

DEAD LEAVES

by

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OVER BLACK:

Before you embark on a journey
Of revenge, start by digging two graves.

- Confucius - 500 B.C.

...or several.

- Lori Baddle - 2025 A.D.

FADE IN:

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

The back of a semi-trailer. A Joe's Chicken Shack logo shines from the slightly ajar double doors. A huge man, nearly as wide, DALE (30), moves in to close it.

DALE

Huck! Ya didn't close the doors all
the way, ya dumb shit. You wanna
lose our whole load?

He slams the raggedy door, turns the latch to lock it. It barely hangs on.

INT. SEMI-TRAILER - DAY

Near pitch black. A WOMAN'S panicked breaths pierce the dark space. We get a glimpse of pale skin as she hides among the shadows. She peaks over a pallet of oil drums.

HUCK (O.S.)

Go fuck yourself, fat ass.

The trailer moves.

The woman moves to the double doors. A small crack allows her a glimpse of the moving ground below.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DUSK

The trailer and truck scuttle down the bumpy road. On the double doors, the raggedy latch is losing its battle.

As the trailer rattles over the rugged terrain, along with the woman's forceful kicks from the inside, the latch gives.

The doors swing open. The trailer comes to a screeching halt.

HUCK (O.S.)
What the fuck?

The WOMAN jumps out and runs into the adjacent --

WOODS - DUSK

WOMAN

Late-twenties, in a halter-top with the name FLOWER written in black marker. Purple panties are her only other attire. A mix of dirt and bruises cover her legs.

Her dirty, bare feet speed along the grass.

Hundreds of thin trees stretch as far as the eye can see. Remnants of the sun peek from above.

Dry leaves and loose branches are kicked along.

She looks back nervously with each step as she runs for her life.

A wolf's HOWL -- imitated by a redneck's southern drawl.

HUCK (O.S.)
You stay going west. I'll take the path. She won't get far.

HUCK (40), skinny as a rail with the face of a rat, sneaks toward a bush. He's heard something.

HUCK
You're mine now.

Behind him, a pair of MALE HANDS grab his head and twist his neck much further than nature allows. SNAP.

WOODS - DUSK - ELSEWHERE

Flower trips to the ground and twists her ankle. She drags herself behind bushes, wincing as she goes. Boots SCUFFLE closer in her direction.

DALE
Yoo...hoo! Where you at, love?

The SCUFFLING moves past her. Further and further away.

She jumps out from behind the bush and takes off, limping like a three-legged deer.

She sees a CHERRY RED CABIN ahead, but is halted as she runs into the arms of PARK RANGER FRED (60s), tall, broad build, with a ranger uniform and gray comb-over, gun on his belt.

FRED

I got you, sweetheart.

She tries to pull away and slaps at him in desperate defense. He yanks her close and ties her up in a rear-naked choke hold.

FRED

No. No. Calm down. Everything's gonna be alright now.

As easy as he could snap her skinny neck, he squeezes gently. Her strikes dissipate to love taps then go limp as she loses consciousness.

Dale jogs up. Out of breath. Near heart attack. A nervousness overtakes him when he sees Fred.

DALE

Oh, Fred...you got her. Thank God. The bitch musta' climbed in the back of our rig when--

FRED

So, you thought you was gonna get away with my property? Is that it?

Dale puts his hands up in pleading defense.

DALE

Fred, no...no...no, don't get the wrong idea, now. We would never...

FRED

Oh yeah, I got an idea.

He pulls his pistol and -- BANG -- puts a bullet in Dale's forehead with dead-eye precision.

FRED

No freebies, motherfucker.

He pulls the woman close.

FRED

I took care of em', baby. Let's go home.

He throws her over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes.

INT. STATE PENITENTIARY - VISITOR'S ROOM - NIGHT

LORI BADDLE (35) sits opposite the glass partition. Her blond hair is up in a school teacher bun. Through thin prescription glasses, her green eyes shine with laughter. A yellow sundress wraps her frame.

Across from her in an orange jumpsuit sits her father BEN BADDLE (70). Tattoos cover his arms. Skulls. Christian crosses. Battle hardened vet of the prison system.

They both talk into receivers.

His bearded gray mug sneaks out a light smile as he meets eyes with her.

That smile brightens when AARON (8), a glowing, blond-haired tyke, comes into view at Lori's side.

BEN

Wow! Young eyes! You musta' grown four inches since I last saw you, kiddo. You're a big boy now.

The boy smiles proud. Lori is up on Ben's sarcasm.

LORI

It hasn't been that long, Daddy.

BEN

What has it been? Five? Six months since your last visit? A damn eternity. The hours are like days in this shit hole.

LORI

I'm sorry. With the divorce and everything...it's just been--

BEN

(puts up a hand)
Enough a' that. Good vibes here only. I deal with enough behind these walls. I'm just happy to see your faces.

AARON

Are you still grounded, Grandpa?

BEN

Unfortunately, yes. I've been in here for a long, long time, kiddo. But just one more year to go.

AARON

Uncle Roger said you robbed banks.
Is that true? Mom said he's a liar.

BEN

(chuckles)

Your uncle Roger is a lot of
things. But a liar ain't one of
'em. Just listen here. Don't ever
steal a damn thing unless it's a
smile from a pretty lady. You got
that?

The boy nods. Lori twists in her seat nervously, clears her
throat as if preparing a daunting question.

LORI

Hey, Daddy, I was thinking maybe I
wanted to take Aaron up to the
cabin this weekend. Get away for a
while, ya know? The weather's gonna
be perfect up there and--

Ben is taken aback. His smile dissipates.

BEN

I told you I didn't want you going
up there, Lorraine. Ain't nothing
but distressing vibes and worse
memories at that damned place.

They share an uncomfortable silence.

LORI

Yeah. A couple things I've
unfortunately had plenty of
practice with over the years. I'm a
big girl now. I don't need you to
hold my hand anymore.

BEN

When I get out of here I'm gonna
fix it up and sell it. In the
meantime, you just need to stay the
hell away from there. You
understand me?

His eyes are tense. He means it. But her return glare is
unwavering.

LORI

Sorry, but no. I don't. This is
something I need to do for myself.

She's won. Her mind is made up and he knows it. He swallows hard. Her faux pas smile breaks the tension.

LORI

But, hey, we got a long drive. I have work tomorrow. He has school. We'll be back in a couple weeks though. Okay?

BEN

I'll be looking forward to it.

Lori hangs up the phone, then puts a hand to the glass. Tears well in her eyes as the painful departure rears its head once again. He presses his palm to meet hers. The boy's little hand joins.

EXT. STATE PENITENTIARY - DUSK

With the sun nearly a memory, clouds gather as rain sprinkles the asphalt.

Lori and Aaron walk hand in hand out of the exit gates and over to an old Honda in the parking lot. She carries an aura of irritation.

AARON

Grandpa said I'm a big boy. Does that mean I get to sit in the front seat now? Pleeeeease!!!

The question rattles her out of deep thought.

LORI

Huh...um...yeah, I guess. Whatever. Just put on your seat belt.

INT. LORI'S CAR - TRAVELING - NIGHT

Heavy rain douses the windshield. The wipers try to keep up.

Aaron plays a portable video game system on his lap. Lori HUMS a soft tune to soothe the dreary night.

The car hits a bump. The boy's game falls to the floor.

He unbuckles his seat belt.

LORI

Put your seat belt on, Aaron!

AARON
I dropped my game.

He goes to the floorboard and searches in the darkness blindly.

LORI
Aaron!

A red light approaches. She stops. A desolate intersection. No other cars around.

A single traffic light shines worthlessly dim from above. The boy grabs the game and climbs back up into his seat.

HEADLIGHTS bear down behind them. Aaron attempts to connect his seat belt.

The lights behind them grow closer. Brighter. An engine ROARS like a hound from hell. She looks to the rear-view mirror. GASPS.

SMASH -- A rear-end collision -- she jerks forward, her head slams against the steering wheel. No airbag deployment.

Aaron shoots forward and smashes his little face against the dashboard.

-- As shattered glass sprays the inside of the car.

A MOMENT LATER

With Lori's busted forehead resting against the steering wheel, her eyes shoot open. She's nearly blinded as if a bucket of blood has been poured down the front of her face.

Consciousness in and out, she looks around confused, then to her right.

Aaron's face is a busted, brutal mess from the impact, nearly flattened, his nose smashed into the back of his skull.

She trembles, in shock at the sight. She reaches for him, but pulls back.

TIRES SCREECH as a BRIGHT YELLOW CAR pulls away from the scene like a bat-out-of-hell.

She looks out the window with her heavily obscured vision, grabs a pen from her center console and proceeds to carve something into her palm.

She drops the pen and reaches for her lifeless son.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Redwoods sway with the slightness of a summer breeze.

A LONE FEMALE FIGURE strides among the sea of bushes.

In camo pants and black bomber, she stalks.

This is Lori. Some time has past as the brightness in her green eyes has traded for a dark and vengeful hue.

With a determined gaze, she loads a Cabela Lancer crossbow with an arrow meant for a clean death.

She takes a knee, takes aim and with the squeeze of the trigger, takes the young life of a whitetail deer 100-feet away.

LATER

Lori straps her legs to a tree branch and hits some Rocky Balboa-style sit-ups.

Sweat beads form on her forehead as she blasts a heavy bag with vicious combinations and ruthless intent.

She GROWLS like a rabid pitbull as tears mix with sweat.

One last RIGHT-HAND busts a hole in the heavy bag. Sand leaks to the ground like a shattered hourglass.

Her hair shifts and we get a clear view of the light scar on her forehead.

She lets out a SCREAM to the blue sky. A war cry. Ear rattling as it echoes through the trees. BIRDS scatter as if fleeing a predator.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROADS - DAY

A bird's eye view of seemingly infinite green. A Black 1975 Dodge Charger cruises down a two-lane highway, 15-miles-per-hour above the speed limit.

The license plate of the car reads - **WLDCAT2** -

INT. ERIC'S CHARGER - TRAVELING - DAY

ERIC WILLIAMS (24) exudes with confidence in his Versace shades and 90's Justin Timberlake curly top. A college football Letterman's jacket wraps his jock-built frame.

He taps the wheel to the rhythm of 2PAC busting through the stereo speakers.

Lori, now with brunette hair to her shoulders, sits shotgun. Homely, content, with a slight artificial smile.

She watches nature fly by at 60 miles per hour. Trees, corn fields, cattle ranches, then up into the mountains. Winding roads.

LORI

You're gonna love this cabin. I promise you.

ERIC

I better. You've been trying to get me out here for weeks.

She gives him a sweet gaze. He peeks over at her, then back to the road, grins.

ERIC

I love when you look at me like that.

LORI

Like what?

ERIC

Like I'm the answer to everything.

LORI

Maybe you are.

ERIC

I adore you so damn much.

LORI

You're not getting all sappy on me, are you?

He laughs lightly, grabs her hand, interlocks it with his own and kisses it gently.

ERIC

This time we've shared together has just been something special for me.

LORI

Me too.

ERIC
 Maybe after all this, I can
 convince you to finally move in
 with me.

Lori rolls her eyes and sighs with annoyance.

LORI
 Eric...

He sticks out his bottom lip and gives her a puppy-dog
 whimper.

LORI
 (smiles)
 We'll see.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SIDE - DAY

A PARK RANGER'S OFFICE sits on the side of the road. An
 18-wheeler is parked in the lot.

A TRUCKER exits the office, fondling with his zipper as he
 gets into his truck. A 1000-watt grin from ear to ear.

Eric's car drives by.

