THE LOST AND THE FOUND

Written by

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FADE IN:

### EXT. DAVISES' HOUSE - NIGHT

A CLOAKED FIGURE observes, through a group of bushes, a white house. The house is one-story with a Direct-TV satellite on the roof. A black Porsche Carrera is parked in the driveway next to a blue SUV.

INT. DAVISES' HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dolls and stuffed animals are tossed about the floor and dressers. Pairs of pants, socks, and shoes are scattered around also.

AMBER DAVIS, a seven year old Caucasian girl, lies awake in a twin-sized bed. Her big blue eyes are wide open, staring into the darkness. She holds a brown teddy bear close to her chest.

> AMBER Ain't it hot in here, Booby Bear?

The little girl looks into the teddy bear's eyes as if waiting for an answer. She pulls the blanket off of her and sits up in the bed.

> AMBER (CONT'D) (shouting to next room) Mommy, can I open my window please?

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Amber's mother is DENISE DAVIS, 38, young face, strong modellike figure. She lies in bed eating popcorn from a bowl and watching television.

Her husband is MARK DAVIS, 41, his hair a salt and pepper gray. In a wife-beater and sweat pants, his muscles are ripped like a man in his 20s. He lies comfortably, asleep and SNORING.

> DENISE (shouting) Go ahead baby, but just a little bit.

Mark GROANS lightly in his sleep.

INT. AMBER'S BEDROOM

# AMBER (shouting) Thank you.

The little girl gets out of the bed and walks over to the window across the room. She unlocks the window and pulls it open a few inches; just enough to feel a breeze from the outside.

She lets out a SIGH as the cool air hits her face.

EXT. DAVISES' HOUSE - FRONTYARD - LATER

After seeing the last room light go out, the cloaked figure makes a move.

The cloaked figure creeps slowly through the yard, unlatches the backyard gate, and pushes it open.

INT. MR. DILLMAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A neighbor across the street, MR. DILLMAN, African-American, mid-60s, watches the figure's shadow from his front window. He looks on, his dull eyes glazed over, obviously sleepy.

Shaking his head, he grumbles in a southern country/Californian accent.

MR. DILLMAN (to himself) That damn kid is unbelievable. Sneakin' out to mess with some boy, I bet.

The old man stands up from his recliner.

MR. DILLMAN (CONT'D) (to himself) She should be tryin' to set a better example for that little one.

Mr. Dillman turns off his TV and leaves the room.

EXT. DAVISES' HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

The figure, now standing at Amber's slightly ajar window, puts a hand through and slowly pushes it open. It makes a small CREAKING sound as it slides across the sill. The noise is slight, but enough to get the little girl to roll over in her sleep.

INT. DAVISES' HOUSE - AMBER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

With the window now open, the figure slowly climbs through and tiptoes over to Amber's bed. Knife in one hand, the figure puts the other hand over Amber's mouth, and forcibly pulls her out of the bed and close to their chest.

Amber is awakened and startled. She attempts to scream. Only a faint MURMUR is heard.

CLOAKED FIGURE (a rough voice, whispering in Amber's ear) Quiet little girl or I'll kill your mommy, your sister and your daddy. Do you understand me?

Amber, without hesitation, nods her head in acknowledgement. The figure, with Amber, then turns to the open window.

EXT. DAVISES' HOUSE - MORNING

Four vacant police cruisers are parked outside the home.

INT. DAVISES' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

JAMIE DAVIS, 14, jet black hair, fingernails to match, sits quietly on the couch. An oversized Green Day T-shirt and baggy sweatpants, swallow her skinny body. She wears a blank expression as her eyes wander.

She watches as a number of POLICE OFFICERS scurry around her home. Her mother Denise sits at the kitchen table, her face cupped in her hands. An OFFICER standing next to Denise, speaks into a handheld radio.

> OFFICER #1 Brown hair, blue eyes, 7 years-old, approximately four-feet tall. Last seen wearing red and blue footed pajamas.

A few feet away, Mark speaks with a group of OFFICERS. One takes notes with a pad. Mark is visibly shaken. Jamie stares into his face as if waiting for a firework to burst. When the tears begin to roll down his face, she looks away.

JAMIE (V.O.) A Marine for ten years and middleweight kick-boxing champ for two. That was the first time I'd ever seen my father cry.

EXT. MILLER HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

A school bell RINGS.

It is a bright and sunny Monday morning at Miller High School. Teenage boys and girls scatter in all directions, heading to class. Some in groups, others are alone.

Two boys, DAVE MORGAN, Caucasian, 18, and TONY MILLS, 17, who himself, looks a mixture of races, walk through the quad area together. Tony's pants sag half way off of his ass and his head is covered with a black oversized beanie. He wears an irritated smirk on his face like the guy walking with him is a bother.

Dave is dressed almost identical, but no beanie. His shoulder length blonde hair blows in the wind.

DAVE Man, did you hear about what happened Friday night with that little girl?

TONY

Yup.

DAVE That's some shit you hear about happening somewhere else. Not in this small ass city.

TONY

Hey, that's real life. Something like two thousand kids reported missing everyday.

DAVE

Man, screw that, my dad has a nine milli under his bed for shit like that.

TONY Well, you know they took her while everybody was asleep, right?

## DAVE

Oh.

The two begin to walk in opposite directions. They walk backwards as they continue speaking.

TONY You seen John yet?

DAVE Nope, but tell that punk I want my movie back.

TONY (turning away) Yeah, right.

INT. MILLER HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tony reaches a classroom and walks in. A large group of ROWDY TEENAGERS shout across the room and laugh with one another. As he walks past the desks, he slaps a BOY in the back of the head.

The boy is RAY BARRIOS, 17, Spanish, his careless face shows that he'd love to be anywhere else. He turns around and gives Tony a dirty look. Tony sits at his desk and smiles back at him. The school bell RINGS again.

The teacher of the class, MR. BURNS, mid-50s, his polo shirt tucked in tight to secure a rotund belly, stands up from his desk.

He walks up to the chalkboard, grabs a piece of chalk, and writes: *QUIZ NOW, AND YES I MEAN RIGHT NOW!* 

The entire class GROANS. The teacher circles the words and turns to the class.

