contemplates to himself, confused.

DARWIN
So... can I crash here or...?

She blinks at him, deadpan. Too tired to argue.

MADELINE
Darwin. Go home.

She shuts the door in his face.

DARWIN
Maddy?

No response.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
Madeline. Open the door.

Darwin turns the knob but it's locked. He takes a step back,
nodding bitterly.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
Fine, fuck it.

He sits down, leans his back against the wall.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
I can do this all night. I'm not
going anywhere until you let me in.

MADELINE'S APARTMENT

Madeline listens by her door, fighting tears.

DARWIN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You hear that? I'm not going
anywhere!

A DOOR OPENING from inside her apartment OS grabs her attention. She looks to her door again, but walks away.

MADELINE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY

Darwin rests the back of his head against the wall. As he waits, his eyes well up.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
(under his breath)
I'm not going anywhere...

Eyelids getting heavy, he slowly dozes off.

A CELL PHONE RINGING takes us to...

INT. MADELINE'S BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Darwin's CELL PHONE continues to RING - **ED**. Darwin thinks about it, finally answers.

DARWIN
(sighs)
Yeah.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK.

DAY 5

FADE IN:

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY - LATER

Darwin stares down at the toilet, baffled, while chugging coconut water.

DARWIN

I yakked all over the place.

The bathroom is spotless. No sign of vomit. He looks to Ed.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

And now it's gone. How do you explain that?

ED

I don't know, Darwin, maybe you cleaned it up. Don't you sleepwalk when you're drunk?

DARWIN

This wasn't how it was before I left. I'm pretty sure.

ED

So, this ghost cleans up after you? That's the story we're going with?

He shakes his head, storms out of the bathroom.

LIVING ROOM

Ed stares down at a near-empty bottle of Jack Daniels on the coffee table, picking up "**The Entity**" VHS cover.

ED (CONT'D)

I'm gonna guess you passed out with the TV on last night?

Darwin points to the WALK-IN CLOSET.

DARWIN

Someone killed themselves right there in that closet, before I moved in.

ED

Ugh, it smells like piss.

Covering his nose, he shuts the WALK-IN CLOSET.

DARWIN

He hung himself. And after that, more people died...

ED

Darwin...

DARWIN

The last tenant got pushed right
out the fucking window...

ED

Enough! Enough of this stupid,
Scooby Doo fucking bullshit! You
sound like a fucking nut-job!

He snatches the Jack Daniels bottle off the coffee table and
heads to the...

KITCHEN

Ed dumps the rest of the Jack Daniels into the sink, setting
the empty bottle on the counter.

ED (CONT'D)

All this booze is turning your
brain to mush. You need to stop.

(pauses)

I brought you back your AA chips.

He rummages through his pants pockets, coming up empty.

ED (CONT'D)

Whatever, fuck the chips. You need
to put the bottle down and start
showing up to meetings again.
Before someone locks you away and
puts you in a straitjacket. I mean,
look at you. Did you seriously run
all the way to Maddy's like that?
In nut-huggers and a fucking wife-
beater? What are you on,
speedballs? Then you pass out at
her door the whole night?

DARWIN

Listen to me, Ed. I know what it
sounds like, but I'm telling you, I
saw something here last night...

ED

Maddy almost called the cops.

Darwin stops rambling, suddenly silenced.

ED (CONT'D)

I had to convince her not to. She
thinks your losing it. And I didn't
even tell her about this paranormal
activity bullshit coming out of
your mouth.

Ed paces in place, massaging his temples. He stops and turns to Darwin, staring at him for a few moments.

ED (CONT'D)
I don't think I can help you
anymore, Darwin. I think I'm done.

Nothing left to say, he heads to the front door. But looks back at Darwin again.

ED (CONT'D)
You know, Maddy's a good girl...

He stops for a moment, as if he wanted to say something sincere. But he changes his tone.

ED (CONT'D)
Stop showing up to her place all
fucked up, huh? She deserves better
than that.

Ed leaves, shutting the door behind him.

Darwin hangs his head in thought. While staring off into space, he aimlessly glances at the counter at some old mail.

He approaches the counter, now focused on a letter addressed to **Annie Riley Ray**.

DARWIN
(realization)
Steven RAY.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY - LATER

Darwin sits in front of a computer and CLICKS away.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

A series of articles pop up. He clicks on the top one.

**Steven Ray, 34, was found dead in his apartment early
Sunday morning. He was found by his wife, Annie Ray,
31. Police have ruled it a suicide.**

A lovely photo of Steven and Annie at the top.

PRINTER AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Darwin snatches the article as it spits out from the printer.

His eyes linger on Steven's photo. Haunted. But his focus shifts to Annie's part of the photo. He glosses over the caption beneath and reads - ANNIE RAY.

AT THE COMPUTER

Eyes bloodshot, Darwin continues his research.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

He scrolls through several Facebook profiles under the name ANNIE RAY, stopping when recognizes one of the profile pictures and CLICKING on it, bringing up her profile.

No status updates. Barely any friends. Only a few photos.

The mouse pointer moves to WORK & EDUCATION on the menu, reading WORKS AT RILEY'S DINER.

EXT. RILEY'S DINER - DAY - LATER

A small mom-and-pop joint in a quiet neighborhood.

INT. RILEY'S DINER - CONTINUOUS

Darwin at a booth sipping coffee, a WAITRESS, pen and pad ready, greets him with a smile.

WAITRESS

All set to order?

DARWIN

I was actually wondering if Annie was working today?

Her smile fades. On the brink of tears, she leaves the table. Darwin, confused, watches her run off.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

The fuck was that?

Moments later, REBECCA RILEY (mid 50s) marches to his table. She glowers down at him, hands on her hips.

REBECCA

Can I help you with something, sir?

DARWIN

Uh, do you work here?

REBECCA

Yes, I'm the owner.

DARWIN
I was just asking if Annie was
working today?

REBECCA
And you are?

DARWIN
I'm... Darwin?

REBECCA
(firmly)
How can I help you, Darwin?

Darwin hesitates, confused by the confrontation.

DARWIN
I just wanted to talk to Annie.

REBECCA
About?

DARWIN
Stuff?

REBECCA
Stuff.

DARWIN
I'm sorry, I feel like this isn't
going very well.

REBECCA
I'm Annie's mother.

DARWIN
Oh.

A tense silence.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
Look, I don't know Annie. I
actually just moved into her old
apartment and got some of her mail.

He shows her the envelope. Rebecca takes it, the letter sent
from **REBECCA RILEY** to **ANNIE RAY RILEY**.

Dumbfounded, she looks to Darwin. Back to the envelope. She
sits down across from him, taken aback. Stunned silent.

REBECCA
 (somberly)
 My therapist thought writing
 letters to her would help.

DARWIN
 With what?

Rebecca takes a moment.

REBECCA
 Annie died three years ago.

Deflated, Darwin sinks into his seat, not sure what to say.

DARWIN
 I'm sorry for your loss.

The uncomfortable silence drags on...

DARWIN (CONT'D)
 I should probably go.

REBECCA
 Why did you come here? And don't
 tell me it was because you wanted
 to give her some mail.

DARWIN
 I'm sorry, I'm super uncomfortable
 right now...

REBECCA
 You're here, aren't you?

