

WORKING MEN

Written by  
Jacob F. Keller

[jacobfkeller@gmail.com](mailto:jacobfkeller@gmail.com)  
323-872-7248

Black. Then, the high-pitched, nasally voice of BEN (22).

BEN (V.O.)  
Right, where to start?

CHUCK (V.O.)  
Hey, tell them the part where I  
saved the hot cosmetics girl.

CUT TO:

INT. STORE - DAY

Flames. Fire. Chaos. A muscular male-model type fires an assault rifle in slow-motion like an 80s action hero.

BEN (V.O.)  
Dude, no!

CUT TO BLACK.

BEN (V.O.)  
I'm telling this story. You just be  
quiet for now.

CHUCK (V.O.)  
Sorry, dude. You will tell them the  
part about me saving the hot chick  
in cosmetics, right?

BEN (V.O.)  
When we get there.

CHUCK (V.O.)  
Cool. Peace out.

BEN (V.O.)  
Okay, where to start? You think you  
know that old story about the  
shoemaker and those elves. Oh  
buddy, you don't know jack or shit  
about it. Let's go back a ways,  
like a looooong ways.

FADE IN:

INT. GENERAL STORE (ABANDONED) - DAY

Silhouettes move behind opaque dust covered windows. A few boards covering them.

MAN (O.S.)  
Wait till you see it.

The doors RATTLE as the man struggles to open them. Finally, he bursts in.

This is THOMAS HANDY (30s) handsome, rugged, full of hope. His wife, JANE (30s), follows behind carrying their newborn son in her arms.

SUPER: FARLANE, OHIO

SUPER: 1907

A Ford Model-T puttters down the cobble stone street behind them.

THOMAS  
It's perfect.

He yanks the sheet off the front counter. Dust flies up into the air.

THOMAS  
This is where you place your order. Then the clerk, me, will fill that order. Then we will deliver your groceries to your front door.

Jane scrunches up her face.

JANE  
It's awfully... dirty.

THOMAS  
Just needs a little elbow grease that's all.

He kisses his wife.

THOMAS  
Perfect.

DISSOLVE TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS -- Thomas renovating the store

A) He tosses the broken furniture out on to the street and sweeps the floors.

B) He replaces a light bulb and it explodes into flames -- he grabs a rag and tamps out the fire.

C) He hammers nail after nail into the floor boards -- fingers covered in bandages. THUNDER CRACKS outside.

D) Pots and pans dot the floor catching dripping rain water from the Swiss cheese ceiling overhead.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Thomas wipes the sweat from his brow. The store is still a mess.

THOMAS  
I think I'm going to need some  
help.

CHILDREN GIGGLING echoes from somewhere close by.

THOMAS  
(startled)  
Hello?

CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

The newly renovated shop is buzzing with activity. Letters stenciled into each window in front spell out "HANDY'S."

Behind the counter Thomas and another clerk are busy filling brown paper bags and scribbling orders down in notepads.

Everything is running like a well-oiled machine.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

Thomas and Jane CLINK wine glasses. Both sitting on a blanket with the remnants of dinner spread before them.

THOMAS  
I have a surprise for you. Don't go  
anywhere.

He gets up and disappears through the front door. Jane sips her wine when CHILDREN GIGGLE from somewhere close.

She turns and sees the cellar door ajar. She gets up to investigate.

INT. GENERAL STORE - CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

She peers down the stairs into the dark.

More GIGGLING.

JANE

Hello? Anyone there?

She slowly plods down the steps, a single orange lightbulb brightens the claustrophobic space.

GIGGLING ECHOES.

She follows the sounds towards a small crack in the foundation. Beyond it nothing but darkness.

INT. GENERAL STORE

Thomas returns to find an empty blanket.

THOMAS

Honey?

Then, a SCREAM from the open door.

THOMAS

No, no, no! God no!

The necklace in his hand falls to the floor.

INT. GENERAL STORE - CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

JANE

Help me! HELP!

Thomas practically trips down the steps and comes around the corner just as he sees his wife disappear into the crack.

THOMAS

NO!

He drops down and reaches into the void -- finds her hand -- pulls and pulls -- her fingertips break the barrier.

THOMAS

You. Can't. Have. HER!

He pulls with all his might but it's not enough -- her hand slips -- SCREAMS fade.

THOMAS  
NOOOOOO!

He gropes inside the dark but she's gone.

THOMAS  
Jane! JANE!

Echoing kid-like LAUGHTER.

THOMAS  
What have I done...

TITLE OVER: WORKING MEN

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A hand crams part of a muffin into a mouth. Both the hand and mouth belong to CHUCK (25), tall and thick with long brown hair pulled back in a pony tail. An embroidered patch on his blue vest says "HANDY'S".

CHUCK  
(muffled through muffin)  
C'mon, man, we gotta go! We're  
gonna be late for your first day!

INT. BEN'S BEDROOM - AT THE SAME TIME

Then there's BEN (20s). Slight, pale, tense, leaned up against his bed dressed with the same blue vest on. A button that says, "How can I help you?" pinned to one side.

Ben pulls his paralyzed frame to a standing position and grabs an orange pill bottle sitting on his desk.

BEN  
(mumbling)  
For the treatment of acute anxiety.  
Take every six to... don't  
exceed... side-effects may  
include... dizziness, weight-gain,  
insomnia, day terrors? Wonderful.

Glass. Water. Pill. Swallow.

INT. KITCHEN - AT THE SAME TIME

Chuck walks his fingers through a stack of mail. There are several overdue notices.

BEN  
Ready.

CHUCK  
Jesus, finally!

Ben leans to the side.

BEN  
Did you eat my muffin?

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY - ESTABLISHING

A hodge podge of flannel wearing riff raff, overweight women in too tight yoga pants, college bros with zero dollars to their name, and geriatrics with nothing better to do all descend upon the mega superstore in town: HANDY'S.

EXT. GENERAL STORE - ROOF - DAY

Across the great expanse of concrete, the grizzled faces of ARTHUR (77) and EUNICE (78) stare through black binoculars.

Arthur's shoulders slump as he ambles away but Eunice does the only thing that she can do: She holds out her hand and extends her middle-finger.

EUNICE  
Fuck you!

INT./EXT. CAR - DAY

Chuck's late 90s Nissan screeches to a full stop.

CHUCK  
Punch in while I park.

Ben, flustered, jumps out.

BEN  
Wait, where do I --

But Chuck rockets away before he can finish the question.

EXT. STORE - CONTINUOUS

Ben faces the monument to consumerism looming in front of him. He takes a deep breath, summoning all the courage he has.

INT. STORE ENTRANCE/AISLES - CONTINUOUS

The automatic doors open and Ben walks straight into a hornet's nest.

SHOPPING CARTS CRASH together -- the unrelenting BEEPING of cash registers -- constant BLARING intercom messages overhead -- the DULL ROAR of a couple thousand people crammed into 250,000 square feet of rock bottom prices.

Ben is completely overwhelmed by the furor. He darts and dodges manic shoppers coming and going.

Then, a tug on his vest from behind.

OLD SHOPPER

Isn't 12.99 a bit steep for this?  
What kind of deal can you give me?

Ben's mouth gapes open. What is he supposed to do?

Another shopper blitzes him from the other side.

WOMAN SHOPPER

Where are those things you hang  
from the thing over the thing?

BEN

Umm... I don't know?

WOMAN SHOPPER

Is that a question?

Luckily Chuck slides up in the nick of time.

CHUCK

Try Aisle thirty-two.

The woman smiles, delighted.

Chuck wraps his arm around Ben and pulls him away before he can get into any more trouble.

BEN

What was she looking for?



CHUCK

Not a clue. Sent her to the  
fertilizer aisle. If you're gonna  
survive in Thunderdome, Benno,  
you're gonna have to learn some of  
the rules.

Ben digs into his shirt pocket.

BEN

Oh, right. They gave me this to --

Chuck rips the little store issued manual out of his hands  
and tosses it away.

CHUCK

Useless. First rule: avoid the  
front entrance at all costs when  
you're wearing your work uniform.  
That's the kill box, no man's land,  
the DMZ. Got it?

BEN

But you dropped me off...

CHUCK

Yeah, kinda my fault on that front.  
Sorry.

Ben shakes his head, trying to assimilate this new  
information as best he can.

BEN

Okay, anything else?

CHUCK

Oh yeah. Lots. Come on baby bird,  
let me take you under my wing.

Chuck leads Ben through the maze of merchandise.

CHUCK

Rule number two: Don't do a damn  
thing until you've clocked in.

Another SHOPPER steps in front of them.

SHOPPER

Excuse me, can you --

CHUCK

Back off, we're on break.

Chuck pulls Ben around a sharp corner and kicks open the swinging double doors to the --

INT. STOCKROOM - CONTINUOUS

A stark departure from the brightly lit sales floor: cold concrete and dim halogen lights. Huge pallets of product stacked two stories high on dangerous, industrial shelving line the corridors.

A few pale, zombie-like blue-vested employees mill about waiting for their shift to begin.

CHUCK  
Pick your badge up yet?

BEN  
No, I didn't know --

CHUCK  
Let's go see Darla.

CUT TO:

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ben briefly spots the old, dusty computer in the corner pumping out the soft muzak to keep the shoppers content.

DARLA (50s), a sweet, chubby woman with a smile as big as her waistline pushes papers around in a too tiny cubicle.

CHUCK  
Darla! What's the word my dark chocolate empress of input?

She giggles.

CHUCK  
How's that adorable puppy of yours?

DARLA  
Feisty as ever, that little scamp.

Darla holds up a framed picture of a little Pomeranian, primed and spoiled with pink bows clipped in her fur.

CHUCK  
Awww... Benno here is joining us for his first day.

DARLA  
Congratulations!

BEN  
Mm-hm.

CHUCK  
Do you have his badge so we can get  
him punched in?

DARLA  
What's the name again, darling?

BEN  
Ben. Ben Simmons.

She thumbs through a few folders.

DARLA  
Not seeing... oh wait, here we go:  
Been Jamin.

Ben grabs the name badge out of her hands.

INSERT - NAME BADGE

Bold, black type: "BEEN JAMIN".

BACK TO SCENE

BEN  
Are you kidding me?

DARLA  
Sorry about that. Must have been a  
typing error.

Chuck snickers. Ben glares at him.

CHUCK  
Sorry. Any chance we can get a new  
one printed out ASAP?

DARLA  
Probably won't happen until next  
week.

BEN  
Next week?!

DARLA  
Could get lucky. Sometimes they  
arrive by Thursday or Friday.  
(MORE)

DARLA (CONT'D)

Just fill out a new request form  
and get it submitted before the end  
of the day.

Ben takes the pink form off the desk reluctantly.

CUT TO:

INT. STOCKROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ben stares at his name badge clipped to his shirt.

CHUCK

It's not that noticeable. If you  
glance at it real quick it kind of  
works.

Chuck grabs Ben around the shoulders and swivels his head  
left and right a few times as he repeatedly glances at the  
name badge.

Ben pushes him away, annoyed.

BEN

First impressions are important.

Chuck holds his badge up to the glowing red scanner under the  
time clock and it BEEPS. Ben does the same.

RILEY, the assistant manager in his white, short-sleeved  
shirt and red power tie, ducks out from his little side  
office.

RILEY

Avengers assemble!

The few employees shuffling around the stockroom wander  
closer with all the urgency of lazy sloths.