MR. BURNS Good morning folks. I hope you all had a lovely weekend.

He picks up a stack of booklets and walks up and down the aisles, dropping one on each desk corner.

MR. BURNS (CONT'D) Okay, now that I've gotten that out of the way, let's get out a #2 shall we.

INT. DAVISES' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mark walks through the front door. He drops his keys and a paper bag to the couch and throws his back against the door.

He exhales, closes his eyes, and rubs his forehead and face with his palms. He looks to Amber's open bedroom door and heads toward it.

INT. AMBER'S ROOM

Mark arrives at Amber's room to see Jamie sitting on the bed. Still in her pajamas, she sits with her hands folded, thumbs twiddling. She stares down at the messy floor, her face pale, her hair an unwashed disaster.

MARK

Hey.

JAMIE (doesn't look up) Hey.

Mark walks over to the bed and sits. He reaches his arm over his daughter's shoulder and pulls her head to his chest.

> MARK You okay? JAMIE (quietly) No... (beat) ...not really.

#### MARK

(kisses her forehead) The most important thing is for us to keep it together. We need to stay strong, especially for your mom. Where is she, by the way?

JAMIE

I don't know. I got up and she was gone.

Mark gets up and walks out of the room.

INT. KITCHEN

MARK Come eat something. I got some burritos from that Mexican place.

He picks up the telephone and dials. After one ring it is answered.

Hello. MARK (into phone) Hey baby, it's me. DENISE (V.O.) (low tone) Mark. MARK (into phone) Where'd you go? You know you shouldn't be out right now.

DENISE (V.O.)

DENISE (V.O.) (sorrowful) I'm trying honey, but I just keep hearing my baby screaming for me.

EXT. LARRY'S LIQUOR - DAY

Denise walks out of the store and into the parking lot. She carries a paper bag with two bottles of liquor in it.

DENISE (into phone) It's just...

INT. DENISE'S SUV - DAY

Denise gets into her SUV and drops the brown bag into the passenger seat. She looks into the rearview mirror and sees Amber in the backseat. She closes her eyes, opens them and she is gone.

DENISE

(into phone, choking up) You know when you have a nightmare and an instant after you wake up you think it was real. After a few minutes you realize it was all a dream, you feel safe. Well when I wake up I'm still in a nightmare and I will be until they find my little girl.

Denise slams her head and hand on the steering wheel simultaneously. She continues to cry hysterically.

INT. DAVISES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

MARK (into phone) Come on home, baby.

INTERCUT with Denise's SUV.

DENISE (into phone, wiping her face as she lifts her head) I'm sorry honey, I know the police said we need to stay strong and positive, but it's kind of hard knowing some sick bastard has my baby. She doesn't deserve this.

MARK (into phone) You don't have to apologize to me. (beat) We're all in this together.

Denise turns the car on, looks in her rearview mirror, and backs out of the parking space.

# DENISE

(into phone) I know, honey. Will you call that detective and ask if he has any information yet? I'll be home in a minute.

MARK

(into phone) Yeah, I'll give him a call right now. I love you.

DENISE (into phone) Love you, too.

Denise hangs up.

INT. DETECTIVE MILLS' OFFICE - DAY

DETECTIVE ANTHONY MILLS, 42 years old, sits at his office desk looking over paperwork. His face is cleanly shaven except for a light goatee. His black hair shows wear from his stressful job in the form of gray streaks here and there. He wears reading glasses, a white button-up shirt, and black tie. Searching through a folder he finds a photo of Amber Davis holding her teddy bear. A red silk ribbon with a bell at the end is around the stuffed animal's neck. The detective grins at the photo. The telephone rings at his desk and he picks it up.

> DETECTIVE MILLS (into phone) This is Mills.

INT. DAVISES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

MARK (into phone) Hello, Detective Mills. This is Mark Davis.

INTERCUT with Detective Mills' office.

# DETECTIVE MILLS

(into phone) Oh, hello Mr. Davis. I was just about to give you a call. There are some procedural things I wanted to go over with you. How are you and your family holding up, sir?

## MARK

(into phone) Well, honestly, we're not. It's really easy imagining the worst and really hard hoping for the best, ya know?

## DETECTIVE MILLS

(into phone) I want you to know that I am on this rigorously. We've received no new leads over the weekend, but I will definitely keep you up to date.

(looks at watch) Though we've been scavenging all weekend, I have an officer out there doing follow-up questioning of your neighbors as we speak. I just want to be sure that we didn't miss anything or anybody. I want to know if anyone saw <u>anything</u> out of the ordinary that night. (MORE) DETECTIVE MILLS (CONT'D) Your daughter is mine and this department's number one priority right now, Mr. Davis. I understand that it is quite difficult, but I really need you to stay strong for your family's sake.

MARK (quietly, into phone) I'll try....I'll try.

DETECTIVE MILLS (into phone) Agent Marcos of the FBI and a group of his finest investigators will arrive in San Frio later today. As soon as possible, I want you to go to the missingpersons.com web-site and get some flyers printed up. Get your family together and go around to the local parks, mall, and any other youth hangouts. Post those fliers and ask questions. I will keep you informed of any changes, anything I find.

# MARK

(into phone) Yes sir, I'll get on it right away. My family and I couldn't appreciate your tenacity any more than we do. We thank you.

DETECTIVE MILLS I will keep in touch, Mr. Davis. Goodbye.

#### MARK

Goodbye, sir

Mark hangs up the phone and walks over to his computer desk in the corner of the room. As he sits down, his wrist swipes a tear from his eye.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

OFFICER NELL, a chubby man in his late-30s, wearing a lightblue patrolman's uniform, stands on the sidewalk with a clipboard in his hand. He looks up at a number on a house, then back down to his clipboard. He walks up a walkway to the front door and presses the doorbell. EXT. MR. DILLMAN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Seconds later, Mr. Dillman answers the door. He is in his bedroom slippers and a bath robe with the San Frio football team logo on it. He yawns as he picks out his eye boogers.

> MR. DILLMAN Hello officer.

> > OFFICER NELL

Hello Mr....

The officer looks down at his clipboard.

