



Written By

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Property of Animal Among Us LLC

This is a story about a monster.

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Flashes, in blurs, of EVERGREEN trees whipping by--

INTERCUT WITH:

The opening CREDITS; and old CRIME SCENE PHOTOS:

1998; Two pale, teenage DEAD BODIES, maimed, lay face down at the lake's edge. Their wounds savage; animal-like tears in the flesh.

CAUTION TAPE on sticks cordon off the area. A CAMCORDER is planted in the mud not five feet from the bloody scene.

TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Sprinting FOOTSTEPS crack dead limbs-- heavy, feminine GRUNTS, as she slices through heavy brush, she cries, her face cut, bleeding--

TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Tracking her from above, a mere blip in the blurs, a BROWN MASS, gives chase at an inhuman speed-- just ahead, his prey TRIPS, falling to her knees...

TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAY - CONTINUOUS

LUPITA DE ROSA (26) a fiery Latina, dirty, sweating-- with *Amigos Del Squatche* stenciled across her TEE, rises to her feet.

The tripping culprit, a TENT ripped apart; FOOD BAGS scattered, she's discovered her ravaged CAMP SITE. She clutches a small CAMERA.

LUPITA
NINAAAA!?

She rises, noticing the large FOOTPRINTS and DRAG MARKS in the area, leading to a TREE. She inches closer, flies buzz in the surrounding BUSHES. Fumbling to operate her camera, it blinks on-- **LOW BATTERY...**

Pushing the camera between branches, eyeing her view finder-- she stumbles back, keeling over to retch, dry heaving.

Only to notice the pile of CLOTHES she's landed in, they're hers-- and Nina's AMIGOS DEL SQUATCHE SHIRT, all covered in BLOOD... she breaks down, muttering:

LUPITA (CONT'D)
*Padre nuestro, que estás en los
 cielos-- please, get me out of
 here.*

...from behind, a loud THUD plunks in a BUSH next to her. She stumbles back, trying to stop her crying, when... *plop...* a red DRIP lands on her leg. Then another. Another. She looks up to--

--dangling human *INTESTINES*. As it gives way to gravity, the body free falling--

Lupita SCREAMS and the BEAST HOWLS wild, a victory cry...

2

EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - MAIN GATE - DAY

2

Removing the **CAMP CLOSED SIGN** hung on the OPEN gate, the big, plotting EYES of Park Ranger ANITA BISHOP (37) perk at the SCREAMS.

Her dark hair in a tight bun, no makeup-- she's tanned and toned, the result of life in her surroundings. Her eyes lift above, into the treeline, as she loads her tool belt into her TRUCK, "...did I hear something?"

REMINGTON RIFLE strapped on her back, her hand moves to the 9MM on her hip-- she turns down the CLASSICAL MUSIC playing from the dash... and listens-- *nothing but nature*.

She loads up to go, with a smile, she stares up to the newly restored sign:

ANITA
*...much better than Mother's old
 one.*

Crooked branches make up its jagged letters--

WELCOME TO MERRYMAKER CAMPGROUND

TO:

From it's vantage point, high in the trees, *the BEAST* watches Anita pull through the GATE, jumping out to lock up...

It shifts limbs, to follow her, as she drives on-- passing the quaint CABINS and a MAIN HALL giving way to a large FIELD, a LAKE in the distance.

Her TRUCK disappears under the foliage, into the spider web of PATHS cut out of the wild to make up the *Merrymaker Campgrounds*.

As the sun fades, a CLAW grips a branch, bits of FLESH and BLOOD cover it-- the monster growls us to...

TITLE CARD:

ANIMAL AMONG US

3 INT. ROLAND'S HOUSE - OFFICE - DUSK 3

The SMALL SPACE is seclusive, cozy--

A POSTER hangs above the anonymous MAN seated at his desk, typing by the window-- THE MERRYMAKER MURDERER BOOK COVER: an ominous CABIN 13 in thick woods, blood sprayed all over the outside-- across its bottom:

BASED ON TRUE EVENTS, #1 BEST SELLER BY ROLAND BAUMGARNER.
and a huge RED BANNER to crown it all-- **10 MILLION COPIES SOLD.**

Big, blue EYES stare at a COMPUTER SCREEN, moving along as fingers type, his WEDDING RING clacking against keys. His lips mutter the words as they're written:

ROLAND (O.S.)
...she'd caught him in her trap,
the *smug bastard*. All the son of a
bitch could muster in his defense
was a lyric from better days past.
As her gun muzzle nestled between
his lips, he quivered, saying--

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN, the last line-- "*No one knows what it's like to feel these feelings, like I do. And I blame*"

He leans back-- his eyes, on the verge of tears.

MATCH TO:

4 INT. ROLAND'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY 4

A SHOWER HEAD gushes; the water runs down his face, his BLUE EYES staring into nothing, his skin with goosebumps.

TO:

INT. ROLAND'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Drying off, stepping in front of his reflection is ROLAND BAUMGARNER (38). He combs his hair back, leaning in to loathe the gray in his beard. He eyes cologne, next to his removed WEDDING RING. He pulls a SHIRT from a hanger, buttoning up...

He spritzes, puts on the ring, then sizes his options, on the bed: new JEANS with tags, but he chooses the second option, the SLACKS sat beside them. He reaches for his shirt, just as his daughter ISABELLA (4) bursts in-- she's wearing a cheap WEREWOLF MASK:

ROLAND
AAAAAH, AN ISABELLAWOLF! QUICK,
MOMMY, GRAB YOUR SILVER!

He grabs her, pretending she's eating him-- she giggles:

CHRISTINE (O.S.)
Only silver thing I own is that
tongue of yours.

Roland pokes his tongue out at CHRISTINE BAUMGARNER (42) stepping in. Her dark hair plain, same as her clothes and makeup, a sacrifice made by a stay at home mom. WATER BOTTLE and SNACKS in one hand, KEYS, PURSE, MAIL in the other... all atop her SIX MONTH PREGNANT BELLY.

He pops up, pulling the MASK off Izzy, and wrapping Christine in a hug and a kiss:

ROLAND
You are the most amazing woman I
know.

CHRISTINE
I think you're right.

ROLAND
I can't believe you found a
Halloween mask in May. Honey, it's
perfect.

CHRISTINE
Yeah, I found that at a cute little
shop I'd never heard of downtown,
Azazel's Attic of Death. I ordered
their Killer Kitchen Knife set for
us!

Ro grabs Izzy, eating her tummy:

ROLAND
Aaaggh-- I think Mommy's earned
some extra credit for her hard work
today!

As Isabella giggles like crazy, Christine steps in:

CHRISTINE
Okay, okay-- Daddy's gotta go--
(taking her from him)
--go wash for dinner, please, Iz?
Two squirts of soap only.

ISABELLA
But I like the bubbles--

ROLAND
--hey, we do what mommy asks,
please.
(creeping toward Izzy)
...or... *daddy* will sneak in your
room... while you're sleeping...
and--

Ro tickles her tummy again-- setting off a squealing fit. He stops, kisses her, sending her on her way:

ROLAND (CONT'D)
I love you. See you in the morning,
Bumble Butt.

After she's gone:

ROLAND (CONT'D)
You know what I think is sexy? You
braving the *Attic of Death* for--

CHRISTINE
--what's not sexy is my butt
hurting from driving around all
day, looking for that stupid thing.
I'm tired, I'm behind on my
deadline now--

ROLAND
--and it's important for the
students to see me supporting their
ideas 100%, so, you've saved *my*
ass. I'm sure it won't be the last
time.

CHRISTINE
(noticing)
Are those new jeans?

ROLAND
What, no, I've had these a while--

CHRISTINE
--I didn't buy them for you.

ROLAND
I am still capable of doing a few
things myself.

CHRISTINE
You're all grown up!

She squeezes his cheeks in her hand, hard, then:

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
Get all your writing done?

ROLAND
Yeah, I'm almost there-- I had a
breakthrough, but I don't think I
like the ending.

CHRISTINE
Doesn't every horror story end the
same? Kill the monster or the
monster kills you?

ROLAND
Yeah... but what if the monster *has*
to live, *with you*? Ah well, I'll
figure it out... see you tonight.

A kiss on her cheek as he goes.

5 INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY

5

A dim COLLEGE LECTURE HALL.

KARA (25) a cute blonde, finishes giving her report in front of the CLASS. She wears a PHANTOM OF THE OPERA MASK, makeup done up on it. Blown up behind her, a PHOTO of Kara and her TEST SUBJECT, a more hideous version, her makeup *Joker-like*:

KARA

...my test patient's charade of misconstrued feelings, *will* lead to misguided intentions. Therefore, no matter how she chooses to doll up now, this *will* manifest one day in her actions. The *makeup* is merely her mask covering the scars *none of us* can see.

(flipping a page)

...but my issue isn't with her feelings, or even her way of thinking. What choice did she have? She's labeled a "freak", triggering years of oppressing her true feelings-- loneliness, inadequacy-- the inability to live "up to the standard". A standard *set by whom*? Daddy didn't give affection. Mommy didn't care. So who's left?

The rest of the class-- 15 STUDENTS, all wear masks-- alien, funny, scary, a catcher's mask, homemade, all kinds:

KARA (CONT'D)

Each and everyone of us here.

(then)

If we don't begin to recognize and help these types of people, before it reaches a point where maniacal thoughts become actions, you might never know when your worst nightmare could be sitting right next to you.

(then)

Thank you.

The lights come up, the class claps. Roland sits anonymous amongst them, in his wolf mask. As the kids remove masks:

ROLAND

Kinda exhilarating, isn't it? That feeling you get *behind the mask*... a strange *freedom*, right? An anonymity-- with the power to do almost anything you want.

(he stands)

Powerful imagery, Kara. Very creative.

(she smiles)

(MORE)

ROLAND (CONT'D)

My one criticism, if you can even call it that-- what to do about the people who love their masks? Those who refuse to take it off, ever? Are they worth the time, money and resources?

As he makes his way through the row, mask still on:

KARA

The problem is our foundation, built on '*We the People*', was trampled over by the "*Time, Money and Resources People*", who conveniently are never available when--

ROLAND

--wa-wah-wa-wah-- liberal alert.

KARA

Is it democratic or republican to let our society devolve into a *self-centered* existence?

ROLAND

Can we get some poll numbers on that?

KARA

--or hell, who knows, maybe my test patient is an evil genius, plotting to murder me during our follow up session and Chaos Theory wins again!

The class bursts laughter-- Roland too-- Kara's eyes linger on Roland, as he approaches the podium. He pulls off his mask, whispering something to her, it makes her smile.

He moves her aside, reaching down, to a small CAULDRON below. Holding it up:

ROLAND

*Provocative? Inspiring? But is it **A Plus** Material?*

He holds up a neutral thumb, the class wavers, then all raise thumbs up:

ROLAND (CONT'D)

THE TRIBE HAS SPOKEN! CHOOSE YOUR TREAT, SALTY OR SWEET?

She reaches up, her eyes on him, as she pulls a RED LOLLIPOP:

KARA

--my favorite color.

ROLAND
 (to the class)
 Due for Tuesday Lab-- minimum 1000
 words on your most vivid memory of
 when your "maniacal thoughts *didn't*
 become conscious actions" and what
 positive effect you believe it's
 had in your young lives.
 (waving)
 Make good choices this weekend, my
 pet brains.

The class murmurs, shuffling out-- Roland begins to gather
 his things-- after a moment:

KARA (O.S.)
 You really think I was *inspiring*?

Stepping up close, behind him:

ROLAND
 My neurons are still buzzing.

KARA
 I was thinking of basing a book on
 my test patient from my thesis. A
 story based on her fucked up
 story..?

She pops her sucker out, biting her lip--

KARA (CONT'D)
 ...would that be something that you
 could help me with?

ROLAND
 I'd be more than happy to offer my--

KARA
 --perfect, when can we start?

ROLAND
 Um... well, have you already
 cleared the idea with Dean Winters?

KARA
 Ew, he's such a creeper. Every time
 I see him, he always tries to *touch*
me--

(Ro laughs, quickly)
 --but, yeah, I totally ran it by
 him yesterday, and he said it was a
 great idea. He actually thought you
 were the perfect person for me.

ROLAND
 ...uh huh.
 (a charged beat, then)
 Okay look, I think there are some
 things to consider before we jump
 into this.

(MORE)

ROLAND (CONT'D)

We all have voices in our heads,
but sometimes it gets hard to hear
which one is speaking the loudest
and if its message is most
important, you *understand*?

(she nods)

Let's talk more next week.

KARA

You're gonna make me wait a whole
week!? *Are you trying to drive me
crazy!*

(then)

Are you having office hours this
weekend?

ROLAND

...um, no.

KARA

--okay, never mind. It's fine.

As she starts to go:

ROLAND

Christine told me she explained our
reasons, with the whole nanny
situation, right? I hope she wasn't
too--

KARA

--firm but fair. Tell her again for
me, I'm really, really sorry, I
didn't think, I'm an idiot, I just--

ROLAND

--hey, it's "water under the
bridge" now. No skin off our
backs... No harm, no foul.

KARA

"No harm, no foul", I like that.

(then)

That reminds me-- check your e-mail
before you get home.

CUT TO:

6

EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - WATCH TOWER - NIGHT

6

Anita peers through BINOCULARS, 60 FEET up in the tree, atop
the WATCH TOWER-- at her feet, an empty COIL SPRING TRAP and
an *old, female BLOUSE*.

Perched undetected, 60 feet high in a trees behind her--
something big and hairy shifts. Into her RADIO:

ANITA

All's clear from Tower 3-- 'bout to
set the last trap. Rally at my
cabin?

(MORE)

ANITA (CONT'D)
 (no response)
 Earth to Poppy? Hello, do you copy,
 Poppy?

POPPY (O.S.)
 (over the radio)
 Some of us are trying to work,
 Anita.

TO:

7 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - MAIN GATE - NIGHT

7

A MULTI-PURPOSE CART sits-- its HEADLIGHTS blare through the darkness, illuminating the locked FRONT GATE. Atop the gate, a lanky MAN climbs over it.

PENELOPE 'POPPY' BISHOP (27) leans up onto the steering wheel. Her hair cut short, her lips cherry RED, her shirt cut low, with a nostril pierced and RED DICE earrings:

ANITA (O.S.)
 What are you doing?

She plucks the SUCKER from her mouth:

POPPY
 (into her RADIO)
 I've stumbled upon a surprise for
 you, Ms. Queen Bee. Seems a young
 man wandered into the woods, was
 tryin' to sneak into camp, without
 prior authorization--

ANITA (O.S.)
 --just tell him to go away, we're
 closed.

POPPY
 I offered that option-- then he
 said he'd talked to Burl.

ANITA (O.S.)
 What!? When?

The reporter wobbles on top-- he yelps, to the sound of
 RIPPING PANTS, in the dark:

POPPY
 Oh, shit... okay there, buddy?

THE REPORTER
 Just ripped the ass in half, I'm
 fine. Totally fine.