Riley flips through the mound of papers attached to his  
clipboard. Searching... searching... searching...

RILEY

Uh... just a couple notes. Uh...  
make sure we're refreshing the  
coolers in the center aisle as they  
sell out. Right... Next... We...

His cadence and disorganization drags out the pow wow longer  
than it needs to be. The other employees roll their eyes as  
Riley stares down at his clipboard.

RILEY

And... got a note from the boss man  
ummmmm..... just make sure your  
name tags and pins are properly  
displayed at all times, like  
Charles here.

Ben looks at Chuck and mouths "Charles" to him. Chuck shrugs.

RILEY

We can all learn a few things by  
following his stellar work ethic.

CHUCK

Oh, stop it you.

RILEY

Hey look, he's here now!

Heads turn as MARSHALL HANDY (50s) struts down the long  
corridor.

HANDY

Always good to see some new  
recruits, Mister Echternach.

Handy is tall, fit, with slicked back black hair wearing  
clothes meant for your average 30-something. He's the "cool"  
dad. He walks straight up to Ben and invades his space.

HANDY

Welcome aboard...

He leans in close to read Ben's name tag.

HANDY

Been Jamin. That a street name,  
son?

BEN

Just a little mix up.

Ben holds up the pink sheet like it explains everything.

HANDY

Uh-huh. Well, carry on. And  
remember, Handy's means quality  
with a smile.

His smile perfectly matches the poster of him hanging just  
over his shoulder.

INT. GROCERY SECTION - MOMENTS LATER

Ben and Chuck emerge through the swinging doors once more.

BEN  
He seemed nice.

CHUCK  
Yeah, shame about his family  
though.

BEN  
What about it?

CHUCK  
Bad history of mental disease going  
all the way back to his grandfather  
who killed his wife in a fit of  
rage.

Ben whistles.

They pass an old female employee struggling to lift an  
enormous bag of dog food into someone's cart.

CHUCK  
Lift with the legs, Bernice.  
Attagirl.

She gives Chuck a thumbs up, drops the bag spilling kibble  
all over the floor.

Chuck suddenly stops dead in his tracks, Ben collides into  
the back of him.

CHUCK  
There she is.

BEN  
Who?

CHUCK  
Cosmo Girl.

They stare down the main corridor to the cosmetics counter  
where COSMO GIRL (25) is helping a woman with the perfume.

BEN  
Is this the one you've been  
obsessing over all summer?

CHUCK  
Not obsessing.

BEN  
She is way out of your league.

CHUCK  
Fuck you.

BEN  
Maybe you should talk to her or something?

CHUCK  
I will... there's an art to this.  
It's all about the technique.

Chuck continues to stare.

CHUCK  
Okay, you got this right?

BEN  
Wait, what? I thought --

CHUCK  
Time for the baby bird to leave the nest. Fly or die. Sink or swim.

He pushes Ben away and then disappears into the crush of shoppers like a ghost.

Ben takes a deep breath.

BEN  
(to himself)  
It's okay. I got this. I am a smart, capable, well-adjusted...  
Nevermind.

CUT TO:

INT. TOY DEPARTMENT - DAY

Ben awkwardly carries an oversized ladder and makes the perilous climb up to the top shelf to retrieve a toy but when he returns again the woman waiting looks at it, shakes her head, and walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. PHOTO LAB - DAY

Irate customers shout at Ben as he struggles to juggle several mixed up orders.

Behind him, two employees stand around the digital photo printer literally scratching their heads.

CUT TO:

INT. ELECTRONICS DEPARTMENT - DAY

A brat 4-year-old licks his ice cream cone as he gives Ben a death stare. Ben looks around, can't figure him out. The hell spawn then tips the ice cream over right on to the floor. He gives Ben the middle finger.

CUT TO:

INT. CENTER AISLE - DAY

Ben stares into the abyss as the world spins around him -- eyes glazed -- a cacophony of questions, complaints, and insults hurled at him from all sides.

CUT TO:

EXT. GARDEN CENTER - DAY

Chuck replaces a bag of mulch on an outdoor shelf when he spots two familiar shoes poking out.

He peeks around the corner and finds Ben sitting on the cold ground legs pressed up against his chest with a faraway look in his eyes.

BEN

So... cold...

CHUCK

Whoa. Um, okay. Break time.

CUT TO:

INT. BREAKROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck pokes his head in the fridge and scours the inside.

CHUCK

Okay, who's the smart ass that took my yogurt?

He stands back up and looks around the room. Other employees just shrug "not me." Chuck slams the door.



CHUCK  
I'm telling you there are no  
personal boundaries anymore.  
Everything is fair game.

BEN  
It's a yogurt cup.

CHUCK  
It's the principle!

Chuck plops down across from Ben and his well prepared lunch.

BEN  
Hummus?

Chuck glares.

BEN  
Not a fan of chick peas?

Ben then takes out his little orange pill container.

CHUCK  
Now we're talking.

Chuck reaches for them and Ben pulls back.

BEN  
It isn't what you think.

CHUCK  
Pass that dutchie mon.

BEN  
(hushed)  
They're just anti-anxiety meds.

CHUCK  
(out loud)  
Oooo... Valium? Xanax? Klonopin?

BEN  
Jesus.

CHUCK  
What on God's green Earth do you  
have to be anxious about? Is this  
because your mom breast fed you  
until you were ten?

BEN  
Drop it.

Chuck retreats to one of the nearby vending machines and pops a few coins in.

CHUCK  
You know what your problem is?

BEN  
Oh, this should be good.

Chuck punches in his selection and turns around as the mechanism goes to work.

CHUCK  
You set the bar too high.

BEN  
Coming from the guy that slept through most of his senior year of high school.

CHUCK  
You're lashing out, I get it.

Chuck turns back to the vending machine just in time to see his candy selection get lodged between the coils.

CHUCK  
Godammit.

He bangs on the glass. Shakes the machine. No luck.

BEN  
Maybe you should lower your expectations?

CHUCK  
Shut it.

Two other employees stroll in mid-conversation.

EMPLOYEE #1  
I call bullshit.

EMPLOYEE #2  
I'm just telling you what I heard.

CHUCK  
What are you two chuckle fucks arguing about?

EMPLOYEE #2  
Chuck fill him in on the night shift.

Ben cleans up his lunch and joins them.

BEN

What about the night shift?

EMPLOYEE #1

Liar McFirepants here tells me Handy hires ex-cons or something to come in after closing to clean the place that way he doesn't have to pay them. It's free labor masquerading as community service or something.

CHUCK

Nah, we all know Mister Handy employees the mentally unstable around here.

BEN

Funny.

He gives him a little shove.

EMPLOYEE #2

C'mon, when was the last time you saw any of the third shifters?

CHUCK

What's to see? They come in after the store closes and leave before sunrise. I'm fine with that.

EMPLOYEE #2

In and out without leaving a trace?

CHUCK

I see Bernice about once week and we basically have the same shift, doesn't mean anything.

EMPLOYEE #1

I heard Hector from maintenance stayed late one night, got locked in and was never seen again.

CHUCK

Hector got arrested and deported dumb shit.

(to Ben)

C'mon. You don't need to listen to this crap.

They pass the vending machine still holding Chuck's candy in its death grip.

CHUCK

And I'm not done with you, either.  
I will have my vengeance.

INT. PHARMACY - DAY

A teen in a baggy sweatshirt stealthily stuffs his pockets full of over-the-counter cough medicine, antihistamine, and anything else that can be used for a quick high while a second teen keeps a lookout.

But their pilfering hasn't completely gone unnoticed.

R.J. MCCRACKEN (40s), the bad ass Scottish security guard, spies on the teens from the next aisle over.

LOOKOUT TEEN

That's enough. Let's go.

PILFERING TEEN

Relax.

Two giant black boots stomp into view.

MCCRACKEN (O.S.)

Why can't you two stick with reefer  
like normal kids?

Both teens stop cold -- eyes fixed -- slowly turn.

MCCRACKEN

Now, you lads have two choices:  
One, you can surrender quietly, no  
fuss; or two, you don't and I get a  
chance to use the Paralyzer 3000  
here on ya and we both get to  
discover exactly what one hundred  
thousand volts does to the  
prepubescent nervous system.

McCracken flashes the shiny new taser clipped to his belt.

PILFERING TEEN

You idiot, it's not the volts it's  
the amp--

McCracken jams the taser into the pilfering teen --  
electricity pops -- he instantly drops with nothing more than  
a WELP.

MCCRACKEN  
What about you, twinkle fingers?  
Want your testicles reduced to  
raisins?

The teen vehemently shakes his head.

MCCRACKEN  
Thought not.

The other teen twitches on the ground.

PILFERING TEEN  
I think I shit my pants.

CUT TO:

INT. STORE ENTRANCE - DAY

McCracken stands with arms folded as both teens are escorted out the store by police. DEPUTY MIKE (30s), what passes for the local 5-0 in town, is just finishing his report.

DEPUTY MIKE  
So just to make sure I got this  
right; he jumped you and then you  
had to shock him?

MCCRACKEN  
Aye, that sounds good.

Sheriff Mike does a once up and down of the hulking security guard.

DEPUTY MIKE  
Good enough for me. Sign here.

McCracken scribbles his signature on the sheet.

CHUCK  
Scaring the kids again, McCracken?

MCCRACKEN  
They started it.

CHUCK  
Got a favor to ask. Seen the new  
guy around? Dark hair, Casper  
complexion.

MCCRACKEN  
Yeah...?

CHUCK

He's my best friend from, like,  
kindergarten. Keep an eye on him  
for me?

MCCRACKEN

Got that forty bucks you owe me?

Chuck sighs and reaches into his wallet. Starts to hand over  
the cash but pulls back.

CHUCK

Just between you and me, he's going  
through some things so if he seems  
a bit off, it's not completely his  
fault.

McCracken snatches the money away.

MCCRACKEN

Aren't we all a little crazy around  
here?

He bursts into laughter.

CHUCK

Weirdo.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STOCKROOM - EVENING

Ben hefts a small but heavy box -- bottom rips open and golf  
balls spill out bouncing wildly all over.

BEN

Dammit.

Ben manages to corral most of them before getting on his  
hands and knees to search for the rest.

He finds the last few under a pallet. He stands and pulls it  
back from the wall and scratched into the concrete are three  
words: "WE WANT OUT."

Ben cocks his head as he reads the foreboding message.

BEN

You and me both.

He collects the last few golf balls and returns the pallet to  
its original place.

CHUCK

What are you doing? Daddy needs to get his drink on. Let's go!

BEN

Yeah, sorry. Lost track of time.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The last car leaves. All is quiet.

A security camera rotates towards the building then away -- liquid and foam splatters the lens. A shadow drops a spray can.

EXT. STORE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

A brick smashes through one of the glass windows -- three figures crawl in.

Two of the pilfering teens from earlier have returned with a third in their group. It's quiet except for the soft pop music playing through the store.

Flashlights bounce up and down the dark corridors -- spray paint cans JANGLE JANGLE.

INT. ELECTRONICS DEPARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

One teen freely destroys merchandise and displays -- black spray paint covers anything with a Handy's logo on it.

PITTER PATT PITTER PATT

Something rushes past -- quick and small.

The teen swivels -- flashlight scans the empty corridor.

CHILDREN GIGGLE from somewhere.

INT. LIQUOR AISLE - AT THE SAME TIME

The third teen takes a baseball bat to the entire shelf of wine -- a river of Merlot covers the floor.