OFFICER NELL (CONT'D) ...Dillman. Good morning sir, I'm doing some routine follow-up questioning around the neighborhood regarding the recent abduction of an Amber Davis.

MR. DILLMAN Yeah, I know her. Cute kid.

OFFICER NELL Sir, do you recall any suspicious activity on the night of May 10, last Friday? I would say around 10pm.

MR. DILLMAN

You know somethin', officer? You need to tell them folks across the street to watch that older girl of their's.

OFFICER NELL

Older girl, sir?

### MR. DILLMAN

Yeah, I saw her sneakin' out last week a couple times. Real late too. Ain't that girl 13 or 14? She ain't got no business doin' that. Probably goin' to some boy's house.

OFFICER NELL (writing on his clipboard) Oh really. What days were those, sir, if you remember? MR. DILLMAN Ah hell, I don't know, maybe Thursday or Friday night.

OFFICER NELL You say you saw her sneaking <u>in</u> on Friday? You sure it was her, sir?

A dog begins to BARK loudly from Mr. Dillman's backyard.

MR. DILLMAN (to dog, shouting) Shut up Elvira. I'll give you some chicken in a minute, girl.

Mr. Dillman steps out his front door and closes it a little.

MR. DILLMAN (CONT'D) Well, I don't wanna be a liar, but I did see somebody tiptoein' through that yard Friday night. It could have been anybody, now that I think about it. All I saw was a shadow of somebody. I didn't think nothin' else of it and went to bed.

OFFICER NELL Well Mr. Dillman sir, thank you for your time. And please if you see any strange faces around here or any kind of suspicious activity, give us a call. I'm gonna give this information to our head detective. Thank you again.

The two men shake hands.

MR. DILLMAN You have a pleasant day, officer.

OFFICER NELL You too, sir.

The officer walks directly across the street to the Davises' home.

EXT. DAVISES' HOUSE - DAY

He walks up the driveway and knocks on the door. After a few knocks, Mark opens it.

MARK Oh, hello officer. OFFICER NELL Hello Mr. Davis. How are you doing, sir?

The officer can see the tears fresh in Mark's eyes.

OFFICER NELL (CONT'D) Oh, I'm sorry.

MARK

No, no, thank you for asking officer. Um, did you get any helpful information?

OFFICER NELL Well, it's just something I thought you should know. Didn't know if you were aware, but one of your neighbors says they've witnessed your older daughter going out of the house late at night. Please, you need to let her know that it's not safe out there. The events of the past few days have proven that exponentially.

#### MARK

(surprised) Jamie sneaking out, huh? Is that right?

Mark turns around and looks at Jamie.

INT. DAVISES' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She sits on the couch in the living room. She looks up slowly and meets her father's glaring eyes.

MARK

(angrily, to Jamie) What's this? You been sneaking out again? I thought we talked about this, young lady?

Jamie runs her hand through her hair and looks away.

MARK (CONT'D) The anxiety we're going through right now is exactly why we don't want you out all hours of the night.

Eyes back to her father.

JAMIE (matter-of-factly) I didn't even go anywhere last Friday.

OFFICER NELL The neighbor said it could have been Thursday.

MARK Did you go out Thursday?

JAMIE Yeah, but I wasn't....

MARK (interrupting her) Just go to your damn room.

Mark takes a step closer to her and points toward her bedroom door. She gets up from the couch slowly.

MARK (CONT'D) Did I stutter, goddamit?

Jamie stomps angrily to her room.

EXT. DAVISES' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Mark turns back to the officer.

MARK Sorry about that, officer.

OFFICER NELL Well, sir, maybe what your neighbor saw was our suspect and not your daughter. He said he couldn't see more than a silhouette anyway.

MARK

(shameful)
Yeah, you're probably right.
I think I'm letting my emotions get
the better of me.
 (then firm)
But, sometimes talking to that girl
is like talking to a damn rock.

OFFICER NELL Oh man, I totally understand. I have two little girls of my own. (MORE) OFFICER NELL (CONT'D) Both under ten, but think they're older than me.

With that said, an unsettling vibe rears amongst them. The officer looks almost embarrassed by his own comment as his grin quickly dissipates.

OFFICER NELL (CONT'D) Uh...Um, I do understand how you must be feeling, sir. If anything ever happened to either of my girls... (he stops his comment short) Well, I just wanted to discuss a few of these things with you before I give the information to Detective Mills.

The officer extends his hand and the two men shake. The officer turns, walks down the driveway, and waves to Mark.

MARK Alright, thank you officer.

INT. DAVISES' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mark closes the door. He looks toward Amber's room, then over at Jamie's closed door a few feet away from it. A look of regret is painted on his face.

INT. HALLWAY

He walks up to Jamie's door and knocks. She doesn't answer. Her heavy metal music BLASTS through the door. He knocks again, still no answer. He turns and walks away.

INT. JAMIE'S BEDROOM

Jamie lies on her back, head over the edge of the bed, and facing her bedroom door.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. DAVISES' HOUSE - JAMIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

With her music BLARING, Jamie lies on her bed reading the book, <u>ROMEO AND JULIET</u>.

Her bedroom door opens. Amber's small head peeks around the edge. She watches her big sister bob her head to the music.

AMBER Jamie, can I use one of your pencils?

Jamie uses her radio remote to turn up the volume.

AMBER (CONT'D) (shouting) Can I please use a pencil to do my homework?

Jamie snaps her head toward Amber and glares at her.

JAMIE (shouting angrily) No, because you didn't bring the last one back. Now get the hell out of my room, you little shit.

Amber slams the door in anger.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. JAMIE'S BEDROOM

Jamie's cellphone vibrates on the dresser and moves along the wooden top. She jumps up and grabs it.

INT. DETECTIVE MILLS' HOME - NIGHT

The detective walks in through the front door and throws a manila folder onto a black leather couch. He walks over to a liquor cabinet, opens it, and pulls out a new bottle of brandy.

# INT. KITCHEN

He goes to the kitchen, picks up a glass from the counter and presses it to the ice dispenser on the refrigerator. Three ice cubes fall into the glass.

## INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN

With glass and bottle in hand, he walks back toward the living room, stopping at a shelf just outside the kitchen. Numerous boxing, football, and baseball trophies are present. Some of the gold paint is chipping, but the old keepsakes shine nonetheless. Framed medals and photos of himself in an army uniform grace the wall above the shelf. He unscrews the cap from the bottle and tosses it onto the kitchen counter. He then fills the glass up halfway.

The proud detective puts the bottle on the counter and loosens his tie. A look of jubilance surrounds his face. He takes two sips from his glass as he admires his accomplishments.

He picks the bottle back up, walks over to the couch, and flops down. His black dress shoes fly across the room as he kicks them off one by one. He picks up a remote and turns on the TV.

INT. DETECTIVE MILLS' - LIVING ROOM - LATER

The brandy bottle sits on the coffee table, an inch from empty.

The detective sits, legs open and slouched on the couch. He blinks his eyes repeatedly, seemingly trying to keep from passing out.

He gets up from the couch, picks up his glass, and walks down a hallway.

## INT. HALLWAY/BATHROOM

As he passes the slightly ajar bathroom door, he notices a bottle of cologne sitting on the counter. He opens the door and grabs it.

DETECTIVE MILLS (to himself, irritated) This is my new shit?

### INT. OFFICE

He continues down the hallway and into his office. He walks over to his desk and puts the bottle in an open drawer. With the drawer open, he notices that some of his case paperwork has been rustled. He looks down at the cologne bottle and then toward the door.

# INT. HALLWAY

He exits the office and walks further down the hallway to another room. He is visibly upset. Still holding his glass of brandy in one hand, he pushes open the door. INT. TONY'S BEDROOM

His son Tony sits on his bed wearing a headset, laughing, and playing a video game.

ON TV: Tony's character shoots one of the on-screen characters in the head.

BACK TO SCENE

TONY (into headset mic) Dome shot. Dome shot. Beast81, he's going for rockets. Get there, get there.

DETECTIVE MILLS (angrily) You been in my damn office?

Tony looks up at his father, startled by his abrupt entrance.

TONY (innocently) I was looking for one of those enrollment forms. I lost the one you gave me.

The detective walks over to Tony and slaps him in the back of the head, knocking the headset off. He then reaches over and pushes the power button on the video game console, turning it off.

> DETECTIVE MILLS Turn off this fucking game and fill out that damn form. I'll take it to Sergeant Morris in the morning.

The detective looks at his son up and down, disgusted. He slurs his words as he speaks. With each word, the strong brandy smell fills the air. Tony covers his mouth and nose with one hand.

> DETECTIVE MILLS (CONT'D) You're a sorry piece of shit, you know that?

Tony reaches down to the floor, picks up the headset and sets it on the dresser. He remains quiet.

DETECTIVE MILLS (CONT'D) All you do is play these damn games all night. What's the matter with you? You don't like girls? (MORE) DETECTIVE MILLS (CONT'D) You're probably a little fruit cake like your uncle, huh? (takes a sip from his glass) Too damn dumb for high school. How does it feel to be the only senior in a freshman English class? (takes another sip) Can you even spell F?

Tony continues to glare into the static of the television. He looks as if he's trying his hardest to ignore his father's berating insults.

DETECTIVE MILLS (CONT'D) I shoulda' left you out there with that bitch.

With that comment, Tony quickly stands up and confronts his father. He takes a step closer to him.

DETECTIVE MILLS (CONT'D) (rolling up his sleeves) Oh, you a man now? Your balls finally growing in? Come on tough guy, you wanna go?

Detective Mills puts down his glass and points at his chin. Tony, now extremely angry, balls up his fist. His father takes a fighting stance.

> DETECTIVE MILLS (CONT'D) (enticing) Go ahead kid, just put your hands up and I'll break your goddamn jaw. Your ass'll wake up back in Kentucky. Come on, come on, do something.

Tony slowly unballs his fist, turns towards his game console, pushes the power button, and sits back down on his bed.

DETECTIVE MILLS (CONT'D) Just like I thought. You're a spineless bastard. You don't get that shit from my side. That's for damn sure.

Detective Mills turns to the bedroom door, then back around.

DETECTIVE MILLS (CONT'D) You stay your ass out of my office. You understand me? Nothing in there concerns you. (MORE) DETECTIVE MILLS (CONT'D) I catch you in there again and I won't be asking you if you want an ass whoopin'. Don't try me boy, cause you'll fail real quick. I run this house, I run this town, and I run you. Don't you forget it, kid.

Tony, looking at the TV screen, still doesn't acknowledge his father's comments. His father exits the room and slams the door behind him. A hanging portrait of Tony and his mother falls to the ground, SHATTERING the glass picture frame.

Tony looks over at the fallen picture and then back to his television.

CLOSE ON Tony's face as a tear forms in his right eye.

#### EXT. LAKESIDE PARK - DAY

A family of bluebirds sing while perched atop branches of a redwood tree. Two squirrels playfully chase each other from shrub to shrub.

While the spring-loving animals are draped in harmony, three young kids, SAM, a nine year old boy, JASON, an eleven year old boy, and MICHELLE, an eleven year old girl, are grouped together, arguing about the day's activity.

LYNN BEATTY, a stout 18 year-old girl, sits on a bench nearby, texting on her cellphone. Her bushy brown hair is tied tight to the back of her head.

> JASON You guys wanna play hide-and-seek?

SAM We play that all the time. This place is too wide open and I always gotta be <u>it</u> first.

#### JASON

Come on, we have plenty of hiding places around here. I don't wanna call them out and ruin the game, but they're all over the place. Just use your imagination, ya dork.

SAM (glances at Lynn) I'm tired of that game, though. I think I'm just gonna go play my Gameboy. JASON (looking over at Lynn) Oh, I see. You wanna go sit next to your baby mama. You're in love, ain't ya? Don't lie.

SAM Man, heck no, I can't stand that bitchy woman.

MICHELLE One of you boys should have brought a dang ball.

JASON (grabbing his crotch) I got some balls right here, two of 'em.

Disgusted, Michelle glares at Jason.

MICHELLE Nasty little boy.

Both of the boys laugh.

JASON Okay, your gonna be <u>it</u> first Michelle?