The reporter hurries to the cart, holding his pants together,
 as he loads in:

THE REPORTER (CONT'D)
Hey, how it's goin'--

POPPY
(turning her RADIO down)
--15 minutes then you're outta
here, okay? We're closed.

THE REPORTER
Fair enough, but you should know, I
wasn't just wandering in the woods.
Tonight is actually my first
official blog assignment for
(re. his shirt)
Bigfootsafoot.com.
(ejecting his recorder)
--the guy you mentioned, Burl-- *is*
he here? Cause he's the one who
confirmed Sir Squatch was sighted--

POPPY
--*he said who!?*

THE REPORTER
Notorious B.I.G-- F.O.O.T.

POPPY
(laughing)
--hold onto your nuts, Squirrely
boy.

She hits the gas, spinning around, spraying mud--

Suddenly, she slams the brakes-- the Reporter screams like a
little girl, as they narrowly miss:

POPPY (CONT'D)
Jesus--

LUPITA
--THANK YOU, JESUS!
(crying, in Spanish)
MY FRIEND-- SHE WAS-- SOMETHING! IT
ATE HER SKIN-- IT ATE HER! HER
SKIN...

Lupita faints. They jump out:

POPPY
What did she say--

THE REPORTER
--does her shirt say Squatche!?

CUT TO:

8 EXT. ROLAND'S HOUSE - NIGHT

8

Roland's parked in his CAR. His quaint, TWO-STORY HOUSE before him, the wolf mask disregarded in the car's floorboard.

Ro stares down to his PHONE-- reading the e-mail sent by Kara, it's PHOTOS of Kara in her KITTY MASK and not much else. In the subject line, **Meow**.

His PHONE buzzes again... a text from CHRISTINE: **U close?**

He deletes the e-mail from Kara, pushing open the DOOR...

11 INT. ROLAND'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

11

Roland pushes the door open to a dim room-- Christine types on her laptop, in her RED GOWN:

ROLAND
You... wanted to see me after class?

She stops her work, as he climbs onto the bed, kissing her. She allows him... he grabs her breasts, a little too eager:

CHRISTINE
Careful! They're tender.

ROLAND
It's your fault. You're sexy.

CHRISTINE
No, I'm pregnant, which means fat, bloated and achy, not sexy.

Roland glides his hand under her shirt, caressing her gently, but she flinches:

ROLAND
What, do I scare you now?

She peers into his eyes-- *something's up*:

ROLAND (CONT'D)
Babe, you're not fat! You're glowing.

CHRISTINE
No, I'm just-- distracted.

ROLAND
By?

CHRISTINE
I've been debating whether or not to just throw it away.

ROLAND
The baby?

She hits his arm, reaching over to an envelope and LETTER on the night stand:

CHRISTINE
This was in the mail today.
Addressed only to *Baumgarner*. No
return address. So, I was
curious...

Roland takes it, reading:

ROLAND
Dear Mr. Baumgarner, I must start
by stating, I am your BIGGEST fan!
(he reacts)
My name is Marilyn M. Bishop, you
would not recognize me, but more my
family, owners of the Merrymaker
Campgrounds-- undoubtedly made
famous by your book...

He trails off, Christine watching him closely. When finally:

ROLAND (CONT'D)
Oh my God--
(aloud)
*...I believe whatever maimed and
killed those two girls will never
return. I don't know this for
certain, but I do not, nor did I
raise my children to live in fear
of the unknown.*

CHRISTINE
Ro--

ROLAND
--my two beautiful daughters in the
picture-- the what? What picture?

CHRISTINE
Oh, yeah. They're hideous.

Christine pulls a 4X6 up from the envelope: it's Anita and Poppy, arm in arm by the lake, in LIFEGUARD BIKINI TOPS and SHORTS.

ROLAND
(he reads)
...they have endured so much over
the past fifteen years, they simply
deserve only the beauty that
Merrymaker holds.

He looks up, clearly blown away:

ROLAND (CONT'D)
Why would you ever think of
throwing this away!?

CHRISTINE
It's a really sweet, kind of
obsessive, fan letter in respect to
a book you wrote 7 years ago.

ROLAND
(offended)
Calling an invitation to a Re-
Opening of the place I made famous
isn't just a fan letter. It was her
last dying wish, for Chrissake!

CHRISTINE
Well, her last dying wish is in two
days from now.

ROLAND
Perfect. I can drive, take me 10
hours tops, snip the ribbon, and
I'm be back before you miss me.

CHRISTINE
Roland--

ROLAND
--come with me. This is a sign.
It's got my creative juices pumping
already.
(pulling her closer)
...maybe this is just what we need.
Some time in the middle of nowhere
together.
(he pops up)
I'll find someone to watch Izzy, a
ton of students always offer--

CHRISTINE
--so, are your students gonna clean
and buy the groceries too? Your
students going to put Isabella to
bed? Read her favorite story to
her? Get her dressed, make her
breakfast--

ROLAND
--hon, we can--

CHRISTINE
--we tried that, remember? If not
for your "student" Kara and her
baby-sitting under the influence
routine, maybe we'd have someone
reliable around here.
(he reacts)
I'd love to just run off from life,
from my work, from everything when
it isn't perfect... but one of us
has to be the adult. We both know
who drew that card.

She starts to practice her breathing, calming herself--
Roland synchronizes with her:

ROLAND
 Just breathe. I'm being ridiculous,
 you're absolutely right. It was
 stupid-- just breathe, babe...

As he moves closer, putting her LAPTOP away, pulling her into
 him as he pulls off the light.

CUT TO:

12 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - MESS HALL - NIGHT

12

Poppy's CART, equipped with TRANQ GUNS, NETTING, ROPES and
 TRAPS, pulls up. The gangly REPORTER (29) bounds out of the
 passenger side-- RECORDER in hand, T-SHIRT boasting his pride
 and joy, **Bigfootsafoot.com**.

Lupita's leaned against Poppy:

ANITA
 Jesus H., *who is that!?*

THE REPORTER
 I'm from Bigfootsa--

ANITA
 --not you--

POPPY
 --just a lost camper. Gonna take
 her to the Infirmary, she seems a
 little delirious.

Poppy holds out Lupita's CAMERA:

POPPY (CONT'D)
 Her belongings.

ANITA
 (taking the CAMERA)
 Any sign of--

POPPY
 --nope. Traps are all set though.

ANITA
 Okay, good job. Rally when you're
 done with her.

Poppy blows a kiss as she backs into darkness, and they're
 off. Anita turns to the reporter, holding his recorder, all
 smiles:

THE REPORTER
 Fascinating place you've got here.
 Are those the Sassafras trees from
 the book? *Which cabin ya'll keep
 the baby-eatin' inbreeds shackled up
 in?*

ANITA
 (unamused)
 Right this way.

Above the MESS HALL, covered by the thick pines, the BEAST lurks, watching. SALIVA drips from its lips, 50 yards above them--

As the drool tracks, headed straight down for the reporter's head, he glances up, stepping to follow Anita... the spit blob splattering the dirt.

13 INT. CAMPGROUNDS - MESS HALL - NIGHT

13

A LARGE WHITE BOARD; notes, blueprints all over it, a map of the grounds-- the reporter next to Anita, holding his recorder, wearing very small SHORTS, M.M.C.G. stenciled on them:

ANITA
 --we repainted and remodeled all thirteen cabins. All that's left now is to put the bodies in 'em!

THE REPORTER
Bodies? You mean, like dead bodies.

ANITA
 Yes, dead bodies-- of *bloggists* first.

THE REPORTER
Ohh, touche mademoiselle.
 (shifting)
 Okay, you fill in the blank-- first thing people think of when they hear MerryMaker is..?

ANITA
 The book, I know. The perception created of our camp based on that book is completely moronic and ridiculous. *Entertaining, but fictional.* What happened to those two young girls was a tragedy, and should be viewed and treated as such, in my opinion. If you believe that book, you must also believe animals are gonna rise outta the cemetery too?

THE REPORTER
 Do you *have* a cemetery located here?

ANITA
 We have a proud family history here... and I intend to get these grounds up and running, as my mother's mother's mother did long before me...

(MORE)

ANITA (CONT'D)
 (noticing him)
 You seem-- *disappointed*.

THE REPORTER
 I was actually hoping you'd say the
 bigfoot sighting reported on
AmigosDelSquatche.org...

ANITA
 The *what*?

THE REPORTER
 It's a circulating Monthly Squatch
 Report-- Sir Squatch, reportedly
 surfaced .67 miles from this exact
 location. You haven't seen any
 traces?

ANITA
 Unfortunately not.

THE REPORTER
 But Burl--

ANITA
 --I don't know what Burl was
 thinking, but his way of thinking
 is the reason he's no longer here.

As she steps past him:

ANITA (CONT'D)
 --so, how 'bout the quick tour on
 your way out?

14 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - ROAD - NIGHT

14

Anita and the reporter walk, the only light her FLASHLIGHT:

ANITA
 ...this is off the record?

He pockets his RECORDER, then:

ANITA (CONT'D)
 The truth is when they found those
 two girls, only my mother, brother
 and step dad, Burl, were here.

THE REPORTER
 Can I talk to mom or brother?

ANITA
 My brother Wayne turned eighteen,
 checked out that summer after it
 all happened-- I haven't talked to
 him since.

(MORE)

ANITA (CONT'D)

Our real dad split, cause he couldn't deal with my crazy, over-bearing mother, leaving her here alone to run this place. She stumbled upon the meat sack known as Burl, and married the oaf. But when she died last year, half cancer, half broken heart-- Burl was asked to leave, so... I'm sorry, I don't look like a buck-tooth, in-bred, who likes to blend babies into smoothies, but--

THE REPORTER

--NO WAY, DID HE BASE THE FRAN CHARACTER ON YOU!? THE INNOCENT DAUGHTER TURNED PSYCHOPATHIC SCALPING EXPERT.

She smiles wicked--

ANITA

You'll never know.

The BEAST waits silently, hunched low, undetected in the brush-- its dark eyes anonymously fixed on the lanky trespasser.

CUT TO:

15

INT. CAMPGROUNDS - INFIRMARY - NIGHT

15

A simple clinic-- a few tables, some beds and cabinets full of the usual medical supplies. Poppy pulls Lupita's shirt off, some DRIED BLOOD and CUTS. Lupita shakes, still in shock of what she's seen.

Poppy tenderly cares for her wounds-- Lupita reflexes:

POPPY

You're safe. Okay?

LUPITA

Not safe here.

(then)

...safe in the desert, with no monster.

Poppy eyes her, eyeing her shirt, *Amigos Del Squatche* across it, holding it up:

POPPY

You've run a long way from home...

LUPITA

I no want to go-- but I did, then on my camera, you see it, I see it! On there, this is the monster, I record it! It kills--

POPPY
 --okay, I'll get you your camera,
 but just relax for a minute, okay?
 Let me at least get you cleaned up.

Lupita shrinks, as Poppy bandages a cut, moving to another:

POPPY (CONT'D)
 ...I believe you.

LUPITA
 Insides parts-- *guts*-- they fall on
 my head--

Lupita breaks down, Poppy tries to comfort her, reaching up
 to wipe her tears. Her touch is intimate:

POPPY
 Hey, no one is gonna hurt you,
 okay? You have nothing to be afraid
 of--
 (beat)
 --if you weren't safe, I'd drive
 you out to the desert myself.

LUPITA
 You will drive me..? *Esta Noche?*

Poppy's stare lingers on her, then gives her TWO WHITE PILLS,
 and a cup of water.

POPPY
 Let's see how you feel after you
 take these...

Like a frightened animal, Lupita takes them--

BACK TO:

16 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - WOODS - NIGHT

16

Hidden within the thick trees, the BEAST paces Anita and the
 Reporter, mixing in with his surroundings:

THE REPORTER
 ...what about the camera, left with
 the two teenage girls, maimed at
 the lake? No tape was found with
 the bodies? At least, that's what
 the police reports say. That what
 you say?

ANITA
 Unfortunately our time is up.

THE REPORTER
 Ok, but one last thing! You look
 armed for World War Z-- nets, tranq
 guns, shotguns... what's out here
 got you so scared, Ranger Rambo?

As the pair approach the main gate:

ANITA
My God, you're a perfect portrait
of the world. Obsessed with death,
till it knocks on your front door.

She pulls her 9MM from her hip--

ANITA (CONT'D)
I'll make you famous, if you like?

THE REPORTER
No, no, I'm--

ANITA
--I'm sorry our camp has no man-
eating inbreeds, no bigfoots, no
nothing but real folks getting
ready for it's re-opening.

She aims her gun at the NO TRESPASSING SIGN hung on the gate:

ANITA (CONT'D)
No means no, even in the middle of
nowhere.

A low GRUMBLE as the BEAST moves among the limbs--, she
unlocks it, ushering him out... immediately locking up behind
him.

ANITA (CONT'D)
Well, *Godspeed*.

And with her light, she turns to go-- leaving him in the
pitch black, his only hope the moonlight... as she retreats,
he lingers, then reluctantly starts back to his car.

He shuffles down the road, out of site-- then pops back out:

REPORTER
I'd be doing a great disservice to
my audience if I didn't try to get
an interview with that Mexican
Girl.
(then)
*And he said, "Let there be
liiiight"!*

He pulls his PHONE from his pocket, his flashlight APP floods
out in front of him...

17

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

17

Within the trees, the BEAST follows the small GLOW made by
the reporter-- tracking in silence.

19 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - MAIN GATE - NIGHT

19

The Reporter sneaks up to the gate, gripping the metal, when a RUSTLE moves *inside the gate*. He pauses--

THE REPORTER
...Ranger Bishop?

Nothing... he stands frozen, then scoffs:

THE REPORTER (CONT'D)
Careful of your vagina on the way
over, sir.

He lifts his body up, scaling with no problem, plucks a foot in, pushing up-- then another RUSTLE. SNAP! CRACK!

He pauses, suspended on the fence. He holds out his phone for light, it's little use. He climbs up, perching atop the fence, straddling it, scoping the area. He whips out his recorder:

THE REPORTER (CONT'D)
Bigfootsafoot investigation, Blog
Log. The time is-- I don't know
what o'clock. I am at MerryMaker
Camp Grounds. I am experiencing
familiar, yet unidentifiable sounds--

--a primal HOWL starts a chain of loon calls:

THE REPORTER (CONT'D)
This might be the very moment,
tonight-- I make first, bonafide
contact with the *primordial... Sir
Squatch*. I will now attempt to
climb down off of the fence for
further investigation. Log out.

He swings a leg over, when HEAVY FOOTSTEPS approach-- causing him to pause-- it's too dark to see anything.

THE REPORTER (CONT'D)
...other Ranger Bishop, is that
you?

He tries to climb quietly, when suddenly something darts out-- whipping past him:

THE REPORTER (CONT'D)
Little Mexican girl? *Hola--*

--but before his foot can hit the ground, his LEGS are taken out below him-- he flops, banging his head on the dirt, BLOOD spurting from his mouth.

Quickly, the reporter's body is dragged off the main road-- with grunts, rustling, then a PIERCING SCREAM, the call of victory...