INT. ERIC'S CHARGER - TRAVELING - DAY

Lori looks out the back window at the office with a
 questioning glare. Eric's cell phone RINGS. He answers it.

ERIC
 (into phone)
 Hey, Will.
 (pause)
 We're good, man. Don't worry.
 Remember to feed my cat, please.
 (pause)
 Yeah, okay, I'll call you in a
 couple days. Alright. Love you,
 too, bro.

He hangs up. Lori seems displeased.

LORI
 I thought we agreed, no phones
 while we're up here.

ERIC
 Come on, now. He's just checking
 up.

Eric's phone RINGS again. He presses the "Deny Call" button and tosses it into the glove compartment.

ERIC
Better?

LORI
You should've left it.

ERIC
Doesn't matter. That signal will be nonexistent the further we get out here anyway.

Gas gauge is low. A sign shows a GAS STATION symbol 3 miles ahead.

ERIC
Need some petrol and I gotta piss.

LORI
Do what you gotta do, cowboy.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

He pulls up to the pump, gets out and heads to the station's store.

Lori watches as a LITTLE GIRL (9) tapes a photo to a telephone pole. She cradles a bundle of at least twenty more under her free arm. Lori gets out of the car.

Eric comes from the small store, tosses Lori a pack of cigarettes and heads toward the restroom.

ERIC
Give me five.

LORI
Take your time.

She walks toward the sidewalk and the little girl as she lights a cigarette.

LORI
Hey, there.

LITTLE GIRL
Hi.

She can see the photo on the pole is a MISSING PERSONS photograph. Our previous escape attempt -- Flower -- is the host.

LORI
Who is this, may I ask?

LITTLE GIRL
My mommy. No one can find her.

LORI
I'm sorry to hear that.

LITTLE GIRL
Her and daddy got in a fight and
she left the hotel we were staying
at.

LITTLE GIRL'S DAD
Let's go, honey.

The LITTLE GIRL'S DAD (45) puts the gas pump back on its
holster.

LITTLE GIRL
If you see her, will you tell her
to come home? Please?

Eric comes out of the restroom. Lori gives him a glare.

LORI
I'm on the search for something as
well. But I will...if I see her.

LITTLE GIRL
Thank you.

The girl heads to her dad's car and gets in.

LITTLE GIRL'S DAD
(to Lori)
Take my advice: You be careful out
here in this area, young lady. It's
not safe.

LORI
Thank you. But I think I can take
care of myself.

LITTLE GIRL'S DAD
I hope so. Have a good day.

Eric walks up and grabs the pump. The dad gets in his car
and drives off.

ERIC
(laughs)
Did that dude just give you the
cliche horror-movie-gas-station-
pre-destination warning?

INT. ERIC'S CHARGER - DAY

They get in the car.

ERIC
Don't worry, my damsel. Your prince
stays ready.

He puts up his fists. She smiles off his goofiness.

LORI
You better be.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Eric's car drives down a dirt road and soon comes upon the
same CHERRY WOOD CABIN from earlier in our story. Trees and
bushes trimmed.

Car stops. They step out. He's in awe.

ERIC
Damn, this is nice. You weren't
kidding.

LORI
I told ya. Sits on ten acres. Right
on the edge of Berryessa Park.

A gloominess hits Lori the closer she gets to the cabin. He
notices and grabs her hand.

ERIC
You alright?

LORI
Yeah, I'm good.

She steps forward and snatches her hand away. He's a bit
surprised yet shrugs it off.

LORI
Come on!

INT. CABIN - FRONT ROOM - DAY

They walk in. DEER HEAD trophies line the walls. Family photos and a Medal Of Honor are displayed over the fireplace.

ERIC

Your aunt really kept this place up.

LORI

We came out here, maybe, a weekend a month. Dad would do some writing, some hunting. I was almost afraid to keep it. I probably could sell it for a good price.

ERIC

You can't do that. He built this place with his bare hands, right? I'm sure he'd want you to take care of it and pass it to his grandkids.

He pulls her close.

LORI

Grandkids?

ERIC

At least two.

LORI

Let's make it three.

They kiss. Eric pulls away and continues to rummage around. Lori picks up framed photo after photo, seeing faint memories in each.

He counts the deer head trophies on the wall.

ERIC

He sure did love his hunting.

LORI

So did I.

ERIC

Some of these yours?

LORI

All of them, actually. He didn't put his up. Coming out here used to scare the hell out of me, honestly.

(MORE)

LORI (cont'd)

He kept these up to remind me that I'm the hunter and they're the hunted.

ERIC

You, the little huntress? I never would've thought. We learn something new about each other every day.

He finds a door. A heavy bolt lock secures it. He pulls.

ERIC

Why is this locked? What's down here?

Lori pulls a serious face as she picks up a black and white photo of her father in his 20's, sporting U.S. Army fatigues.

LORI

My aunt didn't have the key. But that was his private room. It stays closed.

ERIC

You're not in the least bit interested in what's down there?

LORI

I know exactly what's down there, Eric. A conglomerate of shitty memories. This whole place...it was hard enough just walking through the door. Ya know?

ERIC

Shit. I'm sorry, baby. I didn't mean to push.

LORI

I thought I never wanted to see this place again. But just walking through that door kinda gives me--

ERIC

A sense of solace? Right? Facing our past is the only way to move forward sometimes.

LORI

Exactly.

He wiggles the knob.

ERIC

I'm sure with a little work I can get it open. When you're ready to go down there, I'll be right here with you.

She smiles, cheers up.

LORI

I know. You can help me clean it up too. It's probably a haven for spider webs and inland creatures by now.

He picks up an old football from the fireplace mantle. PENN STATE is printed on the side. A big smile from Eric looks to lighten the mood.

ERIC

Penn, huh? I didn't know he played.

LORI

Yup. All-State Defensive lineman 69' and 70', I believe.

ERIC

You know I was...

LORI

'All-State 2018 and 2019.' You've told me a hundred times already.

He laughs.

ERIC

And don't forget about 2020!

He sees the framed photo of Young Ben.

ERIC

Is this him? Handsome dude. I bet he had to fight 'em off with a stick. He and I have more in common than I thought.

He caresses his own face and hair in admiration of his looks.

LORI

Dork.

ERIC

Come on. Let's see what you got.

LORI

Oh, stop it.

Football tucked under his arm, he shuffles his feet as if he's going to run through her for a touchdown. She laughs and gets in a defensive stance.

LORI

Hey, you better watch it. He showed me a few things.

He charges her. She grabs him, playfully, and they wrestle to the floor. He gets her in a headlock. The football rolls away.

ERIC

(laughs)

Now, I gotcha.

The fun romp turns to an MMA scuffle when she twists around and gets him in an armbar Jiu-Jitsu hold.

He laughs it off, tries to break free. She wraps him up even tighter. She twists. He grimaces, then cries out in pain. She releases him. He rubs his shoulder.

ERIC

Damn, you're tough. He musta shown you more than a few things.

She watches with a brooding eye, the football roll across the floor.

EXT. LAKE DIAMOND - DAY

Eric and Lori row across the crystal blue water in a small boat. He admires the surroundings. Trees galore. Sunlight glistens from atop the water.

ERIC

I can't get over how beautiful it is out here.

LORI

You've spent way too much time in the big city. The long silences of Lake Diamond have always been the most peaceful thing about this place.

ERIC

It's like, all you can hear is your own thoughts.

She crawls seductively over to him and peers into his eyes.

LORI
Can you hear my thoughts right now?

She takes off her shirt.

ERIC
What are you doing?

She takes off her shorts.

ERIC
Are you serious?

LORI
Don't I look it?

He looks around the area. Trees all around them. No one in sight.

Now only in her bra and panties, she jumps in the water.

ERIC
Lori, wait!

She floats to the top and treads.

LORI
You coming in?

He reaches down and touches the water.

ERIC
Damn, it's freezing.

LORI
Come on! Get in. I'll make it worth your while.

She takes off her panties and throws them into the boat.

ERIC
I'm not getting in that cold ass water.

Her smile melts into a darting, angry glare.

LORI
Eric, don't be such a fucking pussy.

He's taken aback at her response.

ERIC
Wow! It's like that?

She smiles again.

LORI
I'm kidding. Just get in. Please!

He looks away in shame.

ERIC
I can't swim, alright.

She giggles, then clears her throat, as she sees the embarrassment in his eyes.

LORI
You're right. We learn something new about each other every day.

INT. PARK RANGER'S OFFICE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Low light. A small light flickers above.

FOUR YOUNG WOMEN, naked, face a wall. Their bare backs and butts are sprayed with a garden hose. A MAN'S GRAVELY VOICE barks like a drill instructor.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Shower time.

In obvious discomfort, they squirm about, but the deep, commanding voice keeps them in order.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Stay the fuck still, I said.

BASEMENT - LATER

Face unseen, a MAN shaves a YOUNG WOMAN'S legs with a razor.

Another YOUNG WOMAN'S hair is brushed. Teeth are brushed. All by this man as he grooms them like pets.

The Four Young Women are shoved into 6-foot-tall dog kennel cages. Each of their own.

Bowls of plain spaghetti noodles are slid into each cage.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Eat up.

EXT. CABIN - BACKYARD - NIGHT

An AXE CHOPS as Eric hacks away at lumber. He winces and shakes his bare hands out.

INT. CABIN - FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

Lori reads a book on the couch.

ERIC

You seen my work gloves? I know I
took 'em out.

She points at the counter to a set of black Gription Gloves. He grabs them and slips them on.

ERIC

Gotta have that grip, ya know?
Protect my baby soft skin.

She giggles. He goes back to chopping.

Something's in her eyes as she reads, as if her mind is elsewhere after every few words.

She HUMS that same soft and pleasant tune she used to sing to her son.

EXT. PARK PLAYGROUND - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Aaron expels that childhood energy as he tumbles and cartwheels in the sand.

EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)**POST-CAR ACCIDENT:**

Lori pulls her son's bloody body from the car and falls to the ground as an ambulance approaches.

INT. CABIN - FRONT ROOM - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

A spider crawls across the side table next to her.

She pulls a small switchblade from her pocket and IMPALES it into the table with authority.

Eric comes in with firewood. She pulls the knife from the table, dead spider still attached, and scrapes it off into a small trash can next to the couch.

He drops the wood into a rack.

ERIC

What's that you were singing? It's pretty.

Lori snaps out of a daze.

LORI

Oh, my mom...she used to have to serenade me to sleep. She said it would keep the monsters away.

LATER

A blanket is spread out. Soft music PLAYS. Fresh flames crackle from the fireplace.

Eric sits. Lori pulls out a bottle of wine and two glasses. He gives her a disapproving smirk. She fills both glasses.

LORI

What? One drink isn't going to kill you. I didn't poison it, I promise.

ERIC

Don't do that. I told you I was done with that stuff.

LORI

You did. But you failed to explain why. No more secrets. Let's make this trip a 'coming to terms' for the both of us.

He sighs and grabs the glass. He stares it down, reluctance in his eyes.

Beat. As she chugs her glass.

ERIC

This shit's just never done any good for me.

He puts down the full glass.

ERIC

But, as you said, some doors are just better left unopened. Until we're ready, of course.

LORI
Sounds like we both have some
repairing to do.

ERIC
Well, I'm definitely on the right
track because you make me feel like
I'm ready for anything.

She dives on top of him, lovingly.

LORI
You spend so much of your breath
praising my existence, Mister
Williams. I'm afraid you might
suffocate one day.

ERIC
It'd be worth it.

He pulls out a princess cut engagement ring from his front
pocket. Her eyes widen.

ERIC
I know it hasn't been long, but I'm
ready to make this Hollywood love
story official.