MICHELLE (turning toward tree) Yeah fine, go.

The two boys jog off in different directions. Sam runs toward the men's restroom and Jason runs off into the field. Jason hides in a group of bushes.

Michelle stands facing a tree. She counts out loud, now almost to one hundred.

MICHELLE (CONT'D) 97, 98, 99, 100.

She pulls away from the tree and quickly scans the area from left to right. She walks up to a nearby group of bushes and peeks between the shrubs. No luck. She walks a little further and jumps behind a trash can, hoping to surprise one of the boys. Still, nothing.

Michelle starts for the open field. Lynn, who's been paying no attention to the kids up to this point, looks up and sees Michelle headed toward the field. Lynn looks around suspiciously and sees neither of the boys. She gets up from the bench and continues to look around, calling the boys' names as she goes.

LYNN (CONT'D) (shouting) Sam, Jason, dammit, I told you guys not to wander off. Michelle, where did they go?

Michelle turns to Lynn.

MICHELLE (with an attitude) If I knew where they were I wouldn't still be looking.

Lynn walks over to Michelle and they both call for the boys. Jason sees the girls searching together from his hiding spot.

JASON (irritated, to himself) What the...? We didn't say she could play.

INT. MEN'S RESTROOM, LAKESIDE PARK

Sam stands in the last stall closest to the back wall.

SAM (to himself) No way she'll even come in here. Five more minutes and I win.

Just as he finishes his sentence, the main restroom door SLAMS open. Sam jumps up on the toilet and covers his mouth, trying to quiet his laughter. He hears the stall doors SLAM open consecutively.

Sam looks down at the opening under the door as a pair of brown work boots appear in the opening.

EXT. LAKESIDE PARK - OPEN FIELD

LYNN (shouting) Sam, Jason, the game is done. Get your asses out here now. Jason comes from out of the bushes and walks toward the two girls.

JASON (angrily to Michelle) I thought we were playing hide-and-seek? What, you needed some help?

LYNN No, I told you guys not to leave that area. Now, where is Samuel?

JASON I don't know, woman. I ain't the seeker.

LYNN Whatever little boy, just help us find him.

The three of them go off in different directions in search of Sam.

JASON (to himself) Man, that boy is good.

MICHELLE (shouting) Sammy, you can come out now. The game is over, dudey.

EXT. LAKESIDE PARK - OPEN FIELD - LATER

After about an hour of searching for Sam, Lynn's cellphone rings. She pulls it out of her pocket and looks down at the caller ID screen.

ON CELLPHONE SCREEN: Evan Smith 555-3222

Lynn looks at the time displayed on the phone which reads: 5:21 PM.

LYNN (to herself, panicstricken) Oh damn.

Lynn's phone continues to ring. She stands in the field, hand on her hip. She scans around the field quickly and stomps her foot. In the meantime, the other two kids continue to look around for Sam. Lynn answers the ringing phone. LYNN (CONT'D) (into phone, nervous) Um, hello.

INT. EVAN SMITH'S HOME - GARAGE - DAY

EVAN SMITH, 30, a hulk of a man, leans against a red Enzo Ferrari. His massive shoulders and boulder of a neck burst through his white T-shirt. His upper left shoulder brandishes an American flag tattoo with the number 72, in bold dark ink, under it.

> EVAN (into phone) Hey Lynn, this is Mr. Smith. It's almost 5:30, where are you guys?

EXT. LAKESIDE PARK - DAY

LYNN

(into phone) Hi Mr. Smith, we're just leaving the park. I'm sorry, but the kids were just begging me to stay a little longer. They were having so much fun.

INTERCUT with Evan Smith's home.

EVAN

(into phone) Well look here Lynn, I pay you to pick my boy up from school at 2:30, take him to get something to eat, and then maybe to the park for a half hour. I still expect you back here by 4:30 or so. Now, I don't mean to yell at you but lately this town hasn't been the safest place for a kid.

The other two kids continue to shout Sam's name as they look for him. Lynn puts her hand over the mic on her phone.

> EVAN (CONT'D) (into phone) Is that him? Let me talk to him.

Lynn slaps her hand against her forehead.

LYNN (into phone, shameful) Sir, I'm sorry, but I can't find him. Me and the other kids looked all over the place.

EVAN (irate, into phone) What the hell you mean you can't find him?

LYNN (into phone, defensive) All the kids were playing together and he just wandered off.

EVAN (into phone) Bullshit, he's not a dog or a damn two-year-old. I thought you were supposed to be watching him, dammit. What park are you at?

LYNN (into phone) Lakeside.

Evan hangs up.

INT. DAVISES' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mark sits on the couch in front of a 50" plasma television. He is watching a news broadcast. A NEWSCASTER addresses the viewers.

> NEWSCASTER (V.O.) I am sorry to report this evening that another young child has been abducted. This time from Lakeside Park. This is the second child this week. Two nights ago, sevenyear-old Amber Davis, was abducted from her home in the North Village community of San Frio. Here is Daniel Achen live, with the story.

ON TV: A number of OFFICERS and K-9s are scattered about the open field and surrounding area. Lynn sits on a park bench, her hands cupped to her face.

## EXT. LAKESIDE PARK - NIGHT

DANIEL ACHEN (V.O.) (talking as he slowly comes into camera view) It was like a magic trick in the circus, said Lynn Beatty, 18 yearold high school student and parttime baby-sitter. It was like he disappeared into thin air, she said. Ms. Beatty was baby-sitting nine-year-old Samuel Smith, son of San Frio linebacker, Evan Smith, and two other children when he mysteriously vanished earlier this evening.

DANIEL ACHEN, Asian, late-20s, holds the microphone to Lynn Beatty.

LYNN (V.O.) (distraught) I looked and saw the kids were playing and running, you know, just fooling around. I went to look for something in my backpack and when I looked up, they were gone. When I yelled for them, Jason and Michelle came running, but Sam wasn't with them. We looked for him all over the place.

The camera is now focused on the reporter as he stands by the park sign and speaks into the microphone.

DANIEL ACHEN (V.O.) This traumatic event comes only days after a previous kidnapping from a neighborhood home.

We now see Detective Mills. He stands next to Daniel Achen, who holds the microphone to him.