FADE TO:

20 INT. ROLAND'S HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT

20

Ro sits at his desk, his computer his only light. The letter to Marilyn laid in his lap. He stares up to the MERRYMAKER MURDERER POSTER, lost in thought.

Pulled up on screen, the Merrymaker Campground WEB SITE; focused on a picture of Poppy. Poppy holds a POSTER SIGN, appearing to be naked behind it, "**COME PLAY WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE!**"

Roland's broken from the moment, when the door pops open behind him-- it's Izzy, wandered out of bed. She hold her BLACK TEDDY BEAR in hand. Flipping the screen off, he pockets the letter, moving to her:

ROLAND
...what's up, little girl? You have another bad dream?

Nodding, she raises her arms for him. He grabs her and her TEDDY:

ROLAND (CONT'D)
Daddy's got you now, you're safe.
(re. the bear)
Did Mommy get you a new teddy? I like this one, he's cute...

21 INT. ROLAND'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

21

Roland stares down, chewing the end of his PEN. He stands looking at Christine, a red SLEEPING MASK over her eyes. Finally, it hits him what to write, he begins to scribble...

FADE OUT.

22 INT. ROLAND'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

22

A kick from the baby wakes Christine. She rolls over, pulling her mask off... Roland's side of the bed made, with a NOTE folded on his pillow. She opens it, reading... then tosses it back onto the pillow, all it reads is:

I moved some stuff around, everything is taken care of for you!

I love you, but I think I need this. It's about survival.

23 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

23

The flat horizon of open highway, city in the rearview... top down, hair blowing in the wind, Ro cruises. He cranks the radio, turning up the rock tune-- a cover version of PEARL JAM'S "Animal".

24 INT. CAMPGROUNDS - ANITA'S CABIN - DAY 24

Anita stares at the monitor, watching shaky playback on Lupita's camera...

FOOTAGE: NIGHT VISION-- a LARGE CLIFF SIDE eroded out of the mountain-- muttering voices overlap, when suddenly, emerging from a CREVASSE-- a LARGE, HAIRY FIGURE. The voices GASPS. Then the SCREEN cuts to SHAKY RUNNING, from the opening .

ANITA
...ugh, enough of the shaky screen.

POPPY (O.S.)
(through the radio)
Hey, think I found somethin' worth reporting, Annie.

25 EXT. FOREST - HIGHWAY - DAY 25

Roland rolls his window down, holding the phone out, trying for a signal. The radio hums on low static. Into his HEADPIECE:

ROLAND
Hey, Hon-- I assume you're enjoying your facial about now... I know-- I'm a stubborn ass, but this will be good for us. You know how I feel about my fans. And I'm outta your hair, now you can get some writing--

BEEP, BEEP, BEEP-- the call drops.

BACK TO:

28 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - MAIN GATE - DAY 28

Anita stands over the Reporter's SHOES-- Poppy behind her-- chewing her nail:

ANITA
Any other traces?

Poppy hands Anita the Reporter's KEYS and his broken iPhone:

POPPY
Those-- more big scat next to big *freakin'* footprints. It's getting closer-- more curious.

Anita follows the drag marks leading into the bushes, her eyes lift up into the trees:

POPPY (CONT'D)
Lupita told me last night guts fell out of a tree onto her head--

ANITA
 --what!? No, that's delirium,
 hallucinations, dehydration,
 malnutrition, sun exposure--

POPPY
 This has gotten way out out of
 control since he left!

ANITA
 --we don't need Burl! Do you
 understand me, Penelope!?

HONK, HONK! An old FORD CAMPER-BED TRUCK rolls up to the gate
 with a squeal-- eyeing the driver:

POPPY
 Well, I called him because we do
 need him! I need him to eliminate a
 problem from my life. He might just
 be my ticket outta town.

Poppy stares daggers, jutting her hand out for Anita's KEYS:

POPPY (CONT'D)
 ...I'm letting him in.

ANITA
 We'll discuss this later, Ms.
 Bishop.

Reluctantly, she hands the keys off, and Poppy heads forward:

Idling with a smile, BURL WOLF (60) cigarette SMOKE billows
 out his nostrils-- his salt/pepper hair is *cropped tight*. He
 looks the kind with a sordid past, horrors locked behind his
 recessed eyes.

A P.O.W. FLAG hangs in his BACK WINDOW, he's already in his
 CAMO CHEF'S APRON. He rolls down his window, passing Poppy,
 he SALUTES-- his accent southern:

BURL
 Well, well, Miss Tinker Belle. You
 look more like a fairy tale every
 time I see ya'. How's it, Muffin?

POPPY
 Spinning my wheels. Can I pop one
 of those squares from you, daddio?

BURL
 You should never smoke...

He ejects a cigarette for her, she lips it, as he goes to
 light it:

BURL (CONT'D)
 ...alone.

ANITA
 (marching over)
 Ey, Future Lung Cancer Advocates--

She snaps the cigarette from Poppy's mouth, crumpling it. He squeezes Poppy's arm with a wink--

BURL
 Nose to the ground, soldier.

Anita looks into the truck bed: TWO LAUNDRY SACKS, stuffed full:

ANITA
 What did she tell you?

BURL
 Clean up, Aisle One. I brought my whole bag of tricks with me. Little sister had me pick these up for you on the way in-- don't worry, I didn't peek.

He hands her a PHOTO ENVELOPE--

BURL (CONT'D)
 You missed me?

ANITA
 Like my period.
 (quick)
 A reporter. Said he talked *specifically* to you. *How does that happen?*

BURL
 Change the voice-mail code'f you don't want me responding to guest inquiries.

She throws the bloody shoe into his truck. Burl scoops it up:

BURL (CONT'D)
 The poor *sole*...

Burl cackles, blurting out smoke. Poppy giggles. Anita snaps:

ANITA
 --ey, any cockameme ideas you brew up in that burnt out brain, dispose of 'em *immediately* and I will consider allowing you to stay here, you copy?

BURL
 Ooooh-rah, you sizzle just like your mama did.

He exhales SMOKE out the sides of his crooked grin:

BURL (CONT'D)
Any luck with the *traps*, *Popsicle*?

POPPY
...it's too smart for the traps. It did take the blouses-- but left the trap untouched.

BURL
Sounds like it's playin' with you.

Burl grins, as he sucks down a drag:

BURL (CONT'D)
Sounds like you two need the big, bad Wolf after all.

Anita and Burl's eyes meet, a tense moment lingers--

ANITA
--should be a pot of boiling water waiting for you in the Mess hall.
Welcome to the House Made of Brick.

He salutes--

BURL
Lighten up, Piggie-- or you'll never make it out alive.

With a toot of the horn, and goes. On his bumper sticker: **GONE CRAZY-- WANNA COME ALONG?** Then, from behind:

LUPITA
Dónde diablos está mi cámara!?

Anita whips, Poppy too-- as Lupita limps up:

ANITA
I thought you took care of this..?

POPPY
This won't go without her belongings.

ANITA
(low)
It's in my cabin. Take your 4x to get the rest of her things, I'll go grab it and you can take my truck and get her out of here.

TO:

The place is dense, cramped to every corner with old knick-knacks and priced antiques-- rusted ANIMAL TRAPS hang behind Roland as he plops his WATER and JERKY onto the counter.

THE SHOP ATTENDANT is an odd looking man. He wears bottle cap glasses, a ZOMBIE SHIRT under FLANNEL and a JACKET/VEST full of incense, crystals and other mystical objects...

ROLAND
 Could you tell me if I'm going in the right direction? Guess my GPS must stands for Generic Pieca' Shit.

He chuckles, the attendant looks up.

THE ATTENDANT
 I'm sorry, did you say something?

ROLAND
 Well, what are the chances?

Roland points to the cardboard shelf behind him, "Bargain Books"-- a few copies of MERRYMAKER MURDERER the only copies left on the shelf, each \$2.99:

ROLAND (CONT'D)
 That's actually where I'm headed-- MerryMaker Campground. Do you know if it's close to here?

THE ATTENDANT
 It's closed.

ROLAND
 Yes, I know. That's actually the very reason I'm headed there--

THE ATTENDANT
 --why? You one of those freaks into having sex at murder sites? Cause that's freaky. Out of balance. You don't look like a freak, but those tend to be the freakiest freaks. Freaks who don't look like freaks, but really are... freaks.

ROLAND
 It's on full display here though, huh?
 (looking around)
 Deeply in touch with your freakiness here. My book is the reason I'm-- nevermind.
 (handing his CARD)
 How much is it?

THE ATTENDANT
 \$4.72, and we're cash only.

ROLAND
 Credit card civilization not expanded out among ye' Natives?

Pulling a SOCKET WRENCH from nelow the desk:

THE ATTENDANT

Anything else today-- maybe a tune up..?

Plucking the cash:

ROLAND

No. Can I get a receipt, please?

The attendant hands over the change, Ro grabs his things, the receipt, with a crazed look:

ROLAND (CONT'D)

*If I keep going down this road,
will it get me to the camp or not?*

The attendant nods.

THE ATTENDANT

Either way... I'd watch my back. I read the book about MerryMaker-- ain't far from the truth...

Roland turns, as he out the door:

ROLAND

Freak.

31 INT. CAMPGROUNDS - INFIRMARY - DUSK

31

Lupita spies Poppy and Anita in a heated exchange, Anita dominating the discussion. Poppy's not happy-- Anita's snap look catches Lupita at the window. A moment, then Poppy pops in:

POPPY

We're leaving...

LUPITA

Why does your sister fight? She likes to hide monsters?

POPPY

No, she's just a fighter.

LUPITA

She's the monster.

A beat.

POPPY

No... she's just a product of her environment.

LUPITA

I don't know what you say. Why you stay here? Why you not run away?

Poppy smiles, pulling out Anita's TRUCK KEYS, helping Lupita gather her things, putting on her CLOTHES--

POPPY
Cause I made a promise I didn't
want to make a long time ago...

32 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - MAIN ROAD - NIGHT

32

Anita stands at her truck, Lupita's CAMERA in hand. She removes the SIM CARD, tossing it into the brush, just as Poppy and Lupita pull up.

Poppy points Lupita to the truck, going to retrieve the camera, just as approaching LIGHTS wobble down the narrow road:

POPPY
Who is that?

ANITA
I don't know, just get in the truck
and get her out of here.

Poppy takes the KEYS and CAMERA, climbing in the truck.

INT. CAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Limbs scrape and scratch the sides, Roland's grimace growing bigger with each screech... but as the MERRYMAKER SIGN comes into view-- lit up is Anita's surprised face.

She stands at the gate, a showdown with headlights-- Poppy and Lupita idle in her TRUCK behind her. In one motion, she grabs and aims her RIFLE, stepping slowly toward the car-- Ro quickly rolls down his window:

ROLAND
Whoa, hey-- I'm unarmed, I
surrender! *Roland Baumgarner! I'm
on the good team!*

Anita turns to Poppy, waving Poppy back-- Poppy flashes her lights, Anita snaps her radio from her belt:

ANITA
(low)
Reverse it, take her back to the
Mess hall, now please.

POPPY
(over the radio)
But you just said to get her--

ANITA
--BACK TO THE MESS HALL NOW! Wait
for me there, copy?

Walking to Roland's window, lowering her weapon, as Poppy backs the truck away:

ANITA (CONT'D)
Mr. Baumgarner!?

ROLAND
 I'm sorry I didn't write or call to let you know I was on my way-- but I heard you all had a camp to re-open and *could use a famous face!?*

ANITA
 (shocked)
 You're-- *here!?* You actually came!?

ROLAND
 Well, I was in the neighborhood and thought I'd swing by... if you got room for one more?

Anita shakes his hand, staring-- Roland holds it tenderly:

ANITA
Mom's letter worked!?

ROLAND
 Hey, I tell everyone, you're nothing without your fans.

ANITA
 I mailed it a few days ago, and just thought, you know, "No way he'd ever, he'd never"--
 (getting emotional)
 I just, I can't... this is actually happening, it's unbelievable...

Roland parks, climbing out, hugging Anita tightly:

ROLAND
 (in the hug)
 I'm so sorry for your loss-- your mother seemed like a wonderful woman.
 (pulling back)
 Anything I can do for my fans, I'm there. They're always numero uno.

He takes a deep breath in--

ROLAND (CONT'D)
 This place is beautiful! Amazing!
 (he turns)
 ...no Axe-murders to report?

ANITA
 (a smile)
 Not recently.

ROLAND
 Sorry to hear that! Well, *maybe*
some baby-stew later then?
 (she smirks)
I'll follow you in?

TO:

33 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - MESS HALL - NIGHT

33

A ZIPPO with an ARMY insignia, flicks on-- Burl wipes his bloody hands on his rag, sitting on the truck bed, gazing out over the darkness that goes on forever. He sucks a drag, hacking a cough, as he lights a cigarette for Poppy...

BURL
 See no evil, hear no evil--

POPPY
 --*speak no evil*. Thanks.

Poppy sits on the truck bed, Lupita in the cab. When finally, from around the bend, comes Roland with Anita leading the way on Poppy's 4X.

Roland parks next to Poppy, who goes to greet him--

POPPY (CONT'D)
 Must be somebody important--
 (extending her hand)
 Hi, Penelope Bishop.

ROLAND
 Roland Baumgarner. Pleasure's mine.

She pulls him in close, quick--

POPPY
 --Roland Baumgarner? The famous
 writer?

ROLAND
 Ha. The one and only, I think.

POPPY
 Here-- in the flesh. My *dream* man.

ROLAND
 (taken aback)
 This really is quite the reception.
 I didn't--

ANITA (O.S.)
 --what'd I say about smoking?

She snaps the cigarette away from Poppy, stomping it out:

BURL
 ...*only for meat?*

Burl chuckles, Anita whips to him:

ANITA
*You'll respect our rules and not
 subject young and impressionable--*

BURL
 (he notices Lupita)
 --whoa-la, *Senorita!*
 (moving to her window)
 Which fence did she sneak over and
 muey importante, are there mucho
 more like eh-her comin' for dinner?

ANITA
 (to Roland)
 Excuse Burl-- he's left his manners
 on the cutting board.

BURL
 I do forget my manners sometimes.
 Old habits die hard--

He ditches his cig, and pulls his large CARVING KNIFE from
 behind his back:

BURL (CONT'D)
 Hope you like your Bambi *dead*.

Burl turns away with a limp, a hitch from a bum knee.

BURL (CONT'D)
 Sloppy Doe's inside, campers.

34 INT. CAMPGROUNDS - MESS HALL - NIGHT

34

Burl holds up a pitcher, Roland takes the last sips of his
 MOONSHINE:

BURL
 Brewed her myself, call 'er, *Bingo
 Juice*. Best Aperitif in 1,000
 miles.

ANITA
 Not only illegal, but known to numb
 the brain.

ROLAND
 Then fill me up!

BURL
Bingo.

Lupita sits in awe, at the end of the table, cast aside for
 the moment, till Poppy returns with WATER and some ADVIL. As
 she hands it to Lupita, urging her to take it:

ROLAND
 ...it's not as *creepy out here* as I thought it would be. Dark, quiet... it's kinda nice, but I don't think I could survive out here though, so exposed like this. At home, I'm roughin' if I don't *shower twice* a day.