LORI
Are you serious right now?

ERIC
Don't I look it?

Their lips smash together. Rough kisses. Sloppy. She rips
his clothes off. He helps her with hers.

LATER

Steamy love-making. Lori's the aggressor as she pulls him
on top of her and pulls him into her.

She pushes him to the side and climbs on top. He goes with
the tide but her rough, animalistic behavior is a bit off-
kilter for the mood.

She unleashes a sexual rage as if trying to fuck away her
own thoughts.

INT. CABIN - BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Eric is sound asleep. Lori faces him. Wide awake, she
caresses his cheek and HUMS her tune lovingly. She runs her
index finger around his eyes, his lips, just being playful.

Her tune darkens as she pulls out her switchblade and flicks it open. She runs it along his cheek, from his forehead to his lips, to his chin, to his throat.

Her hand trembles.

His life is hers for the taking.

He grumbles and turns over.

BATHROOM

Lori stares into the mirror at her reflection.

She grabs a lock of hair and proceeds to cut it with the switchblade. Lock after lock of jet black hair strands fill the sink.

She washes her hair. Black hair dye swirls down the drain.

BEDROOM - LATER

Eric awakens. Other side of the bed is empty. He looks around.

ERIC

Babe?

He hugs himself, rubs his arms. Chilly.

ERIC

Jesus! You have a window open or something?

KITCHEN

Eric walks around in search.

ERIC

Babe?

He sees the back door ajar.

ERIC

Dammit.

BEDROOM

He throws on his jeans, sneakers and a button-up.

EXT. CABIN - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Flashlight beaming, he walks the area.

ERIC

Lori? Babe, you out here?

Lori, still in her sleeping gown, digs a hole in the dirt with a shovel.

The hole is at least four feet deep. She pants heavily as she's been at it for a while. Sweat dripping. Her bare feet caked with dirt.

ERIC

What the hell are you doing?

She freezes, back still to him, now with her natural blond pixie-cut hairdo.

ERIC

Did you cut your hair?

LORI

I can't marry you, Eric.

ERIC

What?

He grabs her shoulder, turns her. With the momentum, she smacks him in the head with the shovel.

He falls back and drops the flashlight. She comes on, shovel up and ready to strike again.

ERIC

Lori, what the fuck?

He backs away, feeling in the darkness behind him.

LORI

I can't love you.

INT. CABIN - KITCHEN - NIGHT

He crawls backward along the floor.

She grabs a steak knife from the counter, rushes him and puts it to his throat, he freezes.

LORI

I can't let you live.

ERIC

Please, baby. Put down the damned knife.

She pulls out a chair with her free hand and pushes him into it, the knife still firmly against his jugular.

LORI

Hands behind the chair!

He does as she asks. She wraps his wrists together quickly and firmly with a roll of duct tape. He's not going anywhere.

She paces with the knife.

LORI

You were right. I came here to clear up my past. But the true secret to that is you. And I'm going to make you feel more pain than you could ever fucking imagine.

ERIC

Did you have a bad dream or something? I don't understand what the fuck is going on right now and I want you to stop.

LORI

Bad dream? Unfortunately not.

She pokes him in the ribs with the tip of the knife. Draws slight blood. He jerks away.

ERIC

What the fuck! Stop this!

She shakes her head and paces frantically.

ERIC

It's Eric. Your fiance. Remember? What is wrong with you?

She pulls the engagement ring from her finger and shoves it down his throat. He gags and struggles as she holds a hand over his mouth.

LORI

Swallow it! Swallow it, fucker!

He swallows. Gags. He pushes words through hacks and rough coughs.

ERIC

Stop this! Goddammit, Lori!

She goes to the sink, turns on the garbage disposal and drops the car keys down the drain. A rough GROWL as the metal is eaten.

LORI

Neither of us are going anywhere until this is over.

ERIC

Until what is over? What are you talking about?

LORI

I was alone. I was a lonely piece of shit and I laid with the devil in hopes that he would confide in me his past transgressions. But after four long months...nothing. You buried it in the back of your life, like I'm going to bury you in the back of this cabin.

INT. LORI'S CAR - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A SHADOWED FIGURE approaches the wrecked car from behind.

The figure peaks inside and runs off, jumps in the other car and peels out, front bumper dragging the ground.

Through Lori's faint gaze, she spots the license plate number of the car.

- **WLDCAT2** - is displayed on the California plate. Same as on Eric's Charger.

With the pen, she carves the letters into her palm like a prison tattoo. W...L...D....

INT. CABIN - KITCHEN - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

She looks into her palm. A faint **WLDCAT2** is carved into her skin.

LORI

I told them I didn't see a damn thing. And I promised him that I would find you.

ERIC

Him?

She shoves the knife into his crotch.

LORI

My son! He was only eight years old. You rammed us and drove off like we were fresh roadkill.

ERIC

Son? You have a kid?

LORI

No! You took him from me.

ERIC

Please, stop this. I have no fucking idea what you're talking about. Please, Lori.

She puts the knife to his eyeball.

LORI

Bullshit! I know it was you. Confess and I'll only take ONE of your baby-blues.

Eric looks to the ceiling, tears in his eyes.

ERIC

Stop this! Okay...okay. What was this...like...How long ago?

Eric ponders through his tears. He racks his brain for what the hell it is she's referring. Then, something clicks.

ERIC

Wait! Wait...Lonnie. Lonnie, you lying son-of-a-bitch!

LORI

Speak!

ERIC

Lonnie! Lonnie wrecked my damn car last year. Around April, right? He told me he hit a goddamn tree. He paid for the repairs and everything. That was the same night he--

LORI

You're still lying to me.

She puts the knife to his eyeball.

ERIC

I swear to you, Lori.

LORI

And why shouldn't I think that your coward ass wouldn't say anything to not lose an eye right now?

ERIC

I've always been straight with you since day one. We were drinking, I passed out, and he took my keys.

LORI

You let a drunk asshole take your car? That's like giving a toddler a loaded gun.

ERIC

I told you, I was out. I didn't just GIVE him anything. That's the same night he went and fucked my ex. So, you're not gonna put this all on me.

LORI

Oh, you poor baby. And yet he's still one of your best buds. You're such a forgiving soul. Truth or not, this makes you just as accountable. If you had your shit together, my boy would be alive.

ERIC

This was not me! I don't know what you want!

LORI

I want you to admit fault. This is just as much yours. He'll die, but you first.

Eric looks to the ceiling, tears in his eyes.

ERIC

Please, God, tell me this isn't happening.

LORI

Oh, it is, Eric and this is just the beginning.

She raises the knife and slams it down into his thigh. He lets out an agonizing SCREAM. She kneels down to him, face to face, and peers at him gleefully as she enjoys his suffering.

LORI

Until your last breath or mine, you
will suffer.

He reels back and smashes her in the forehead with a fierce head-butt.

She falls back and clutches her forehead. Dazed.

Eric sees his chance, smashes the chair against the wall and shatters it to pieces. He's free as Lori struggles to her feet.

Limping on one good leg, the steak knife protruding from his thigh, and his wrists still wrapped tight around his back, he shoulder smashes through the front door.

EXT. CABIN/WOODS - DAWN

As the sun rises, Eric runs, stumbles along through the trees and bushes.

Heavy, green, thick. Mountains in the far distance. The chill gets to him. He falls and scoots close to a tree.

Tears pour. He struggles, but gets his wrists under his butt and to the front of his body.

He uses the knife, still protruding from his leg, to cut the tape. Done. He pulls the knife from his leg, SQUEALS as quietly as possible. Success. He tosses the bloody knife away.

He rips off a sleeve from his shirt and wraps his thigh. Tight. Makes a tourniquet.

He uses the tree to pull himself to his feet. He grabs the bloody knife from the ground as he limps into the trees.

INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM

Lori opens the door to the basement with a key and heads down.

DAD'S BASEMENT

She flicks on the light. Lining the walls are rifles, hunting knives, machetes, bows and arrows, crossbows, just a shit load of hunting toys.

She opens a closet and rips out a coat. She pulls on some dark jeans, a belt, tucks in a knife and grabs the crossbow.

Ready for war.

EXT. WOODS - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

YOUNG LORI (7) caresses the head of a YOUNG DEER. It shows no fear to her soft touch. It feeds from her open hand.

BEN (O.S.)

That's right. Gain his trust. Look him in the eyes. Show him your sympathy.

She pushes the deer into the woods and slaps its back along the way.

Lori's father hands her a crossbow. He helps the girl aim as the deer trots slowly into the trees.

110...115...120 feet away as Lori aims.

BEN

Stay with him, Lori. Breathe. Feel the rhythm of each step he takes.

The deer's hooves touch ground, lightly trotting. Branches crackle, rocks scatter.

BEN

Deep breath through your nose.

Young Lori inhales. On target. Finger on the trigger. She presses.

EXT. WOODS - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

The silver arrow ZIPS through the air and misses Eric's head by inches. He gasps and dives to the ground, crawls, then takes off hobbling.

He climbs down a twenty-foot mountain side, struggles to make his footing on the various outcropping. The knife stumbles clumsily from his hand and to the water below.

ERIC

Shit.

He drops to the ground and treks through the lake. His fear is evident as the water gets deeper as he walks in.

A WHISTLE from Lori as she stands high atop an adjacent mountain. He looks up.

LORI
Hey, there, lover.

She aims the crossbow.

ERIC
Please, Lori. Put down the fucking
bow.

She fires. Misses.

Eric dives under the water. He tries to swim, but he's in an obvious struggle. He swallows water as he flaps his arms and legs wildly like a drowning infant.

LORI
Calm your breathing. Use your legs.
Scissor you legs, Eric.

He does as she commands to keep himself from sinking. He struggles, but it's working for him.

LORI
Now go to your back. That's it.
Wave your hands in a circular
motion. Good job.

She cheers him on. He's got it. He floats slowly across. Legs up and down. Hands waiving slowly through the water.

LORI
I can't let this lake claim your
life.

She fires again and clips his arm. The arrow bounces away. He gets to the rocks on the other side and climbs out. He spots a dark cave and runs in.

INT. CAVE - DAY

He searches through the darkness and hides behind a boulder.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Lori reaches the bottom of the mountain, swims across and stands at the cave's entrance.

INT. CAVE - DAY

She looks inside. Pitch black.

LORI
I know you're in here, dummy.
There's only one way in and out.

Lori steps in and turns on a flashlight attached to the crossbow.

She whips her aim from left to right.

Eric is tense in the shadows. White knuckles over his mouth. She inches closer to his location.

He climbs a tall rock. Now on a higher plain, he dives on top of her and knocks her to the ground, the crossbow falls several feet away.

They tussle in a small creek of water. He holds her down.

ERIC

Get a hold of yourself, goddammit.
Stop this.

She throws him off and jumps on his back. She dunks his head in the water. He struggles, flails his arms as she tries to drown him.

He grabs her wrist and yanks her off. He hobbles away. She grabs her crossbow and FIRES. Misses again.

He hobbles out of the cave. She collects herself and heads after him.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Eric goes off the path and into the trees.

He looks back, sees Lori's head. He changes direction. Seconds later. ZIP!

As his foot is snagged and he's now hanging upside down from a tree branch. A tree-spring-noose-trap has him dangling like a carrot.

He reaches up, tries to pull the rope from his leg. He can't reach it.

Lori walks up laughing as she looks at the trap quizzically. Not her work.

LORI

Nice design.

ERIC

Cut me down.

LORI

As fate would have it, you're
trapped like the animal you are.

She rips a punch to his gut. Again and again.

He dangles like a punching bag as she delivers vicious punches and kicks.

ERIC
Please, stop.