DETECTIVE MILLS (V.O.) I can't say whether or not this disappearance is related to the kidnapping from a few days ago. We do have more evidence and potential witnesses on that case as opposed to this. But I can tell you that no less effort will be made to find either of these children. Suddenly, a tall muscular man rushes into camera view. He snatches the microphone from the reporter.

The detective stumbles back from the man's abrupt entry. It is Sam's father, Evan. With tears in his eyes he stares directly into the camera.

> EVAN (V.O.) No amount will be too much. You bring me back my boy and I'll give you whatever you want. Sam.....

He wipes tears from his face. TWO OFFICERS, who have witnessed the commotion, approach the man from behind. Detective Mills signals them to stay back.

> EVAN (V.O.) (CONT'D) (with tears flowing) Sammy is a good boy. He's only nine years old. Sammy, if you're listening, we all love you and Daddy will take care of this, I promise.

The reporter, with one hand on the man's shoulder, slowly takes the microphone from him. Evan pulls away, turns around, and punches a corner of the Lakeside Park sign, breaking it off of the post.

Daniel Achen turns to the camera.

DANIEL ACHEN (V.O.) (in a low tone) From Lakeside Park, this is Daniel Achen, Channel Seven News.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.) Please, if you have any information, contact your local police. You can also visit our website or call our 1-800 number, both at the bottom of your screen, if you have any information regarding either of the children's whereabouts.

BACK TO SCENE

INT. LIVING ROOM

Mark grabs the remote and turns off the TV. He walks into the kitchen and up behind his wife, who's washing dishes.

She is momentarily startled as he wraps his arms around her waist. He puts his chin on top of her head. She grasps his arms around her as if to urge him to squeeze her tighter.

DENISE (sorrowful) What the hell is going on in this town?

EXT. MILLER HIGH SCHOOL - MID-DAY

Tony, Ray and SHAWN GOLDSTIEN, 17, Caucasian with a frizzy Afro and Coke-bottle eyeglasses, sit together at a wooden picnic table. Groups of teens scurry around them, many eating food and sipping sodas. Tony spots someone a short distance away and motions for them to come over.

He is JOHN WILLIAMS, 19, Caucasian, black hat, and looks to old to be in high school. His scruffy beard and wife-beater insinuate that he just doesn't give a damn what you think of him. His baggy jeans hang low as he walks with an overconfident swagger.

He walks up to the four seater table and gives everyone a fist pound except for Ray, who looks away, seemingly irritated by his presence. John peers at Ray, then sits.

JOHN What up, folks?

SHAWN What up, Johnny? You needed a day off?

JOHN Nah, I was a little sickly yesterday.

TONY (sarcastic) Of school.

John reaches across the table and grabs a pack of cookies from Shawn's open lunch pale. Shawn smirks at him but lets it slide.

JOHN (smiling) Damn right. I need a break from this place sometimes and two days ain't enough. TONY

(changing subject) Well anyway, there's a reason I wanted to get all y'all together today.

RAY What reason?

# TONY

Did y'all happen to see the reward for that little girl, Amber Davis? It's like 30 grand.

JOHN (chewing cookie) And?

#### TONY

And, that's a lot of damn money. We could check some people out, talk to some neighbors. We'll say it's for the school paper or something.

JOHN (reluctant) Come on, dude. We ain't cops.

#### TONY

Man, I know, but think about it. My pops is on this case, right? He has all this info at his desk at home, and <u>yes</u> I was looking through it last night.

#### SHAWN

Look, Big Tone thinks he's a detective now. So you looked over some paperwork, so what. I know what you're thinking, and it's crazy. Like Johnny said, we ain't cops.

#### JOHN

Yeah, I mean, what are we gonna do? We gonna find this kid in some cave full of treasure or some shit? We'll just get in the way and piss your pops off. You really think we're gonna find this kid before the master detective?

Tony looks at John with a sinister grin.

JOHN (CONT'D) (mocking Tony) Oh, I get it. I'm gonna find this kid before my pops does so I can rub it in his face.

TONY

Look at it this way. If the cops find her then that's it. The cops don't get a reward for finding lost children. They're just doing their job. Look, we've been wandering around this town for years, since we were little ass kids. The bridge, under the freeway, even that old park by the mall. We probably know this place better than anybody. Yes, even my pops. We could find this kid and get paid for real. Now, y'all with it or what?

The boys look around at one another but remain quiet.

JOHN I got a question. How do you figure she's still here in this city, anyway? She's probably in Mexico by now.

TONY It was something my pops had in his

report. His first thought is that abducted children are taken somewhere close, usually when a ransom is involved. Everybody knows that the folks in that community got some bread.

JOHN And how do you know she ain't chopped up somewhere?

SHAWN (frowning at John) Don't say shit like that.

JOHN (to Tony) You really are serious?

TONY

30.

Dead.

RAY Has there been a ransom demand yet?

TONY No, not as of last night.

A VOICE comes over the intercom speaker posted on a light pole in the middle of the quad.

VOICE (0.S.) Ladies and gentlemen this is your principal. I am sad to say that there has been another child abduction reported.

A nearby crowd GROANS in disbelief.

VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D) It happened yesterday at Lakeside Park at about 5PM. The child is a nine-year-old boy, by the name of Samuel Smith. Please, if you have any information, come to my office or contact the local police department. Thank you and have a productive day.

RAY (surprised) Oh, shit.

## TONY

Right, oh shit. Now we got two kids missing, boys. How much you wanna bet that this kid's folks are paid too?

JOHN

That's crazy man. It's only been a couple days since the last one.

RAY Man, T, you can count me in, bro. What ever you need.

TONY

Hey, I wanna beat down whoever's taking these kids, but I ain't got no problem gettin' paid either, you know what I mean?

RAY (writing numbers on a piece of paper, excited) (MORE) RAY (CONT'D) That's \$7500 apiece. And with this other one too, oh man.

JOHN I guess it wouldn't hurt to give it a shot.

TONY (smiling) Not unless fat pockets hurt your legs.

The school bell RINGS. Everyone gets up from the table and grabs their backpacks.

They walk together, like an entourage on a mission. Tony, walking ahead of them, stops and turns around.