Point taken. But he's still reluctant.

DARWIN
 I wanted to ask about her husband.

Her eyes cast down, wearing a petulant grin.

REBECCA
 Steven.

DARWIN
 This is gonna sound silly but I
 have reason to believe that the
 apartment may be, you know...

She waits for him to finish.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
 Haunted.

Suspicious at first, she lets out a soft, sardonic chuckle.

REBECCA

I guess if anyone were to haunt anybody, it'd be him. He wasn't the nicest person.

DARWIN

In what way?

REBECCA

Every way. Annie blamed it on his bipolar disorder. But where I come from, being an abusive, evil shit isn't considered a condition. She claimed it was a DISEASE... what a load of shit.

(sighs)

But she defended him, even after she left him. And when he killed himself, he blamed her. And she just couldn't handle the guilt.

A somber, deafening pause.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Darwin, right?

He nods.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Darwin, when I wrote that letter, I wasn't supposed to send it anywhere. Not sure why I mailed it to her. Maybe a part of me thought she'd respond. Somehow.

She slides the envelope back across to Darwin.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

I want you to do something for me.

EXT. QUEENSBORO BRIDGE - NIGHT

The New York skyline in the backdrop, lights shimmering off the East River.

BIKE/WALKING PATH

Darwin peers over the guardrail, to the river below. His hair blowing as VEHICLES zoom past.

He tosses the envelope off the bridge, watching it flutter down into the dark waters.

Darwin turns, sees Annie at the guard rail. Approaching the edge, about to climb on top of it. He shuts his eyes --

SERIES OF FLASHBACKS

- FRANK in the closet, shushing Darwin.
- Darwin slices his wrists with a blade.
- His MOTHER slapping him in the face as a child.
- Darwin lying in a bathtub, blood slowly clouding the water.
- His MOTHER standing in traffic, VEHICLES closing in.
- Darwin's head dipping slowly beneath the red bathtub water.

BACK TO SCENE

Darwin opens his eyes - Annie is gone.

He moves to the guardrail and peers down into the river. As he brings his head back up, away from the guard rail --

Annie's ghastly face appears behind him!

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Darwin wakes up suddenly. Just a dream.

But a THUD from above distracts him. Followed by DRAGGING FOOTSTEPS. Then SCRATCHING... subtle but continuous...

The SCRATCHING grows louder. Faster. But it's not coming from the ceiling. Paralyzed with fear, Darwin's eyes shift to the bedroom door - the SCRATCHING coming from the other side!

His heart pounding, panic filling his eyes, the SCRATCHING grows even louder. And faster. Continuous.

Darwin cautiously leaves his bed, zeroing in on his bedroom door as the SCRATCHING persists. He tiptoes towards it. One. Step. At a time. But as he reaches the door...

The SCRATCHING stops. Darwin listens with bated breath. Places his hand on the knob... slowly turning it... before...

Quickly pulling the door open to reveal A BLACK CAT arching its back, staggering sideways, making Darwin jump, startled!

The BLACK CAT runs into the room, past him, into the corner.

On the brink of a heart attack, Darwin takes a few breaths to calm himself. He moves towards the BLACK CAT, cornered against the wall in his room. Its tail puffed out. Eyes wide.

DARWIN

How'd you get in here, huh?

The tag on its collar reads - **FUCK BOY.**

As Darwin nears the BLACK CAT, he sees that it isn't staring at him. It's staring past him. Darwin glances back into the empty living room behind him. Then back to the cat.

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Darwin KNOCKS on --

KATORAH'S DOOR

The BLACK CAT by his feet. FOOTSTEPS from inside until...

The door opens, smoke pouring out. Katorah answers in shorts and a wife-beater, eyes bloodshot. Stoned out of her mind.

DARWIN

Fuck Boy snuck into my apartment.

INT. KATORAH'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Horror movie posters line the walls of her messy apartment.

Darwin checks out her DVD collection, impressed. A lot of obscure horror titles; "**Suspiria**", "**House of the Devil**" and "**Mother's Day**" among the many titles.

DARWIN

Nice collection. Didn't take you for a horror fan.

As "**Texas Chainsaw Massacre**" plays on her television, Katorah puts the finishing touches on an immaculately rolled blunt, drying the saliva-covered leaf with a lighter flame.

KATORAH

Got like 300. What's your DVD collection looking like?

DARWIN

I'm more of a VHS kinda guy. Guess I'm kinda stuck in the past.

As he continues perusing her DVD collection...

DARWIN (CONT'D)

There's something about VHS. It's got charm, character. All this Blu Ray shit, it's too perfect. It makes everything look too... real.

Darwin finds a copy of "**The Entity**". Takes it, holding it up as he turns back to Katorah.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

My girlfriend's favorite movie.

Katorah looks at the DVD as she lights up her blunt.

KATORAH

The Entity. Barbara Hershey and Ron Silver. Dope-ass film.

(pauses)

That ever happen to you over there?

DARWIN

What?

KATORAH

Like in the movie. It's about this white lady who gets raped by a ghost. Based on a true story.

DARWIN

I know what it's about.

KATORAH

So? Did that happen to you?

DARWIN

Did WHAT happen to me?

KATORAH

Like in the movie. Did the ghost, you know, rape you? Like, anally?

Darwin gives her a deadpan stare.

DARWIN

No. That never happened.

KATORAH

That's cool.

She takes a puff.

KATORAH (CONT'D)
Is it true, though? What they say
about your apartment?

He sits down across from her.

DARWIN
I think so, yeah.

KATORAH
You see anything?

DARWIN
Things moving, cabinets slamming
shut, shit like that.

KATORAH
Dope.

DARWIN
Pardon me for asking, but, knowing
what you know about the place, why
wouldn't YOU move? You live right
across the hall.

She shrugs while taking a puff.

KATORAH
This is my home. And it's not like
I'm the one living there.

DARWIN
You never hear anything?

KATORAH
Not really. Just Bernadette
yammering away.

Katorah offers him the blunt. Unsure, he refuses.

KATORAH (CONT'D)
Come on, don't be a bitch.

On the fence, Darwin gives in to the peer pressure and takes
a puff, coughing. Katorah laughs, taking the blunt back.

KATORAH (CONT'D)
Hell yeah, open up them fucking
capillaries...

Darwin beats his chest, clearing his throat.

DARWIN

You ever get to know any of the other tenants?

KATORAH

Nobody was really around long enough to get to know. Just chit-chat, small talk. Only ones I really knew were Annie and Steven. That was a long time ago.

Darwin's eyes light up.

DARWIN

Yeah? What were THEY like?

KATORAH

Annie used to feed Fuck Boy every time I'd let him run around the building. I even smoked her up a few times. Don't think Steven liked me, though. Think he thought I had a thing for his girl. He seemed like the crazy, jealous type.

Darwin nods sheepishly while listening.

KATORAH (CONT'D)

Think he had some serious issues. I remember, I smoked BOTH of them up one night. The whole time, he's talking shit about my apartment under his breath, whispering about how messy it was. And he kept rearranging shit...

She arranges items on his coffee table so that they're perfectly symmetrical.

KATORAH (CONT'D)

Like he was building a fort. And every two seconds, he's washing his hands. Like I'm some kinda fucking dirtball. Anal as fuck. Then he started yelling at my cat for getting fur on him. That's when I fucking snapped.