As he coughs up blood.

Relentless, she comes in for another kick. He catches her foot and pulls her to the ground. He holds on.

LORI
Let go of me!

As she struggles to pull away, the rope attached to the branch stretches, then snaps. He slams to the ground.

He unties the rope from his leg. Lori gets to her feet and kicks him in the back of the head.

He rolls over and struggles to his feet. A left-hook. A right-cross. Uppercut. He takes the shots with no retaliation.

LORI
Fight back, you bastard.

He spits blood.

ERIC
I'm not going to fight you.

Lori delivers a soccer blast to his balls. He drops to his knees.

A roundhouse kick sends him rolling head over foot down a hill.

She walks to the edge, looks down, but he's nowhere in sight.

Through the trees, she spots her target several feet away, and grins with the joy of the challenge.

Eric sees the dirt road ahead and darts for it.

A SEMI-TRUCK comes down the road. If he can move fast enough, he can meet the truck.

He limps along as fast as he can, stumbles to the ground a couple times, yet rises, determined.

INT. SEMI-TRUCK - TRAVELING - DAY

HUMBERT JOY (60), grizzled and grayed, in a hunting cap, drives with a cheek full of chewing tobacco. He spits black goo into a handy coffee cup.

Eric darts out in the middle of the road and waves his hands in the air.

Humbert slams on the brakes. Truck stops on a dime.

Eric rushes over to the passenger side and opens the door. Out of breath, he can barely get out the words.

ERIC

Please! Please, you have to help me!

HUMBERT

Get the hell away from my truck.

He starts to pull away, but Eric hangs on, still pleading as he limps along, his feet dragging.

ERIC

Please, you gotta let me in! You gotta let me in! She's coming.

Eric tries his best to pull himself up into the cab.

Humbert hits the brakes again, reaches in a backpack and flips a six-shot revolver to Eric's nose.

HUMBERT

Now, I ain't gotta do nothing but put a bullet in ya noodle if you don't get off my goddamn door. Now, beat it.

Eric sees the backpack on the floorboard. A rifle barrel sticks out from the top. He snatches it, slams the door, and takes off back into the woods.

Humbert jumps out of the truck and falls to the dirt. He struggles to get his old bones off the ground.

HUMBERT

Hey, you fuck!

Eric disappears into the trees.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

Eric sits against a redwood and rummages through the backpack. The rifle. It's empty. A box of ammo, but not for the rifle. Fuck. A T-shirt. Some prescription pills. A sandwich.

A small purple pair of woman's panties gets an odd glare.

An ARROW whizzes past his head.

Lori beams down the sight of her crossbow from 100-feet away. Eric crawls around to the opposite side of the tree.

LORI

You are one slippery little fucker.
Ain't ya? I'm done toying with you.
Stick that pretty little head out
for me and let's end this love
story.

ERIC

You lured me here to bury me.
Pre-fucking-meditated murder.
They'll lock you up for life. Is
that what you want? People know
we're up here.

Humbert creeps along, in hearing distance of the conversation. He spots Lori several feet away.

HUMBERT

(to himself)
Well, hello, gorgeous.

WOODS - LORI

LORI

I'm perfectly content with going
down, so don't threaten me with the
outcome. And you'll be dead long
before anyone finds you here. Your
brother, your sister, your friends,
when they do come looking--

ERIC

You're fucking crazy.

She fires an ARROW. It hits him in the shoulder and sticks him to the tree. He screams in pain.

LORI

They're all going in that hole
right on top of you.

A rage engulfs Eric as he rips the arrow from his shoulder.

He grabs a softball-sized dirt clump and tosses it in her direction. He grabs another, flings it blindly. Rage-filled. Grunting. He grabs another.

She laughs as his wild aim is ridiculously off. The clumps fall several feet away from her.

WOODS - HUMBERT

Humbert creeps up behind Lori. A twig SNAPS and alerts her to his presence. She turns. He's gone.

WOODS - ERIC

Eric grabs a football-sized clump and takes aim, calms his breathing. His target kneels just behind a boulder some 40 yards away, the top of her head only visible.

WOODS - LORI

She loads her bow, leery of a nearby presence. Turning back toward Eric's direction, she looks up.

The football-sized dirt clump explodes onto her forehead knocking her out cold.

Eric comes up on her unconscious body.

He turns her over. Blood leaks from the old scar on her forehead.

He feels for a pulse. Good. He throws her over his shoulder.

ERIC

All-State, you crazy bitch.

WOODS - HUMBERT

Humbert watches from the bushes as Eric carries Lori through the trees.

HUMBERT

(to himself)

What the hell you up to, boy?

He follows from the distance, watches Eric the entire time. The cabin moves into view. Eric takes her inside and closes the door.

EXT. PARK RANGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Humbert drives up in his truck and jumps out. Fred stands out front and chats with a TRUCKER.

Humbert walks up. They speak. Inaudible. He points down the road.

INT. CABIN - KITCHEN - DAY

Eric cleans the knife wound, wraps it tight with gauze and pulls on a clean pair of pants.

He pours peroxide on the arrow wound in his shoulder and puts a bandage over it.

He looks to the basement door. A key hangs from the unlatched lock.

DAD'S BASEMENT

As he walks down the steps, he flicks on the light.

The array of weaponry throws him for a whirl.

ERIC

Holy shit!

He pulls a machete from the wall hook. Swings it a couple times. He likes the feel.

A desk in the corner catches his eye. A laptop is open. He sits in the desk chair. The background screen-saver is a photo of him and a BRUNETTE WOMAN (20s).

ON MONITOR SCREEN:

He selects a file labeled PHOTOS -- opens it.

Numerous photos, taken from a distance, of himself, his friends, LONNIE and JACK, even his teenage brother, WILL, walking home from school with his backpack strapped tight.

ERIC

Will, Jack, Lonnie? What the fuck?

He clicks on another photo. Pops up. Himself and a brunette JESSICA (20s), seated inside a crowded restaurant, smiles on their faces.

ERIC

Jessica?

A closer look reveals that the woman in the photo has a striking resemblance to Lori's previous hairstyle and make-up. She knows what he likes.

INT. CABIN - BEDROOM - DAY

Lori lies in the bed, still unconscious, her wrists tied to the headboard, her legs tied to the leg posts.

He watches the unconscious Lori. He struggles with his thoughts and emotions as he looks to the floor.

ERIC

You've been watching us? My ex?
You've been playing me this whole
fucking time. I'm sorry about your
son, Lori. But I can't just let you
go and attack my family.

Eric walks out. Lori's eyes retract as she's been faking unconsciousness for some time now. Her eyes burn with a vengeful rage as she yanks at her straps.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Eric, with a towel wrapped around his fist, punches and shatters the passenger-side window of his car.

He reaches in the glove box and retrieves his cell phone. He opens the screen. Life bar is at 3%.

He searches for Lonnie's number in the phone and presses CALL. It RINGS.

Lonnie picks up on the other end. He speaks with a grogginess. Surely awoken from a slumber.

LONNIE (V.O.)

Eric, what the hell? It's six in
the morning.

ERIC

(into phone)
Lonnie, I need you to be very clear
with the answer to this question.

LONNIE (V.O.)

I thought you were on vacation?

ERIC

(into phone)
Listen to me, goddammit. Shut the
fuck up and listen for a second.
Last year, the accident. My car.

(MORE)

ERIC (cont'd)
Did you or did you not rear-end
someone?

LONNIE (V.O.)
Dude, this shit again? It was a
damn tree. I told you. I got your
shit fixed. Even slapped that nice
midnight black paint job on it
myself. Good as new. What's the
problem?

ERIC
(into phone)
Lonnie, the problem is I think
you're a fucking liar. Did you or
did you not?

Eric waits impatiently for a response.

LONNIE (V.O.)
Now's not the time for this, man.

ERIC
(into phone)
LONNIE!

STATIC. Call starts to break.

LONNIE (V.O.)
Okay, man...I know I'm the scum of
the Earth for...was raining...
couldn't see shit...parked car...

ERIC
(into phone)
Yeah, a parked car at a fucking
stop light. And you RAN! It was
Lori. She had a son. He died, man.
Now, she's trying to kill me over
this shit. Fucking attacked me,
stabbed me with a goddamn knife.

HEAVIER PHONE STATIC.

ERIC
(into phone)
LONNIE? LONNIE? Can you hear me?
Get your ass to Berryessa Park. A
red cabin about a quarter-mile
outside of it. You're going to
explain this shit to her. AND TO
THE COPS! LONNIE!?

Phone BEEPS. Dies.

ERIC
FUCK YOU, MAN!

INT. LONNIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

LONNIE (25), shaggy-haired stoner, sits up in bed. He puts down the phone as he runs his fingers through his unkempt mane.

LONNIE
Fuck me.

INT. CABIN - BEDROOM - DAY

Eric rustles through a suitcase, searching intently.

He pulls out a wire. Not what he was looking for. He tosses it away.

LORI
You gonna kill me or what?

He snaps around, startled by her voice.

ERIC
I ain't no killer, Lori.

LORI
Opinions vary.

ERIC
But you...you're looking to hurt my family. And I just can't let that happen. I can't.

LORI
Well, how 'bout this? There's a nice, deep hole out back. Ripe and ready for a warm body. Untie me. Whoever is left standing, gives the other a proper burial. And we go on our way. When I win, I won't touch your family.

ERIC
And I'm supposed to believe that shit? You've been lying to me ever since I met you.

LORI
And how long have you been lying, Eric?

ERIC

Look, goddammit, I wasn't even the one driving. It was Lonnie. All right? Now, please, leave my sister and brother out of this.

LORI

Now's not the time to plead your case. I'm neither judge nor jury here, lover. But I've brought you here to make this right. And me watching you breathe your last is the only way to facilitate that.

A KNOCK at the front door startles him.

ERIC

Shit.

He puts tape over her mouth.

ERIC

Quiet.

FRONT ROOM

Eric opens the door to Fred.

ERIC

Hello. Can I help you?

FRED

Good morning, sir. My name is Fredrick Beasel. Berryessa Park ranger. I just stopped by to ask you a few questions. Hope I didn't catch you at a bad time.

Eric's nervousness is clear in his voice.

ERIC

Oh, not at all. What's the problem, officer?

Fred motions to himself advancing inside. Eric's reluctance is evident.

FRED

May I?

ERIC

Oh, sure. You'll have to excuse my rudeness.

Fred steps in.

ERIC
Don't get many visitors up here.

FRED
Is that right? What's your name,
son?

ERIC
Eric. What'd you say was the reason
for your visit?

FRED
Well, Eric, I received a call from
one of my occupants about some
strange activities occurring in the
area recently.

Eric steps away.

ERIC
Strange activities? Really? Can't
say that I've seen or heard
anything out of the ordinary.

Fred notices his slight limp.

FRED
You hurt yourself there?

ERIC
Yeah, just a little cut. A branch
got me pretty good on my run
earlier this morning.

Something's familiar to Fred.

FRED
Wait a minute. Didn't you play for
West Tech Penn? Number two, right?
Williams?

Eric smiles and nods, proud of the recognition.

ERIC
That's me. You watch college ball,
huh?

FRED
Much more intense than the pros.
They just want it more. But, wow,
you had an arm on you. I can't
believe you didn't go pro.

(MORE)

FRED (cont'd)

They said you dropped out of the draft. What happened?

ERIC

Life happened. Demons just crawled up and bit me in the ass.

Fred walks the room, eyeing the surroundings, picking up photos, trinkets, just being nose-y.

FRED

Yeah, we all got 'em. Either we accept 'em or we send 'em back to hell where they belong. So, what was it? Drugs?