BURL
 Kinda nice though, no showers, no food-- surviving..? Roughin' it--

ROLAND
 --I like a little roughin'.

BURL
Bingo!

Roland takes another sip, his eyes landing on Lupita, silent and somber at the end of the table:

ROLAND
 And who's Ms. Keep to Yourself and Not Say a Word, down here?

Everyone turns to Lupita, no one says anything, until:

POPPY
 She's doesn't speak good English--

ANITA
 --and unfortunately, Lucinda's not staying much longer.

LUPITA
 Me llamo is Lupita, bitch. You lie.

Anita's stung, glancing to Poppy, a look that says, "do something."

LUPITA (CONT'D)
 ...I want to leave now. Away from the monster--

Roland laughs, looking around the table, no one else is:

ROLAND
 Monster? What monst--

WHAAAM-- *slamming against the window, screaming:*

THE REPORTER (O.S.)
 HEEEEEEELLLLLP!

The whole table jumps-- he bangs wildly:

THE REPORTER (CONT'D)
 HEEEEEEEEEEEEEEY!

Everyone moves out quickly, except for Burl, who lights up without regard.

35 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - MESS HALL - NIGHT

35

The Reporter-- in BOXERS and a muddy, old SHEET he's found. His neck bruised, cut and bloodied by CLAW MARKS, MARKS up and down his legs, BITE MARKS on his arms-- Anita tries to grab him, but he's hysterical:

REPORTER
WHAT IN THE FUCKING FUCK--
(his voice cracking)
--YOU LYING FUCKFACES!?

ANITA
Okay now, calm down! It is not okay to--

THE REPORTER
--DO I LOOK OKAY!? CALL THE POLICE,
CALL THE WILDERNESS PATROL!

ROLAND
What happ--

THE REPORTER
--A VERY FUCKING LARGE BEAST-LIKE-
THING DRAGGED ME THROUGH THE GOD
DAMN WOODS TO IT'S SECRET LAIR AND
TOOK ALL MY CLOTHES!

ANITA
Wow--

THE REPORTER
--NOW GET YOUR GUNS AND NETS READY,
CAUSE SIR SQUATCH IS OUT THERE AND
HE'S PISSED OFF!

ROLAND
Sir Squatch!?

POPPY
Come on, man--
(to Roland)
Don't worry, we know this guy--

LUPITA
--I have proof on my camera... of
the Squatche! Es true.
(pointing at Anita)
She's take it.

ANITA
Oh my goodness, this is like an
episode of Tales From the Crypt!
(to Lupita)
I gave you back your camera,
Lucreta.

LUPITA
 --with no recordings? Where are the recordings go?

ROLAND
 Okay, wait! Let's everyone take a deep breathe.

He looks to the reporter:

ROLAND (CONT'D)
 Well, you can't deny something got to this kid.
 (to Anita)
 So, what is going on exactly?

ANITA
 Our friends here are both fascinated with a supposed *Bigfoot*--

REPORTER
 --SUPPOSED MY ASS! LOOK AT MY ASS!
 THE B.F. DID THIS TO ME!

He turns, revealing BLOODY CLAW MARKS down his back, bite marks too:

ROLAND
 Jesus--

ANITA
 BURL!?
 (then)
 We have an infirmary, I'll get you all cleaned up--

ROLAND
 --has anyone thought of calling the police?

POPPY
 Closest station is 85 miles. We have full legal jurisdiction here.

ANITA
 (calling off)
 Burl, we need you, please!?

ROLAND
 This seems a little bit out of your jurisdiction, Rangers.

ANITA
 Oh, please. Burl will drive them both into town, a clinic and a bus stop are 'bout 25 miles from here.
 (to the Reporter)
 You're hysterical... you could have a closed head wound, subarachnoid hemorrhaging, concussion, maybe something worse--

THE REPORTER
 --I'M HYSTERICAL CAUSE A FU--

ANITA
 --uhfufufuh, we heard you! It's
 enough--

BURL
 (from behind)
 --kiddies, kiddies, simmer down,
 cool it off... yer' mind plays
 tricks on you way out here-- bears
 look like beasts, wolf calls sound
 like virgin sacrifices. Hell, I'da
 swore I saw Fay Wray and my late
 lover Mary skinny dippin' in the
 lake last sunset...

THE REPORTER
 WHO THE FUCK IS THIS GUY!?

ANITA
 He's the reason you're here.

BURL
 (stepping to him)
 You look like you could use a smoke
 and a pancake, partner. Where'd you
 park?

Anita pulls the reporter's KEYS from her pocket, holding them
 up for Burl. He leads him away, lighting up a cig for the
 Reporter-- they disappear around the corner. Anita pivots:

ANITA
 My apologies for that. He was a
 trespasser Penelope found. Just
 trying to do our best among the
 freaks, you know? You can take it
 from someone who's lived here her
 whole life, there's nothing out
 there--

LUPITA
 --THERE IS SOMETHING IN THE WOODS!
 (to Poppy)
 You know this too!

Roland looks to Anita:

ROLAND
*Where is this infamous camera of
 hers?*

ANITA
 In my truck.

ROLAND
 And she claims it holds possible
 proof of a *Merrymaker Murderer!*?

ANITA
No, no one has said that. She's
delusional. Out of her element.

ROLAND
Now we have to watch it!

ANITA
Mr. Baumgarner, this is ridiculous.
It's over. Done with.
(quickly)
Penelope, inside with me.

Anita pulls Poppy inside. Roland studies Lupita-- after a
moment:

ROLAND
I must admit, my curiosity, it's
beyond peaked.

Lupita darts, moving to KNOCK on the door...

36

INT. MESS HALL - NIGHT

36

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK--

ANITA
A MINUTE, PLEASE!
(to Poppy)
--we agreed to this a long time
ago, Penelope. You promised me.

POPPY
We didn't agree to it with
circumstances involving a maimed
reporter, a delirious Mexican
girl... things have changed--

ANITA
--stop. What's changed? Except that
we're all systems go.

POPPY
Something is killing people, Anita!
(then)
Again! You can say you never--

ANITA
--so run away if you want, it won't
change anything except everything.

POPPY
Just remember what happens at the
end of your plan--

ANITA
--maybe someone or something will
gut me, hang me from a tree and
dance on my bones.

(MORE)

ANITA (CONT'D)
 For your sake, I hope that makes it
easier for you to abandon your
 legacy.

37 EXT. MESS HALL - NIGHT

37

THE BEAST'S P.O.V. FIFTY FEET UP IN TREE--

It watches Roland, as Poppy bounds out of the door, Anita
 behind her:

POPPY
 Mr. Baumgarner, we've set you up in
 Cabin Six, just between mine and
 Anita's Cabins.

ANITA
 And Lupita, if you can come with
 me, please--

ROLAND
 --wait, what about watching her--

ANITA
 --see for yourself if you'd like,
 but her tape is completely blank...

Anita pulls Lupita with her quick, as Pop grabs onto Roland.

38 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - ROLAND'S CABIN - NIGHT

38

Roland trails Poppy, headlights illuminating her ASS, as she
 drives her FOUR WHEELER standing. Ro parks his CAR, Poppy
 hops off her CART:

POPPY
 Door's unlocked, I'll get your
 motor runnin'.

Roland smiles, watching her disappear around back. He takes a
 deep breath, coughing... BRUUUNNGGGGG, the GENERATOR
 rumbles on, lights in CABIN SIX glow on, CABIN FIVE too, as
 well as two FLICKERING LAMPS illuminating the SHOWER STATION,
 30 yards away.

CUT TO:

39 INT. POPPY'S CABIN - NIGHT

39

Anita stands in her door-- leaving Lupita alone with camera
 in hand. The room is a BED and DRESSER, that's it:

ANITA
 You captured nothing, comprendo? I
 looked, okay? Nothing...
 (moving to the door)
 You stay put. Poppy will be over to
 drive you out when she's done.

(MORE)

ANITA (CONT'D)
 (closing the door)
 Goodbye, Snoopita...

LUPITA
 Where are you going?

MATCH TO:

ROLAND (O.S.)
 Where are you going?

40 INT. CAMPGROUNDS - ROLAND'S CABIN - NIGHT

40

Roland plops his bag on the bed-- Poppy in the doorway, lit by moonlight:

POPPY
 No hot water in the mornings. So if you don't prefer ice-cold showers, I'd wash off before bed.

She leans a TRANQ RIFLE next to the door:

ROLAND
 Is that you offering protection?

POPPY
 Only for those who might wander out into the woods alone...

ROLAND
 ...so, that's what the woodsmen and women do for fun around here, *Post Meridiem*?

POPPY
 Anita reads. Burl listens to the radio. I wait for the *Ante Meridiem*.
 (he smiles, impressed)
 I don't sleep a lot.

ROLAND
 Ironic, with a name like Poppy-- I figured you fall right to sleep.

She moves toward the door:

POPPY
 Not even opiates can help you here.
 (she smiles)
 Anita's cabin is right next door, if you need anything else--

ROLAND
 --are they like, dorm showers, individually divided or community style--

POPPY
 --everything is community here.
 It's kinda like a prison, but
 without bars.

ROLAND
 Sounds like you are *pumped* to be
 openin' back up!

POPPY
 I just work here.

ROLAND
 I'm sure you do more than that.

Her stare lingers on Roland, then:

POPPY
 Enjoy the rest of your evening...

A beat.

ROLAND
 Save me some hot water, will ya? I
 can't sleep if I get into clean
 sheets with a dirty body.

Off Pop's crooked smile--

BACK TO:

42 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - MAIN ROAD - GATE - NIGHT 42

Anita drives slow-- suddenly in her headlights, a large
 figure approaches.

She flashes her brights, as it draws closer... stepping up,
 wiping his hands, lighting his smoke, is Burl.

43 INT. CAMPGROUNDS - SHOWER STATION - NIGHT 43

The loud HUM of the generator mixes with the SHOWER HEAD
 gushing on.

Poppy stands outside the open SHOWER WELL-- six spigots, no
 doors, hanging her uniform as the area fills with STEAM. She
 bends, pulling off her panties...

44 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - MAIN ROAD - NIGHT 44

Burl lands at her window with a smile:

BURL
 Evenin'...

ANITA
 Uh, what happened to your co-pilot?

Shooting his hand down the road--

BURL

Damn shame. Didn't even get the chance to report anything-- took off faster than diarrhea out a baby's butt-- don't think you'll ever see his face around here again.

ANITA

I'm not as confident as you--

BURL

--you should be. I made him an offer he couldn't refuse.

She notices the tab of blood on his fingers, smearing on the CIGARETTE FILTER as he lights up:

ANITA

...I have a proposal for you.

45 INT. CAMPGROUNDS - ROLAND'S CABIN - NIGHT 45

Roland sits in silence, absentmindedly, he spins his RING. He checks his CELL, 10% BATTERY LEFT and NO SERVICE. He scrolls through his RECENT CALLS, finding Christine. He dials. It doesn't connect.

He tosses the phone atop his open TOILETRY BAG...

46 INT. POPPY'S CABIN - NIGHT 46

Lupita stares out the window, scared but curious:

LUPITA

(in Spanish)
That bitch isn't coming... *so go find her and tell her to get you hell outta here!*

Her eyes tick to a SHOTGUN propped by the door.

BACK TO:

47 EXT. CAMPGROUND - ROAD - NIGHT 47

ANITA

First, I wanna know something-- what draws it to the blouses? The color, texture, the scent?

BURL

Not so far along as you think, Columbo. I'm glad you called me. You need me.

ANITA
This thing is the only reason
you're here right now. You remember
that.

BURL
Impossible to forget with you
around. But it ain't a deal, till I
hear you say it... You. Need. Me.

49 INT. CAMPGROUNDS - SHOWER STATION - NIGHT 49

Steaming, hot water rains onto the arch of Poppy's back--
she's working the shampoo into her hair. Her head cocks, a
look to the door-- no one there...

50 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - ROAD - NIGHT 50

ANITA
Those are my terms. Take it or
leave it.

Burl pulls out a CIGAR:

BURL
With one addendum--

ANITA
--absolutely not.

BURL
(ignoring her)
...when I deliver my end, you grant
me full pardon, for every past
indiscretion in our past lives,
here or otherwise.
(smelling the cigar)
We'll burn them to ashes and let
the smoke carry them to heaven.

ANITA
(steely)
If you deliver.

He extends his hand, greasy, some blood maybe-- Anita looks
repulsed, she shakes it quick.

BACK TO:

51 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - ROLAND'S CABIN - NIGHT 51

Roland stands in the middle of the road-- he looks back to
Cabin Six, its desolate... then down the dark path in front
of him-- as if pulled by a force, he heads down the path...
toward the shower station...

BACK TO:

52 EXT. ANITA'S CABIN - NIGHT

52

Lupita cautiously walks in the dark, SHOTGUN aimed, camera hung around her shoulder.

FROM THE BEAST P.O.V.

Above the cabin, moving on the intertwining tree limbs, pacing Lupita, the BEAST tracks silently.

EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - SHOWER STATIONS - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Roland inches up to the door, listening for the sound of running water. He spies the path he's just come-- no one around... as he steps inside...

53 INT. CAMPGROUNDS - SHOWER STATION - NIGHT

53

SOAP washes down her thighs, as Poppy racks her face, her eyes pry open, and she catches something move behind the wall.

POPPY

I saw that!

She waits, but there's no response... until stepping out, facing away, is Roland:

ROLAND

I'm sorry, I figured you'd come and gone by now.

POPPY

Well... I've not done either yet...

She reaches behind her, turning the water back on:

ROLAND

Looks like there's plenty of hot water left, I'll come back.

POPPY

Why can't you look me in the eye and say it..?

Ro furrows:

ROLAND

...uh, it's just, I'm not used to such overt-- you could be one of my students.

POPPY

But I'm not.

ROLAND

No, of course not, I didn't--

POPPY
 You can teach me something, if
 you'd like?

She steps out of the steam-- just her thin arm covering her
 breasts, as she reaches out with the other, to his shoulder:

POPPY (CONT'D)
 No one can hear you. No one can see
 you-- but just in case...

She cranks the HOT WATER, and the steam begins to billow.

BACK TO:

54 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - ROLAND'S CABIN - NIGHT 54

THE BEAST P.O.V. --

Lupita's nearly at the showers, SHOTGUN wobbling-- as the
 BEAST descends from its perch, CRACK! Lupita freezes-- but
 all she sees is black...

TO:

55 INT. CAMPGROUNDS - SHOWER STATION - NIGHT 55

Poppy stands close to Roland, peering down:

POPPY
 What are you hiding down there?

He's still in his boxers:

ROLAND
 I--

She kisses him hard-- then:

POPPY
 --relax, it's just like going
 swimming if you have those on...

Her hands slide down his chest, onto his boxers, pushing them
 down:

ROLAND
 --wait! Oh God...

As Poppy works her magic down below-- he closes his eyes-- a
 flash of CHRISTINE, KARA:

ROLAND (CONT'D)
 We hafta stop--

Poppy stops, eye to eye, with a look-- "you don't want me?"