CHILDREN GIGGLING then -- the teen is yanked out of view.

INT. ELECTRONICS DEPARTMENT/MAIN AISLE - AT THE SAME TIME

The third teen runs and slides up next to the first.

TEEN #2  
I can't find Josh.

TEEN #1  
Shit. Leave him.

But the second teen is suddenly paralyzed with fear -- shocked terror glaring back.

TEEN #1  
You okay?

The teen turns to see what his buddy is staring at -- Dozens of tiny red eyes dot the black nothingness behind him.

The teen pushes past his buddy at a full sprint.

Behind, his friend SCREAMS in terror. Then, PITTER PATTER PITTER PATTER -- dozens of tiny feet on linoleum.

The teen runs furiously back the way they came in.

He sees the parking lot lights -- almost home free -- a glimmer of hope except -- the broken window has been miraculously repaired, his exit has vanished.

The teen slides to a stop -- paws at the glass -- can't believe what he is seeing when -- he is yanked back into the darkness by a still unseen horror.

Eerily quiet except for soft muzak in the background.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. PARKING LOT - EARLY MORNING

A white Cadillac Escalade pulls in to a parking sign where a little sign reads "HEAD HONCHO." Handy jumps out.

CUT TO:



INT. UTILITY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Handy, whistling a happy tune, flips all the switches one one-by-one.

CUT TO:

INT. HANDY'S SUPER STORE - AT THE SAME TIME

Lights flick on one section at a time.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSEWARES DEPARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Handy continues whistling as he goes about his morning routine. The store is bright and shiny and clean. No evidence of the carnage from the previous night.

As he takes a step something suddenly CRACKS beneath his shoe. He reaches down and picks up a tooth.

CUT TO:

INT. STOCKROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Handy pushes his body weight against one side of a shelving unit. It slowly slides to the side to reveal:

A black crack in the wall just a few inches wide and three feet tall.

He throws the tooth into the crack.

HANDY

Did you guys have a busy night?

CHILDREN GIGGLING.

HANDY

We talked about this. You can't kill anyone anymore. It makes things... difficult.

More GIGGLING.

HANDY

Do we understand each other?

Long pause.

HANDY

Tell me we understand each other.

DEMONIC VOICE

Nooooooooooooo....

Handy quickly pushes the shelving unit back. He then slides down the length of it and sits, shaking his head.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

White & sterile. The HUM of an industrial air conditioner echoing in the bare space.

Ben and Chuck, along with a half-dozen other minimum wage rejects appear to be in various stages of absolute boredom.

RILEY

Which finally brings us, boys and girls, to --

Riley unveils a hip, stylized graphic crapped out by some Madison Avenue think tank.

RILEY

-- The Super Saturday Sale Stravaganza. What do you think? I like it.

Chuck raises his hand.

CHUCK

And who's bad idea was this exactly?

RILEY

That would be corporate.

A collective GROAN ripples through the small gathering.

RILEY

We're having our first ever wall-to-wall sales event this Saturday and I need --

Ben leans forward.

BEN

What's corporate?

INT. STORE ENTRANCE - AT THE SAME TIME

Automatic doors open: a pair of black high heels enter. A smiling old GREETER turns to welcome the CORPORATE WOMAN (40s).

GREETER

Welcome to --

CORPORATE WOMAN

Straighten the vest and move the name tag one and a half inches higher for optimal eye height visibility.

His smiling face sours as she pushes past him.

CUT TO:

INT. MAIN AISLE - AT THE SAME TIME

Chuck takes a free food sample from one of the many stations throughout the store. He points to the Corporate Woman as she walks briskly.

CHUCK

She's corporate. Every time they come sniffing around they want to rearrange everything that's working perfectly fine.

Chuck's face contorts at what he is eating so he slips into a passing cart without the shopper noticing.

BEN

Oh.

CHUCK

They're heartless, Benno. Nothing but bloodsucking vampires come to make our lives miserable just to make themselves feel important. That's lesson five. Don't trust corporate.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Handy pushes a teddy bear cookie jar across his desk.

HANDY

Cookie?

The Corporate Woman gives a half shrug and happily takes one. Handy follows suit.

HANDY

They're from our new private label product line. What do you think?

She nods.

CRUNCHING and CHEWING.

HANDY

This isn't a social visit, is it?

She reaches into her briefcase and plops down a newspaper. Buried at the bottom is a small blurb about three missing teens.

HANDY

Oh, that.

CORPORATE WOMAN

We can't have another Hector incident. You know that.

HANDY

One slip up. That's all. It's been quiet for months.

CORPORATE WOMAN

I thought you had them under control.

HANDY

I do!

CORPORATE WOMAN

This is not under control.

She jabs the newspaper with her finger as punctuation.

HANDY

What do you expect me to do? Put a leash on them?

CORPORATE WOMAN

It makes the board nervous. We can't talk expansion --

HANDY

Expansion?

CORPORATE WOMAN  
-- until we can prove their  
reliability.

She leans in close and talks more quietly.

CORPORATE WOMAN  
Listen, you have a good thing going  
here. We've never seen numbers like  
these before from just one store. I  
would hate for all of this to come  
crashing down.

She pulls back and stands.

CORPORATE WOMAN  
Get them under control.

She reaches into the bear shaped cookie jar and takes another  
cookie.

CORPORATE WOMAN  
These are good. Gonna make a  
killing.

Handy loosens his tie and takes another cookie. He is  
trapped.

CUT TO:

INT. SPORTING GOODS - DAY

CRASH! A too full shopping cart collides with a shelving unit  
nudging it a few inches over.

LILLY (20s), a young, chubby Asian girl pushing the cart  
tries to fix it when Ben intervenes.

BEN  
Here, I got it.

LILLY  
Ben?

He looks up, recognizes her.

LILLY  
I didn't know you were back... do  
you... do you work here now?

Ben attempts to act casual even as he dies a little inside.

BEN  
Oh, yeah, temporarily, you know.  
Just weighing my options.

LILLY  
That's so weird running in to you  
like this. You know, after you  
totally stood me up at prom and  
then didn't tell me you were  
leaving.

Ben chuckles. Uncomfortable.

BEN  
Yeah, about that --

LILLY'S DAD (O.S.)  
Lilly, time is ticking! Pick up the  
pace.

LILLY  
Give me a minute, daddy!  
(to Ben)  
I'm sorry, what were you saying?

BEN  
Never mind. You guys still  
preparing for the apocalypse?

LILLY  
Since 2nd grade. We have a full  
bunker now.

BEN  
A bunker... Congrats.

LILLY  
So, how long has this been going  
on?

BEN  
It's actually my first week.

LILLY  
Rough?

BEN  
Kinda. Yeah, no. Mostly.

She chuckles.

LILLY'S DAD  
Lilith Precious O'Brien!

LILLY

Shit. I gotta go. We should catch up sometime.

She backs away and spins around the corner.

BEN

Yeah, catch up...

Ben slides the crooked shelf back into place -- he then discovers an ID card from the local high school wedged under the shelf.

He slides it out and his thumb smooshes something wet. He checks it -- blood.

He gags and quickly wipes it off on his vest.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FURNITURE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Chuck relaxes on a leather sofa inside a staged living room.

An old woman shopper stops in front of him.

CHUCK

On break.

He gives her a little move along gesture and she toddles off confused and annoyed.

BEN

You keep that up you'll suddenly find yourself sans employment.

CHUCK

Nah, it's impossible to get fired from this place. Trust me, I've tried.

Chuck pats the other side of the couch and Ben plops down.

BEN

You'll never guess who I ran into. Lilly O'Brien.

CHUCK

No shit. How'd that go?

Ben struggles to find the words.

CHUCK  
Holy shit. You didn't tell her  
you're back, did you?

BEN  
I was getting around to it.  
Eventually.

CHUCK  
Dude, that's cold.

BEN  
Hey, at least I'm not constructing  
elaborate fantasies with the  
nameless cosmetics girl.

CHUCK  
You leave Cosmo Girl out of this!  
We have something special!

A pause.

BEN  
Hey, can I ask you something?

CHUCK  
You just did.

BEN  
You ever get the feeling there's  
something a little bit off about  
this place?

CHUCK  
Every damn day.

BEN  
I'm serious, man. It's like there's  
something else going on here. I  
just can't...

But their conversation is interrupted by a commotion right  
around the corner. They investigate.

INT. PET DEPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Riley and McCracken attempt to subdue an agitated female  
employee standing on top of a shelf of kitty litter. This is  
BETHANY CHILDS (30s).

BETHANY  
I don't give two shits what you  
think I did.

(MORE)



BETHANY (CONT'D)

I didn't do it and I don't have to do a damn thing you say.

Chuck and Ben stand at the back of the small crowd.

CHUCK

Ruh-roh. Someone's gone off the deep end.

BEN

You know her?

CHUCK

Bethany Childs. Serious mental case. We're pretty sure she killed someone once so this isn't surprising.

(to himself)

Wonder if I have this week in the pool...?

BEN

(to another employee)

Hey, what happened?

EMPLOYEE #3

I don't know. I heard they caught her stealing some stuff last night or something.

Chuck raises his smart phone.

CHUCK

This is going to get me a million views for sure.

RILEY

Beth, let's not make a scene. Just come down, I'm sure there's something we can work out.

MCCRACKEN

Let me have a crack at her.

BETHANY

Bring it McRib!

McCracken steps forward, Riley holds him back.

CHUCK

This one isn't going quietly.

Bethany spots Chuck at the back of the crowd.

BETHANY

You! You did this! You set me up!

Chuck glances left and right then points to himself and mouths, "Me?"

BETHANY

Don't play dumb you --

BEN

He's not playing.

Chuck arm punches him.

Bethany leaps off the shelf straight into McCracken and Riley. They struggle to get her under control as she's lead away still screaming about her rights.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Bethany, hobbling from one missing shoe, hair a tangled mess, and clothes wrinkled, is led away by the sheriff towards her car with most of the store watching.

She tosses her purse in the back seat and climbs in.

Black smoke belches from the tailpipe as her old yellow VW Beetle roars towards the exit, nearly causing an accident as it bounces into traffic.

CHUCK

Well that was fun. Who's hungry?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BREAKROOM - LATER

Chuck kneels down and stares straight ahead.

CHUCK

So we meet again my friend. I bet you thought you saw the last of me.

In front of him, the vending machine with his candy selection still dangling by a thread behind the thin glass window.

Chuck stands back up, looks left and right in the empty breakroom then braces himself against one side of the machine and puts his full weight into it. The machine tips up and then --

KA-CHUNK! Drops back down.

He looks. The mechanism still holding on to his candy.

He tries again.

KA-CHUNK! Metal feet slam to the floor even harder. Still, the candy doesn't move.

CUT TO:

INT. SECURITY OFFICE - AT THE SAME TIME

McCracken sips his coffee with his feet up on the console.

ON MONITOR --

Gray security footage of Chuck violently shaking the vending machine.

BACK TO SCENE

MCCRACKEN

Ooo... he's really giving it all  
he's got. He's got spunk, I'll  
give him that.

CUT TO:

INT. STOCKROOM - AT THE SAME TIME

Ben sweats and grunts trying to organize the stock that has come in. He moves pallet after pallet and then sees deep gouges scratched into the cement floor.

He traces them to a smaller storage shelf against the back wall. He gives it a little shake and it wobbles.