ERIC

Getting a little personal, man.

FRED

My apologies. Just a little star-struck, is all.

ERIC

Not a problem. To be honest with you, no, it wasn't drugs.

FRED

Aaah, the bottle then. You and I were once soldiers in the same war, kid. I couldn't keep my hands off that shit till it drowned me and everyone in my circle.

Eric gives an understanding nod.

FRED

Anyway, keep the past at bay or thou shall be doomed to repeat it. That's what I always say.

ERIC

Truer words never spoken.

FRED

So, what are you doing all the way out here?

ERIC

I got a pretty good deal on this place. I just come out here every few weeks and do a little writing, a little hunting. Get away from the wife and kids. You know?

FRED

Oh yeah? Funny, I've never seen you out here before. I'm usually pretty up on the area.

ERIC

Well, I like to fly under the radar, stick to myself.

Fred spots a pair of pink shoes under the couch.

FRED

Look here, I'm gonna be completely honest with you. I expect the same in return. Someone reported a woman being carried through the area. Either dead or unconscious. But definitely in the direction of this cabin, no less. You're alone, did you say?

ERIC

Oh wow! A woman? Well, I've been sitting here trying to get down a few pages for my new book. I haven't seen or heard anything.

FRED

Let me guess. Autobiography?

ERIC

Something like that.

Eric grabs his letterman jacket and slides it on.

ERIC

Hey, listen, I'm gonna head down the road for some breakfast. Getting a little hungry.

FRED

Oh you gotta try Mona's. Best pancakes in the area.

ERIC

I will. Thanks. I hope you find the girl.

FRED

That's a nice jacket you got there. Where can I get me one of those?

ERIC

You can't just get one of these, man. You gotta earn one.

Fred laughs.

FRED

Yeah, I guess you're right. Well, you wanna tell me where I can get a pair of pink Nike joggers? My granddaughter's been begging me for a pair.

Eric sees Lori's pair of pink Nike joggers under the couch. Fred picks them up.

FRED

Hey, now. These sure don't look your size, big guy.

He tosses the shoes and puts a hand on his gun. His tone darkens.

FRED

Now, where's the girl?

ERIC

Come on, man. My wife musta left those the last time she was here.

Eric sweats with nervousness.

Fred looks down at Eric's left hand.

FRED

Your wife's, huh? I thought you said this was your little getaway?

Eric stutters and looks hard for a way out of this hole. Fred looks at his trembling left hand.

FRED

No ring. Not even a fore-finger indent. Something tells me your honesty is lacking. You've been throwing picks this whole conversation, young QB.

Fred looks down the hall and heads down.

ERIC

Hey, you can't go back there.

BEDROOM/HALLWAY

Fred pushes open the door to find Lori tied up.

FRED
Well, well.

ERIC
I can explain.

Fred grabs him and slams him against the wall.

ERIC
Wait, man. You got it all wrong.

Fred pulls his radio from his belt.

FRED
(into radio)
Get in here. She's in the back
room.

Humbert comes through the front door and into the bedroom.

HUMBERT
Lookie, lookie what we got here.

Eric tries to pull away. Fred takes him down. They tussle.

At war on the floor like an MMA brawl, they huff and puff,
both nearly out of breath.

It's not in Eric's favor when this guy outweighs him by a
good fifty pounds. Fred gets behind him, wraps his neck and
squeezes.

Eric gags. Turns from white to pink to purple. Eric's eyes
bat as he's near unconsciousness. Fred releases him.

Eric's on all fours as he struggles for air.

Fred kicks him in the stomach repeatedly. Eric vomits.
Red, green, last night's dinner and LORI'S PRINCESS CUT
RING.

Fred pins him to the floor, his knee in the back of his
neck. Eric's face grinds into the rug and vomit.

He struggles to no avail.

FRED
Who is this little angel to you?
Answer me!

ERIC

My fiance, but, please, it's not what you think. She was trying to kill me.

HUMBERT

This doll tried to hurt you? I don't believe that for a second.

Humbert goes to untie Lori's arm restraints. She panics, shouts through her muffled mouth and yanks at the ropes. Humbert holds her steady.

HUMBERT

Calm down, little darling. We're gonna get you out of here.

FRED

Alright now, Humbert, get her cleaned up.

HUMBERT

What are you gonna do with him?

FRED

I'm gonna take him back to the kennel. Why not?

HUMBERT

The kennel?

Fred grabs Eric by the chin. He yanks at his handsome face, then wipes the vomit from it with Eric's own shirt.

FRED

That's right. Look at that face. Gary and Simon are always asking for a variety. I bet Prince Charming here would look real nice in some Chantilly lace.

Eric's eyes widen in horror.

ERIC

The fuck?

FRED

Time to expand our selection.

HUMBERT

We only got room for one more.

FRED

Shit, you're right. Gotta stop at Ed's Depot on the way back.

Fred spots the shiny diamond ring among the vomit and picks it up. He uses Eric's shirt to wipe it clean.

FRED

Hey, now.

ERIC

I told you. She's crazy. She made me swallow the damn thing.

FRED

Well, that's one helluva way to deny a proposal. Nice cut diamond, though. What's that about? Half karat?

He pockets the ring and yanks Eric along.

BEDROOM

Humbert TIGHTENS Lori's restraints rather than loosening them.

He runs his dirt-caked fingernails sensually down Lori's arm.

Lori's eyes widen in questioning fear as he pulls out a full syringe and sticks her in the stomach.

HUMBERT

Sleepy time.

Her eyes flutter as she loses consciousness once again.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Fred rips the Letterman jacket off of Eric and tosses it in the front seat.

FRED

Guess I got me a West Tech letterman after all.

He slams Eric against the door jam and slaps cuffs on him.

He shoves him in the backseat and slams the door.

INT. FRED'S PATROL CAR - DAY

Fred gets in the driver's seat. A cage partition separates them.

ERIC

Where are you taking me?

Fred pulls his revolver and presses the nozzle through one of the cage partition holes.

FRED

Let us get one thing straight as a hard dick. You don't ask the questions here, son. I do. And the only one I got is how handsome you'd still be with a second mouth. Now, keep the one you got shut. Understood?

Eric nods, their eyes meeting in the rearview. A corner smile from Fred.

FRED

Good. Now, let's hear some tunes.

Fred turns on the radio. Eric sits back. Defeated.

INT. CABIN - BEDROOM - DAY

Humbert pulls the tape from Lori's mouth and runs his fingers along her lips.

HUMBERT

Soft.

He pulls out a brush and proceeds to brush her hair. He removes her pants.

He uses a washcloth to wipe the dried blood from Lori's forehead and cheek, the dirt from her neck. He wipes any visible dirt spot along her body, her thighs, her calves, her feet.

He shaves her legs with a razor.

He opens a women's make-up case and applies some foundation to her cheeks and lipstick to her lips.

He stands back, impressed with his work.

He takes pictures with a cellphone. A few close up, a few from across the room.

HUMBERT

Damn! Sleeping Beauty, eat your heart out. Gotta get these up on the website ASAP. New fish for the fishermen.

EXT. PARK RANGER'S STATION - DAY

Fred pulls Eric from the car. He struggles. Resists.

Fred whips out his gun and calms him down with a smack of the handle -- knocks him out.

FRED

That'll be quite enough of that.

INT. PARK RANGER'S STATION - DAY

Fred drags the unconscious Eric down a long hallway, opens a door and enters.

DARK ROOM

A sliver of sunlight shines through a small window in the corner.

Fred unlocks Eric's handcuffs and tosses him into a stand-up dog kennel cage. Six feet high, six-foot by six-foot diameter.

A dust cloud fills the air as he hits the floor.

He grumbles awake and pulls himself to his knees. Fred pulls out Lori's engagement ring and tosses it at him.

ERIC

You can't do this, man. I didn't do shit wrong.

FRED

No. As a matter of fact, you did everything right.

ERIC

What?

FRED

Don't you worry, Mister West Tech. We're gonna take good care of your lady.

Fred leaves.

Eric collects himself as he rubs his reddened wrists and sits against the wall. He picks up the ring and looks it over with sad eyes.

The ring slips from his hand.

It hits the floor and rolls. He goes for it, but a hand with pink nail polish slips through the chain links, snags it, then slips back into darkness.

ERIC
Hey, give it back.

No response.

ERIC
You hear me? I said, give it back.

A soft voice comes from the other side. CANDY (20s) giggles, unseen through the pitch black neighboring cell.

CANDY (O.S.)
Did you ask her yet?

ERIC
Excuse me? Just give me the damn ring back.

No response.

ERIC
Ask who what?

CANDY (O.S.)
Your lady.

Eric falls back against the wall, does his best to relax.

ERIC
I did.

CANDY (O.S.)
And she said 'no'?

ERIC
She made me swallow it.

CANDY (O.S.)
Sure sounds like a 'no' to me.

ERIC
Just keep it.

She slides the ring on her finger. It fits perfectly.

CANDY (O.S.)
What's your name?

ERIC
Eric.

CANDY (O.S.)
He calls me Candy.

ERIC
Candy, huh? Well, Candy, what did you do to get locked up in a dump like this?

CANDY (O.S.)
I didn't run fast enough.

ERIC
Excuse me.

CANDY (O.S.)
We're his toys. And he shares us with his friends.

ERIC
His toys?

Eric stands and looks around the room. Five dog kennels come into view. The small shadow of a WOMAN resides in each.

He eyes one kennel in particular. Flower lies motionless in the corner. Pale, eyes wide open looking deathly into nothing. On her shirt, the name Flower is crossed out and now has the word EXAMPLE written under it.

CANDY (O.S.)
Flower tried to get away. They drugged her, starved her, and let us watch her die.

ERIC
How long have you been down here?

CANDY (O.S.)
Weeks. Months. I don't even know anymore.

Eric looks around the cell. As if looking for a soft spot. He kicks at the kennel door.

CANDY (O.S.)
It's no use. You'll die before he lets you out.

He presses his head against the fence. He's given up.

ERIC
She's right.

CANDY (O.S.)
What was that?

ERIC
She's right. This was all my fault.
I let him take the keys. All this
shit is because of me and my damn
drinking. She has every reason to
fucking hate me.

CANDY (O.S.)
Whatever it is you did, you'll have
the opportunity to apologize face
to face. It sounds like he's taken
a liking to your lady. I'm sure
she'll be down here soon.

INT. CABIN - BEDROOM - DAY

Lori's eyes slowly retract. Then from her perspective we see blurriness. A white ceiling, a wall, then Humbert's red and black hunter's cap.

He sees Lori's eyes and covers her mouth, gets close, nearly nose to nose.

HUMBERT
Oh, you're awake. Sooner than
expected. That's unfortunate.

The fear in her eyes is evident. Her legs are untied, but she can't move a muscle. Her eyes shoot left and right.

Humbert runs a finger down her thigh, then teases the edge of her panties by the crotch. She forces out a light mumble from the corner of her numb face.

LORI
No.

He licks his finger and shoves it inside of her. Lori winces, but looks surprised as she feels nothing.

Seconds later, Humbert sticks his finger into his mouth. Savors the taste.

HUMBERT

If you ain't as sweet as
grandmama's Sunday apple pie. You
see, I'm quality control. I make
sure you smell good. I make sure
you taste good.

He goes to the dresser.

HUMBERT

Gotta hit you one more time. Don't
want you squirming about while I
finish my inspection, darling.

Humbert prepares the syringe, back to Lori, who stares
intently at her left foot. Her eyes conspire, concentrate,
like a psychic trying to bend a spoon with their mind.

Her left pinky toe moves...slightly.

It seems the drug is wearing, but she plays it off, keeps
still.