Katorah, out of nowhere, pulls a gun, alarming Darwin.

KATORAH (CONT'D)

Told that motherfucker, you lay a finger on Fuck Boy? Boom!

Darwin flinches. But she lowers the gun.

KATORAH (CONT'D)
Probably explains why Bernadette
don't give me shit about the rent
no more. Poor old Bernadette.

Once her hand leaves the gun, Darwin relaxes a bit.

DARWIN
What's HER deal?

KATORAH
(shrugs)
Ever since they found Steven
hanging in that closet, she lost
her mind, I guess. Any mother
would. To some degree.

DARWIN
Mother? Wait... Steven was...?

Katorah nods, taking a long puff.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
But she's black.

KATORAH
Oh, so them rich white bitches can
adopt black babies left and right
but old Bernadette can't adopt one
white kid? It's 2018, bruh, get
with the times.

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - FIRST FLOOR - LATER

Darwin quietly makes his way down the stairs, APARTMENT 1A
his destination. But he slows as he nears.

BERNADETTE'S DOOR

And just stands there, frozen. Reluctant, he makes the
decision to knock. But before he can...

The door suddenly opens, making Darwin jump! He quickly
gathers himself, trying to act natural.

Bernadette wears an empty expression. Until an unsettling
smile creeps across her face.

BERNADETTE
Hello.

DARWIN
 (delayed)
 Hi.

They just stare at each other, sharing a long silence.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
 I just stopped by to thank you. For
 the food the other night.

BERNADETTE
 At this hour?

Bernadette eyes him curiously.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)
 What are you really doing here?

He takes a moment to come up with something.

DARWIN
 I was wondering if you'd wanna
 maybe stop by sometime? And chat?

She continues to analyze him suspiciously.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
 At a more appropriate hour. Thought
 it would be nice to get to know the
 neighbors a little better. Me being
 new here and all.

Bernadette mulls it over.

BERNADETTE
 Okay.

And she shuts the door.

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Darwin dumps beer into his sink, one can at a time. He
 crushes each empty can, tossing them into a trash bin.

But he keeps the last can. Thinks. Then looks out to the
 empty living room. Tosses the crumpled can onto the floor.

He gives the whole living room a glance, brainstorming.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Darwin tears the room apart, tossing clothes around and
 moving furniture out of place. Creating a huge mess.

MOMENTS LATER

He lies a vinyl on the record player. It spins, playing the ROMANTIC OLDIES SONG.

Darwin sits on the couch. Staring at the WALK-IN CLOSET, the door wide open. His eyes never blinking, MUSIC playing.

DARWIN
Come on, Steven.

Silence. Darwin sips coffee directly from the pot.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
I got all night.

THE NEXT DAY

Sunshine brightens the room.

Darwin still on the couch, in the same position. Bloodshot eyes glued to the WALK-IN CLOSET, the door wide open.

The music no longer playing, just the SOUND of the NEEDLE GRINDING against the vinyl.

His ALARM goes off.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE CARD:

DAY 6

FADE IN:

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

His ALARM continues to go off.

Darwin, eyes still locked in on the WALK-IN CLOSET, silences the alarm. Finally, he gives up, leaves the couch. He steps over the crumpled beer can on the floor.

RECORD PLAYER

Darwin lays an AL GREEN vinyl on it.

BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

As Darwin showers, the AL GREEN track stops. Silence until the ROMANTIC OLDIES SONG plays instead.

Darwin jumps out of the shower, grabbing a towel.

LIVING ROOM

Dripping wet, Darwin stares down at the record player, as it plays the ROMANTIC OLDIES SONG, his AL GREEN vinyl returned to its cover, neatly propped up to the side.

His attention shifts to the kitchen counter, where the crumpled beer can now sits.

Darwin looks to the WALK-IN CLOSET, the door now shut.

DARWIN
You sneaky fuck.

He steps out into the living room area, looking around with a snide grin, nodding his head.

MOMENTS LATER

Darwin paces, cell phone to his ear. Taken to voice mail.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
Hey, Maddy, it's me. I just wanted to apologize for the other night. I was... out of sorts...
(pauses)
So, hey, I was wondering if I'd be able to borrow your camera...

INT. DAD'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY - LATER

Darwin sits at the table, sipping coffee.

DARWIN
Do you still have that camcorder you and Mom used to have?

His Dad pours a cocktail at the counter.

DAD
We had a camcorder?

He glances back at Darwin curiously.

DAD (CONT'D)
You still have that old typewriter I gotcha? When you were a kid?

DARWIN
Yeah, actually.

DAD
You ever use it?

DARWIN
Not since the book. Haven't really
written anything else.

Dad nods, getting borderline sentimental.

DAD
I read that book...

Quickly getting uncomfortable.

DAD (CONT'D)
Can I make you a drink?

Darwin shakes his head.

DARWIN
I'm taking a break for a little
bit. Get my head straight until I
figure some things out.

Dad cocks his eye at him suspiciously.

DAD
You're not gonna get all righteous
on me, are you? Like the last time
you "took a break"?

Darwin studies his father, something on his mind.

DARWIN
Do you blame me? For what happened
to Mom?

Dad freezes up, caught off guard.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
Once in a while, I think about
things, you know?

His father exhales, clearly not up for this conversation.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
Like, what if I hadn't said
anything. What if I'd just let her
sneak him outta the house. Maybe
things would be different. Maybe
she'd still be alive.

His father looks across to him, about to say something
meaningful...

DAD
I gotta take a shit.

He rises, takes his drink to the bathroom and shuts the door.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY - LATER

Darwin searches for jobs on Craig's List. Meanwhile, at a nearby table, a GEEKY GIRL (early 20s) reads a book titled, "Killing Frank".

Geeky Girl bookmarks her page, shuts the book - Darwin's photo, along with bio, on the back cover. She looks across to Darwin, recognizing him. She smiles, timid at first.

GEEKY GIRL
Hey.

Darwin turns, sees the book. Almost cracks a smile.

DARWIN
Well, what do you know? How deep into the bargain bin did you have to dig to find that?

GEEKY GIRL
It's really good.
(still a bit shy)
I cried when Shane's mother died.

He nods, a tad uncomfortable.

GEEKY GIRL (CONT'D)
Did that really happen?

Darwin thinks about it. But shakes his head.

DARWIN
Pure imagination.

She nods, impressed.

GEEKY GIRL
You have anything else I should check out?

DARWIN
Nope, that's about it.

Geeky Girl seems slightly disappointed.

GEEKY GIRL
Plan on writing anything new?

Darwin shrugs.

DARWIN
Maybe one day.

After an awkward silence, Darwin returns to his computer screen. As we transition to the next scene...

FRANK (V.O.)
Hello, my name is Frank...

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - DAY - LATER

Darwin sits in the back as FRANK, an AA member, stands before a small group.

FRANK
And I'm an alcoholic.

INT. UBER CAR (MOVING) - LATER

Darwin stares at his cell phone.

ON CELL PHONE

He watches Madeline's Youtube channel.

MADELINE
Salutations, Youtube, today I'll be reviewing Jordan Peele's directorial debut, "Get Out"...

Just then, he catches a SHADOW move past Madeline, as if someone was passing by from behind her camera.