TONY (CONT'D) Hey, wait a minute.

The three boys stop in their tracks and focus on Tony.

TONY (CONT'D) We need to keep this to ourselves. I don't want a bunch of fools coming up and putting in their two cents, ya know, tryin' to be part of the team. This is between us four, alright?

The entire group nods. They then take off in different directions.

Out of the frantic sea of students scurrying to class, Tony spots Jamie walking in his direction. She walks very slow amongst the crowd. Her head hangs low.

She looks up just as Tony walks past her. He lets out a small grin as if to say hello without words. She grins in return.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET, TRAFFIC LIGHT - DAY

Two cars sit at the light of a two-lane, one-way street. The sun beams down on the roof of a Celica in the right lane. Its red paint gleams from the sunlight. The engine HOWLS as Tony revs it.

A black, two-door Integra is in the left lane next to the Celica. John revs the engine. He looks through his passenger window at Tony. Tony glares back at him. Shawn is John's passenger. He sits with a textbook on his lap, flipping through the pages.

Ray, Tony's passenger, throws a peace sign to John. The light turns green and both cars burn rubber as they launch. The two cars scream down the street, whizzing past parked cars on each side.

Tony looks to his left at John's car, which is scooting ahead, and shifts into second gear. The two cars, now neck and neck, swoosh past a 25 mph sign going closer to 60 mph.

One RESIDENT, a black, pudgy old man walking outside to get his newspaper, waves his hands and yells at the cars.

# RESIDENT (shouting) Slow down!

This whole time, Shawn isn't paying his driver or the other car any attention. His eyes are set in his book as he writes.

The two speeding cars pass a police car sitting at a stop sign. The cruiser makes a right turn and proceeds to follow the cars.

The Integra pulls ahead again and Tony shifts to third. Just as Tony's car catches up to John's, he sees police lights in his rearview mirror.

> TONY Damn man, I almost had that fool.

Tony puts on the brakes and pulls his car off to the side of the road. John, on the other hand, shifts it into 4th and slams on the gas. He nearly misses another car coming from a side street on the right. Tony and Ray, now stopped, see this and look at each other in amazement.

> RAY Whoa, that shit was close.

Ray looks over his shoulder and sees OFFICER DIMES, mid-30s, approaching the car.

RAY (CONT'D) Tell this fool to hurry up, we gotta get to school. The officer reaches Tony's window. He bends his six-foottall frame down, sticks his face through and sniffs the air.

> TONY (CONT'D) (backing his head away) What the hell, Mike?

Officer Dimes, takes off his oversized sunglasses and gazes at the two boys, suspiciously.

OFFICER DIMES You two high?

TONY (laughing)

Come on now, you know me better than that.

OFFICER DIMES Reckless endangerment, speeding, street racing, yeah I know you a little too well, kid. We'll see what the detective has to say about this one.

Tony, now upset, throws his head back against the seat.

TONY Ah man, come on. Can't you just let us get to school? I promise you'll never see me out here again. I'll take Tabor St. from now on.

The officer, ignoring Tony's plea, walks back to his cruiser. He reaches into the car and pulls the CB radio from the dash.

> OFFICER DIMES (into radio) This is three William 56, Mills, I got your kid out here racing again, over.

DETECTIVE MILLS (V.O.) Oh really? You tell that knucklehead to get his butt to school. Yeah, I'm gonna have a little surprise for him and his buddies when they get out today too. Was that Williams kid with him again?
OFFICER DIMES (into radio) Yes sir, he was racing with him. That same black Integra.

DETECTIVE MILLS (V.O.) Well, you know what to do. Call me when it's done.

OFFICER DIMES (laughing quietly, then into radio) Yes sir, I will take care of it. 56 out.

The officer grunts, looks in his side mirror, and tries his best to wipe the smile from his face.

He walks back over to Tony's car and bends down, level with the window.

OFFICER DIMES (CONT'D) Now, I'm gonna make this real simple kids. Get your asses to school and tell that Williams kid that if I see either of your little rice rockets doing more than a mile over the speed limit, I'm gonna recycle 'em. Do I make myself clear, boys?

TONY AND RAY (in unison) Crystal.

OFFICER DIMES Now get on.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

A big, white garbage truck stops at a stop sign at the end of the street and then makes a left turn.

We see Mr. Dillman walking down the sidewalk. He is dressed in a gray and red jumpsuit and wears an MP3 player around his neck. Earpieces hang from his ears. He SINGS "Heartbreak Hotel" to himself.

> MR. DILLMAN (sings) Since my baby left me I found a new place to dwell, (MORE)

MR. DILLMAN (CONT'D) duh, duh, duh, duh, duh, duh, heartbreak hotel. I feel so lonely, I feel so lonely, I could diiiiie.

As he walks by each home he pulls the empty garbage cans up to the backyard gates. A NEIGHBOR waves to him from her window. He waves back. He reaches the Davises' home. As he rolls the garbage can up the driveway and to the back door, he notices a chain and bolt around the gate.

He frowns at it and shakes his head.

MR. DILLMAN (CONT'D) (to himself) Bout' damn time.

The old man walks back down the driveway and continues his walk.

EXT. MILLER HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - DAY

The school bell RINGS, indicating the end of the school day. Students scatter in all directions. Tony, John, Ray, and Shawn walk out to the school parking lot. John walks to his parking spot to see an empty space.

> JOHN (confused, looking around) Um, where the hell is my car?

Tony walks a little ways down to his parking space and sees someone else's car there. KOJAK, a 50-year-old, hefty baldheaded man is in the parking lot directing traffic. He sees the boys looking around. He smiles like he knows something.

> KOJAK (amused) Hey kids, you lose something?

JOHN You know something, fat man? Where the hell is my ride?

KOJAK (pointing at Tony) Tell your boy there to go ask his daddy.

TONY Ain't this a bitch. He impounded our shit. John angrily throws his backpack to the ground.