As he goes in to inject her again ---

HUMBERT

(laughs)
Now, you hold still.

She JOLTS up and wraps her legs around his neck.

Her skinny legs squeeze like a pissed off python.

Humbert gags. Drools. His mouth begs for oxygen. He lifts
her into the air, ripping her arm restraints from the
headboard posts, and slams her into the wall.

Yet she's still tight around his neck. He lifts her again
and slams her to the floor. Still locked.

He tries to grab her neck, her face, anything, then charges
her through the closed --

BATHROOM

-- door like a battering ram.

And drops her into the bathtub.

Humbert jumps in after her and wraps his hands around her
neck.

HUMBERT

See how you like it, ya cunt.

His laugh is maniacal. Lori's arms flail. The shower is turned on. Cold water blasts them both.

HUMBERT
You like to fight? Well, let's
fight, bitch.

Lori grabs a disposable leg razor from the side of the tub and STABS him in the eyeball with the handle end.

Humbert reels back to the other side of the tub. His eye gushes with blood. He yanks the razor out. As Lori jumps out, he grabs her ankle.

HUMBERT
We ain't done yet!

Lori grabs the toilet tank cover from the toilet and SMASHES it across his skull. He crumbles into the corner of the tub, out cold.

EXT. PARK RANGER'S STATION - DAY

An 18-wheeler pulls into the parking lot.

TRUCKER BOB (50) gets out. Portly. Half of his button-up hangs out of his pants. He walks up to the door and looks through the glass.

He knocks.

TRUCKER BOB
Fred, you in there?

He enters.

The DING-DING of a bell above the front door chimes annoyingly.

DARK ROOM

Candy and Eric are alerted to the sound.

INT. PARK RANGER'S STATION - DAY

Trucker Bob looks around the office.

TRUCKER BOB
Hey, Fred, I'm here for my one-o-
clock. Where you at, you S-O-B?

He goes down the hallway.

DARK ROOM

A small illumination and a CREAK in the distance as the door to the dark room opens.

Trucker Bob comes in. He flicks a light switch. A pair of ceiling lights flicker. One dies, the other stays live, barely.

Eric blinks, tries to focus.

Trucker Bob pulls a set of cell keys from a hook on the wall and pulls a cattle prod from his belt.

Five dog kennels stretch along one side of the room. The women pull against the back of each cage like frightened dogs.

He walks along, poking the cattle prod through the chain-link fence and BUZZING it to life.

The first one, black female, COCOA (20), name in black marker on her halter top, jumps in fear, pushing herself as tight as she can to the corner.

He continues on to the next kennel. Does the same, BUZZING the prod through the fence. A Hispanic female, CAMEL (16) jumps back in fear.

Next kennel, an Asian female, LEMON (17), stands in the corner.

TRUCKER BOB

Young and tight Lemon Custard
Delight. Maybe next week. I've been
wanting a piece of you.

He comes upon the dwindled Flower next.

TRUCKER BOB

Looks like this one is off the
menu. Poor gal.

He moves along to the next. Stops. Next cell is Candy's. He's made his choice.

TRUCKER BOB

Classic Vanilla. My favorite.

He unlocks the door and slithers in. Cattle prod in one hand and his junk in the other, he comes on. She backs against the wall.

CANDY
Please. Not me.

TRUCKER BOB
And why not?

She pisses herself. He looks on in disgust as urine runs down her leg.

He goes out of the cell and grabs a garden hose attached to a spigot on the wall. He turns it on full blast and points it in her direction. Sprayer handle is on the end, forcing the water out at a jet-like consistency.

Her legs first. She drops to the floor and winces at the sting of the water.

TRUCKER BOB
Nasty bitch! Ain't nothing a little water can't fix.

Now he has her soaked, hair, shirt, legs. He tosses the hose and approaches with the live prod.

CANDY
If you hurt me, he'll kill you.

TRUCKER BOB
As long as I don't leave a mark.
Nothing visible at least. Now, turn around and spread 'em like butterfly wings.

She turns reluctantly to face the wall.

ERIC (O.S.)
Hey, man, that's enough.

Trucker Bob is attentive to the new guest next door. He freezes and looks over his shoulder.

TRUCKER BOB
Well, who the fuck is this guy?

ERIC
A big problem for you if you don't get the hell away from her right now.

Trucker Bob is amused as he mocks him and fondles Candy.

TRUCKER BOB
Big problem. The only one with a "big problem" is Miss Candy here.
(MORE)

TRUCKER BOB (cont'd)
But don't worry, cutey. I'm a
gentle one.

ERIC
Sick fuck.

Trucker Bob draws his attention back to Eric. Candy's eyes are conspiring.

TRUCKER BOB
I'll tell you what, cutey: When I'm
done with her, I'ma come beat you
bloody, then maybe have a little
fun with you, too. What do ya say?

Candy lunges at him, knocks him off balance. The cattle prod falls to the ground.

He stumbles across the cell and smacks into the fence on Eric's side. His back facing Eric.

Eric grabs the loop of his belt and holds on tight. Bob fights it, but can't get loose. He elbows the fence as he tries to break free.

TRUCKER BOB
Let go of me, goddammit!

Candy picks up the cattle prod and buzzes it to life.

ERIC
I say we have a little fun right
now. What do ya say, Candy?

She comes on with the cattle prod and sticks Trucker Bob in the ribs. He HOLLERS in pain from the jolt. He swings at her, but she's just out of distance.

TRUCKER BOB
I'll kill you, you little bitch.

After a few more jolts, the cattle prod loses it's juice. And gives a weak spark with each following button press. Candy tosses it down.

Bob tries like hell to loosen his belt buckle, but Eric's grip won't allow it.

She pulls a box knife from Bob's belt, flicks the blade open, then shoves it into his fat belly. She stares hatefully into his pained eyes.

CANDY

You like that? Who's the little bitch now? I'm gonna make you love me.

He wraps his hands around her throat.

She stabs him repeatedly. Her anger, rage, and tears flow with each strike. The other girls cheer her on.

He HOLLERS as his guts are ripped to shreds. His head slumps. He releases the death-grip on her throat and his arms fall to his side.

He goes quiet. She continues to stab away.

ERIC

That's enough, Candy.

She drops the blood-soaked box knife.

Eric releases his belt and Bob's body slumps to the floor, his head still upright at an angle. His dead eyes continue to stare at her.

She delivers one last kick to the side of his head and sends him face down to the floor. She drops to her knees in a pool of blood. Tears flow with pain and joy.

Eric reaches through the fence and pulls the cell keys from Bob's belt. He unlocks his door and goes to the next.

OFFICE

Eric looks around the office and rifles through the drawers. He opens one filled with DRIVER LICENSES, JEWELRY, FAMILY PHOTOS and various CELLPHONES.

He opens one phone after the other. All dead.

He continues to rifle, finds a pocket knife in a drawer, tosses it back down.

Opens another, finds a .22 pocket pistol. No bullets. Drops it.

Then, shining like the holy grail atop its pedestal --

A MOSSBERG PUMP SHOTGUN hangs on the wall. He grabs it and some nearby shells. A photo on a desk garners his attention.

He picks up the black and white framed photo.

INSERT PHOTO:

A U.S. Army unit photo. A young Park Ranger Fred and Lori's father, Ben, stand together, each carrying a mean M-16 assault rifle.

ERIC
Fucking hell, man!

DING-DING as the bell hanging over the front door chimes, in walks TRUCKER LEO (30), a mellow, frail fella in glasses and cowboy hat that's too big for his head.

He meets the barrel of Eric's shotgun and drops to his knees with his hands in the air.

ERIC
You have an appointment?

TRUCKER LEO
No. Please. I mean, yes. But please, I just want to turn around and leave.

Eric racks the pump and puts it to his head. Leo spits snot from his nose as he belts like an infant. Candy, Cocoa, Caramel and Lemon walk up next to Eric.

ERIC
He a regular?

CANDY
Never seen him before.

TRUCKER LEO
Please, please. This is my first time here. Please, I have a wife and kid at home.

COCOA
That makes you even more of a fucking pig.

ERIC
What's your name?

TRUCKER LEO
Leo. Leo Markson.

INT. LONNIE'S CAR - TRAVELING - DAY

Lonnie drives. JACK (20), a baby-face and shaved head, sits shotgun.

JACK
Okay, man, we've been driving
around for almost two hours.

LONNIE
Stop complaining, Jack.

JACK
I mean, what did he say?

LONNIE
I don't know what the hell's going
on exactly. He just said that Lori
broad went crazy and we need to
come get him.

JACK
Something wrong with his car? He
okay? Dammit, man! There just
seemed something off about her.
Maybe we shoulda called the cops.

There's a worry in Lonnie's eyes.

LONNIE
NO COPS!

He gets a crazy look from Jack.

LONNIE
I mean, it can't be that big a
deal. Or he woulda called them
himself, right? And not me.

JACK
You even know where we're going?
Where's the damn GPS?

As he opens the glove box, he's taken aback by the .45
revolver inside.

JACK
What's that for?

Lonnie reaches over and slams the glove box closed.

LONNIE
Stay out of my shit, man.

JACK
Bro, you gonna talk to me or what?

LONNIE
It's for protection.

JACK
(laughs)
From what? Bears and mountain
lions?

LONNIE
Look, Jack, you know I've never
lied to you.

Jack is preparing for some bad news.

JACK
What is it?

LONNIE
Last year...that accident. Eric's
Charger...

Jack is clearly uncomfortably shaken from the subject.

JACK
Yeah. The tree, right? What about
it?

LONNIE
It wasn't a tree. It was a Honda
Civic.

JACK
Holy shit! How could you not tell
me this?

LONNIE
It was raining fucking nuts. I had
just left that bitch's house. I was
a mess, man. I couldn't see shit.
And I hit the car at the light.
There was a woman and a kid inside.
The kid didn't make it.

JACK
You've got to be fucking kidding
me, Lonnie! And let me guess. It
was her car? You killed her fucking
kid, man?

LONNIE
I called her an ambulance. I didn't
know what else to do. She musta got
the plates.

JACK
Of course, she got the plates, dumb
ass.

(MORE)

JACK (cont'd)
 And kept that info from the cops so she could track down the owner herself. Who just happens to be your best fucking friend since middle school.

LONNIE
 I ain't going back to jail, Jack.

JACK
 And what the fuck does that mean?

LONNIE
 You heard me. I'll fix it.

JACK
 (points to glovebox)
 How? With that?

LONNIE
 If need be.

Jack slumps down in his seat.

JACK
 Jesus Fucking Christ Almighty! You seriously coulda left me the fuck home.

Lonnie pulls off the road and stops.

JACK
 Why'd we stop?

LONNIE
 Just get out.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

Rocky mountains on one side and forestry on the other. Both guys get out of the car.

LONNIE
 All I got before the call dropped was 'red cabin'. Too many big ass trees out here to see from the road. We'll get a better view of the area on foot.

He points at a sign: **BERRYESSA PARK**

LONNIE
 This is the place.

Lonnie walks into the trees. Jack follows.

JACK
I don't like this shit at all.

EXT. PARK RANGER'S STATION - DAY

Eric walks the girls to Leo's truck, blankets wrapped around their shoulders.

ERIC
Now, Leo, I want you to get to the hospital off of Highway-thirteen and contact the Baker Police Department. Tell them everything you told me about this asshole and what he does here. Tell them to bring every cop they have out to Berryessa Park.

TRUCKER LEO
Yes, sir.

He hands Candy and Cocoa a knife.

ERIC
If he doesn't, ladies, you pretend he's a pin cushion.

CANDY
What about you?