He pushes it to one side, feet sliding on the smooth concrete. Behind the shelf he finds -- the crack.

BEN

Whoa. Talk about your shitty  
engineering.

Ben kneels down and looks inside. His eye rolls around trying to peer through the darkness.

BEN

Weird.

He reaches in all the way up to his shoulder and still can't find the edge. He pulls his arm back out.

CUT TO:

EXT. STORE - CONTINUOUS

Ben examines the wall from the other side. Smooth and perfect concrete.

CUT TO:

INT. STOCKROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ben throws a golf ball into the crack. It disappears into the void. He waits and listens. Nothing.

BEN

That is so.... cool!

He takes off running.

Seconds later, the golf ball pops back out and bounces away.

CUT TO:

INT. BREAKROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chuck pants, his head resting against the machine's front window. He's spent.

Ben pokes his head around the corner.

BEN

Dude! You have come check this out.

Chuck holds his finger up as he tries to catch his breath.

BEN

You're never going to get it to fall. Just buy another. I'll give you the money.

CHUCK

No! No. This isn't about the money anymore. It's about sending a message.

BEN  
Fuckin' whatever. Will you just  
come here.

CUT TO:

EXT. STOCKROOM - CONTINUOUS

They walk to the back of the darkened corner.

BEN  
-- it looks like it goes to  
nowhere. It's the weirdest thing  
I've ever seen.

Ben bounces like an enthusiastic puppy dog.

CHUCK  
Just settle down. It's way too  
early for all that.

BEN  
Just see for yourself.

Ben points.

CHUCK  
So what am I looking at?

BEN  
You need glasses or something?

He finally glances -- nothing but a smooth wall.

BEN  
Wait. It was right there. This  
gaping hole.

CHUCK  
You sure you're feelin' alright?

Chuck tries to feel his forehead but Ben slaps his hand away.

BEN  
I know what I saw.

CHUCK  
It was probably a shadow or  
something.

BEN  
I swear I --

Riley finds both model employees staring at the wall.

RILEY

Charles. Ben. I need you guys on the floor ASAP! And put all this back. I don't need Handy chewing me out.

CHUCK

We were just punching back in from break, Mister E.

Chuck gives his friend a reassuring little squeeze on the shoulder.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ENTRANCE - DAY

An incognito Bethany in an oversized hat and old lady sunglasses slips in.

GREETER

Welcome to Handy's.

BETHANY

Uh-huh, thanks.

She blows right past him.

CUT TO:

INT. CAFE - AT THE SAME TIME

McCracken not-so-subtly checks out two young women in tight yoga pants as they walk past. But his twitching mustache pulls his gaze in a completely different direction as he spots Bethany wrestling to pull a single shopping cart away from the long train.

MCCRACKEN

Here, miss. Let me help you with that.

Bethany looks down and away. She lowers her voice several octaves.

BETHANY

Thank you, sir.

She grabs her cart and flees.

McCracken casually follows at a distance.

CUT TO:

INT. HARDWARE DEPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Bethany keeps up a frenetic pace as she walks up and down each aisle grabbing matches, a propane canister, several bottles of paint thinner, etc. Anything that's combustible or flammable.

BETHANY

(mumbling)

Oh yes, that's good. And these...  
And can't forget these... Oh, this  
will burn and some of these...

CUT TO:

INT. PHOTO LAB - AT THE SAME TIME

Ben and Chuck find McCracken staked out across from the hardware department. Chuck jumps up on the counter.

CHUCK

What's happenin' McCracken, you  
still scaring...  
(mock Scottish accent)  
...the wee little children?

He smiles and then points. Ben and Chuck glance and see Bethany.

CHUCK

Is that...?

BEN

What is she doing?

MCCRACKEN

If I didn't know better I'd say she  
was acquiring the necessary  
materials to burn down the store.

CHUCK

She is really taking things to the  
next level, isn't she?

BEN

Shouldn't somebody, I don't know,  
do something?

CHUCK  
One, they don't pay me enough.

McCracken nods in the background.

CHUCK  
Two, crazy couldn't set a birthday  
candle on fire.

MCCRACKEN  
Best not to intervene, lad.

BEN  
Wait. Isn't it your job to  
intervene?

MCCRACKEN  
Really, she gives me the heebie  
jeebies.

BEN  
Fine. I'll go.

Ben crosses the busy center aisle.

MCCRACKEN  
He is a brave little idiot, I'll  
give him that.

CUT TO:

INT. HARDWARE DEPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Bethany rounds a corner, a few things spill off the enormous  
mound of stuff in her shopping cart.

BEN  
Here, I'll get --

BETHANY  
I'm fine!

BEN  
It's okay I'll just --

BETHANY  
I said back off!

BEN  
I don't think you really want to do  
this.

She lowers her glasses.



BETHANY

I'm sorry, who are you?

Ben smiles and holds out his hand.

BEN

Sorry, we didn't get a chance to --

Bethany shoves her cart into Ben when he's distracted.

BEN

Hey!

She does it again even harder. Ben pushes back. Chuck is finally forced to join the fray.

CHUCK

Whoa, hey. Okay, bitchzilla. Back off the new guy he's just trying to do the right thing for some unfathomable reason.

BETHANY

(to Ben)

I should have known you'd be friends with this lab monkey.

CHUCK

Easy, batshit. Aren't there any villagers you should be terrorizing?

BETHANY

Shouldn't you be on a pedophile watch list?

Chuck grabs the other end of the cart. Ben follows suit. They wrestle for control until Bethany lets go and both boys tumble back.

BETHANY

Fine! I don't need this. But if I go down, I'm taking you all with me!

She jabs Chuck in the chest as she passes before taking off, pushing people out of her way as she goes.

CHUCK

Rule 16: mind your business when it comes to disgruntled employees.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHECKOUT LANES - EVENING

The last cashier flicks her station light off and collects her cash drawer.

INT. ENTRANCE - EVENING

McCracken sees the last person out. He flicks the switch above his head disabling the automatic function of the doors and then locks both sides.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A familiar yellow VW beetle spewing black smoke pulls into the farthest spot of the farthest corner of the lot.

The driver side door opens and an empty glass bottle rolls out and shatters on the asphalt.

BETHANY

Shit!

A very drunk Bethany practically falls out of her car. She bounces up and attempts to act sober.

BETHANY

It's okay. It's okay. I'm okay.

She reaches back into her car -- another full bottle of something clear and alcoholic falls out.

She walks past the giant un-lit sign and sneers. She spits while grabbing her non-existent testicles -- very classy.

EXT. LOADING DOCK - NIGHT

She finds a nice dark corner and unscrews the cap of the glass bottle.

BETHANY

And just a little bit for mama.

She tosses back a healthy swig. Coughs.

BETHANY

That's good.

She finds herself talking incredibly loud.

BETHANY  
Shhhh... you're gonna wake the  
neighbors.

She laughs to herself.

BETHANY  
Shhh...

Nobody is around but her. She dumps the remainder of the  
bottle in the bushes.

BETHANY  
So sad. All gone.

She throws the empty bottle away and it shatters in the  
distance.

BETHANY  
Matches. Matches.

She gropes around in her pockets.

BETHANY  
Okay, how do you work these things?

She holds the box up and tries to read the directions. She  
takes a match out and strikes it across the side, it breaks  
in half.

BETHANY  
Fuck!

She fishes for another one but spills half the box in the  
process.

BETHANY  
Shit!

That's when the loading dock door slides up a few inches just  
to her left.

Bethany stops mid-strike.

BETHANY  
Hello?

She stumbles over to the gap and bends at the waist to look  
under the door. CHILDREN GIGGLE.

BETHANY  
Peek-a-boo.

Several demon-like paws reach out, grab her legs, and trip her.

Bethany SCREAMS as she is pulled into the darkness and disappears -- BOOM -- the door slams shut.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - DAY

A KNOCK. Chuck, beer in hand, opens the door. Ben barges right past him.

BEN  
You're not going to believe this...

CHUCK  
Yes, come in won't you.

BEN  
...I couldn't shake this feeling I had about that place. Just something didn't feel right.

CHUCK  
C'mon, man. This is my day off. Can't this wait until tomorrow?

BEN  
No!

Ben manically paces. A man with a million thoughts coursing through his brain.

CHUCK  
You feeling alright? Like, not homicidal at all, right?

Chuck sips his beer, eyes darting back and forth between Ben and the butcher block of knives on the counter.

BEN  
...and then I stumbled on... something... I mean, I think it's something.

Ben fumbles in his pocket: the student ID he found at the store. Chuck looks at it.

CHUCK  
Terrible picture. Where did you --

BEN  
-- under one of the end caps in  
Sporting Goods.

CHUCK  
What is this hot sauce?

BEN  
Blood.

Chuck immediately drops the ID and wipes his hands on the counter.

Ben then unravels a newspaper. He lays it down for Chuck to look at. He slaps the ID card down next to the picture under the main story. They match.

BEN  
These guys went missing two nights ago. They're the same kids your security friend had arrested for shop lifting.

CHUCK  
So what? So they dropped it when they were thrown out.

BEN  
They were nowhere near sporting goods. And where did the blood come from? And it's just a coincidence they went missing 24 hours later?

Chuck downs the other half of his beer. Eyes wide.

CHUCK  
So what are you saying? Handy had them killed? At the store?

BEN  
No! I mean, I don't know. But there is something else going on.

CHUCK  
So we go to the police?

BEN  
This isn't enough. We need more proof.

CHUCK  
So, what do you want to do?

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. HOUSE - DAY

Another doors opens. A hazmat encased Lilly on the other side.

Chuck and Ben both lean back, alarmed. Lilly adjusts her face mask to see better.

LILLY  
Chuck! Hi Ben!

Ben opens his mouth but can't seem to form any words.

CHUCK  
What my mute friend here is trying to say is we're here to ask a small favor.

LILLY  
Uh-oh. What do you need this time?

Chuck looks at the stuttering Ben. Finally jabs him in the side.

BEN  
(blurting)  
You still have those night vision binoculars?

Lilly unzips the top half of her suit -- blows the wafting hair out of her face.

LILLY  
You and your boyfriend going to spy on the girl's softball team again?

CHUCK  
There was never any proof that was us.

LILLY  
Sure. What are you two up to? No lies.

CHUCK  
Ben here thinks that Mister Handy is chopping up local riff raff that mess with his store and burying their bodies in the basement like John Wayne Gacy.

Cool.

LILLY

Chuck!

BEN

LILLY  
 Hold on a second.  
 (shouts into house)  
 Hey daddy, when do you think the  
 apocalypse will wrap itself up  
 here?

This whole time Chuck is nudging Ben and nodding.

LILLY'S DAD (O.S.)  
 The apocalypse ends when you're  
 dead!

Lilly rolls her eyes as she turns back.

LILLY  
 Can you give me, like, 20 minutes?  
 Daddy takes his drills very  
 seriously.

BEN  
 Sure. We'll just be --

She slams the door.

BEN  
 -- right here.

Chuck and Ben walk away.

CHUCK  
 Well that went well.

BEN  
 Why did you tell her?!

CHUCK  
 Relax. No one believes the crazy  
 shit I say. It's one of my many  
 redeeming qualities and you could  
 make an effort to appreciate it  
 more.

BEN  
 You're right. I'm sorry.

CHUCK  
 Now, let's go catch a serial  
 killer.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

Only a few cars dot the vast asphalt landscape.