BACK TO SCENE

Darwin narrows his eyes, suspicious. But looks up, to the front of the car, eyes jolting open wide --

He sees his MOTHER in the middle of the street, waiting for the car to run her over --

WHAM! She topples onto the hood, rolling off just as the Uber car slams on the brakes.

Darwin, stunned, immediately gets out of the car along with the DRIVER of the Uber.

EXT. UBER CAR (PARKED) - MIDDLE OF THE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Other VEHICLES behind them HONK wildly.

Darwin and DRIVER hurry to the front of the Uber car to check on whoever was hit - it's a BICYCLIST, dusting himself off, gingerly getting to his feet.

DRIVER

Hey, buddy, you okay?

Darwin is baffled - he wasn't sure if what was happening was real. But it is. It's just not his mother. The clashing of reality meets fantasy unsettles him.

INT. MADELINE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Darwin stands by the door as Madeline detaches her camera from her computer set-up.

MADELINE

What do you need my camera for, anyway?

As his eyes wander the apartment, looking for something...

DARWIN

Things have been happening at my apartment. At night.

She turns back, intrigued.

MADELINE

What kinda things?

His eyes gravitate to the closet where Frank hides, index finger to his lip, shushing Darwin.

DARWIN

I don't know.

Darwin continues to inspect the room, something weighing heavy on his mind.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

Was somebody...

While putting her camera in its case, she turns, waits for Darwin to finish.

MADELINE

Was somebody, what?

He looks to her. Shakes his head.

DARWIN

Nothing.

She shrugs it off, turns her back to him while finishing packing up her camera and its accessories.

MADELINE

I need it back by the weekend.

Madeline turns but Darwin is gone.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Darwin?

The SOUND of a TEA KETTLE WHISTLING takes us to...

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT - LATER

Hot air pours out from a WHISTLING tea kettle. Darwin shuts off the stove. Pours two cups of tea.

BERNADETTE (V.O.)

A little messy in here...

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Bernadette sits on the couch, scoping the mess Darwin made the previous night.

BERNADETTE

Don't you think?

Darwin sits down across from her.

DARWIN

Yeah, well. I just moved in.

BERNADETTE

Of all the apartments in New York, why here?

He thinks about it briefly.

DARWIN

The rent's cheap. And my girlfriend broke up with me.

She nods, understanding. Falls into thought.

BERNADETTE

I was married once. Probably about your age. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to have children. So, he found someone who could.

Reflects for a moment, Darwin captivated.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)

People can be so cruel, can't they?

After a few moments, she snaps out of her trance.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)

I'm sure you've heard all the stories. About what happened here.

He hesitates.

DARWIN

I may have heard a few things.

She chuckles softly.

BERNADETTE

A few things...

DARWIN

I know about Steven. I know he was your son.

Bernadette wears a sad, bittersweet smile.

BERNADETTE

Steven. He was a good boy. I took him in when he was eight years old. Of course, he had some... issues. But he just wanted to be loved. Just like anybody else.

She turns to the WALK-IN CLOSET, concentrating on it.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)

I always kept him close. Nobody understood him like I did. I tried protecting him the best I could.

Shakes her head sadly.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)

But I couldn't protect him from everything.

DARWIN
Bernadette?

Bernadette gives him her full attention.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
Is Steven here right now?

A creepy grin slowly crosses her face as she looks past him --

STEVEN RAY stands behind Darwin. Smiling back at her.

Darwin slowly turns, but doesn't see anyone. He faces Bernadette again.

She whispers something very softly, not making sense. Steven smiles back at her as she continues to whisper, clapping his hands together like an excited child.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
What is that? What are you saying?

She laughs in nostalgia.

BERNADETTE
I remember, when he was just a little boy, he wouldn't talk to nobody. Not a word. He didn't feel like he could trust many people. So, we made up words. Kind of like our own language that only he and I could understand...

She bursts into a fit of laughter.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)
Oh, those were good times...

Then she stops laughing, her smile immediately vanishing. Her eyes move to Darwin, sending a chill down his spine.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)
This isn't your home.

Disquieted, he examines her.

DARWIN
I wanna see him. Have him show himself.

BERNADETTE
I'd be very careful what you wish for, dear. Steven can be very, very temperamental.

Darwin stands up, surveying the room. Searching for a sign.

DARWIN
Steven? If you're here right now,
show me a sign.

Bernadette chuckles under her breath, amused.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
(growing desperate)
Where is he, huh? Come on! Show
yourself!

His attention turns to the record player. He hurries over,
playing the ROMANTIC OLDIES SONG.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
That's his song, right?

Bernadette sips her tea, swaying to the MUSIC, falling into
some kind of trance.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
Come on! Where the fuck are you!

Befuddled and agitated, he looks to Bernadette. Her eyes half-
closed, lost in the MUSIC, she whispers gibberish again, not
making any sense.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
Steven!

The whispers grow louder and faster, Bernadette sounding like
she's speaking in tongues.

Fed up, Darwin explodes, knocking the record player to the
floor and killing the music.

An awkward silence, Darwin heaving with rage.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
This is all bullshit, isn't it?
Steven isn't here. Those three
tenants who died after him, the guy
in the wheelchair, it was you,
wasn't it? You probably poisoned
that fucking lasagna you tried
giving me.

Bernadette only sips her tea, not responding.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
This little shitty apartment, it's
like some kind of shrine.
(MORE)

DARWIN (CONT'D)

You don't want anybody else living here because it reminds you that he's gone. FOREVER. And you can't deal with that, can you? CAN YOU?

Another long, awkward silence.

BERNADETTE

I should probably head home, now.

She rises from her seat and calmly heads to the front door. But she glances back at Darwin with a smile.

BERNADETTE (CONT'D)

Thank you for your hospitality.

Shuts the door behind her.

Darwin plops down on the couch. Looks to the WALK-IN CLOSET. He buries his face into his hands, defeated.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Darwin, at the bar, watches Madeline's Youtube video on his cell phone, repeatedly going back to the SHADOW moving past.

A FEMALE BARTENDER sets a cocktail in front of him. He lowers his phone and stares at his drink, contemplating. Unsure.

Casually glancing across the bar, he spots Ed.

ACROSS THE BAR

Ed downs the rest of a drink, disheveled and downbeat. He waves for another drink. While waiting, he glances at the PRETTY LADY in the seat next to him.

Female Bartender sets Ed's drink on the bar. Ed nods over to HOT GIRL next to him.

ED

And whatever this super model sitting next to me wants.

Hot Girl forces a smile, looks to Female Bartender.

HOT GIRL

Two Jager shots?

Ed flashes a sly, obnoxious grin. Nodding, impressed.

ED

Nice, I can go for a little Jager.

Female Bartender sets a shot in front of Hot Girl.

ED (CONT'D)
 (slyly)
 You from around here?

Female Bartender pours the second shot. Ed glances at her, reaching out to grab it. But Female Bartender snubs him, setting the shot in front Hot Girl's good-looking BOYFRIEND at the next seat.

ED (CONT'D)
 (confused)
 What the shit?

Boyfriend salutes Ed with the shot glass.

BOYFRIEND
 Thanks, man.

He clangs shot glasses with Hot Girl, both of them downing their Jager shots.