ERIC
I've gotta go get my fiance.

Candy opens his hand and puts the ring inside, closes it. He pushes out a light smile. She returns it. No words needed. The girls climb into the truck.

INT. FRED'S PATROL CAR - DAY

Fred pulls into the park entrance and travels along the road.

INT. CABIN - BEDROOM - DAY

Humbert sits in a chair, naked. His arms are tied behind him and his head is taped to the back of the chair so he's forced to look straight ahead. His good eye opens.

LORI
There you are, darling.

The syringe is on the table. It's clear he's been drugged. With one eye covered in blood, his good eye wanders left and right, yet he doesn't move a muscle.

She scrolls through pictures on his cellphone.

CELLPHONE SCREEN:

Snaps of half-naked women in various, involuntary positions and forced smiles.

LORI
(reads)
Flavors of the Month?

She tosses the phone like a wishful third strike into the wall.

LORI
You are surely one demented,
repugnant motherfucker.

She takes a knife and proceeds to slice open his face. He watches in numb horror as the skin of his cheek opens up.

LORI
Where are they?
(beat)
Can't feel a thing, can you? You
couldn't answer me if you wanted
to. That's too bad.

She cuts the tape holding his head upright. It slumps down, but as he's paralyzed, just hangs there looking into his lap. We don't see what he sees.

She takes Eric's pair of Gription Gloves and slides them on.

LORI
Perfect fit. Eric and his fucking
baby hands.

She then grabs Humbert's dick, puts one foot on his knee and proceeds to pull like it's a pesky weed from Grandma's old flower garden.

She struggles a bit as she gives him the handjob from hell. Tough weed. She grabs a knife and cuts a little at the base.

LORI
That should help.

She goes back to work. We see Humbert's slumped head this whole time. Poor guy just has to watch. SLUUURP! POP!

LORI

There we go!

Success. She tosses it to the floor and removes her gloves, wipes her hands.

LORI

I hope you can at least hear me. Within eight to ten minutes, you're going to bleed to death. I don't know how long your little tranquilizer lasts but I sure as hell hope it wears off before then.

A lone tear drops from his eye. Drool seeps from his mouth.

She leaves the room.

EXT. BERRYESSA PARK - DAY

Lonnie and Jack walk a dirt path.

JACK

I'm pretty sure we can get the car on this path.

LONNIE

Just keep walking. Maybe we should split up.

Fred's cruiser drives up next to them. A brand new five-piece dog kennel is strapped to the roof of the car.

FRED

Hey, there, fellas.

LONNIE

Hello, officer.

FRED

Y'all look a little lost. Can I help you find your way?

LONNIE

Maybe. We're looking for a friend of ours. Tall, white guy. Brown, curly hair. He came up here yesterday with a real pretty brunette. Eric Williams.

Fred ponders. Jack gives an inconspicuous peak to the backseat of the cruiser. Something catches his eye.

FRED
Can't say that I have.

Jack quickly looks away.

LONNIE
What about a red cabin?

FRED
(laughs)
You're gonna need to be a little more specific. We got multiple red cabins outside of this park. Oh, but you know what? I did see a group of folks out at Lake Diamond about a quarter-mile back that way. Just go south here through these trees and you can't miss it.

He points to the path behind his cruiser.

FRED
Maybe they can help you find your buddy.

LONNIE
Alright, thanks. We'll check it out. Appreciate that, officer.

FRED
Anytime! Y'all have a pleasant one here at Berryessa Park.

Fred drives off. Lonnie heads south. Jack watches Fred's car drive into the distance.

LONNIE
Come on, fool. He said this way.

Jack heads back the way they came. Back toward the car.

JACK
I know what he said. But that was Eric's jacket in the backseat. Asshole was lying to our faces.

LONNIE
You sure?

JACK

Unless there's another West Tech Alum that just happens to be out here this weekend.

LONNIE

What the hell's going on here?

JACK

My thought exactly.

INT. FRED'S PATROL CAR - DAY

Fred looks out his rearview and sees the boys walking the opposite direction in which he told them to go.

He looks down and sees Eric's West Tech letterman jacket, clear as day on the backseat. He smiles though embarrassed with himself.

FRED

Goddammit, Fred. You're getting old.

He mashes the gas. The cruiser roars down the dirt path.

EXT. PARK RANGER'S STATION - BACK - DAY

Eric opens a storage shed and finds a dusty DIRT BIKE.

ERIC

Jack-fucking-pot! Please, run.

ROAD - LATER

Eric heads full speed on the bike, Mossberg shotgun at his side.

He has the bike to its limit as he takes the winding roads like a pro.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Fred's cruiser pulls up and screeches to a halt.

INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM - DAY

He walks through the door carrying two bags of fast food. He walks around, SHOUTING, in search.

FRED

Where you at, Humbert? We gotta get the girl outta here now.

(MORE)

FRED (cont'd)
 Got a couple knuckleheads probably
 coming up this way looking for
 Prince Charming.

He stops cold as he spots several DROPS OF BLOOD on the
 floor. A trail which leads from the trash can in the -

KITCHEN

He opens the lid -- HUMBERT'S PENIS -- sits atop the blood-
 soaked pile of trash. He gags, quickly looks away.

FRED
 My God!

A BLOOD CURDLING SCREAM from Humbert comes from the bedroom.

Fred drops the bags and pulls his gun. The trail of blood
 leads to the -

BEDROOM

Fred opens the door. Humbert, tied to the chair, the
 tranquilizer clearly worn off, cries like a baby.

HUMBERT
 She tore it off, Freddy. She made
 me watch her TEAR...IT...OFF!!!

Fred wraps an arm around him, consoling his old friend.
 Blood from Humbert's crotch leaks a puddle onto the floor
 like a busted oil pan from an old Chevy.

FRED
 Everything's gonna be alright now.

HUMBERT
 Please, Freddy, you gotta get me to
 a hospital. That looks like a lot
 of blood.

He shushes him.

FRED
 Sorry, old friend.

SNAP -- as he breaks Humbert's neck and puts him out of his
 misery. He goes limp.

Fred's face twists with rage.

FRED
 Where are you, bitch?

He stomps around the cabin and finds the door to --

DAD'S BASEMENT

He walks cautiously down the steps, gun ready.

Lori stands in the middle of the room, crossbow drawn on him.

He looks around. Surprisingly upbeat considering the situation, in awe at the hunting weaponry on display. He still has his gun pointed at her head, however.

FRED

Wow! Nice collection.

LORI

Where's Eric?

FRED

He's alive. Can't say the same for my deputy.

LORI

That sick fucker was your deputy, huh? He's lucky I didn't pop one of these flair guns up his ass.

The two walk a combative circle, tensely awaiting the others first move.

FRED

Oh, I don't think he can get anymore unlucky than he was today.

Fred flashes a sly grin.

FRED

Damn, you are a cold one.

(beat)

Just like the lieutenant.

Lori freezes. Confusion sets in.

LORI

Who the fuck are you?

FRED

You don't remember your old Uncle Freddy? I served with your daddy. Seventy-two. We started this business in a province down in Saigon. Brought our work to the States.

(MORE)

FRED (cont'd)
Smuggled in a couple of them young,
Gookanese tarts. And right here in
this basement is where it all
started.

LORI
You're a lying sack of shit and
this conversation is over.

She aims steady, finger on the trigger.

FRED
Nothing but the truth. I would say
ask your mama. But he took care of
her, didn't he?

LORI
My mother fell down those stairs,
asshole.

FRED
Or maybe the bitch couldn't learn
to mind her own. The lieutenant
didn't take too kindly to
insubordination, so...

He makes a CRACK noise with his mouth.

She fires at him. The arrow hits the wall six feet away
from him. She blinks her eyes as her vision is off.

FRED
Ooh wee! Aftereffects of Humbert's
cocktail still got you a little
woozy, huh? You drop that bow or
I'm gonna put one in your thigh.

LORI
No.

BANG. He puts one in her thigh. She SQUEALS, falls to one
knee and drops the bow.

FRED
I don't ask twice.

He smacks her and sends her to the floor. He pulls out his
cuffs and dives on top of her. He bites his bottom lip as
he runs his hand down her arm sensually.

FRED
You still got that same butter soft
skin. Would you touch it again for
your Uncle Freddy?

She shoots up and wraps him up in an armbar hold. She pulls with all she's got and SNAPS his arm. He SCREAMS and tosses her across the room with his good arm.

Fred pulls a machete from the wall, rushes her down and slices her shoulder. She pulls a machete of her own and limps away.

They face off. She slices down low. Clips his thigh. He winces, but strikes at her head. She ducks and comes up with a slice to his chin.

He grabs her by the throat and lifts her against the wall.

She reaches in her boot, sheds a knife and stakes his forearm. He drops her then pulls the blade from his bleeding flesh. He laughs off the pain.

FRED

You are good. Daddy taught you well.

He picks up his gun and points it at her head. Now he's serious.

FRED

I'm done with this fracas. Now, turn around and get on your fucking knees.

He kicks the cuffs over to her.

FRED

With your sweet ass on my roster, I'm gonna make back double what he owes me.

She does as he asks, wincing as she gets down.

ERIC (O.S.)

Put down the gun, Fred.

It's Eric at the bottom of the stairs with the Mossberg.

FRED

If it ain't young number 2 back to claim his trophy. You just gonna stand there with your dick in your hand or--

BOOM -- as he rips a shell into Fred's chest and sends him into the wall. Dead.

Lori drops to the floor. Eric puts a hand on her shoulder.

ERIC

The fucker was telling the truth.
I'm sorry, Lori.

He hands her the photo of Young Ben and Young Fred.

INT. CABIN - DAD'S BASEMENT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Young Lori peeks through the slightly ajar door at the top of the stairs.

YOUNG BEN, YOUNG FRED and another miscreant war buddy, MARCO (40s), frolic hysterically as they knock back cold ones.

Young Fred tosses a naked ASIAN WOMAN (18) onto a mattress. The woman opens her legs reluctantly.

Young Ben's wife DIANA (35) has wandered in and is at the foot of the stairs, frozen in shock at the sight.

Young Ben sees her and goes ballistic. He slaps her silly and grabs her arm white-knuckle-tight.

YOUNG BEN

I told your ass to never come down here, Diana.

Fred unzips his pants and climbs on top of the girl.

Diana pulls away from Young Ben.

DIANA

Our daughter is upstairs, Ben!
You're all a bunch of animals.

Young Ben shoves her to the ground. She falls backward and slams her skull on the edge of the bottom stair rung. Blood pools under her head as she twitches.

MARCO

(referring to Lori)
Young eyes, Lieutenant.

Young Ben looks to the top of the stairs just as Young Lori closes the door.

INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - (FLASHBACK) - CONTINUOUS

Young Lori backs away in fear and confusion. Young Ben comes from the basement door. His careless tune turns to one of false despair. The young Lori doesn't see through the act.

YOUNG BEN
Mommy had an accident.

YOUNG LORI
Is she okay?

YOUNG BEN
I don't think so, sweetheart.

INT. CABIN - DAD'S BASEMENT - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Lori rips the photo to pieces.

Eric grabs her and wraps her tight. She cries into his shoulder.

ERIC
Everything's gonna be alright now.
But listen to me. The accident...
your boy; it WAS my fault and I'm
so fucking sorry, Lori. But I'm
gonna make this right and Lonnie's
gonna confess to all of it. I know
that won't bring your boy back,
but...

Eric's words go mute.

She opens her eyes and standing on the steps of the basement is her boy Aaron staring blankly at her.

Lori's face calms, almost as if she's willing to heed Eric's apology -- then in a twist of rage she presses a thumb into his shoulder wound.