ROLAND (CONT'D)
--I'm... married.

POPPY
Not in this version.

As she tightens her grip...

56 OMITTED 56

57 OMITTED 57

58 OMITTED 58

59 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - SHOWER STATION - NIGHT 59

WHOOOOOOOMMMMAAAAH-- the generator muffles, the lamps dim, one barely flickering at all-- Lupita silently approaches. She ducks at the window...

WHAM! Lupita is collapsed onto.

DESCENDING FROM THE ROOF, she's grabbed, the quick sound of struggle-- a GNARL, grappling, wildly arms flail, it muffles her SCREAMS, then her neck SNAPS.

Roland climaxes in the background.

The blazing moonlight reveals Lupita's limp BODY being dragged away into the forest. The BEAST grunts-- a FLASH of it's LARGE, FURRY BODY disappearing into the dark...

A HORRIFYING, ANGUISHED HOWL pierces the natural silence.

60 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - MESS HALL - NIGHT 60

Anita and Burl freeze, heard the howl:

BURL
Close--

ANITA
--you have your orders, Wolf-man.

She flicks the nameplate on his FATIGUE shirt; WOLF.

DISSOLVE TO:

61 EXT. ROLAND'S CABIN - NIGHT 61

Roland shuffles back to his cabin, his BLUE EYES stunned, as if they might break...

Poppy dashes by on her FOUR WHEELER, squawking into her RADIO, quickly she's out of site.

INSIDE

Roland closes the door behind him, turning out the lights, curling up in the fetal position on the floor...

FLASH TO:

62 INT. ROLAND'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT 62

Christine types in bed, pausing to rub her eyes. The clock reads 11:38, She glances to Roland's empty place, the note left untouched from the morning. She eyes her phone, no missed calls.

She finds her place and begins typing again.

CHAPTER SEVEN

WHEN THE MONSTERS EAT EACH OTHER.

Her cursor moves-- "It was cold, cloudless sunrise..."

FADE TO.

63 INT. ROLAND'S CABIN - DAY 63

Roland sleeps, still fetal position, silently, until-- BAM-BAM-BAM on his DOOR. He startles, as bursting in:

POPPY
(frazzled)
Lupita in here with you!?

She rips the covers off of him.

64 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - LAKE - DAY 64

Anita squats at the end of the DOCK, eyes fixed across the lake-- a predator stalking her prey. Perched high on a limb, clear across from her, staring back-- the BEAST watches.

It climbs higher, stretching out, revealing it's towering, long frame. It hangs from a limb, bellowing out a PRIMAL SCREAM. Anita jolts--

TO:

65 EXT. ROLAND'S CABIN - DAY 65

ANITA
(over the radio)
Poppy, get over to the dock now.

Roland pulls on a shirt, emerging from his cabin:

ROLAND
What's going on--

Before he can finish, Poppy mounts her FOUR WHEELER, revving, drowning him out.

POPPY
I'm responsible for you, so come on.

66 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - TRAIL - DAY

66

As they bump and ride on the 4X, the pair sit back to back:

ROLAND
(over his shoulder)
Um-- I'm sorry if this sounds stupid but... I didn't mean for what happened last night--

POPPY
--I don't know what your talking about.

A beat.

ROLAND
I didn't think--

She jerks the wheel, swerving, trying to shut him up.

POPPY
What happens here, stays here.

ROLAND
Right. Exactly. Okay...

They turn, passing an ARROW SIGN on the side of the trail--
MARILYN BISHOP LAKE -->

67 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - LAKE - DAY

67

Roland stands, Poppy's bent down, both their faces blank.

Anita stares down, at the end of the dock-- Lupita's ripped up shorts and shirt. Anita fished out her sock, laying on the dock:

ROLAND
Is that what I think it is?

Turning on a dime--

ANITA
This is nothing, just-- a hiccup.
We get our fair share of skinny-
dippers too.

POPPY
--her shorts are *shredded*, Anita!

ANITA
Listen--

ROLAND
--I think your re-opening probably
needs to be cancelled, don't you
agree?

ANITA
Absolutely not!

POPPY
This could have been me, Anita.

ROLAND
She's right-- there is something
strange going on here. What's the
true story with the reporter kid?
What did that to him? Who did that
to him?

POPPY
And where is Burl!?

ANITA
EVERYONE JUST CALM DOWN, OKAY!?
(then)
Mr. Baumgarner-- I'll make you a
deal.
(a breath)
We won't re-open until we figure
out exactly what *is* out there.

ROLAND
So, you're confirming, something *is*
out there?

ANITA
You have nothing to be afraid of, I
can confirm that.

POPPY
We don't know what the hell we're
tracking.

ROLAND
Or what's tracking you.

ANITA
I will not, under any circumstance,
confirm it's a bigfoot. That is
pure mythos and plain stupidity.

ROLAND
But whatever it is, it's big?

POPPY
And it's killed already.

ROLAND
WHAT!?

ANITA
So says whom? Have you seen any
bodies?
(they stare)
Let's all take a minute and we'll
devise a search plan, copy?

ROLAND
Uh, not copy-- I'm a writer, not
The Grizzly Man-- I'm not going
tromping through the middle of the
woods alone--

ANITA
--you won't be alone. Roland,
you'll come with me to the gun
barn. Poppy, go get Burl. We'll
rendezvous at the Mess Hall.

ROLAND
Excuse me-- go with you to what?

Poppy climbing on her FOUR WHEELER:

POPPY
Fifteen minutes?

Holding her look, a flash of concern:

ANITA
Copy, fifteen. *Be careful.*

Anita's eyes flash to Roland, as Poppy revs the engine.

POPPY
Copy, careful.

She peels off, leaving Ro staring:

ROLAND
Something's out here--

ANITA
--there's *something* everywhere, in
one way or another. You can either
stand and fight or cower and run.

TO:

68 INT. CAMPGROUNDS - MESS HALL - KITCHEN - DAY

68

From a RADIO playing outside, SCOTT JOPLIN'S *Pineapple Rag* plays.

A bloody CARVING KNIFE sits on a mixing bowl full of pinkish water, bits of TENDONS, and MUSCLE float. Unlit cigarette dangling, Burl hollows out a BEARS PAW, in a zone, he's filed the claws to razor sharp:

BURL

I bring this life that came from
God above. Offer it to protect the
ones I love. If it's needed to take
life from me, count it most,
Lord... with courage in victory.

He strips his T-shirt off, revealing THREE SCARS, slicing across his heart. On his ARM, a faded TATTOO: *Courage, Respect, Victory*.

68A EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - WOODS - DAY

68A

Poppy barrels through thick brush on the 4x, eyes peeled-- the BEAST BLURS in the far distance, tracking her.

69 INT. CAMPGROUNDS - GUN BARN - DAY

69

The pair stand before a huge, gray RUSTIC BARN; the planks of old wood and metal are all rusted and worn--

ROLAND

This must be the honeymoon suite?

Anita pulls the double doors open, she pushes an old WAGON AXLE off of a MAT, ripping it up to find buried in the ground, a GUN LOCKER-- she opens the doors, revealing 20 DIFFERENT RIFLES, STUN GUNS, TASERS and AMMO:

ROLAND (CONT'D)

I thought you said there was nothing to be afraid of.

ANITA

With a collection of pretty maidens like this, *there isn't*.

ROLAND

Listen, I could pretend I'm half as tough as you guys, but I'm not really. I think it might be best if I just head out. Maybe I could come back when you guys get this stuff worked out--

ANITA

--baby placenta stew. Used tampons as tea bags, severed penises soaked in alcohol--

ROLAND
--you read the book.

ANITA
I'd have thought a writer would
love something like this. A little
conflict.

ROLAND
I'm all for that, but only if no
one gets hurt--

ANITA
You're not hurt, are you? I'm not
hurt. *Who's getting hurt?* Some girl
that when you drive outta here
tomorrow, you won't even remember
her name?

ROLAND
I don't-- I remember her name, it's
Lu-cerna?

Anita steps in close, handing him a SHOTGUN--

ANITA
--let's hunt together. Get your
primal juices pumpin'. You'll feel
like a *real man*, I promise.

70 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - MESS HALL - DAY 70

Poppy hops off her 4-WHEELER, walking around the back--
Burl's RADIO playing Jazz:

POPPY
Burl!?

She sees something moving in the bushes. She notices the big
FOOTPRINTS in the dirt below... CRACK! She turns, to scan the
treeline-- when, flying down from above, the BEAST collapses
onto her shoulders, hammering her as they crumble.

71 OMITTED 71

72 EXT. GUN BARN - DAY 72

ROLAND
Why are we gathering guns, again?
Cause my courage level is pretty--

ANITA
--cause unlike you, we can't run
away. We belong here... and I owe
my life to this land, and to
protecting it by all means.

ROLAND
Spoken like a true patriot of
courage.

ANITA
Courage isn't the absence of fear,
it's the action taken in face of
it.

Anita locks up the DOORS. Roland checks his GUN, awkward in
his grasp:

ANITA (CONT'D)
...I could have been like you...
(he reacts)
I wanted to be a doctor once upon a
time. And live in "your world".

ROLAND
What happened?

ANITA
Two teenage girls got murdered at
my family's campgrounds. My family
got buried in debt, *lawsuits, lies*
and rumors. A certain book didn't
really *help* the situation either.

ROLAND
Oh--

ANITA
--after my mom got sick, I
inherited the people coming up
here, looking for the *Merrymaker*
Murderer! Breaking in, vandalizing
the property-- I found more used
condoms than--

ROLAND
--but your mom? She wrote like she
was such a fan?

ANITA
Oh, she was obsessed. She'd kill to
be here right now... *literally*.

Slinging her GUNS over her shoulder, they mount up--

ROLAND
If it makes you feel any better, I
probably won't ever write anything
as successful again.

A crooked grin on her face...

73 EXT. CAMP - BROKEN CABIN - BEAST'S LAIR/CELLAR - DAY 73

A CABIN sits, its roof caved in, sporadic, BEAMS and POSTS from days of old still stand, along with it's crumbling brick CHIMNEY. To it's side, TWO STORM DOORS sit, leading to the ominous CELLAR waiting below.

Drag marks lead in, they belong to Poppy-- just as her FEET disappear into the dark, a HUGE CLAW rips the DOOR closed.

74 OMITTED 74

75 INT. CAMPGROUNDS - BEAST'S CELLAR - DAY 75

The space is dark and damp, a man-made cavern. Slivers of SUNLIGHT intrude, illuminating a SMALL CIRCLE of ROCKS surrounded by burnt wood.

Old TENT pieces are ripped and strung about-- BOTTLES sit stacked, filled with BERRIES, NUTS-- FLIES buzz all around the rotting FLESH of a hapless animal.

A beam of LIGHT shines on the pile of dirty BLOUSES and mashed down leaves making up a bed. On the bed--

Poppy lays-- a cut lip, DRIED BLOOD caked under her nose.

A large shadow passes, breaking the LIGHT BEAMS, it's nails scraping against rock-- it's sharpening them...

76 EXT. MESS HALL - DAY 76

Anita comes out the back door of the kitchen:

ANITA
That's odd.
(into her RADIO)
Poppy, come in.

ROLAND
What, they've disappeared, now,
too!
(she doesn't respond)
You think they're already out
looking for Lupita..?

Anita considers him, then:

ANITA
Yeah. Follow me.

77 EXT. ROLAND'S CABIN - DAY 77

Burl sits in Roland's CAR-- cig lit, he grips the wheel, the BEAR CLAW GLOVE on. Catching the corner of his eye, he notices something under the PASSENGER SEAT...

BURL
Well, looky what we have here...

78 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - HILLSIDE - DAY

78

Anita rumbles to a stop-- the hillside, some old, abandoned CABINS sit up in the distance--

ROLAND
You think she's up there? Why would she go up there?

ANITA
It is up there.

Roland looks up, scoping the grade-- a steep hillside, sporadically entangling vines and branches, a maze of foliage.

ROLAND
How about waiting for *it* to come down?

Anita marches to her CARGO CART, unhooking one of her SHOTGUNS, she slides her 9MM into her waist. She holds a TRANQ RIFLE out for him--

ANITA
Yeah, you wait here.

79 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - HILLSIDE - DAY

79

Roland plants his foot into the dirt-- gripping dead branches for support. Anita's in the rear-- it's a long way down:

ANITA
(calling up)
Just a little bit further!

ROLAND
This idea sucks!

ANITA
Try to stay positive! You're doing fine.

ROLAND
I'M POSITIVE THIS IDEA SUCKS!

Roland looks down-- gripping a limb, pulling himself up-- when his foot gives way-- loose DIRT starts to skid fast... he slips, sliding when a jagged ROCK punctures his SHIN--

ROLAND
OW, SHIT--

ANITA
--OH, SHIT!

Anita braces against a STUMP, readies for impact-- Roland skids straight at her, they slam into each other, both flailing off balance.

They tumble down, leaves flying. Anita recovers-- grabbing a nearby LIMB-- she manages to grab Roland, stopping him from sliding--

ANITA
I GOT YOU!

ROLAND
JESUS CHRIST!

Anita waits-- he seethes a moment, then re-starts to climb.

80 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - BROKEN CABIN (CABIN THIRTEEN) - DAY 80

Roland and Anita climb over the crest onto a flat ROCK PLATEAU-- the dilapidated CABIN just 20 yards through the BRUSH.

Ro turns out, mesmerized-- it's tree tops for miles, in every direction-- rolling nature freely grown-- the PATHS cut like scars between it... a blood curdling SCREAM rings out from the cabin ahead. Anita grips her shotgun. Ro readies his shaking gun, as they head toward the cabin:

ANITA
(whispering)
You hear that..?

ROLAND
What do you mean, "DID I HEAR THAT!?" Yeah, I fucking heard it! Was that your sister!?

ANITA
I think so.

She marches closer, Roland cowers behind her:

ROLAND
I'm not sure just rolling up and ringing the doorbell is the best idea.

ANITA
We've got guns, it--

CRACK, SNAP, CRACK-- Roland and Anita freeze.

Roland practices Lamaze breathing, stepping slowly, but loses his balance when he steps on something.

ROLAND
God--

Ro looks down into the grass, and immediately jumps, horrified, retching...

Anita scurries over, to find LUPITA'S CAMERA, and her bloody, severed HAND and HUMOROUS BONE still attached. Anita grips her RIFLE, cocked and ready--

ANITA
Come on. Come on, you're okay--
nothing you can do for her now.

ROLAND
NO WAY I'M GOING ANY DAMN FURTHER!

Anita approaches the STORM DOORS--

ANITA
This is it--

She waits till he steps over, reluctantly, when flying out of the INSIDE--

POPPY
--ANNIE, IT'S HERE--

--WHAM!

The BEAST FLIES from above, a diving tackle of Roland, sending them both tumbling, entangled with each other. Anita screams, firing a SHOT into the air.

The BEAST kicks her in the STOMACH, she goes flying into Poppy. Roland tries to stand, but the beast tackles him again, ripping at him, HOWLING BLOODY MURDER, as its nails slice Ro's face.