ED
 Whoa-whoa-whoa, hold up, what's going on, here? Who the fuck are you?

BOYFRIEND
 (kinda confused)
 Uh, I'm her boyfriend?

Ed glares at Hot Girl, shaking his head, betrayed.

HOT GIRL
 I thought you were just being nice.
 Besides, aren't you married?

Ed glances down to the ring on his finger. Nods to himself, embarrassed... ashamed...

Then he explodes, throwing his drink into Boyfriend's face, getting spatter on Hot Girl, both jumping out of their seats.

BOYFRIEND
 Hey!

Ed jumps from his stool, knocking it to the floor for effect, squaring up. Ready for a fight.

BOYFRIEND (CONT'D)
 Dude, what the hell?

ED

You think you're fucking better
than me? Let's rock! Two hits,
asshole, I hit you, you hit --

Hot Girl sprays Ed in the eyes with mace! Screaming in agony
with his hands over his eyes, Ed staggers backwards as --

Hot Girl grabs an empty beer bottle off the bar and CLUNK!
Nails him right between the eyes, the bottle not breaking. Ed
trips over his stool, hitting the floor hard.

ACROSS THE BAR

Darwin immediately leaves his seat.

DARWIN

Jesus Christ, Ed...

And rushes to his aid.

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Ed, eyes puffy, gash across the bridge of his nose, sits on
Darwin's couch holding an ice pack to his face, tears rolling
down his cheeks.

ED

She fucking left me, man! Kicked me
outta the fucking house!

He bursts into a fit of sobbing. Darwin, standing across from
him, uncomfortable, stares down at Ed as he continues to sob.

DARWIN

What happened? Why?

ED

Never mind why! What the fuck does
that matter? I'm out on my ass!

He wipes his tears, looks desperately up at Darwin.

ED (CONT'D)

You think I can crash here tonight?

DARWIN

I dunno, man...

Ed slams his fist on the coffee table, rattling it.

ED
 (explodes)
 Please!

DARWIN
 Okay! Fuck!

Ed sniffles.

ED
 (softly)
 Thanks.

Looks up at Darwin, eyes red.

ED (CONT'D)
 I'm fucking sorry, man, for
 everything...

DARWIN
 Christ, Ed, how much did you drink?

ED
 Why? You got anything?

BEDROOM - LATER

Darwin lies sound asleep, snoring.

LIVING ROOM

Ed fidgets around, restless while watching television, struggling to get comfy.

He removes his wallet and phone from his pockets and stuffs them under the couch. Tries to get comfy again.

Unable to sit still, he leaves the couch.

KITCHEN

And opens the refrigerator, staring into an empty vessel.

ED (CONT'D)
 Come on, you gotta have
 something...

He frantically rummages through cabinets, coming up empty.

BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ed searches the medicine cabinet. He pulls out a small bottle of mouthwash. Flips it around and reads the label on the back. It reads - 18.9% ALCOHOL.

ED (CONT'D)

Fuck it...

Spins the cap off and chugs, nearly downing the whole bottle.

KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Ed inspects the crumpled beer can on the counter. Shakes it, peeking inside. He shrugs, cocking his head back and jerking the last drops from the can into his mouth.

In the background, the WALK-IN CLOSET door slowly opens from the living room, a DARK OMINOUS SHADOW emerging from it.

Ed freezes, holding the can in the air. His eyes widen. The crumpled can falls from his hand, hitting the floor.

BEDROOM

Ed lets out an ear-shattering scream from the next room!

Darwin wakes up immediately as a DOOR SLAMS from the next room, followed by SCAMPERING FOOTSTEPS shaking the floor.

DARWIN

Ed?

He checks his cell phone - 2:08.

LIVING ROOM

Darwin opens his bedroom door, poking his head out - the FRONT DOOR hangs wide open, RUNNING FOOTSTEPS echoing from the hallway.

STAIRWAY

Sprinting down the stairs, Ed loses his footing, the damaged step crumbling beneath him! He flies down the rest of the way when --

CRACK! Landing awkwardly, face first, his neck snaps upon contact with the bottom step.

FIRST FLOOR

Darwin's FOOTSTEPS hurrying down...

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

Ed!

Darwin tries shaking him awake, eventually turning him to his back. But Darwin freezes in shock, Ed's lifeless eyes staring right back at him.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

(softly)

Ed?

Checks his pulse. Stunned silent, Darwin slowly backs away.

He turns, sees Bernadette downstairs, peeking out from her apartment door. A fiendish smile slowly creeps across her face as they stare at each other.

INT. MADELINE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Madeline and Darwin sit side-by-side at the edge of her bed, stunned silent. Dejected. A somber silence.

INSERT FLASHBACK

That fiendish smile on Bernadette's face.

BACK TO PRESENT

Darwin, haunted by that smile, bows his head, looking to his feet, partially under her bed.

But he feels something with his feet. Slides something out from just under the bed - an AA chip. He dips his foot under the bed again, slides out more AA chips.

After a moment of thought, the realization hits him. Devastated, he gazes sadly at the AA CHIPS by his feet.

He turns to Madeline, who wears a faraway look. Silent. Until tears stream down her cheeks.

She breaks out into a full-on cry.

Darwin, a sad anger in his eyes at first, studies her. His anger dissipating. Fading into sympathy.

Madeline, borderline hysterical, leans her head onto Darwin's shoulder while weeping. Crying into his chest.

Darwin's eyes become glossy, a million thoughts running through his mind. He hugs an arm around her tightly. And consoles her, putting his anger aside.

She calms a bit, looks up at Darwin. He looks back at her.

MADELINE

Darwin... I...

He hushes her, pulling her even closer. Holding her tightly. Finding solace in silence.

LATER

Darwin and Madeline lie in bed side-by-side, staring up at the ceiling, space between them. No more tears. Just the two of them sharing silence.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

When's the last time you've had a drink?

DARWIN

(delayed)

A few days, I guess. I dunno.

He falls despondent for a moment. Thinking. He looks to the closet for a moment. But looks back up to the ceiling.

It's almost as if he wanted to say something. Or ask something. But he keeps quiet.

After a long silence...

MADELINE

So... are you gonna tell me more about your apartment?

No response, she turns to him.

MADELINE'S COMPUTER STATION - LATER

Photos of STEVEN and ANNIE flash on the screen as they scroll through news articles, doing research. Darwin points out various tidbits on the computer screen, explaining the history of his apartment to her.

BEDROOM - LATER

The lights now off, a hue from the television flashes through the dark, a scene from "**The Entity**" playing on the screen.

Madeline sits alone in front of her computer, absorbed.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

A PHOTO of ANNIE with the caption - **MISSING**. Madeline scans over an article...

A search for a missing woman in the East River resumed Tuesday morning after concluding the evening before due to inclement weather...

Further into the article...

Missing woman still not found, declared dead...

BACK TO SCENE

Madeline, suspicious, sits back and brainstorms.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
Did you see this?

Turns to the couch, where Darwin sleeps peacefully. She gently lies a blanket over him. Shuts off the television.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK.

DAY 7

FADE IN:

INT. MADELINE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Darwin wakes up suddenly, as if from a bad dream. Or memory. He looks to the digital clock - 6 p.m.

DARWIN
Jesus Christ...