INT./EXT. CAR - NIGHT

Chuck and Ben pop up from below the window line.

Ben scans the front of the store with the binoculars. Nothing suspicious. Chuck munches on some chips. Ben turns and glares. Chuck points the bag at him. Ben shrugs and takes a handful.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT./EXT. CAR - LATER

Ben continues to keep watch. Chuck fiddles with his seatbelt, bored out of his mind.

Ben watches the last customer pull out. The light inside the giant "Handy's" sign switches off.

BEN

Showtime.

Ben jumps out. Chucks wipes the crumbs off his shirt and follows.

EXT. HANDY'S - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Ben and Chuck stick to the shadows as they make their way around the side of the building.

CHUCK

Wait.

BEN

What?! You see someone?

CHUCK

Isn't that Bethany's car?

They both spot the yellow VW still parked in the farthest corner of the lot.

Ben looks at Chuck who hums the theme from Twilight Zone.



INT. GARDEN CENTER - CONTINUOUS

They come in through a side door.

CHUCK  
Where did you --

Ben holds up a key.

BEN  
I made a copy of McCracken's master  
key at the kiosk in hardware.

CHUCK  
Who the hell are you and what have  
you done with my Benno?

Ben scans the dark interior. Chuck looks up at a speaker  
above his head.

CHUCK  
I can't believe they play that  
music all night.

BEN  
All clear. When does the restocking  
crew arrive?

CHUCK  
I thought they'd be here by now.  
Maybe it's an off night?

INT. CHECKOUT - CONTINUOUS

They plunge deeper into the store. Something moves in the  
shadows.

Chuck stops and glances.

CHUCK  
Did you hear that?

Ben shrugs. Chuck takes another second to make sure he's not  
dreaming before catching up.

INT. HANDY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Ben flips the shades closed. Chuck hits the desk light.

CHUCK  
So, what are we looking for?

BEN  
Something, anything that can tie  
Handy to those missing kids.

Ben pokes through the desk drawers as Chuck sort of putzes  
around.

He opens a cabinet.

CHUCK  
Holy shit!

BEN  
What?!

Chuck steps aside.

CHUCK  
He's got a full bar up here. Look  
at this, Grey Goose... Bacardi...  
oh my god, he's got a bottle of  
Springbank.

BEN  
Can you please focus?

CHUCK  
This stuff is like three hundred  
dollars a bottle. That. Bastard.

Chuck makes himself a drink.

FADE TO:

INT. OFFICE - LATER

Ben has scoured the entire office but has come up empty  
handed.

Chuck swivels around in a chair, bored.

CHUCK  
C'mon, man. It's getting late.  
There's nothing here.

BEN  
(defeated)  
Dammit.

CHUCK  
I'm gonna wait in the car.

Ben takes one last glance around the small office. He focuses on a family photo of Handy with his wife and two daughters. The photo is slightly crooked.

Ben slides the back off the frame. An old yellowed piece of paper slips out. He carefully unfolds it.

BEN  
 (reading)  
 They only come out at night. Do not  
 make a bargain with them. When one  
 is divided, two more shall come  
 forth. Never let the music stop.  
 (to himself)  
 What the...?

INT. OFFICE BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

BEN  
 Okay, man, time to call --

Chuck immediately clamps his hand over Ben's mouth -- his eyes focus on Ben's -- he slowly rotates his head -- Ben follows his gaze.

BELOW THEM

Creatures. Strange, ugly, nasty creatures with pointy ears, red, bulbous eyes, sinewy legs and arms, covered in tattered, stitched together fabric scraps for clothing. Dozens of them slave away stocking shelves, cleaning aisles, repairing broken equipment, and basically returning the store to like new.

BACK TO CHUCK AND BEN

Staring with mouths agape.

BEN  
 I was honestly not expecting this.

CHUCK  
 (whisper)  
 Shhh... Not. A. Sound.

The door behind them CLICKS closed.

All the creatures turn at once. Glowing red eyes focus on Ben and Chuck above looking down.

BEN  
 Umm... Run!

Both boys dart for the stairs and bounce down in two quick leaps.

They turn one way -- creatures lunge --

CHUCK

Shit!

They bolt the other way.

INT. MAIN AISLE - CONTINUOUS

Claws reach out for them left and right -- they duck and dodge each attempt.

The PITTER PATTER of tiny feet rushes up from behind them.

BEN

Stockroom!

INT. STOCKROOM/LOADING DOCK - CONTINUOUS

They kick the oversized swinging doors open and seek refuge in the grocery stock.

Chuck tries the back emergency exit -- chained. Then another -  
- locked and chained.

BEN

That's a major fire code violation!

CHUCK

Yeah, I'll be sure to lodge a  
complaint later.

Ben holds the binoculars up to get a better look in the dim surroundings.

THROUGH BINOCULARS

Everything bright and green. Dozens of creatures and their glowing eyes crawl closer.

But he also he spots --

BACK TO BEN

BEN

Loading dock!

INT. LOADING DOCK - CONTINUOUS

They jump down into the pit.

Ben heaves up the heavy door a few inches -- Chuck worms his way under, nearly getting stuck.

Ben then dives under -- tiny claws rip at his pant legs and shoes.

EXT. STORE - CONTINUOUS

Chuck pulls his friend free.

BOOM! The door slams shut.

They both jump to their feet.

CHUCK  
Holy fuckberries!

BEN  
What the hell were those things?!

CHUCK  
Holy fuckberries!

BEN  
What the hell is going on?!

CHUCK  
Holy fuckberries!

They both look at each other and then run.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

They disappear into the night. Behind them, the unlit "Handy's" sign staring back like a foreboding monolith.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Ben walks at a leisurely pace with an exhausted Chuck managing nothing more than a slight amble.

CHUCK  
(panting)  
Can't stop. Musn't stop. Creatures  
will eat me.

Behind them, a Sheriff's car switches on its emergency lights.

Both boys stop and turn, red and blue flashing over them.

BEN

This night just keeps getting better.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - NIGHT

Chuck tugs at the handcuffs around his wrist, tethering him to the chair he's sitting in.

CHUCK

Are these really necessary? We were just out jogging together.

Across the desk, SHERIFF BOB (50s), continues filling out the paperwork.

SHERIFF BOB

Quiet.

At another desk, Deputy Mike rattles Ben's medication bottle and gives the boy the stink eye.

DEPUTY MIKE

So, what you on? Molly? Candy? Charlie? Norries? Moggies? Opals? Care Bears? Thunder Cats? Sugar Cookies? The Giggs? Whyphy?

BEN

Those are for anxiety. Read the prescription.

DEPUTY MIKE

Uh-huh. So, let's try this again. You and your friend just happen to be jogging in street clothes and your pants just so happen to look like they were shredded by barbed wire.

Ben looks down at his clawed pants with gaping holes ripped in them.

BEN

Yes.

DEPUTY MIKE  
Get help son.

The Deputy glances over at Chuck.

DEPUTY MIKE  
What about you buttercup?

CHUCK  
I'm fine, Deputy Mike. Thanks for asking. I think it would be in everyone's best interest if we just go our separate ways and put this whole night behind us? What'd you say?

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - JAILHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The cell door slams shut with Ben and Chuck on the wrong side.

CHUCK  
Boy, you lie to these guys once and they never let you forget it.

Chuck wanders over and lays down on the cot.

CHUCK  
You just couldn't just leave well enough alone, could you?

BEN  
Me? How is this my fault? I didn't know!

CHUCK  
I had a good thing going. I was going to be assistant manager by next year.

BEN  
Are you listening to yourself? That place is a black hole. They treat people like crap for crap wages. When did get so so --

CHUCK  
What?! Say it!

BEN  
Lazy!

Chuck gasps and clutches his imaginary pearls.

CHUCK  
(mock yokel accent)  
I'm sorry I wasn't able to get one  
of them fancy edumacations.

Both boys are almost chest to chest.

CHUCK  
How much do you owe on your student  
loans, by the way, like one hundred  
grand? Yeah, I saw the letters.  
Guess that's why you came begging  
me to get you an interview, huh?

Ben's eyes get glassy. He sniffs.

BEN  
You're a real bastard sometimes,  
you know that?

Ben takes the farthest seat he can from Chuck.

CHUCK  
Ben, I didn't mean... I'm sorry.

Ben lays down and rolls over, facing towards the wall.

Chuck kicks the bars.

CHUCK  
Fuck!

DEPUTY BOB (O.S.)  
No cursing in there!

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. CHECKOUT LANES - DAY

Numbered lane lights flick on one-by-one in perfect sequence.  
Cashiers log in and load their drawers.

CUT TO:



INT. COSMETIC DEPARTMENTS - DAY

Cosmo Girl cleans her display cases and puts out her samples with care.

CUT TO:

INT. SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

McCracken zips up his uniform and fastens his belt -- shoves his taser and flashlight into the appropriate clips and loops.

CUT TO:

EXT. STORE - DAY

Banners tumble down from the roof and unfurl. Fancy graphics advertising the "SUPER SATURDAY SALE STRAVAGANZA" blow in the wind.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

CAR HORNS HONK and people swarm towards the store like moths to a flame.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLDING CELL - DAY

Sherriff Bob unlocks the door and motions to Ben and Chuck they're free to go.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Handy sits in front of a laptop. He pushes the same two keys over and over again as he watches the screen intensely.

ON SCREEN --

Chuck and Ben sneaking around the side of the store and out of the camera's view.

The angle changes as Ben and Chuck run across the parking lot and out of sight.

The footage is replayed over and over again.

BACK TO SCENE

Handy replays the footage a few more times before calmly closing the laptop.

CUT TO:

INT. STOCKROOM - DAY

Ben stands in front of an open locker. He takes his pill before putting everything in the locker and closing the door.

That's when he makes eye contact with Chuck as he clocks in. Both quickly divert their gaze.

MCCRACKEN

Oi, you two! Boss wants to see ya.

CHUCK

Riley can come out of his hidey hole and ask us himself.

MCCRACKEN

Not that boss.

Ben looks at Chuck and vice versa. He knows.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Chuck and Ben sit opposite Handy.

CHUCK

And this is the part where we get shit-canned.

HANDY

Nobody is getting fired. Yet.

CHUCK

Wonderful! Good talk.

Chuck stands but Ben grabs one of his belt loops and pulls him back down.

HANDY

You two. Start talking.

BEN

What exactly do you have locked up in here Doctor Moreau?

HANDY  
So. You know then.

CHUCK  
Know? Look at us! We don't know  
anything. We're just two fuck ups  
trying to survive. If I could --

Chuck stands again and Ben grabs his vest and pulls him back  
down.

CHUCK  
Would you stop doing that!

BEN  
So, it's like those stories.  
Grandpappy Handy got help from a  
bunch of elves. Except, those  
things aren't elves.

HANDY  
He made a deal with them. And it  
turned into a curse.

BEN  
Couldn't put the genie back in the  
bottle, huh?

CHUCK  
So, he didn't kill his wife?

HANDY  
No. He didn't...

BEGIN FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

INT. STORE - NIGHT

Empty. Thomas quietly sobs to himself on his knees.

HANDY (V.O.)  
These things, they're like  
children. Incurrigible little  
children. Their payment was for my  
grandfather to give them a mother.

BEN (V.O.)  
So they took her?

INT. STORE - EVENING

Thomas sweeps the floor. He glances over at the basement door. CHILDREN GIGGLE from below.