Ro tries desperately to kick it off, but it tears Ro's SHIRT in half, cutting into his chest. With quick slashes, it cuts Roland, springing off of him.

Anita stumbles to her feet, grabbing her discarded SHOTGUN as it sprints, diving into the ravine.

The BEAST bobs between trees, sliding, quickly descending-- Anita fires a shot, but shatters only tree bark. She steadies, catches it in her shaking SITE-SCOPE, pulls a quick trigger--

THROUGH THE SCOPE

BLOOD sprays from the BEAST'S SHOULDER-- Roland collapses, bleeding, out of breath, beat to shit. Poppy moves to comfort him, but he shrugs her off violently:

ROLAND
THAT FUCKING *THING!*
(his voice cracking)
A GOD DAMN BIGFOOT ATTACKED US! A
GODDAMN BIGFOOT ATTACKED US!

Anita grabs him, stopping the rant:

ANITA
--you're okay. We're okay.

ROLAND
 NO, I AM NOT OKAY! STOP SAYING
 THAT! NOTHING'S OKAY, OKAY!?

81 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - PATH - DAY

81

Burl stops, heard the ruckus-- he's in ARMY FATIGUES, his LARGE KNIFE slid in his BELT, his BEAR GLOVE too-- SNIPER RIFLE on his back... and he's wearing Roland's WOLF MASK. He talks into a WALKIE TALKIE:

BURL
 Go for Anita-- R.B. Tango
 Transportation has been
disemboweled-- copy?

A BLOUSE from the laundry sack in hand, he continues after getting no response, every FIFTY YARDS, a BLOUSE is draped, leading to the top of the hill.

BURL (CONT'D)
 (into his RADIO)
 Go for--

--when out of the corner of his eye, the BEAST blurs-- a hundred yards away, dodging between dense trees...

82 EXT. CAMPGROUND - WOODS - DAY

82

Roland and Anita in her CARGO CART-- CUTS bleeding on his cheek, his chest, he's a mess. Poppy hunches over in the back:

ROLAND
 YOUR CAMP IS HARBORING A WILD BEAST-
 BIGFOOT-THING THAT'S MAULING
 PEOPLE. IT NEEDS TO BE KILLED! YOU
 CAN'T HAVE PEOPLE HERE!
 (then)
 YOU'RE LUCKY I'M NOT THREATENING TO
 SUE YOUR ASS!

ANITA
 SUE US FOR WHAT!? WHAT CAN YOU TAKE
 FROM US THAT YOU ALREADY HAVEN'T!?

He reacts, souring:

ROLAND
 JUST RETURN ME TO MY CAR, SO I CAN
 GET THE HELL OUTTA HERE! I HAVE A
 WIFE AND A CHILD AND ANOTHER CHILD
 AND THE REAL WORLD TO GET BACK TO!

TO:

82A INT. ROLAND'S HOUSE - OFFICE - DUSK

82A

Christine stare at her laptop-- Izzy's BEAR lays in an empty blanket below her feet:

CHRISTINE
 (calling off)
 Izzy-bear, did you get lost?
 (no response)
 Mommy is gonna finish this last paragraph, then she's done done... well, with this chapter.

Her eyes tick to the MERRYMAKER POSTER hung above. She stops writing for a moment:

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
 Isabella?
 (no answer)
 IZZY!?

IZZY (O.S.)
 --I'm looking for my shoes and blankie, mommy!

CHRISTINE
 (peering below)
 Your blankie's in here, babe, with your--

Grabbing the bear, Christine hadn't noticed before, but suddenly, popping up on screen, an Instant Message;

KARBEAR13: you hard right now?

KARBEAR13: ...at work, I meant! ;)

KARBEAR13: R U alone or isChristine home?

Christine freezes, her face falls. As izzy pokes her head into the doorway, Christine snaps around to her:

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
 Izzy-baby, do momma a favor and go up to your room-- you wait there, like a good girl, till mommy comes and gets you.
 (Izzy hesitates, till)
 We're gonna go get frozen yogurt...

Izzy shoots out in a flash, closing the door. Chris stares, her face pale. Her fingers shake as she types:

ProfessorRoBau: all alone here..

A beat.

KARBEAR13: good! what RU up2? All work and no play makes Ro-Ro a dull booooooy :0

Christine's eyes are paralyzed, she types:

ProfessorRoBau: all work here.

KARBEAR13: about to take off my mask -- Wanna see?

ProfessorRoBau: Yes

ProfessorRoBau: Kara..

After a moment--

KARBEAR13: Okay, but only if we can play our game..?

Christine's eyes narrow:

ProfessorRoBau: what game might that be?

Flashing up on the SCREEN-- a PICTURE from the neck down: KARA in nothing but her UNDERWEAR, holding her cleavage together for the camera, HIGH HEELS, lips pursed:

KARBEAR13: ...Now You Show Me.

Christine's eyes well, stewing in the repercussions of the moment.

MATCH TO:

83

EXT. ROLAND'S CABIN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

83

Roland's BIG DOE EYES stares, he looks as if he's just been gut-punched:

ROLAND
No fucking way...

He limps his way over to his CAR-- the INTERIOR shredded, with CLAW MARKS, the mirrors cracked, and a big pile of SHIT sits on the hood, flies buzzing-- Roland turns back to Anita:

ROLAND (CONT'D)
(beside himself)
...I'm trapped in my own damn book!

Poppy steps over for a closer look:

POPPY
Do we have insurance, Anita?

ROLAND
Fuck your Smoky The Bear Insurance!
You have a serious *fucking* problem
is what you have here, *Ranger*
Bishop.
(to Anita)
(MORE)

ROLAND (CONT'D)

I told you I wanted to go, I didn't want to be brave-- now this is a crime scene, a *murder scene* and you are accessories to murder!

(sharply)

I know you say you're 'the law' out here, but this seems to have gone to levels *BEYOND YOUR JURISDICTION!*

(to his car)

...you realize a '67 Corvair is a Vintage classic! You know how much in depreciation value this just cost me!?

Anita glances over his shoulder, to Poppy:

ANITA

You like secrets, don't you Mr. Baumgarner?

ROLAND

No, what--

Poppy huffs--

ANITA

There is a secret I've been keeping from you.

He looks down, his clothes, the cuts, *his blood--*

ROLAND

Your secret's out! I mean, *I need Goddamn medical attention!*

Anita steps toward him, peculiarly close, six inches away--

ANITA

You deserve to hear the truth.

ROLAND

What!? What truth?

A WHISTLE from behind turns their attention. Burl stands on the hill, waving a blouse in the air, wearing Ro's WOLF MASK:

ROLAND (CONT'D)

Is-- why is Burl wearing my--

WHAM-- Anita jabs a NEEDLE into the side of Ro's neck, quickly injecting a PINKISH FLUID-- she holds firm, Roland recoils, speechless. His eyes flutter-- and he collapses.

Anita and Poppy step over. Anita rolls him over with her leg--

ANITA

...the truth is, we're smarter than you.

WHAM-- the beast lands on the cart with a CRASH, screaming.

WHOMP, WHOMP, WHOMP-- THREE SHOTS ring out, and the BEAST collapses across the top of the cart. Its BODY shakes, then goes limp, hanging off of the sides of the roof.

Burl comes gimping as fast as he can-- TRANQ RIFLE in hand, LAUNDRY SACK in tow, tossing off the MASK:

BURL
 (on the run)
 GET AWAY FROM 'UM! GET BACK!
 YA'LL GET AWAY!
 (reaching them)
 30 milligrams Diazepam times three
 should do him nicely...

Anita's gun is trained on the beast, but it is out cold-- THREE HEAVY DUTY TRANQ DARTS in its back, its shoulder bleeding, its nails sharpened to razor points. Burl pulls her away, wheezing:

BURL (CONT'D)
 I SAID GET BACK, DAMNIT!

Suddenly THE BEAST jolts back to life, sending Poppy diving into Anita-- it falls off the CART, woozy, stumbling...

Burl fumbles for another ROUND-- it begins to run, drunkenly-- as Anita takes aim, Burl fires:

BURL (CONT'D)
 Come here, bear.

WHOMP, WHOMP-- two TRANQ darts fly into its LEGS-- it crumples to the ground. Burl takes off after it:

BURL (CONT'D)
 Bingo, you big ol' boy!

Anita grabs Poppy, helping drag Ro to the CART:

ANITA
 Get him loaded on the cart. You
 stay over here with him, hear me?

Anita drops him, quickly making for the BEAST, gun dead aimed... Burl pulls a COIL of ROPE from his bag, throwing it at her--

BURL
 To tie up Sleepin' Beauty over
 there.

ANITA
 What about him?

BURL
 That's for me to worry about,
 right?

Anita lowers her gun, finally her first look at the beast up close. It's face covered with dark, dirty HAIR, its skin nearly BLACK from the built up dirt...

Anita inches closer, moving some hair away with the barrel-- when her face contorts-- an overwhelming realization. She shifts her SHOTGUN, point blank, at Burl:

ANITA
What the *fuck!*? This is not-- that
is not--

BURL
(poker faced)
--secret's out, Honey Bun.

ANITA
...secret?
(disgusted)
...you knew about this-- *all along?*

Poppy begins to head over:

POPPY (O.S.)
We got it, Annie!?

ANITA
Get on the cart and start it up,
we're going.

POPPY
What the hell!?

ANITA
Stay over there-- start it up,
we're going, you copy!?
(low, to Burl)
Listen you goddamn bastard-- you've
got approximately 33 minutes before
the drugs wear off to devise a new
plan of action on how you're gonna
make this all better...

Anita heads toward the cart:

BURL
Ey, I held up my end, that makes us
square--

ANITA
--*obtuse* is what this makes you.

Anita climbs in next to Poppy, clocking Ro-- she looks back to the BEAST. Her eyes tick to Burl and the BEAST:

ANITA (CONT'D)
Let's go kill a monster...

FADE TO:

OVER BLACK--

BURL (V.O.)

We all done things we ain't proud
of, Bear...

(then)

The scars are there to show us some
wounds will never heal.

84 OMITTED

84

85 INT. CAMPGROUNDS - CABIN ONE - DUSK

85

A large living area-- the ground a mix with MUD and DEAD
LEAVES blown in. Roland's limbs are tied with ROPE -- his
mouth and ankles wrapped with duct tape.

Poppy and Anita sit beside him on a twin bed, guns slung over
their laps:

POPPY

What'd you give him?

ANITA

175 CC's of Methohexital-- it's a
short acting barbiturate.

POPPY

Drug nerd.

Anita stands, moving to check the window:

ANITA

Listen, Penelope-- no matter what
happens next, there's nothing we
can't get through together. *We're
blood.*

Roland's head rises slowly, groggy... the first time he
notices his bindings, the room-- Anita raises Roland's chin
gently, eye to eye:

ANITA (CONT'D)

*Welcome To MerryMaker Campgrounds
Official Re-Opening, Professor
Roland Baumgarner.*

ANITA (CONT'D)

(sweetly)

I apologize that things haven't
gone smoother, but we've been
dealing with a *bit of an issue* the
last few months. You'd think all
hell broke loose... *but disaster
averted!*

(snapping)

So, officially, welcome!

(an eye on command)

Penelope helped me prepare a little
something in your honor-- Penelope,
if you please?

Poppy rolls a new, FLAT SCREEN TV in front of Roland, as she slides a DISC to the side panel--

ANITA (CONT'D)

Since you seem to get the credit for writing it all down, I thought you should at least see the truth.

SMASH TO:

86 OMITTED 86

87 OMITTED 87

88 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - CABIN THIRTEEN - DAY (ARCHIVED FOOTAGE) 88

A CAMCORDER records-- propped on a stump-- Two girls, VIOLET and CAITIE (13, 15) jump into frame outside CABIN THIRTEEN. A more inviting place 15 years ago, the frame TIME STAMPED: 08/03/1998.

Caitie stands before the camera:

VIOLET

--wait, you know how to erase this, right?

CAITIE

Don't worry about it, just shoot me.

(moving toward the CABIN)

So... supposedly a camp counselor who eats babies or something, lives in this cabin.

CAMERA catches a DO NOT ENTER/ OFF LIMITS SIGN:

CAITIE (CONT'D)

I've been double dared and bet five bucks I won't go inside... alone for ten minutes.

VIOLET (O.S.)

Alone. *Two dollars per minute. That's a good deal.*

CAITIE

I'll give you twenty to do it for ten minutes, you baby.

VIOLET (O.S.)

I told you my number is 100.

CAITIE

Fine. Stay here, sucker.

Caitie grabs the camera, pointing it at her CONVERSE SNEAKERS, then CAMERA finds the cabin-- she aims back at Violet, a face less than enthusiastic, she's scared:

CAITIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I thought you weren't scared of
anything?

VIOLET
You won't do it.

CAITIE
Please.

Caitie hands Violet the CAMERA and starts toward the house--

The camera shakes, zooming in and out on the front door-- a
big new, #1 on it. Glancing back before she opens it-- Caitie
grips the knob, forcing the door open--

--when a SKINNY FIGURE dashes across inside. Caitie jumps
back, they both retreat, screaming...

CAITIE (CONT'D)
Holy crap!

VIOLET
WHATWASTHAT!? Ohmygod,
whatwasthat!?

Caitie pauses, clearly the braver of the two:

CAITIE
Whatever it is, it's trapped in
there.

VIOLET
...well, we're not letting it out!

As Caitie creeps back toward the cabin:

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Hello?

CAITIE
Shh! Don't! Let's just go...

Violet stops at the FRONT DOOR-- she pushes her arm out to
Caitie-- "*stop moving!*" as she watches through the cracked
door...

CAITIE (CONT'D)
Something's in there..?
(Violet nods)
...I'm leaving, let's go--

A LOUD GRUNT comes from inside-- Violet jumps back, Caitie
too--

VIOLET
I think it's an animal. It might be
hurt or something...

As Violet pushes the door open-- she ripped into the darkness violently by a flashing by, pale YOUNG MAN.

Caitie screams, not knowing what to do, she runs to the nearby WINDOW, trying to see in--

CAITIE
VIOLET!?! ARE YOU--

--BLOOD smashes against the glass, as Violet's HEAD shatters the window pain...

Caitie screams, drops the camera at her feet, and takes off running. She gets all of ten yards, when flying out from behind the house and tackling her, comes the MAN...

As the violent screams and grunts fade to silence...

89 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - CABIN THIRTEEN - DAY 89

The camera rolls on, recording every frame...

BACK TO:

89A EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - CABIN ONE - NIGHT 89A

Burl reaches out with a blouse, most of the ROPE wrapped on the ground-- as the LARGE, HAIRY FEET step around the corner, nearing the cabin:

ANITA (V.O)
...no one was allowed up there for a reason. We *knew* never to disobey my mother. *Why were they better than the rule?*

90 INT. CAMPGROUNDS - MARILYN'S CABIN - NIGHT - (FLASHBACK) 90

Chained by ankles and neck to the wall, the YOUNG MAN cowers, whimpering in a corner-- MARILYN BISHOP (50) stands over him, hair in a tight bun, narrow eyes-- she demands respect.