He sits up to see Madeline still at her computer.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
I must've slept like fifteen hours.
Why didn't you wake me up?

She remains glued to the computer screen.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
Did you even sleep?

Madeline turns to him, determined.

MADELINE
We're going over there. With the camera.

DARWIN
When?

MADELINE
Now.

DARWIN

I don't know if that's smart.

MADELINE

Do you have any idea how many views I'll get if I post this? New subscribers?

DARWIN

You wanna post it on your Youtube page?

MADELINE

It IS a horror channel.

DARWIN

I kinda don't give a fuck what kinda channel it is.

MADELINE

If we're gonna do this, we need to do it TONIGHT. Seven days, right? Today's day seven.

She stands up and gathers her coat.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Where's your keys?

DARWIN

I literally just woke up...

MADELINE

I'm going over there, with or without you.

Darwin, on the fence, exhales. But meets eyes with her.

DARWIN

Can we grab something to eat first?

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Madeline gawks at all the cabinets hanging wide open, recording the whole thing on camera.

MADELINE

(in wonder)

Whoa.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Madeline approaches the WALK-IN CLOSET, camera in hand, filming herself, documenting everything. She puts the camera on herself.

LIVE CAMERA FOOTAGE

She addresses her audience.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Salutations, Youtube, it's Maddy the Horror Girl coming to you today with a special treat. Three years ago, a man named Steven Ray committed suicide in this very apartment. And since then, strange activity has been reported...

As Madeline takes her audience through the apartment...

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Three other tenants perished in this apartment under VERY suspicious circumstances since the suicide. The last tenant, however, survived to tell the tale, but was severely injured, permanently confined to a wheelchair.

Madeline disappears out of frame as she aims the camera into the closet.

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

This is the very closet in which Steven Ray hung himself.

She captures every angle of the closet. Her hand appearing into view, pulling on the hangar rod.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Hmm... there's no way this could've supported his weight.

The camera captures the square-shaped pattern in the ceiling above, lingering on it.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Madeline sets the camera up on a tripod at the corner of the room, overlooking the whole apartment.

She gets behind it, takes a look.

LIVE CAMERA FOOTAGE

Of the living room, looking into the kitchen. The closet also in frame. She appears in front of the camera.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Apparently, the spirit of Steven Ray gets a little stage fright. So, we're gonna TRY to get some sleep, hopefully catch some activity on camera...

Checks her watch. Looks to the camera.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

It's almost 10:08, T minus two hours until show time. Ghost Hunters can suck a dick.

BACK TO SCENE

Darwin shuts the WALK-IN CLOSET door, giving it an extra shove to ensure that it stays closed. He even gives the knob a few extra tugs.

BEDROOM - LATER

Madeline lies asleep in bed, Darwin awake next to her. Just staring at the ceiling.

His alarm clock goes off - 2:08. Darwin silences the alarm, Madeline still sound asleep. He sneaks out of bed.

LIVING ROOM

Darwin on the couch, in the dark, stares at the closet, the door still shut. Looks to his cell phone - 2:15. Frustrated, he leaves the couch.

BATHROOM

Darwin washes his hands at the sink, eyeing the scars on his wrists. Shuts off the sink. Looks in the mirror for a moment.

LIVING ROOM

He leaves the bathroom but freezes - the WALK-IN CLOSET is wide open. Darwin shuffles past the closet en route to his bedroom.

DARWIN

(hisses)

Maddy!

As he enters, she appears suddenly at the doorway.

MADELINE
What happened?

Darwin points to the WALK-IN CLOSET.

She flicks a nearby light switch, but it doesn't turn on.
Tries it a couple more times, same result.

DARWIN
Yeah, I've been meaning to pick up
some light bulbs.

Madeline rolls her eyes, takes out her cell phone while
approaching the closet. She turns the flashlight on, shines
it while peering inside.

WALK-IN CLOSET

Darwin stays behind her as she flashes the beam around and
inspects every inch.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
Should we check the footage?

Madeline looks to the ceiling, narrowing her eyes. She stands
on her toes, gets a closer look at the square-shaped pattern
in the ceiling...

There's a gap leading to a crawl space, the panel crooked.

MADELINE
Did you notice this?

DARWIN
What?

He steps in, looking up.

MADELINE
It's a crawl space.

Darwin shrugs.

DARWIN
Nobody said anything.

MADELINE
How did you not notice a crawl
space in your closet?

DARWIN
 (defensive)
 Sorry, I didn't look. Christ.

Shaking her head, she looks back to the ceiling.

MADELINE
 Can you grab me a chair?

DARWIN
 For what?

MADELINE
 Just do it?

He disappears OS, quickly returning with a chair.

Madeline positions it directly below the crawl space panel.
 She props herself up on it, reaching to the panel...

DARWIN
 Wait.

Madeline sighs, looks down at him.

DARWIN (CONT'D)
 The footage?

MADELINE
 That's a good idea, we should get
 everything on camera. You mind
 grabbing it?

DARWIN
 That's not what I meant. We should
 check the footage first before we
 do ANYTHING. Seriously Maddy, I'm
 getting some bad fucking vibes
 right now... hella bad.

Madeline narrows her eyes at him.

MADELINE
 Really? Hella? That's how you talk?

DARWIN
 I don't want you to get hurt, okay?

MADELINE
 Okay. Then you go up, I'll grab the
 camera.

DARWIN
 Absolutely not.

RUSTLING from above grabs their attention. They exchange a spooked glance. She looks back up to the crawl space.

MADELINE

Hello?

Dead silence. No response.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

(hisses)

Hurry up and get the camera!

Impatient, Madeline slides the panel over...

DARWIN

Fuck it, I'll go up.

Madeline considers it. Shrugs.

MADELINE

Fine.

They switch places, Darwin standing on the chair. Reluctant, he takes a deep breath.

Reaches up, sliding the panel all the way over, Madeline watching closely, engrossed. The suspense killing her. But she remembers her camera.

She quickly gives Darwin her phone, giddy. Excited.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Don't do anything yet, we gotta get this on camera.

As Madeline hurries off for the camera, Darwin shines the cell phone flashlight above --

A WOMAN'S FACE glowers down at him! The panel SLAMS onto his fingers --

DARWIN

Fuck!

WHAM! He falls, crashing onto the chair and destroying it. Wincing in pain, he quickly gets to his feet and rushes out.

LIVING ROOM

Scrambling across the room, away from the WALK-IN CLOSET, breathing heavily, in a panic.

Madeline, just removing the camera from the tripod:

MADELINE
What happened?

DARWIN
(awestruck)
I saw someone... a woman.

MADELINE
A woman?

Darwin gasps, looking past Madeline. She turns to the closet, eyes widening, dropping the camera.

A PAIR of FEET slowly emerge from the ceiling... dangling down... then a body... merely a SILHOUETTE...

MADELINE (CONT'D)
(pondering)
A woman...

Something dawns on her. She looks to the closet again at the DARK OMINOUS SHADOW standing inside. Very still. Watching.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
Annie?

A confused look crosses Darwin's face.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
Annie? I know it's you.

DARWIN
(whispers)
You mind telling me what the fuck
is going on right now?

Her eyes remain fixed on the WALK-IN CLOSET.

MADELINE
They said she jumped into the East
River, right?