HANDY (V.O.)  
But when she finally managed to  
crawl out. She wasn't the same.

The door moves and a figure climbs the stairs. A light returns to Thomas' eyes, his eyebrows raise and the corners of his mouth start turning upwards.

But his elation is short lived as the silhouette isn't quite right. A hairy, deformed hand reaches into the light.

Thomas shakes his head and cries out.

HANDY (V.O.)  
They did something to her. And in  
the end, she pleaded with him to  
kill her.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Ben and Chuck are shell-shocked.

BEN  
Whoa.

CHUCK  
So all they want is a mom? We can  
find them a mom. Right Benno? Hell,  
they can have mine if I can ever  
find her.

HANDY  
You don't understand. We can't do  
that. If they get what they want  
they'll be set free.

BEN  
So you trapped them in here? Don't  
you think that would make them a  
little angry after one hundred  
years.

CHUCK  
Jesus.

HANDY  
I'm not a bad guy. Really.

CUT TO:

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM - AT THE SAME TIME

A hairy, deformed hand smashes a computer screen connected to the sound system.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - AT THE SAME TIME

The pop music playing in the background cuts out.

CHUCK  
Well, we should be getting --

HANDY  
Shhhh!

Silence.

CHUCK  
I don't hear anything.

HANDY  
No no no no.

He bolts out of the office.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSEWARES DEPARTMENT - AT THE SAME TIME

From behind there seems to be something slightly off about the blue-vested employee standing in the corner.

CUSTOMER  
Excuse me, could you help me?

What used to be Bethany, now transformed into something else, something hideous and grotesque and monstrous, turns to face the woman.

BETHANY  
(cackles)  
Love to!

The customer falls back and screams.

BETHANY

But first...

She gives a short powerful WHISTLE.

CUT TO:

AROUND STORE

From different cracks, crevices, and hidden places the creatures crawl out.

Several creatures push a cart down the aisle with a baby strapped in crying. The mother chases after them.

The opposite direction a man runs as several of the creatures scratch, bite and gnaw at his face and hands.

One of the creatures dry humps a Barbie doll in the toy department as a little girl watches, crying. Her mom scoops her up and runs.

Several of the creatures cling to a shopping cart as it collides with a support beam -- their gooey innards forced through the metal webbing like Play-Doh.

INT./EXT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER - AT THE SAME TIME

Deputy Mike stretches and yawns out of boredom.

He switches on the radio and starts singing to the poppy tune filling the patrol car.

Behind him, through the back windshield, dozens of frightened and panicked customers pour out of Handy's.

DISPATCH

(over radio)

Dispatch to 48, you out there Mike?

He quickly turns the music down.

DEPUTY MIKE

Roger that, go ahead Debby.

DISPATCH

(over radio)

We're getting a lot of strange calls about something goin' on over at Handy's. Can you check it out?

DEPUTY MIKE

Yeah, I'm there...

He adjusts his review mirror and finally sees the chaos unfolding right behind him.

DEPUTY MIKE  
 (into radio)  
 Uh... dispatch. You may want to  
 send back-up. All of it.

CUT TO:

EXT. GENERAL STORE - AT THE SAME TIME

Eunice pauses sweeping her sidewalk and glances up at the chaos at Handy's. She shakes her head.

EUNICE  
 Knew it.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

The corporate woman along with two other assistants walk straight into the chaos.

CORPORATE WOMAN  
 This might be a problem.

ABOVE THEM

A creature loosens the nuts of a massive de-humidifier bolted between the cross beams.

BELOW

CORPORATE WOMAN  
 I think we should immediately start  
 talking PR strategy.

ASSISTANT  
 I agree.

ABOVE THEM

The creature unscrews the last nut -- de-humidifier drops -- creature waves bye-bye.

NEARBY

Ben, Chuck, and Handy watch the 800 pound machine flatten the corporate stooges spraying red entrails over a 20 foot radius.

BEN  
Holy shit!

CHUCK  
Whoa!

Handy runs back into the office and slams the door.

BEN  
Hey! Get back here!

Chuck runs into the chaos against the surge of people.

CHUCK  
I'm coming Cosmo Girl!

BEN  
Chuck!

INT. AUTOMOTIVE DEPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Ben charges after his friend dodging fleeing customers and sinister creatures.

BEN  
Chuck?

Instead, he spots another employee covered head to toe in bubble wrap being carried away by a dozen or so creatures.

BEN  
Hey! Drop him!

One of the creatures leaps and clings to his arm -- Ben rips him away and throws him down -- SCREECHING.

Ben's foot slams down on top of him -- still SCREECHING -- he continues slamming his foot down over and over again -- the SCREECHES slowly fade as Ben gets winded. He's finally dead.

BEN  
That was tedious.

The other creatures drop the employee and go on the attack as retribution.

Ben grabs a broom -- the creatures grab the other end -- a tug-o-war proceeds.



BEN  
Hey! Stop! Leggo!

He tries to pull the handle back from the surprisingly strong creatures. They struggle.

He finally lifts and tosses the broom away with the creatures still clinging to the other end. He then kicks his way through the few remaining ones.

The bubble wrapped employee manages to get his feet free and makes a break for it, still bound up.

BEN  
You're welcome!

INT. APPLIANCE DEPARTMENT - AT THE SAME TIME

A woman wrestles with one the creatures in her hair. She rips it away by the neck and throws it into a microwave on display, slams the door, and cranks the dial.

The creature dances around and scratches at the glass before the microwave shorts and explodes ejecting creature goo all over her.

INT. SPORTING GOODS DEPARTMENT - AT THE SAME TIME

Two curious creatures discover a paintball gun.

PFFT! A shot splatters the far wall.

Both little troublemakers grin, fangs poking out.

Chuck finds a clear path along the back wall but the paintball gun wielding creatures cut him off. He stares down the barrel.

CHUCK  
Whoa. No.

One the creatures holds down the trigger as they other supports the barrel on its back.

CHUCK  
Hey! Chill!

Dozens of colorful pellets fly out. Chuck can only watch, unable to move.

His body shakes and convulses in slow motion. Flesh ripples, paint splatters. It's a horror show.

INT. BAKERY - AT THE SAME TIME

A crush of people clog the exit.

McCracken doubles back and spots man-sized vent.

He rips the grate off and dives into the darkness.

INT. SPORTING GOODS - MOMENTS LATER

BEN  
Chuck? Chuck?!

His friend wanders out, a moving Jackson Pollock painting.

CHUCK  
They're evil, Benno. Plain and  
simple. And they must die.

BEN  
You look like a rainbow jizzed all  
over you.

CHUCK  
I'm gonna feel this in the morning.

BEN  
If we make it to morning.

Then, a SCREAM. They both look at each other.

CHUCK	BEN
Cosmo Girl!	Cosmo Girl!

They each grab whatever they can find to use as a weapon:  
sand wedge and an aluminum bat.

INT. COSMETICS DEPARTMENT - AT THE SAME TIME

Cosmo Girl is trapped, hunkered down behind the display cases  
as the creatures wreak havoc around her.

Chuck runs up and leaps over the glass cases, still holding  
his bat.

He collides with a support beam and drops down.

CHUCK  
(groans)  
That looks so much easier in the  
movies.

Cosmo Girl crawls to him.

COSMO GIRL  
You okay?

Chuck smiles. The pain gone.

CHUCK  
Yeah, you?

She nods.

CHUCK  
We're gonna get you out of here.

Chuck bounces up. Baseball bat swats away the creatures on  
top of the glass display cases.

CHUCK  
Okay! Who wants a piece?!

Nearby, Ben tees off one of the creatures with a perfect golf  
swing.

BETHANY (O.S.)  
You two will die!

Hell spawn Bethany finds them. Chuck and Ben stare at her  
deformed body.

BEN  
What the hell...?!

CHUCK  
I think I just threw up in my  
mouth.

BETHANY  
Want another quickie in the ball  
pen for old times sake?

Cosmo Girl and Ben glance at Chuck.

CHUCK  
That was -- one time!

Bethany screams as she rushes at Chuck, Ben tackles her and  
they both tumble into --

INT. HOUSEWARES DEPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Bethany falls on top of Ben.

BETHANY

I will eat your face and devour  
your soul!

Ben holds her back using the golf club -- teeth gnash and  
drool dribbles.

BEN

Can't we talk about this?

Her sharp fingernails tear at his clothes.

BETHANY

I will murder your children and eat  
their brains!

Ben reaches for something, anything.

Fingers grasp a handle -- a heavy skillet comes crashing down  
over her head.

Ben pushes her limp body off of him. Chuck and Cosmo Girl  
find him.

CHUCK

Damn. She went from good witch to  
bad witch real quick.

Chuck helps his friend to his feet.

BEN

Now can we get the hell out of  
here?

INT. AISLE - CONTINUOUS

They break for an exit.

COSMO GIRL

Look!

Both halves of one bifurcated creature quiver and convulse as  
they mutate into two separate creatures. Both stand up, brand  
new.

CHUCK

No fuckin' way.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Horns honk. People scream. Pure bedlam.

Dozens of the creatures crawl towards town. Deputy Mike pulls his weapon fires but is quickly overrun.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Chuck, Ben, and Cosmo Girl run as best they can when a beat up truck screeches to a halt cutting them off.

The door flings open.

LILLY  
Get in morons!

They don't hesitate.

INT./EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Lilly barely touches the brakes as they flee.

CHUCK  
Easy there, Danica.

Lilly jerks the wheel and Chuck slams his head into the passenger window.

CHUCK  
Ow!

BEN  
How did you --

LILLY  
Police scanner. Thought you two might need a hand.

Lilly drives up on someone's lawn and through a garden.

BEN  
We have to get off the street. Any suggestions?

CHUCK  
Head for my place. It's the closest. Plus, I got beer.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

People run for their lives passing a familiar house.

LILLY'S DAD  
I told you! I warned all of you  
this day was coming!

LILLY'S MOM (O.S.)  
Honey, come back inside. You can  
gloat when everyone is dead.

FADE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ben peers through two slits in the window blinds. A patrol car lurks past with its lights flashing.

SHERIFF  
(over loud speaker)  
Please remain in your homes. This  
is a civil emergency. Please remain  
in your homes this is...

The message repeats in the distance.

Lilly helps clean Cosmo Girl's cuts and scrapes. Chuck finishes scrubbing off as much paint as possible.

CHUCK  
I think I lost 12 pounds of skin  
getting this stuff off.

Ben stands facing Chuck. Tense pause.

BEN  
So...

Cosmo Girl and Lilly both turn their heads in unison back and forth.

CHUCK  
So...

BEN  
We cool?

CHUCK  
We cool.

LILLY  
Now kiss and make up.

Lilly smiles.

BEN

Can we get back to the problem at hand? Either of you knuckleheads have a plan or something? And what exactly were those --

COSMO GIRL

-- Imps.

Everyone stops as all three turn to stare at her.

BEN

Something you would like to share with the class?

COSMO GIRL

They're imps. Lesser demons in the fairy world. Though not evil, per se, they are quite mischievous.

CHUCK

You are so sexy right now.

She grins.

BEN

I'm sorry, how do you know all this?

COSMO GIRL

Duh. Does no one else play D&D?

They just shake their heads.

COSMO GIRL

Oh.

BEN

Anything else? Maybe a way we can kill them?

COSMO GIRL

Killing them is easy. You gotta smoosh them. Don't leave any parts remaining or they'll make --

BEN

We know!