She holds a THICK BRANCH in her hand, BLOOD on it-- she sits across from the MAN, trying to sink in her message:

MARILYN
Mommy doesn't want to have to do this. But when you do things wrong, you challenge Mommy. When Mommies are *challenged by their offspring...* what are we to do? What is Mommy to do, *not* clip the wings of her baby bird? Coddle and cradle you in her bosom forever?
(she hits him)
No! All that's left to do is break them down and start over!

(MORE)

MARILYN (CONT'D)

(she stops hitting)
Our divine mother provides us all
obstacles to supply us the
nutrients of *opportunity* we need
for our growth as a species. You
are my challenge!

She hits him again, violent swings, till she breaks down--
falling to her knees, grabbing his face in her hands:

MARILYN (CONT'D)

You are the fruits of a mother's
labor, laid out to rot in the
sun... *I gave you sanctuary, but
you bit your Mommy's nipple and now
it bleeds!*

(she strikes him again)
YOU WILL RISE OUT OF THESE ASHES,
AND YOUR SCARS WILL BE YOUR PROOF
YOU CAN NOT BE TAKEN DOWN BY MERE
MORTAL MEN!

She swings the branch back, ready to strike again-- but is
stopped-- his shaking arms rise, holding out a bloodied WHITE
BLOUSE in front of her-- *giving up.*

As she lowers the branch, hurrying FOOTSTEPS stop at the door--
a more youthful Burl stands in the doorway, his eyes fix on
the two BODIES of the TEENAGE CAMPERS laying lifeless, side
by side on the bed-- clothes draped, covering their privates.

Marilyn surveys the carnage:

BURL

What in God's name, Marilyn?

Marilyn stands in the corner-- something COWERED behind her,
in the shadows--

MARILYN

The parents are out on a search
now. We don't have much time.
I need you right now, baby. If I'm
to save this place, I need you
right now to be strong for me.

BURL

What the hell!?

MARILYN

This is our secret from now on,
okay? Okay?

Burl nods, trying to rationalize:

MARILYN (CONT'D)

Where are Anita and Poppy?

BURL

Anita's cabin.

MARILYN

--good. I'll go make sure they
don't move, but I need you to take
that bear you shot that's still in
the walk-in... bring me a paw--
(he's perplexed)
--you'll have to be quick.

91 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - LAKE - NIGHT 91

Burl kneels at the end of the dock-- a BEAR CLAW turned into a weapon, its nails razor sharp. He bends to the water, his reflection rippling... he fights the emotion, as he plunges the bloody CLAW-- rinsing the crimson and flesh off his hands.

Staring across the lake-- the TWO BODIES, lay just off the the WATER'S EDGE, blood seeping into the dirt, looking as if an animal shredded them...

Burl stands, tears in his eyes, he pulls the CLAW across his chest, cutting into his clothes and skin...

92 OMITTED 92

93 OMITTED 93

94 INT. CAMPGROUNDS - CABIN ONE - NIGHT 94

ANITA (O.S.)

And the rest, they say, is history.

Anita stands over Roland, his face beet red:

ANITA (CONT'D)

I didn't think a *fan letter* would
get you out here, *but* when you
rolled up, come hell or high-water,
I knew our ship had come in.

Anita steps up, pointing her RIFLE into his crotch:

ANITA (CONT'D)

Now, how much are the lives of that
cutie pie wife and that lil' bun in
her oven worth to you? What about
your little girl, Isabella?

Roland lunges violently at her, screaming behind his taped mouth, but she skips back. Roland blinks-- helpless-- when his attention shifts to Burl, backing in the door, holding his TRANQ RIFLE out for Poppy, shaking a blouse in his hand--

BURL

Take that, Pop-- then get back.

Anita grips her RIFLE:

POPPY
 You can't bring that thing in
 here!?
 (to Anita)
HE'S NOT BRINGING THAT IN HERE!?

BURL
 Signed, sealed and delivered, as
 promised.
 (then)
 Come on, bear--

ANITA
 --stand behind me, Penelope.

Anita holds her RIFLE, aimed at the door, ready. Burl holds the end of a rope, the blouse in hand. Burl steps in, pulling the ROPE CHAIN-- hooked to the other end in the straight jacket, is the beast, WAYNE BISHOP (38).

Anita's face sterns-- Poppy's drops:

POPPY
 ...that's not a bigfoot.

Wayne's DARK EYES rise, darting, scouring the room-- he's timid, but on high alert...

His hair is horribly DREAD-LOCKED, matted with leaf bits and DIRT. His face is dirty and tanned-- his beard, long and mangy... his feet are big and bare, covered with dirt and grime from a life spent in the woods...

Under the ROPES--

He wears as a cover, the SKINNED HIDE of a BLACK BEAR-- it covers his entire body, arms and legs, adding girth to his already TALL FRAME-- the skins SEWN together with leather STRAPS, interweaving up the STOMACH where the cut was made...

BURL
 That's your brother.

A beat.

POPPY
Excuse me?

ANITA
 You heard him. Your brother, *not a bigfoot.*

Anita eyes her, her look confirmation:

POPPY
That's... Wayne!? OUR WAYNE!?
 (getting emotional)
 But-- but Mom said he--

BURL
 --your mom lied to you, sweet pea.
 She had a lot of secrets.

Poppy's stunned, stepping up closer, but cautious, to her big brother. Anita trains her gun on him:

POPPY
*GET THAT GUN OFF HIM! HE'S OUR
 BROTHER!*

ANITA
 He's not the Wayne you knew, Poppy.

Wayne grunts, putting them all on edge-- he moves away, near the corner. Poppy steps slowly:

POPPY
...Wayney? It's me, Pop-tart.

He jumps back, piercing the small space with a scream. Burl steps over, moving Poppy back--

BURL
 Hey, hey, you okay. You ooh-kay,
 baby. Calm down-- no one gon'
 hurtcha--
 (Wayne calms)
 What do you say tonight's the night
 we take off our armor, you n' me
 both, Bear?
 (eye to eye)
 Can you be brave for me? Can you
 have courage?

He starts to unlatch the KNOTS in the ROPES, Anita steps up:

ANITA
 I will unload, Burl-- he's a
 killer.

BURL
*THAT'S YOUR BLOOD-- GET THE HELL
 BACK!*

Burl holds up the faded blouse-- smelling it:

BURL (CONT'D)
Look, baby, look...

Wayne is fixed on the blouse-- Burl untying the ROPES. Wayne snaps the blouse away, growling, retreating to a corner...

BURL (CONT'D)
 Let him be. The blouses remind him
 of...

Burl turns, grabbing another BLOUSE from his sack--

BURL (CONT'D)
 Look, bear... like Mama's...

FLASH TO:

BLOUSES and SHEETS flutter in the wind, swaying on CLOTHES LINES hung outside the CABIN--

95 INT. CAMPGROUNDS - CABIN ONE - DAY - (WAYNE'S POV) 95

--Marilyn cries as she CHAINS him to the wall. She's in her bra, wiping his cuts with a BLUE BLOUSE. She's gentle now.

--Wayne lies on a bed of CLOTHES, like a dog, in the abandoned space. It's dark, dank and lonely-- his hair starting to grow long, his beard too.

--the CHAIN BREAKS--

--Wayne climbs out a window, a PRIMAL SCREAM--

--a crying Marliyn rips open the STORM DOORS, no sign of him--

--higher and higher, he climbs the trees--

BACK TO:

94A INT. CABIN ONE - NIGHT 94A

Wayne sinks into a crouch, holding the blouse tenderly-- then more grumble than words:

WAYNE
Mumma...

Anita lowers her gun, her eyes welling. She manages to steel herself:

ANITA
 ...you killed those two girls,
 Wayne. And that Mexican Girl--

Wayne doesn't respond.

ANITA (CONT'D)
 And others, Wayne-- I've seen what
 you've left behind. You killed
 innocent people, Wayne!

BURL
 Who's innocent? The boy's
 handicapped--

ANITA
 He's not a boy, he's a fully grown
 man-- and to me, you're just a much
 to blame than he is, so shut it.

Wayne moves back in the corner, scratching dirt from the BLOUSE:

POPPY
He doesn't understand, Annie--

BURL
And he's never hurt you, has he?
Let him alone--

Anita steps close to Burl's ear:

ANITA
--you want to be even? This wipes
the slate clean.
(then)
He can't be here anymore. You do
it, or I will...

Burl looks to the bloody Roland. He straightens--

ANITA (CONT'D)
You want that cigar? You have your
orders.

A slow burn-- as Burl straightens his fatigues-- stoic. Burl moves, opening his arms, coaxing Wayne-- he moves from the corner. Burl reaches up to untie the BEAR SKIN SUIT.

He unravels the first few intersections, finally the HIDE falls to the floor, crumpling lifeless. Under LAYERS of old clothes, stained LONG-JOHNS, dirty and hole filled as hell-- Burl shows him to Roland, proudly:

BURL
He is what will always be great
about humanity. No matter how deep
the shit gets, the spirit is
undying.
(back to Wayne)
Goddamn National monument.

He grips Wayne's face gently, pulling him level-- eye to eye:

BURL (CONT'D)
I swore to your Momma to protect
you, till your dying breath--

Suddenly, Wayne's EYES BULGE-- re-flexing, he SCREECHES-- grabbing Burl by the throat, choking him:

BURL (CONT'D)
They ain't hauling you off in
chains... Don't fight, bear.

Wayne looks down, Burl's CARVING KNIFE plunged in his gut-- the blood oozing. Wayne's grip loosens, as he collapses to the floor. Wayne breathes heavily-- forehead to forehead:

BURL (CONT'D)
No more hurting.

Rushing him, Poppy swings the butt of her RIFLE into Burl's BACK:

POPPY
WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING!?

ANITA
JESUS!

POPPY
HE NEEDS HELP, ASSHOLE!

Burl fights off the attack, she swings, hitting him wildly, kicking him. Anita tries to wrestle the gun away as Burl's pummeled by Pop's onslaught, he swings back, grabs PILLOWS, SHEETS, anything he can, trying to block her:

POPPY (CONT'D)
WE'RE NOT *FUCKING ANIMALS!*

Finally, he turns, cold-cocking Poppy in the face-- she stumbles back, her nose bloodied, flying into Roland, sending them both flailing:

BURL
YA'LL AIN'T EVEN MY FUCKIN' KIDS!

BLAAAAAM!

Burl is blasted off his feet by a RIFLE BLAST.

The loud, thunderous strike echoes, silencing the room. Burl stumbles back, the momentum from the shot tangling him in the sheets-- he collapses.

Poppy turns to Anita-- and her SMOKING GUN, BLOOD splattered on her face. As Burl's eyes flutter closed... Anita steps over, pulling out his CIGAR, shoving into his lips, taking his ZIPPO from his pocket, lighting it for him:

ANITA
Enjoy.

Poppy bursts into tears, collapsing to the floor...

POPPY
Jesus Fuck, Annie!

Anita wipes the blood splatter off her face, re-rolling her hair tight into a bun:

ANITA
Burl and I had unfinished business
that *I just finished.*

POPPY
(from her knees)
FUCK YOU, ANITA! I'm finished! I'm
done with this shit! You and you're
crazy fucking schemes, I'm done--

Anita steps in front of her, her RIFLE aimed at Poppy's chest:

ANITA
 Try and hold it together, Penelope--
 we're almost done. Now remove the
 professor's tape, so we can get
 down to business and get Wayne
 outta here-- he stinks!

A stand off, Anita's aim doesn't flinch, till finally, Poppy marches over and rips the DUCT TAPE off Ro. Roland breathes heavily-- spitting at Poppy:

ROLAND
 YOU CRAZY BITCHES DON'T KNOW WHO
 YOU FUCKED WITH!

Anita moves the tip of the rifle between his lips:

ANITA
*...shhhhhh, I know exactly who you
 are.*

ROLAND
Fugh yew.

ANITA
 Please just be quiet and listen to
 what you're gonna need to do in
 order to leave here with most of
 your blood still *inside* your body.

Pop rises, going to work, as Anita tosses a SHEET crudely over Burl. She pulls up a chair next to him:

ANITA (CONT'D)
 I've always wanted to ask you
 something, Roland. *Face to face.*
 (he stares)
 You *never* camped here-- so our
 story, our history, the misery...
 was it *just* about the money?

ROLAND
 Something wrong with money?

ANITA
 No, we love money. Actually this
 venture we're engaged in now is
 entrepreneurial in nature.
 (leaning in)
 You can't even imagine how deep
 inside you I am.

Roland's EYES FLUTTER, woozy still from the drugs--

96 EXT. ROLAND'S HOUSE - DAY - (RO'S IMAGINATION) 96

The scene is hazy, dream-like... Roland stands staring up to his GLOWING HOUSE, wrapped in the straight-jacket:

ANITA (O.S.)
 24601-- the security code for your lovely abode-- 7, the number of times I've seen you before you drove up to our gate yesterday. *Countless*, the days I spent listening to my demented mother expound upon your piggish gluttony, how you turned, "our nightmare into your golden ticket".

97 INT. ROLAND'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY (RO'S IMAGINATION) 97

Roland steps in, the ROPES tied round him-- piles of DIRTY CLOTHES, scattered with leaves and twigs, are all over the floor.

ANITA (O.S.)
 ...and zero-- that'd be my ballpark guess for the the number of days Christine and little Izzy stick around when you return home and admit to your wife you're a coward, a liar-- and you *fucked* my sister.

98 INT. ROLAND'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY (RO'S IMAGINATION) 98

Roland steps into his bedroom-- bed made, everything tidy. Christine is atop the sheets, sleeping. On her pregnant belly rests Roland's WOLF MASK.

ANITA (O.S.)
 ...but I'd bet a tinge of *contrition* will wash over you when you finally come clean. *Finally!*

99 INT. ROLAND'S HOUSE - OFFICE - DAY (RO'S IMAGINATION) 99

Roland stands, everything black around him, except the MERRYMAKER POSTER hung above him, lit in low light.

ANITA (V.O.)
 You've been trapped for so long-- do you even know who you really are?

His eyes squint at the poster, as the WINDOW in the poster begins to enlarge, we're zooming in...

ANITA (V.O.)
 Seein' yourself for the first time
 will be tough... but...

BACK TO:

100 INT. CAMPGROUNDS - CABIN ONE - NIGHT

100

...flying in from the blood stained window, as if we've just flown inside the poster-- Roland recoils out of his thoughts, Anita next to him on the bed:

ANITA
 ...a man has to answer for his
 sins. Ask Burl. *Or my mother.*

A beat.

ROLAND
 And what kind of man am I? You
 think you know me so well?

ANITA
 Nothing but a hollow tree.

ROLAND
 ...a hollow tree isn't any man.

ANITA
 (a smirk)
 Exactly.

Poppy steps back in, finished dragging Wayne out:

POPPY
 --*what about Burl?*

Anita turns-- the SHEETS soaked RED now:

ANITA
 Leave him. Laptop and pictures,
please.