He nods.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
Nobody saw her jump. All they found
was a note. They never found her
body.

Darwin slowly looks back to the closet and it hits him.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
Annie? I'm sorry about what
happened to your dead husband.

The DARK SHADOW remains still. Quiet. But takes a step forward, revealing...

Annie, in the flesh. Covered in soot, clad in raggedy clothes, her bare feet dirty and calloused. Hair greasy.

She wears a faraway look, staring off.

ANNIE

In sickness... and in health...
till death do us part...

Darwin and Madeline keep very still.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I promised him I'd never leave...

Her dark, empty eyes shift directly to them.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I can't leave him again...

As she steps forward, Darwin spots a knife in her grip.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(explodes)
I can't!!!

She bull-rushes Madeline! But Darwin shoves Madeline out of the way, Annie diving at him with the knife --

They hit the floor, wrestling for the knife. But Annie somehow gains the advantage, straddling on top of him.

SHUNK! She sticks the knife into his shoulder, drawing an agonizing yelp! She holds the knife in, but Darwin pulls her by the wrist, the blade leaving his shoulder.

With all her weight, she comes down with the knife again, sticking it right back into the same wound.

DARWIN

Ah, come on!

He lets out a war cry, kicks her off of him, knocking her to her back.

Darwin gets to his feet, the knife stuck in his shoulder. Gnashing his teeth, he shudders while pulling the knife out, looking at the blood-covered blade in disbelief.

Annie quickly jumps to her feet. They face each other, a good old fashioned stand-off.

WHAM! Madeline bops her in the back of the head with an empty Jack Daniels bottle, dropping her.

Darwin and Madeline stand over her as she lies dazed.

ANNIE
(softly)
I can't leave him again...

Tears stream down her face.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
(crying)
Please... don't make me leave him
again...

Darwin feels for her, a sympathetic stare.

DARWIN
Call the police.

Madeline nods, searches for her phone.

MADELINE
What'd you do with my phone?

As they search around, briefly distracted --

Annie jumps to her feet suddenly, looking to Madeline and Darwin, who remain still. Cautious.

But Annie dashes to the window and SMASH! Jumps through, shattering the glass!

Stunned silent, Darwin and Madeline stand side by side, gawking at the window. After a long silence...

DARWIN
What just happened?

A brief silence, delayed response.

MADELINE
(awestruck)
I'm pretty sure she just jumped out
the fucking window.

They continue to gape at the broken window.

EXT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT - LATER

PATROL CARS and AMBULANCES flood the block, blue and red flashing lights illuminating the neighborhood.

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

POLICE crowd the WALK-IN CLOSET area.

We swoop in, through them, to see OFFICERS shining flashlights up into the crawl space.

CRAWL SPACE

A FEW OFFICERS, ducked down under the low ceiling, shine their flashlights around, the beam cutting through the dark, claustrophobic space.

The light reveals food scraps on paper plates... old lasagna... a pillow and a blanket crammed in the corner...

And finally, a framed wedding photo of Annie and Steven.

FADE OUT:

OVER BLACK.

DETECTIVE #1 (V.O.)
So, is it true?

FADE IN:**INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT**

Bernadette sits across from TWO DETECTIVES in plain clothes, coffee mugs in front of them.

DETECTIVE #1 (O.S.)
Bernadette?

She looks up. TWO DETECTIVES in plain clothes sit across from her, coffee mugs in front of them.

DETECTIVE #1 (CONT'D)
Did you know your daughter-in-law
was living there this whole time?

Bernadette stares off for a moment.

BERNADETTE
Yes.

DETECTIVE #2
Do you know how she could've
survived there for three years?

She nods.

BERNADETTE

I made sure she was well fed. She was quite fond of my lasagna.

The Detectives trade a glance. Back to Bernadette.

DETECTIVE #2

Do you think Annie had anything to do with the deaths of the three tenants who lived there?

BERNADETTE

They all died of natural causes. Says so right in their death records, correct?

DETECTIVE #1

What about Oscar Scandrick? He fell from his window. Claims he was pushed.

BERNADETTE

You'd have to ask Oscar.

Detective #1 leans in close, whispers something into his partner's ear. Detective #2 just nods at him. They both turn back to Bernadette.

DETECTIVE #1

Why was Annie living there in the first place?

Bernadette looks up at them with a warm smile.

BERNADETTE

That's what Steven wanted.

DETECTIVE #2

Steven, as in your son, Steven?

She nods, beaming.

BERNADETTE

He told me to bring her. So I did.

The Detectives exchange an uneasy glance. Turn back to her.

DETECTIVE #2

You DO realize that your son has been dead for three years? Right?

Bernadette stares off again, drifting off into her own world.

DETECTIVE #1
Bernadette? Bernadette?

INT. HOSPITAL MORGUE - LATER

A FEMALE DOCTOR leads Rebecca Riley to a DEAD BODY draped in a bed sheet. Distraught, Rebecca takes a deep breath. Looks to the Female Doctor and nods.

Female Doctor removes the sheet, Rebecca struggling to look. But she peeks at the body. Then looks to Female Doctor, extremely confused.

REBECCA
That's not her.

FEMALE DOCTOR
Excuse me?

Rebecca shakes her head, dumbfounded.

REBECCA
That's not my daughter.

Female Doctor, perplexed, looks to the corpse - it's not Annie. It's the Homeless Lady. Similar skin, blonde hair.

EXT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Homeless Lady stands out front with her shopping cart, sipping from a cup of coffee.

The SOUND of GLASS SHATTERING from above, she looks up --

Annie falls from the sky, coming straight for her...

WHAM! Slamming down on Homeless Lady, crushing her, knocking the shopping cart to the curb. Glass shards everywhere.

Silence as Annie lies on top of her, a heap on the sidewalk... everything still...

Annie moves, groaning in pain. Every movement hurts, bloody lacerations covering her face and body. She opens her eyes to see Homeless Lady beneath her. Dead.

Annie gingerly peels herself off Homeless Lady's dead body, hobbling to her feet. She surveys the block, the coast clear. And limps off, SIRENS WAILING from the distance.

CUT TO BLACK:

OPEN ON:

CAMERA FOOTAGE

Of Darwin's apartment. Darwin takes a swig from a gallon of water at his refrigerator. Leaves frame, back to his bedroom.

An eerie silence. Everything still. Until... the closet door slowly opens. Annie sneaks out. Tiptoes to the fridge. The quality of the footage poor due to the dark room.

She opens the fridge, the light from inside revealing her identity. She pulls out a gallon of water and takes a sip directly from the bottle.

Annie shuts the fridge. Steps out of the kitchen. But stops. She sways to and fro in place. As if to music. Slow dancing alone in the shadows.

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Darwin, on the couch, watches the CAMERA FOOTAGE on his television intently. On the edge of his seat.

The room looks barren, overall. Everything packed up in boxes, as if Darwin were moving out.

INSERT TITLE CARD OVER BLACK.

DAY 15

BACK TO SCENE

As Darwin continues watching the CAMERA FOOTAGE, he feels something by his feet. Looks down. Sees something poking out just from under the couch.

He reaches down, finds a cell phone - Ed's cell phone. Curious, he taps a button, the light shining on his face.

ON CELL PHONE

The battery reads 2%. Several MISSED CALLS from MADELINE.