CHUCK

We know!

COSMO GIRL

Sorry. Also, they can be trapped with like a spell or a song or --

BEN  
Music!

CHUCK  
Gesundheit.

Ben reaches into his pocket and pulls out the sheet that was hidden in Handy's office.

BEN  
No. Music. Look I found this.  
Remember Handy said he trapped them  
inside? It was the music.

Chuck and Lilly look at the sheet.

CHUCK  
It's all here.

BEN  
Do you think the music would lure  
them back?

COSMO GIRL  
Definitely. They can't resist it.

Ben stares off into the distance, deep-in-thought.

CHUCK  
Uh-oh. I know that look.

BEN  
I know what we have to do.

CHUCK  
And now we're boned.

Ben saddles up to Chuck.

BEN  
C'mon, chuckles. I need you with me  
on this. It'll be fun.

Chuck's eyes narrow.

CHUCK  
Sure, what the hell.

LILLY  
I'm in too. But we're going to need  
more than just baseball bats and  
golf clubs against those things.



BEN  
What'd you got?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Riley trips down his porch steps carrying whatever few possessions he can quickly grab. He shoves everything into his car's trunk slams it shut before heading back inside one last time.

He re-emerges with an enormous ball of clothes and tosses them haphazardly into the back seat before climbing into the driver's side.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Ignition key turns, headlights flick on, and the haunting figure of the deformed Bethany stands directly in the car's path.

RILEY  
Jesus!

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

BETHANY  
Hello, boss. Miss me?

Riley steps out holding a gas station squeegee as a weapon.

RILEY  
Bethany? What happened to you?

BETHANY  
Nothing happened to me. I'm their queen now. They worship me.

A fewimps crawl out from the darkness behind Bethany.

THUNK -- they jump up on the roof of the car.

RILEY  
Now... Bethany... let's talk about this.

BETHANY  
Talk about what? How you HUMILIATED ME?! And FIRED ME!

Her scream punctuates the still air.

Riley ducks back inside his car -- slams the door.

Imps swarm -- car rocks back and forth -- claws scratching on metal -- back window shatters -- hand shifts car into drive -- foot stomps on the gas -- car rockets straight ahead -- Bethany steps to the side as it plows straight into a tree.

Imps swarm -- Riley's gurgled screams fade as the windows splatter with blood.

BETHANY

That was fun. Do you guys want to get something to eat?

FADE TO:

INT. AIR DUCT - NIGHT

A flashlight beam bounces off the cramped, dust-filled metal coffin. A sweaty McCracken slithers through the tight space.

MCCRACKEN

(to himself)

This is a fine mess we've got ourselves here, aye. Come and terrorize MY store? They don't know who they're messing with.

Inch-by-inch he pushes forward until -- the duct splits.

MCCRACKEN

Now, is it two rights and a left?  
Or two lefts and a right?

He checks both paths but they look the same.

Then PITTER PATTERN PITTER PATTERN from behind.

McCracken pushes his body up -- drops his chin -- shines the light around behind him.

He reaches for his utility knife. Turns the flashlight off.

Complete darkness.

MCCRACKEN

Come on you wee little bastards.

He flicks the light back on -- Imps lunge.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Three silhouettes move across the sheer white curtain covering the sliding glass doors.

LILLY (O.S.)  
You guys have to be quiet.

The door slides open and all three materialize through the window coverings.

Lilly flips on a desk light and moves towards the opposite door and locks it.

LILLY  
They'll probably be in the bunker by now.

CHUCK  
They not worried about you?

LILLY  
No, we have a pretty strong every man for himself, or herself, agreement.

Lilly grabs one side of a book case and rolls it to the side exposing a hidden firearms cache that would make any NRA diehard jealous.

CHUCK  
Holy --

BEN  
-- Shit.

LILLY  
What can I say? Daddy likes to be prepared.

CHUCK  
For World War three?

She grabs a compact Beretta from its molded case. Pops the clip out -- checks the barrel -- slams the clip back in and cocks it. She tucks it in her belt.

She then sizes Ben up.

LILLY  
You look like a Glock man.

She hands Ben a nine millimeter.

LILLY  
Light. Easy to use. Reliable.

He hefts it in his hands.

BEN  
Nice. Comfy.

LILLY  
Try not to shoot yourself in the  
foot or something. Okay?

BEN  
Oh ha ha.

LILLY  
(to Chuck)  
Okay big boy, you see something you  
like?

Chuck scans the case.

CHUCK  
I don't think I need -- ooo, this  
is a pretty one.

He takes down a pump action shotgun. He smiles and nuzzles  
the barrel against his cheek.

LILLY  
She likes you too.

She hands him a box of shells and he goes about loading it.

LILLY  
Hand me that bag.

Ben reaches for a gym bag and Lilly loads several boxes of  
ammunition.

Chuck gets the gun loaded and cocked. He plays around with  
his new toy when -- CHILDREN GIGGLING.

CHUCK  
Anyone hear that?

Ben and Lilly stop. Shrug.

BEN  
What did it sound like?

CHUCK

Like... children laughing or drunk  
leprechauns. Do you have drunk  
leprechauns living with you? I'm  
not judging or anything. Just  
asking.

Lilly stands and moves towards the blinds. She pulls them  
open with one swift motion.

THROUGH GLASS

A group of imps have their fanged tooth faces pressed to the  
glass.

BEN

Shit.

CHUCK

They can't get in can they?

Tiny dagger-like claws pierce the glass -- a crack slinks its  
way up -- GLASS PINGS and TINKS -- it shatters.

Chuck falls back, throwing his weapon away. Ben hides. Imps  
storm in.

BLAM! A shot gun blast obliterates the desk and a few of the  
imps. Lilly pumps the shotgun.

Chuck's high-pitched scream rattles the room.

BOOM! Another blast decimates the remaining imps and part of  
a book shelf.

Chuck lowers his hands covering his eyes.

CHUCK

Is it over? Am I dead?

Lilly discharges the empty shell.

LILLY

Get up.

CHUCK

I swear to Christ I will never make  
fun of you or your family ever  
again.

LILLY

Alright, time to go.

All three CRUNCH across broken glass and duck through the shattered glass door.

CHUCK (O.S.)  
Hey, does anyone else have an  
erection right now or is just me?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TOWN - NIGHT

A few sporadic fires burn in the dark streets. Cars overturned. Street lamps out.

A few imps terrorize a young couple trapped in their car.

GUNFIRE takes out the trouble makers.

Deputy Mike, dirty and bloodied, lowers his weapon. He limps his way over to the trapped couple.

DEPUTY MIKE  
Run. Go! Don't stop.

They do.

The Deputy makes his way down the center of blood splattered streets, trying to stay in the light as much as possible.

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Mike barges into the dark, quiet station, gun drawn. The place has been trashed -- desks overturned, computer's knocked off and their screens blinking, phone's BEEPING their busy signal.

He checks a few blind spots, ready for anything.

INT. HOLDING CELL - CONTINUOUS

He then finds the older Sheriff locked inside a cell handcuffed to the bars.

DEPUTY MIKE  
Bob!

He doesn't respond. He looks like he's been beaten.

The Deputy grabs the keys off the wall and unlocks the cell door. He frees his partner.

DEPUTY MIKE

Hey bob.

The old Sheriff comes around.

SHERIFF BOB

Mike. Oh for God's sake. Those things --

DEPUTY MIKE

I know. C'mon, we're getting you out of here.

CHILDREN GIGGLING.

SHERIFF BOB

Oh Jesus, they're coming back.

Mike closes the cell door and both men retreat to the pitch black corner.

Mike watches as the top half of the swinging door slides open and then falls shut.

His eyes flick downwards.

From behind a cabinet, an imp. The lone creature looks around, poking and prodding different items strewn on the floor. It's reflective red eyes scanning the area.

Mike raises his gun.

The creature continues to wander around before disappearing through a broken window.

He breathes a sigh of relief.

DEPUTY MIKE

Let's just wait here for a bit.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Lilly's truck parks and lights flick off.

Ben, Lilly, and Chuck hop out.

CHUCK

Okay honey, daddy's gotta go save the town now. You remember what to do?

COSMO GIRL  
I wait here. If I see anything  
weird --

CHUCK  
-- other than --

COSMO GIRL  
-- other than hundreds of imps. I  
honk three times real quick.

CHUCK  
Good girl. And remember, if you see  
us running and screaming with those  
things chasing us... you come pick  
us up, got it?

LILLY  
(to Ben)  
And they say chivalry is dead.

Cosmo Girl leans over and kisses him on the cheek.

COSMO GIRL  
Good luck!

Chuck slings the shot gun over his shoulder.

CHUCK  
Piece of cake.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A lone shopping cart drifts across the expanse before  
clanging into an abandoned car.

The store front is partially lit -- the giant "HANDY'S" sign  
blinks intermittently.

BEHIND CAR

Three heads rise up over the edge. Their faces a mixture of  
horror and shock.

CHUCK  
Cleanup on aisle... all of them.

BEN  
Stay together.



They sneak across the parking lot, using whatever debris they can find as cover.

EXT. STORE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

The automatic doors repeatedly open and close, stuck in a perpetual loop. All three quickly jump in time.

INT. GROCERY DEPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Lights flicker, garbage everywhere, shelves tipped over, shopping carts strewn around. A bloody handprint on the wall.

The store appears to be empty.

CHUCK

Think they're all out having fun?

BEN

God I hope so.

LILLY

Good rule of thumb. If it moves, shoot it anyway.

She cocks her gun.

CHUCK

You first.

Lilly rolls her eyes. Chuck gives Ben a little push to go next as he brings up the rear.

They check each aisle as they go, only crossing when it's clear.

Chuck spins left and right, points his gun up and down like he's playing a video game. They talk in hushed voices.

BEN

Will you stop that.

Ben slides up next to Lilly.

BEN

I should probably thank you.

LILLY

Probably.

BEN

And say... I'm sorry I stood you up. I was going through a rough time and I was scared and I didn't know how to tell you --

LILLY

That you're gay?

CHUCK

Wait, what?

Ben starts to turn red.

BEN

Yeah.

CHUCK

That's... great!

Chuck hugs Ben.

CHUCK

Dude, you should have told me. We could have been hitting those sweet gay bars in Columbus this whole time. They have top notch cocktails.

BEN

So you forgive me?

Lilly punches him in the face.

CHUCK

Damn.

Ben recoils.

LILLY

That's no excuse for standing me up or not calling. Now I forgive you.

Chuck hands him a partially defrosted bag of frozen peas.

CHUCK

Still, could have been worse.

BEN

How do you figure?

CHUCK  
She could have shot you.

CUT TO:

INT. STOCKROOM - CONTINUOUS

Guns lead the way as all three push through the swinging doors.

LILLY  
Where's this operations room?

CHUCK  
Down and to the left.

Ben throws his cold compress away as they continue their slow deliberate pace.

Chuck glances.

CHUCK  
Hold up.

BEN  
Now what?!

Chuck makes a bee line for the vending machine.

BEN  
Oh, you have got to be kidding me.

CUT TO:

INT. BREAKROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chuck smashes the glass with the butt of his gun, reaches in and finally takes his candy. He tucks it in his pocket and walks away.

But returns again and pushes the machine over on its side.

CUT TO:

INT. STOCKROOM - CONTINUOUS

BEN  
Feel better?

CHUCK

Yep!

LILLY

Quiet. You hear that?