Poppy looks under the BED, pulling out of a BLACK DUFFEL. She hands the bag to Anita-- who pulls a STACK of 4x6 PHOTOS and a STUFFED BLACK BEAR-- Roland eyes it:

ANITA (CONT'D)
 There are a couple numbers of yours
 I haven't quite gotten yet--
 (holding up the bear)
 I thought this was so cute.

Roland stares, realizing the connection, *the same as Isabella's*-- Anita plops the STACK of PHOTOS onto his lap:

ANITA (CONT'D)
 Now, I realize there has to be
 incentive for both sides in every
 deal...

Roland looks down-- multiple PICTURES of Isabella asleep in
 her bed, with her STUFFED BEAR-- Anita places one on top--
 its KARA, leaned over taking a picture with Izzy, creepy.

ROLAND
 ...Kara?

POPPY
 Us backwoods folk, we's gots
 cousins ever'where-- like my aunt's
 kid, *cousin Kara*. Who thinks you're
 gross, by the way.

ANITA
 (pulling the LAPTOP over)
 Look at me, Roland...

Roland shakes with fear, rage. Anita opens the laptop:

ANITA (CONT'D)
 Shall we commence the first
 official business transaction for
 the newly re-opened Merrymaker Camp
 Grounds.

ROLAND
Transaction!?

ANITA
 652-3343-013. Recognize that
 number?
 (he does)
 It's my favorite of yours.
 But I need a little magic word to
 get to my favorite number.

She turns the computer around, showing him the web page-- a
 SWISS BANK LOG IN PAGE:

ANITA (CONT'D)
 ...what's the password, hon?

ROLAND
 The password is *blow me bitch*.

Poppy stomps over, Burl's bloody KNIFE in hand. She sticks
 the TIP right up to his neck--

POPPY
 I need this money to get the hell
 outta here, so you're gonna
 cooperate in a timely fashion, or
 I'll stick it in deep--

ROLAND
 --not just tease me with the tip?

Poppy digs the BLADE into his skin--

POPPY
You want it all, baby--

ANITA
--stop. The password to your book
residuals account, please?

Roland glances to the pictures of the sleeping Isabella.
Roland stays on her--

ANITA (CONT'D)
We'll get it one way or another.
The easy way-- or the "*I'm your
biggest fan*" MISERY way.
(then)
Don't make me have to go after the
wife, the kids and the white picket
fence, Ro-Ro.

After a moment:

ROLAND
0130isabellabubblebutt.

Poppy pulls the knife back:

POPPY
Sweet.

A beat as Anita types...

ANITA
What is this? *What the FUCK is
this!?*

POPPY
What is it!?

She turns the SCREEN to show Poppy-- **ACCOUNT BALANCE:**
\$18,733.58--

ANITA
*Is there another account!? Is this
how much you have to keep in there
as a minimum balance?*

POPPY
I thought you said hundreds of
thousands of dollars!?

ANITA
It was-- the-- shut up, Penelope.
(beginning to pace)
You wrote a best-seller? 10 million
copies sold. *Where's the money?*

ROLAND
Who do you think I am, *Steven
Fucking King?*
(MORE)

ROLAND (CONT'D)

I've written one book, from which the publisher takes a slice, the distributor his cut, agent's cut, manager cut-- fucking attorney, all *plus tax*.

ANITA

Pathetic.

ROLAND

What's pathetic is she *makes the real money*. If it wasn't for her, I'd

POPPY

--what the fuck are we gonna do Anita? 18 grand--

ANITA

--I know it's not what we planned for, but--

Eyeing Anita's COPY of MERRYMAKER MURDERER in the BAG:

POPPY

--wait... what if-- what if he wrote a new book?

A beat. Anita considers the notion, then:

ANITA

Huh.

(then)

You need another hit? Be good for your ego.

POPPY

And we've given him the perfect story-- he survived a bigfoot attack.

ANITA

Apparently the bigfoot is very popular now.

POPPY

Yeah, he writes a bigfoot book, he can stay alive and well, which in turn, allows new checks to come in, like from "donors", or something...

ANITA

Something secret, of course--

POPPY

--I'll teach you how to anonymously wire transfers between accounts; we'd never have to see him again.

Anita stares, dumbfounded, then pulls Poppy in for a hug. Finally, breaking:

ANITA
 This is turning out way better than
 I planned.
 (turning back)
 With a down-payment today, of
 course!

Sitting down, she pulls over the laptop:

ANITA (CONT'D)
 Now... Mr. Baumgarner, let me be
 the first to thank you for your
 generous but somewhat pathetic
 \$18,000 donation to the Merry-maker
 Camp Grounds Conservation and
 Memorial Fund.
 (then)
 About how long will it take you to
 whip up a first draft of this new
 book, hmm?

Roland's face falls, the light dimming in his eyes:

ROLAND
 (under his breath)
 Just shoot me.

ANITA
How long?

ROLAND
 I don't deserve to go home. To my
 wife. To my child... my good *life*--
 so *shoot me*.

ANITA
 Nah. That would be what's referred
 to as a "Bad Business Decision".

Anita bends down to catch his eyes:

ANITA (CONT'D)
 I don't know whether to laugh or
 cry at you.

Roland looks up-- dead eyes:

ANITA (CONT'D)
 You want to live?
 (he nods)
 So, we gotta deal?

ROLAND
 Do I have a choice?

ANITA
 Us or death?

A beat.

ROLAND
Three months-- *no more than 300 pages!*

ANITA
Late summer, my favorite time.
(a smile)
Unbuckle him, Sissy.

Poppy moves, unbuckling the straps to the jacket. She pulls it off him-- he drops to the floor, a pathetic heap. The girls on both sides, grab him to stand him up--

--when he suddenly swings his elbow, cold-cocking Poppy in her temple, kicking Anita in her stomach-- sending them both flying onto the bed. He's quick to grab the TRANQ RIFLE from the ground. He takes aim at them both-- rising:

ANITA (CONT'D)
...you're not a hero, buddy.

ROLAND
SHUT UP! I WILL BLOW YOUR FUCKING TITS OFF AND BURN THIS SHIT HEAP TO THE GROUND, SO HELP ME GOD!

POPPY
That's a *Tranq Rifle*, you stupid--

WHOMP, WHOMP... WHOMP, THREE air DARTS fly, plugging into Poppy's CHEST.

ROLAND
...stay for a little while longer.
I know you want to.

She staggers back, collapsing with a whimper:

ANITA
--son of a bitch!

Roland tosses the gun, whipping up Anita's SHOTGUN-- as he moves, every part of his body hurting, he angles toward the door:

ROLAND
Gimme the keys to the fucking gate!

ANITA
You're money is already gone-- I wouldn't be in such a rush to get home, if I were you.

ROLAND
IF I WERE YOU, I'D GO FUCK YOURSELF, CAUSE I'M COMING AT YOU GUNS BLAZIN'! ATTORNEYS, LAWSUITS, THE WHOLE GAMUT, BITCH!

He aims the GUN point blank, stepping close to her-- she holds her hands up:

ROLAND (CONT'D)
 By the way-- NO FUCKING DEAL! NO
 FUCKING BIGFOOT BOOK! *BIGFOOT IS SO
 PLAYED OUT!*

ANITA
 You're not thinking about the
 ripples these actions will create.

Backs toward the door--

ROLAND
 Oh, I know exactly the ripple--
 (then)
I am going to kill you.
 (she firms)
*...but before I kill you, I'm happy
 to answer your question...*

Anita's face grows dark-- Roland stands in the doorway, he
 aims the gun, shaking, manic:

ROLAND (CONT'D)
 ...you wanna know *why* I chose this
 place? It's because people in the
 real world, *don't give a shit* what
happens out here. It's why it's
 called the middle of NOWHERE!
 Whatever you think, doesn't matter
 in my world... so, the answer to
 your question is yes. Your camp,
 you and your *fucked up* family paid
 for my dream house... *NOW GIMME THE
 FUCKING KEY!*

She holds them up, tossing them, when suddenly Anita lunges
 for the SHOTGUN, but not before Roland squeezes off a ROUND--

--BLASTING her ARM, sending her flying, collapsing onto
 Poppy. Roland stares, wide eyed, his hands shaking
 uncontrollably. He drops the gun, quickly turning out the
 door--

BAM! He's clocked in the face-- *out cold.* In the doorway,
 Wayne stands, holding his WOUND. Anita's BODY twitches under
 Poppy-- as Wayne turns, hobbling out of sight.

Anita breathes deep, her eyes locked on Roland as she begins
 to crawl towards him...

100A IN FLASHES:

100A

--Anita pulls the BLOOD SOAKED BEAR CLAW from Burl--
 --The CLAW quickly slices across Roland's face, his neck--
 --Roland's BLOODY WEDDING RING spins on the floor--
 --Poppy stirs; Anita wipes SWEAT, smearing BLOOD on her face--
 --Ro's LIMP BODY is dumped into the back of Roland's CAR--

--Anita limps into the driver's seat--

--Ro's TAILLIGHTS fade down the road, behind her--

--Burl's TRUCK CAMPER follows--

101 EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - BROKEN CABIN (CABIN THIRTEEN) - NIGHT 101

Wayne grunts up the hillside-- turning back, only to catch the fading SETS of LIGHTS, fading down the winding road. His EYES stare, full of innocence-- sad EYES of a wounded animal.

As he continues his climb--

MATCH TO:

102 INT. ROLAND'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAYBREAK 102

--Christine waddles back to bed, pulling down her SLEEP MASK. She passes a window, a double takes-- a FIGURE stands on the front lawn.

103 INT. ROLAND'S HOUSE - FOYER - DAWN 103

Christine heads down the stairs, BASEBALL BAT in hand. She checks the PEEPHOLE, immediately flipping on the porch light:

CHRISTINE
OH MY GOD!

As she opens the door, Roland collapses, BATTERED and BLOODY, CLAW MARKS all over him-- his face covered in blood, soaked through his SHREDDED CLOTHES.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
JESUS, ROLAND!? WHAT HAPPENED!?

ROLAND
(barely audible)
...I'mma...

CHRISTINE
WHAT! WHAT HAPPENED!?

ROLAND
--leave me, please...

CHRISTINE
...Roland!? ROLAND!? WHO DID THIS TO YOU? TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED!

He stares up, locking on her eyes:

ROLAND
...a big-foot...

She clocks the yard, street-- no sign of anyone, anything-- as she pulls him inside.

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPERIMPOSE : SUMMER

104 INT. ROLAND'S HOUSE - OFFICE - DAY 104

The office is bare, ready for a move. The only sound, PAPERS spitting from a PRINTER connected to Christine's LAPTOP.

A KNOCK at the front door.

105 INT. ROLAND'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY 105

The door opens--

CHRISTINE

Kara?

Not the person she was hoping for:

KARA

Oh. Hi, Christine. Um... is--

CHRISTINE

--he's not here right now.

KARA

Oh... okay-- well, is he alright?
I heard he was attacked, like
mauled or--

CHRISTINE

--he's doing better now. Resigned
from the University though.

KARA

(re: the boxes)
You guys moving?
(Chris nods)
Exciting-- where to?

CHRISTINE

(a placating smile)
--did you need something, Kara?

Kara ejects a TEDDY BEAR KEY from her pocket:

KARA

I'm such an idiot, I was cleaning
out my apartment, and I found that.
Figured I should probably give it
back.

CHRISTINE
Mystery solved. Thank you.

KARA
I hope whatever happened at least
inspires some good writing. He's a
good teacher, in his own way...

CHRISTINE
I'll let him know you stopped by.

KARA
He taught me to take the work
seriously.

A beat.

CHRISTINE
Well, all work and no play makes Ro-
Ro a dull boy-- right?

The PRINTER goes silent, as the door SLAMS shut.

106 OMITTED 106

157 EXT. ROLAND'S HOUSE - BACK PORCH - DAY 157

Christine walks with the STACK of PAPERS in her arms, pulling
the sliding GLASS DOORS open, she steps up silently behind
Roland-- he's rocking their NEWBORN in his arms. She touches
his shoulder, startling him--

CHRISTINE
Did I scare you?

Roland turns, his head shaved, revealing the LARGE, JAGGED
SCARS cut down from his FOREHEAD, over his NOSE, across his
CHEEK and onto his NECK-- other SCARS disappear under his
clothing, up his ARMS:

ROLAND
...he's dead to the world.

CHRISTINE
(reaching for the baby)
Trade?

She hands him the STACK OF PAPERS, taking the baby. The TOP
PAGE is blank, the TEDDY BEAR KEY on top of it--

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
Forgive the typos.

ROLAND
(re: the key)
What's this..?

CHRISTINE
The missing house key we couldn't
account for. I told you I made
three copies--

ROLAND
--where'd you find it?

CHRISTINE
Kara had it.

ROLAND
Oh. I didn't know you gave her one.

CHRISTINE
I didn't.

ROLAND
Well-- *when did you see her?*

CHRISTINE
(breath of courage, then)
...Penguin reached out to me, and
I've agreed to become an Assistant
Editor there, with one condition:
they agreed to publish my first
attempt at a novel. That's what
that is.

ROLAND
What!? *Honey!*? Oh my God, that's
fantastic! *When--* why didn't you
tell me before!?

CHRISTINE
Cause I only recently figured out
the way to end it. Horror stories
all end the same, right? You have
to kill the monster.

ROLAND
Babe, this is huge. I can't wait to
read it. Your first big hit!

CHRISTINE
Let's not get ahead of ourselves--

ROLAND
--I know I keep saying it, but...
maybe this all was *really* a
blessing in disguise. No pain, no
gain, right!?

CHRISTINE
If you believe in that sort of
thing.

ROLAND
A horror, huh? Treading on my turf.
Tread lightly.
(thumbing nonchalant)
(MORE)

ROLAND (CONT'D)
 What did you find to write about
 that was so *horrifying*?

CHRISTINE
 ...all the things I wish I didn't
 know about you.

She turns, pulling the door open, as Roland opens the first page to DIVORCE PAPERS waiting underneath, already signed by Christine.

Next, print outs of the PHOTOS Kara sent on the I.M., selfies, clothing optional.

He pulls the papers off, revealing her COVER PAGE below:

ANIMAL AMONG US

By Christine Clay

His face falls-- Chris turns away, as he collapses back into the ROCKING CHAIR, stunned.

Maybe off in the background, a thought in his head, or somewhere in between,

"...no one knows what it's like to feel these feelings, like I do..." Dead quiet. Till, in the not too far distance-- between the TREES-- SNAP! CRACK!

Roland's eyes dart, staring out to the PROPERTY LINE, where the land meets the wild. His gaze narrows on a SHAKING LIMB... a SHADOW moving out of sight. His BIG BLUE EYES stare out-- a mind now a thousand miles away.

Hidden within the trees, staring back at him-- long SCARS runs up the back of the fleshy thigh, a SHOTGUN by her side. Anita's BIG EYES peer through the cheap WOLF MASK... a wicked smirk on her face--

--as Roland reaches for a PEN, sat on the table next to his WATER, he stares at the signature line of the divorce papers. He places them to the side, CLICKING his pen, as he opens to the first page-- we...

FADE OUT.

THE END.