BACK TO SCENE

Darwin gazes at the cell phone sadly. Looks up at the wide open WALK-IN CLOSET and sees Frank staring at him.

Darwin shuts his eyes for a moment. Opens them - Frank no longer there.

Bothered, he downs the rest of whatever was in his cup. He winces, smacking his lips. As if it the taste was strong.

Darwin pauses the CAMERA FOOTAGE, the screen freezing on the image of Annie dancing alone.

He sets Ed's phone on the coffee table, leaves.

KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Darwin sets his empty cup into the sink. Grabs Ibuprofen from a cupboard. Snatches coconut water from his refrigerator.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Darwin sits on the couch again. Sees Madeline with her head poking out from the bedroom.

MADELINE

Hey.

Darwin labors a smile.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

What are you doing awake?

He shrugs, looking to the television. Madeline leaves the bedroom, looking to the TV screen.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Is that...?

DARWIN

Yeah, I made a few copies.

Creeped out, Madeline looks away from the image of Annie.

MADELINE

We should've just slept at my place. It's kinda weird being here.

DARWIN

Movers will be here early, saves us the trouble of waking up on time, coming all the way back here.

She nods.

MADELINE

Well, I'm gonna grab some water. We should probably get to bed, then.

Darwin nods, eyes glued to the television. Something off about him. A bit distant.

Madeline glances at the TV as she passes it, en route to the kitchen. Darwin hits play again, continues watching the CAMERA FOOTAGE on TV.

KITCHEN

Madeline, at the sink, pours herself a cup of water. But she notices Darwin's empty cup in there. She glances at Darwin, back to the cup.

She lifts the cup out of the sink, to her nose, smelling it. Her expression falls. She looks back to Darwin disappointed.

Madeline opens the trash can, sees a small bottle of Jack Daniels lying on the top of the garbage inside.

LIVING ROOM

Madeline tiptoes back into the living room with her water as Darwin continues watching the CAMERA FOOTAGE.

She stares down at Darwin sadly. He feels her look.

DARWIN

What's up?

Madeline looks down, sees Ed's phone on the coffee table. Looks back to Darwin.

MADELINE

Nothing.

They just stare at each other, sharing the same hint of doubt behind their gazes. Almost "**The Graduate**" esque.

But Darwin looks past her just for a moment, his eyes slowly widening as he watches the...

TV SCREEN

Annie, still dancing solo, turns - she's not alone. A DARK FIGURE of a MAN leads her in the slow-dance.

Darwin hits pause.

BACK TO SCENE

Darwin leans closer, sheer terror washing over him. Madeline stands there, confused, looking to the TV.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

What?

TV SCREEN

The Dark Figure is Steven, leering directly at the camera with a wolfish grin.

BACK TO SCENE

The color drains from Darwin's face. His blood turning cold.

The ROMANTIC OLDIES SONG suddenly plays!

Darwin quickly rises, startled, both he and Madeline watching the vinyl spinning on the record player.

He looks down at Ed's phone on the coffee table - **2:08**.

Darwin looks to the record player, petrified. A horrifying moment of realization.

Madeline approaches the record player, spooked.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

What the hell is going on?

An INVISIBLE FORCE sucks her into the WALK-IN CLOSET and WHAM! The door immediately slams shut!

DARWIN

Maddy!

Darwin darts to the...

WALK-IN CLOSET

Blood-curdling screams as a violent struggle ensues from inside!

He pounds on the door, frantically yanking on the knob, but it doesn't open. He pounds on the door desperately.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

Come on, God damn it! Maddy!

The screams becoming louder, more violent. Darwin drives his shoulder into the door, pulling on the knob with all of his might, doing everything he can to open it.

Then silence. The struggle inside ceasing. Darwin stops.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

Maddy?

He takes a cautious step back. Reaches out for the knob... turning it... opening the door.. rocked by what he sees...

Madeline hanging unconscious from the ceiling, a rope around her throat, her legs swinging.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

Maddy!

In a frenzy, he holds her legs up while frantically trying to untie the rope from her throat, the knot extremely tight.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

Come on, Maddy, stay with me...

His fingertips dig into the knot, loosening it. Finally, he pulls on the knot, untying it, immediately carrying Madeline out of the closet...

LIVING ROOM

He carries her to the front door, lowering her to the floor and kneeling over her.

In a panic, he shakes her wildly, smacking her cheeks, trying to wake her.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

Come on, Maddy...

He presses his ear to her chest. Listens. Takes his ear away, staring down at her, a deep, reddened bruise across her throat. But...

She wakes suddenly, coughing, gasping for air.

Darwin exhales. Drops to his rear, leans his back against the wall. Relieved. Exhausted.

He helps a traumatized Madeline to her feet, opening the door for her.

Still frozen in fear, gathering herself, gulping oxygen, she and Darwin stare at each other, shaken.

But she gasps, looking past him!

STEVEN RAY stands by the WALK-IN CLOSET, behind them, staring at them with a contemptuous, frightening expression.

Madeline bolts, running out into the...

THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY

But stops. Turns. Sees Darwin still inside, his back to her as he faces Steven.

MADELINE

Darwin, come on, let's go!

Silence as Darwin and Steven stare at each other.

Darwin turns back to Madeline from inside the apartment.
Tears in his eyes.

DARWIN

You don't deserve this.

MADELINE

What? Darwin, what the fuck are you
talking about, let's go!

He shakes his head.

DARWIN

Things will never change if they
keep staying the same.

Turns to Steven then back to Madeline again.

DARWIN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Maddy. I love you.

MADELINE

Darwin!

WHAM! The door suddenly SLAMS SHUT in her face, the "B" in 3B
immediately falling upside down.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE CARD OVER BLACK.

DAY 361

FADE IN:

INT. DARWIN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Fingers hover over a typewriter, about to type...

Darwin sits at his desk, in front of the typewriter. He types
something on the page...

Behind him, the room neat and organized, the WALK-IN CLOSET
hanging wide open.

In deep concentration, the ROMANTIC OLDIES SONG cuts in, interrupting him. Annoyed, he glances back to the old record player, sees the vinyl spinning.

He faces his page again as the MUSIC CONTINUES.

DARWIN

Can we hold off on the music? Or
maybe play something different?

The ROMANTIC OLDIES SONG continues. Darwin sighs in defeat. He tries to block out the music, continues typing. Behind him...

Annie, scars on her face, slow dances with Steven's ghost. As they continue to slow dance to the ROMANTIC OLDIES SONG...

FRONT DOOR

The KNOB slowly turns until...

The door opens, the MUSIC immediately shutting off as Scotty, the realtor enters with a YOUNG COUPLE.

The room is empty.

Scotty looks around, unsettled. The WALK-IN CLOSET now closed. He looks back to the YOUNG COUPLE.

SCOTTY

So, this is the place.

The record player still in the room, the HUSBAND instead gravitates towards something else - Darwin's typewriter, sitting on a desk.

HUSBAND

This come with the apartment?

Scotty looks to the typewriter, ill at ease. But tries to play it cool, looking to HUSBAND and WIFE.

SCOTTY

A previous tenant left it here.

HUSBAND slowly reaches to the piece of paper in the typewriter, reading, typed on the page - **THEY NEVER LEFT.**

FADE OUT:

THE END