A MAN MOANING.

They run and slide behind a few stacked pallets. They peek around the corner.

HANDY tied up and hanging upside down, mouth gagged with a doggy chew toy as several imps dance around and occasionally poke him with tiny make-shift weapons.

He whimpers through the gag.

BEHIND PALLETS

They whisper.

BEN

I vote we leave him.

LILLY

Ben!

BEN

The guy's a dick.

CHUCK

I have to second that. He does have dickish tendencies.

LILLY

Fine. Stay here.

Lilly dispatches a few of the imps with quick blasts and kicks the others away.

LILLY

Okay, the coast is clear.

HANDY swings by his ankles as Ben and Chuck come out.

BEN

Hiya, Mister Handy.

HANDY

(muffled)

Hm.

Lilly moves to cut him down when Ben grabs her arm.

BEN  
 Hold up a sec. I think this is the  
 perfect opportunity to discuss  
 compensation.

CHUCK  
 Oh yeah!

HANDY  
 (muffled)  
 Cmsenshun?

BEN  
 I'm thinking a raise is in order.  
 And paid vacation time. Chuck?

CHUCK  
 Ooo... how about a stipend? And  
 would it kill you to get some  
 descent snacks in the break room?

Chuck shakes his candy in his face.

BEN  
 You heard the man. Snacks.

Ben leans down.

BEN  
 What'd you say?

Handy closes his eyes and nods. Ben points to Lilly who cuts  
 the rope. Handy falls to the hard ground in a heap.

Lilly cuts the tape around his wrists and Handy removes the  
 gag.

HANDY  
 Oh, thank God!

BEN  
 Happy with yourself?

Handy glares as he finishes untangling himself.

HANDY  
 You think I caused this? It was  
 her. Now they're loose.

BEN  
 Not for long.

CHUCK  
Yeah, we have a plan.

CUT TO:

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck sees the smashed computer.

CHUCK  
Shit man.

Ben crawls under the desk and fishes around -- pulls out the aux cable.

Chuck jacks in his iPod.

CHUCK  
Think this will work?

BEN  
Eh... fifty-fifty?

Chuck's thumb slides down the screen. They both hold their breath and listen.

CUT TO:

INT. STORE - CONTINUOUS

Music starts soft then -- an electric guitar strum -- bass -- drums kick in. A steady beat fills every corner of the store.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Loudspeakers crackle -- music starts pumping outwards into the nearby town.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The desolate calm is slowly overrun with sonic rock echoing from a distance.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - CONTINUOUS

Mike helps Bob out. They watch the imps form a line straight towards the store.

They hobble away the opposite direction.

CUT TO:

EXT. GENERAL STORE - ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Eunice and Arthur dance around to the blaring rock music like they were in their twenties again.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN - CONTINUOUS

A few imps rummaging in a dumpster perk their ears up.

Others emerge from shops and out of the shadows. They make their way to the street almost as if in a trance. Others join them.

Dozens of imps crawl towards Handy's a short walk up the hill, lured away by the magical pied piper music. Unable to resist.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Cosmo Girl ducks down as the imps flow into the parking lot just a few yards from where she is waiting.

INT. STOCKROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lilly shoots the lock off the cage door protecting the store's vital systems.

HANDY

You and your friends have about  
five minutes to get out.

LILLY

I thought we --

HANDY

This is my curse. I'm going to see  
it ends here.

Lilly starts to leave but stops and turns back.

LILLY  
I really, really enjoyed shopping  
here. It was always such a nice  
store.

The corners of HANDY's mouth flinch upwards, his eyes  
brighten.

CUT TO:

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ben peers through the little window and out into the  
stockroom.

BEN  
It's getting ugly out here. I think  
it's time to go.

CHUCK  
Don't have to tell me twice.

Chuck and Ben ready themselves next to the door.

BEN  
Just like the first time. On three.

CHUCK  
1...

BEN  
2...

CHUCK  
3!

They make a break for it. Imps swarm. They rush for the  
loading dock.

INT. LOADING DOCK - CONTINUOUS

They almost reach the doors but the imps are crawling in from  
underneath.

BEN  
Whoa! Not that way.



INT. FREEZER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They pass through and try another side door -- more imps waiting.

CHUCK  
Jesus! They're everywhere.

BEN  
This way.

They double back.

INT. DELI - CONTINUOUS

Straight into hundreds of imps reeking havoc as they are summoned back.

The chaos dies down as each one of the ugly creatures turns and looks at the duo.

CHUCK  
Think they remember us?

The imps SCREECH.

BEN  
Yep!

Ben and Chuck dive behind the meat counter -- food projectiles bombard their hiding place.

CHUCK  
Now what?

BEN  
I'm out of ideas. Your turn.

CUT TO:

INT. GARDEN CENTER - AT THE SAME TIME

Lilly pushes against a side door.

OTHER SIDE

A pile of shopping carts barricade the exit.

BACK TO LILLY

She gives up.

BETHANY (O.S.)  
Going somewhere?

Lilly spins just as something bludgeons her unconscious.

INT. DELI - MOMENTS LATER

Ben drops down after firing.

CHUCK  
You think we're going to be okay?

BEN  
Hell no! I think we are probably  
going to get blown up.

Chuck fires back at the imps. Debris continues to splatter them sporadically.

CHUCK  
In that case, I have a confession  
to make: in the 9th grade I saw  
your mom naked in the shower --

BEN  
What?!

CHUCK  
-- and then I jacked off in your  
closet while you were sleeping.

BEN  
WHAT?!

CHUCK  
I'm sorry. I just -- I had to.

Ben stares, fuming. He points his gun at Chuck. Chuck does the same.

BEN  
Don't point your gun at me.

CHUCK  
YOU don't point YOUR gun at me.

They slowly back off.

BEN

I so fuckin' hate you sometimes.

Ben puts his arm around Chuck.

BEN

I fuckin' hate you too buddy.

They're both smiling and hugging.

INT. STOCKROOM - AT THE SAME TIME

Handy pummels and dents the safety latch on an industrial pipe. "GAS FLAMMABLE" written along the side.

He pushes the release valve all the way over and gas HISSES from around the seal. He steps away and covers his face as gas starts to fill the enormous space.

INT. DELI - MOMENTS LATER

Ben tosses away his spent weapon.

BEN

That's it.

CHUCK

I can't believe this is how it ends. This place really sucks.

That is when the SCREECHING and chaos suddenly subside like someone flipped a switch.

Ben and Chuck wait and listen.

CHUCK

Think it's a ruse?

Ben peers through the glass meat cooler and watches as the imps crawl away towards the stockroom.

BEN

Who cares. Run for it.

They scramble out the opposite direction.

INT. STOCKROOM - AT THE SAME TIME

Handy pushes a heavy cabinet and blocks the crack in the building.

HANDY

Now there's no where for you to go.

He coughs as gas fills the space.

He fumbles for something in his pocket -- a lighter.

PITTER PATTER PITTER PATTER

He tries peering into the darkness.

Slice.

HANDY

Ow!

He reaches down and pulls back a bloody hand.

CHILDREN GIGGLING

He flinches as he's cut again. And again.

He is suddenly yanked off his feet. Lighter escapes his grip and bounces away in the dark.

INT. CHECKOUT LANES - AT THE SAME TIME

Ben and Chuck run for their lives. They both see the exit -- freedom within sight.

BETHANY (O.S.)

Oh, boys!

Ben skids to a stop. Chuck collides into the back of him.

BEN

You have got to be shitting me!  
C'mon!

Bethany pulls Lilly into the light. Her clawed hand wrapped around her neck.

CHUCK

Through what wormhole out of hell  
did you crawl from?

BETHANY

I told you that if I go down, I'm  
taking you with me.

Chuck rolls up his sleeves.

CHUCK

That's it! No more mister nice guy.

Ben holds him back.

BEN

Bethany, look at yourself. Look at what you've become. They're using you.

BETHANY

Using me? They worship me! I am a goddess to them. And when we're done here, everyone will know it and fall before my feet.

Bethany glares at Ben, tightening her grip around Lilly's throat.

That's when a freight train of shopping carts RATTLE down and slam straight into her throwing Lilly clear.

The carts collide into the opposite wall burying Bethany under hundreds of pounds of metal.

McCracken slides to a stop. His guard uniform ripped and torn and transformed into a make-shift kilt with a sales banner as his tartan.

MCCRACKEN

This is my store! All hail the king!

CHUCK

Woo hoo! Way to go you crazy Scottish bastard!

Ben pulls Lilly up to her feet.

BEN

You okay?

LILLY

Yeah.

Chuck rushes in and scoops her up.

CHUCK

Do that later. We gotta ditch this party now!

INT. STOCKROOM - AT THE SAME TIME

Handy frantically crawls and searches for the lighter -- hands sliding back and forth over the cold cement floor.

He finally finds it and flicks it on.

The wafting flame reveals hundreds of imps surrounding him from wall to wall, beady red eyes fixed on him.

He tosses the lighter behind him within inches of the hissing gas.

It ignites.

INT. CHECKOUT STANDS - AT THE SAME TIME

Bethany crawls out of the heap of twisted shopping cart skeletons just in time to see a massive fireball rushing straight for her.

The orange flame reflects back in her bulging eyes.

BETHANY

Dammit.

EXT. GENERAL STORE - ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Fire bursts through asphalt -- burning toys and tires ejected through giant fissures.

CUT TO:

EXT. STORE - CONTINUOUS

Windows explode -- metal and glass fly outwards -- the store façade disappears behind a wall of burning hellfire.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Cosmo Girl stares, mouth agape, as the store burns down in front of her eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Debris rains down as the trio run at a full sprint.

Chuck dives for cover inside a parked car still carrying Lilly.

Ben is knocked behind a car.

McCracken dives for the cover of the bushes.

CUT TO:

EXT. GENERAL STORE - ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Arthur and Eunice cheer and clap as they stand up from their plastic deck chairs.

EUNICE  
Burn you motherfucker!

ARTHUR  
Yeah! Burn!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATER

Flaming debris continues drifting down. Charred cinder flakes float in the air.

A car door moves -- Lilly pushing from the other side -- it falls outwards.

LILLY  
Get him off me!

On top of her lays Chuck.

CHUCK  
(half conscious)  
Was it good for you too?

Ben shakes off his fall and pulls Lilly free. She drapes her arm over Ben's shoulder as she stands on her one good leg.

Chuck pulls himself free.

CHUCK  
Oh my god! My legs! I can't feel my legs!

Ben and Lilly are horrified. Chuck then rolls and stands.

CHUCK  
I'm just fuckin' with ya.

Lilly pummels his back and shoulder.

LILLY  
Not funny. Not. Funny.

COSMO GIRL (O.S.)  
Charlie!

Cosmo Girl runs through the carnage and jumps into his arms.

CHUCK  
It's okay, baby. I'm fine.

COSMO GIRL  
I was so scared.

CHUCK  
Did you see me almost get blown up?

She holds him and kisses him as they retreat to safety.

CHUCK (O.S.)  
You hungry? Wanna get, I don't  
know, some waffles or something?

Ben helps Lilly to a little seat on one of the curbs.

McCracken soon joins them, coughing and hacking and  
extinguishing his still smoldering clothes.

MCCRACKEN  
You lads crazy. I'll gives ya that.

They chuckle until Ben has a realization.

BEN  
Shit!

LILLY  
What?

BEN  
I'm gonna need to find a new job.

THE END.