He SCREAMS and pushes her away.

LORI
Hell no, this isn't over.

ERIC
I came back for you. He was gonna
have you locked up in his basement
and raped by his trucker buddies.
He had five girls locked up like
starving dogs down there. One of
them dead.

LORI
They're safe?

ERIC
They're safe now. Yeah.

LORI

At least something positive comes of this. You're the hero in somebody's story, Eric. Just not mine.

ERIC

Don't act like you care about those women. You really are gone. You've lost it completely.

Lori laughs through her tears.

LORI

Yeah, you could say that. The man I thought was my hero is a murdering, kidnapping bastard.

ERIC

Exactly. This search for vengeance has you possessed and so blinded that you can't see that I'm the only one here for you. I may not be the hero in your fucked up story, but I sure as hell ain't the villain.

She picks up a machete and points the tip at him.

LORI

I told you, till your last breath or mine. This changes NOTHING.

ERIC

This is what it comes down to, huh? Fine. Fuck it.

He gets down on his knees and puts the shotgun nozzle to his forehead.

ERIC

This is what you need to satisfy your thirst? Then fuck the games. I'll just blow my OWN fucking head off and get it over with. Innocent lives for your well-being.

LORI

No, don't.

He holds the shotgun out to her, handle first.

ERIC

Here. Go ahead then. You end this.

She grabs the shotgun and holds it to his head. He puts his hands behind his back and closes his eyes. She hesitates.

ERIC

Come on! End this bullshit! Have your peace!

Lori is at the brink. The drugs, her anger, a twisted mixture of hatred and confusion -- pulling her in every direction.

Eric opens his eyes.

ERIC

Wait. Promise me this will be over and you'll leave my family out of this.

LORI

You don't have the right to dictate who lives or dies.

ERIC

And you do? Please, Lori. That's all I ask.

She RACKS the pump, then nudges the barrel into his forehead. Nearly pierces his skin. He closes his eyes.

LORI

Don't worry. For your brother, your sister, for your friends...

(beat)

I promise to kill them quick. Burn in hell. All of you.

He sees Fred's car keys on the floor and the area rug in which Lori stands on.

ERIC

Noooo!

He yanks the area rug from under her feet. She falls backward and onto her back -- BOOM -- as a shotgun shell rips through the ceiling above.

Eric grabs the keys from the floor and darts for the door.

Lori recovers and -- BOOM -- shreds the door jam with another blast, missing Eric's head by inches. Wood chips rain down.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Eric runs over to Fred's car and jumps in. He fumbles with the keys, poking his head up nervously. Still no sight of Lori.

He finally gets the right key in, turns. Engine cranks but doesn't turn over.

BASH -- as the windshield shatters a spiderweb crack.

Eric dives onto the floorboard, covers his head as glass rains onto his back.

Lori continues to smash away at the windshield with the shotgun.

She reaches through the window and pulls him out of the car and onto the hood.

She smacks him repeatedly, swinging the shotgun like a bat. She pulls him to his feet and punches him in the face, sends him flying to the ground.

She jumps down after him.

LORI

Come on!

As she taunts him, he struggles on all fours. She kicks him in the ass. He grabs a handful of dirt and throws it in her face.

She steps back, blinded. She coughs, wipes her eyes.

Eric takes off deep into the trees.

INT. CABIN - FRONT ROOM/KITCHEN - DAY

Lori stumbles blindly through the door and into the kitchen. She finds the sink and splashes water into her eyes to clear her vision.

She looks around the room. Her father's trophies. His plaques. The animal trophies on the walls. She grabs a wooden bat from the closet.

And howls with a banshee's rage as she knocks every single standing item to the floor.

She swings a homerun to the picture frames on the mantle, the animal head trophies on the walls take a beating themselves.

The front windows are BASHED out.

The lamp on the table is sent 20-feet with a Barry Bonds swing. Glass and wood scatter about the floor.

She goes to the basement door.

DAD'S BASEMENT

She grabs a gas canister and splashes the entire room.

The walls, the weapons, even Fred's body gets a good slathering of gasoline.

She pulls a trail of gas on the floor, up the stairs and back to the --

FRONT ROOM

She pulls out a pack of matches.

EXT. WOODS/CABIN - DAY

Lonnie's car stops. He and Jack step out and see Eric's Charger. Lonnie reaches in the glove box, pulls out the gun and slides it in the back of his pants.

JACK

Yup, that's his car.

LONNIE

Check out the ranger's car.
Window's busted.

INT. CABIN - KITCHEN - DAY

Lori hears the boys banter. She ducks down behind the counter.

EXT. WOODS/CABIN - DAY

The boys walk around the cars.

Lonnie walks to the cabin front door. He turns the knob. Locked.

He goes to the shattered window and peeks in.

LONNIE

Eric! Eric, you in there, bro? It's
Lonnie and Jack. Eric!

Jack shouts into the woods.

JACK
Eric! Eric!

WOODS - ERIC

A good distance away, Eric continues to run. But the voices catch his ear. He stops and listens intently.

JACK (O.S.)
Eric!

ERIC
Jack?

He limps hurriedly back toward the cabin.

EXT. WOODS/CABIN - DAY

Jack observes an arrow stuck in a nearby tree.

JACK
What happened here? Target practice?

JUST AS another arrow slices through the air and pierces his hand, sticking him to the tree. He screams to high Heaven.

It's Lori. Crossbow up and loaded for another blast. She aims at her son's true killer as he stands next to Eric's car. The imagery is dreadfully poetic.

LONNIE
You fucking cunt! Where's Eric?

A death gaze from Lori says every word that needs to be said. He steps back as she comes forward.

LORI
You.

Lonnie pulls his gun and points it at her. Stand off.

LONNIE
Yeah. This is between us. No one else needs to get hurt.
(beat)
I didn't see your damn kid, alright? You were moving. I thought you were okay, so I took off. I'm sorry about that.
(MORE)

LONNIE (cont'd)
Now, just tell us where Eric is and
we'll be on our way.

JACK
What the fuck, Lonnie?

LONNIE
Chill out, Jack. I got this.

An uncomfortable beat.

In a SIMULTANEOUS BURST, he fires the gun just as Lori fires
an arrow. The bullet misses her, but the arrow pierces his
wrist.

The gun falls to the ground. He SCREAMS as he backs away
and goes for the gun with his good hand.

She fires an arrow into his outstretched forearm. He
recoils and backs up even further. Gun stays right where it
was.

LONNIE
Fuck you!

She reloads and fires another into his thigh. He limps
backward as she continues to come on.

LONNIE
Stop this!

Another shot pierces his shoulder.

LONNIE
I'll kill you. You hear me?

He puts up a hand in defense and changes his tune. From bad
ass to begging for his life.

LONNIE
Okay. Okay. Just tell me what you
want. I'll go to the cops. I'll
confess to the whole thing.

Another arrow pierces his other hand.

LONNIE
You don't have to do this. I'll do
anything. Please.

She reloads and hits him with another one to the gut. He
hunches over.

Blood gushes from his stomach. She stares into his eyes, cold as steel...

LORI
Die slow for me!

He falls face first into the dirt. She watches with joy as the last few breaths leave his lungs.

Eric comes limping up and sees Lonnie down.

JACK
She killed him, man.

Eric heads to Jack and reaches for the arrow impaled through his friend's hand.

LORI
No. Get away from him.

ERIC
This is over. You got your revenge.
He's dead. What else do you want?
This is over!

Lori proceeds to reload.

ERIC
Lori, wait. Wait!

She aims at him.

ERIC
Behind you!!

BANG! -- She's shot in the back and falls to the ground.

It's Fred, back from the dead. A bulletproof vest peeks from underneath his shredded uniform shirt.

FRED
Ain't a damn thing over till I say
it is.

Eric rips the arrow from the tree and Jack's hand and shoves him along.

ERIC
Run, Jack! Run!

Jack takes off into the trees as Fred pops off round after round in their direction. Tree branches and leaves explodes.

Jack is out of there, but Eric takes one to his bad leg. He falls, but scrambles to his feet as Fred reloads.

WOODS

Eric limps for his life. He spots a bear trap among some leaves. The teeth albeit visible.

He hastily covers it up as Fred is in the distance and trekking like an enraged bear himself.

Eric continues deep into the trees.

Fred steps on the trap. It bites onto his leg like a vicious great white. He SCREAMS in pain but continues forward, dragging the trap, determined.

FRED

It's gonna take more than that to stop this old bear, you fucker. I know my woods. You ain't gettin' far.

Eric comes to a ledge. He looks down. Fifty-foot drop. The river below. What the fuck to do now?

He backs away and raises his hands to the air. He's given up. Fred comes up, pistol pointed his way, with a cackle and a sneer.

FRED

You shoulda jumped. Your spine and skull shattering is a cake-walk compared to what I'ma do to you.

An ARROWHEAD bursts from Fred's chest. He grabs the end and falls to his knees. His cackle continues.

FRED

Bitch just won't die.

Lori comes from behind, RIPS the arrow from his back, lifts it high and lodges it deep into the top of his skull.

Still on his knees, he cracks a grin before dying with his eyes open, blood trickling down his forehead.

Lori picks up the gun. She checks it for rounds. A single bullet in the chamber. She aims at Eric. He backs away, looking back to the ledge as he goes.

With a bullet in her back and one in her leg, Lori limps forward like the lone survivor of a train wreck.

Eric falls and crawls backward as she comes forward.

Suddenly, she stops and lowers the gun.

It's her son, Aaron, now standing in front of Eric as if shielding him.

He walks up to her and grabs her hand. Eric looks on, confused.

Tears pour from her face. She looks at Eric with something different in her eyes. Solace?

ERIC

Lori?

She raises the gun and puts it to her own head.

ERIC

Lori!??

He struggles to his feet and dashes toward her with his last bit of strength, but he's too late as she pulls the trigger.

BANG! -- Her head jerks as blood spurts onto the nearby trees.

She falls into his arms. Blood pumps from a hole in her temple. He tries to cover it with his shirt. It does no good.

ERIC

Lori? No! No! Lori!

As tears pour from his own eyes for the woman he loves, TWO POLICE OFFICERS come running to him, guns drawn.

ERIC

Call an ambulance! Get an ambulance! Hurry, goddammit!

INT. GENERAL HOSPITAL - ROOM 66D - NIGHT

Lori lies comatose in a bed. A heart monitor beeps rhythmically next to her. Vitals stable.

Heavy bandage wraps around her face and forehead.

Next to her, head on the edge of the bed, is Eric. A few bandages of his own. His hand rests atop hers. The engagement ring is back on her finger.

EXT. GENERAL HOSPITAL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A MAN walks through the double doors. Leather jacket, hiking boots, his face unseen.

INT. GENERAL HOSPITAL - FRONT - NIGHT

He walks up to the help desk.

INT. GENERAL HOSPITAL - ROOM 66D - NIGHT

Eric awakens, sharply, as if from a bad dream. He watches Lori. He's unsure about a lot of things, but surely he loves her as his hand rubs her cheek.

CHATTER comes from outside the door.

NURSE (O.S.)

Surgery was successful. She's still in a coma, but her vitals are good.

The door opens. NURSE walks in, followed by Ben Baddle.

NURSE

You've got one tough daughter, Mister Baddle.

The nurse leaves the room. Eric isn't at all deterred from the sight of the hulking man in front of him.

BEN

You must be, Eric.

ERIC

I am.

BEN

I've heard much about you.

Eric reaches down and pulls a small hunting knife from a holster on his ankle. He conceals it behind his leg as he rises to face the man.

ERIC

Likewise.

Lori opens her eyes.

FADE OUT.