SHAWN (quietly to Tony) Man, you knew he was gonna get fed up and teach you a lesson sooner or later. TONY (to Shawn) Shut up. The boys, as a group, take off through the parking lot on foot. JOHN (to Tony, hopeful) You think I can get my car back tonight? TONY Man, I hate to say it, but knowing my pops, our shit is probably soda cans by now. JOHN You are kidding? TONY Kidding about my pops? (sarcastic) Right. JOHN (shouting at the top of his lungs) FUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUK!!!!

INT. DAVISES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - SUNSET

Denise stands at the kitchen sink, almost as still as the vegetables she chops. With her body still, only her fingers move as she chops a celery stick into the sink. She nips one of her fingers with the knife, drawing blood. She is unfazed as she continues cutting and rinsing the vegetables.

Mark walks into the kitchen from the living room.

DENISE Hey, we need some stuff from the store.

Mark exhales and kisses her on the side of the head.

MARK You sure you want me to go?

DENISE (attempting a smile) You want to eat don't you? The refrigerator's almost empty. Just get a few things.

INT. JAMIE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jamie lies on her bed with her cellphone to her ear. As usual, music SCREAMS through her radio speakers. A sudden knock at the door startles her. She looks toward the door and sits up.

> JAMIE (shouting over her music) Yes. (then into phone, whispering) I gotta go.

Jamie presses the end button on the phone and tosses it onto the bed.

MARK (O.S.) (shouting) Hey, you wanna go to the store with me? I just gotta get some milk and stuff.

Jamie slowly opens the door and peeks out.

JAMIE Dad, we need a lot of stuff. You've never even been grocery shopping.

MARK Okay, then come with me.

JAMIE How's Mom doing?

MARK

Well, I see she's really trying to hold it together, in there cooking and cleaning with everything that's going on. I think she's doing her best to keep her mind somewhere else.

Jamie walks out into the hallway.

JAMIE Dad, um...I really am sorry for all the crap I've been putting you guys through, lately.

He puts his arm around her shoulders and pulls her close.

MARK I love you, Pebbles. Go tell your mom you're coming with me. I'll meet you at the car.

Mark walks down the hallway and out of the front door.

#### INT. KITCHEN

Jamie slowly walks up behind her mother, who is still at the sink.

JAMIE (quietly) Mom, I'm gonna go to the store with Dad, okay?

Denise turns around and wraps her arms around Jamie. She squeezes her older daughter like she is all she has left in the world.

JAMIE (CONT'D) You want me to stay with you?

DENISE (pulls away) No, no, I'll be okay. Your dad would probably come back with a bunch of TV dinners. Go with him.

Denise kisses Jamie on the cheek.

DENISE (CONT'D)

I love you.

JAMIE I love you too, Mommy.

INT. MARK'S PORSCHE - TRAVELING - SUNSET

Mark drives the black Porsche down the street. The car radio isn't playing. Neither have bothered to turn it on. Jamie gazes out of the passenger side window at the setting sun. JAMIE Daddy, can we go to the lake? MARK

I don't know. (beat) This just doesn't seem like the time to be doing family stuff like that.

JAMIE (still looking out of the window) Well we're still a family, right?

Mark looks over at Jamie befuddled, then back to the road.

#### MARK

I can't believe that just came out of your mouth. Your little sister completes this family. Our family tie has been broken. I get this gut-wrenching feeling every time that telephone rings. Besides, that lake is two hours away. I don't want to be miles away when we get a call from the detective.

#### JAMIE

You think she's okay?

#### MARK

You know what, I can't seem to think otherwise. I just can't see why someone would want to hurt her.

JAMIE But they could though, right?

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. DAVISES' HOUSE - KITCHEN TABLE - NIGHT

Amber sits in a chair with a plate of food in front of her. She has a fork in one hand and her teddy bear in the other.

> AMBER (talking to her teddy bear) You want some, Booby? Okay, but I don't think you'll like it.

She scoops some of the green peas from her plate with her fork. Then she puts the fork up to the teddy bear's cotton lips.

AMBER (CONT'D) (making spit noises) Spppppllll.

The group of peas scatter as they hit the floor.

AMBER (CONT'D) (shaking her head, to teddy bear) Now that's a bad boy. I told you that you wouldn't like them.

Jamie sits across from her little sister, watching her in amazement. She shakes her head.

JAMIE You're a retard.

Both of their parents, Mark and Denise, sit on opposite sides of the table. Mark gives Jamie a dirty look.

MARK Don't call your sister a retard.

He saws away at the steak with his knife.

MARK (CONT'D) She's probably smarter than half the kids at your school.

JAMIE Whatever. I know I ain't cleaning up that mess her and her little friend made.

DENISE Amber, I want you to help Booby pick up those peas when you're done, okay baby?

AMBER

Okay, Mommy.

Jamie gives Amber an awkward look.

JAMIE (laughing) Wow, how old are you?

Amber flips her middle finger to Jamie.

AMBER (giggling) This many.

Jamie gasps in shock and points at Amber.

JAMIE (to Mark and Denise) Did you see that?

MARK (to Amber, holding back his laughter) Hey, not funny.

DENISE (peering at Jamie) Yeah, I wonder where she learned that.

JAMIE Don't look at me.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. MARK'S PORSCHE - TRAVELING - NIGHT

Jamie, still gazing out the window, giggles lightly to herself.

MARK

What?

JAMIE (quietly) Nothing.

EXT. SHOPCO GROCERY STORE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Mark pulls the Porsche into the parking lot. A big red sign reads SHOPCO above the building.

INT. SHOPCO GROCERY STORE - BREAKFAST/TOY AISLE - CONTINUOUS

A short, pudgy, Italian woman, JILL SURANTO, 37, pushes a shopping cart slowly down the aisle. Her sundress sways left and right with the movements of her wide hips. Cereal boxes cover one side while toys cover the other.

STANLEY SURANTO, six years old, walks behind the woman, admiring the toys as they pass. When she stops, he stops to look over the group.

While the woman looks at the cereal boxes and the contents, the boy fumbles with the toys on the other side. He picks up a toy army soldier.

As the woman turns the boxes to read the nutritional content, the boy does the same with the toy soldier.

CLOSE ON side of cereal box revealing nutritional content.

CLOSE ON back of action figure package showing weapons, biography of the soldier and other special-team members.

JILL (showing the box to the boy) Do you like these?

As she holds the box of cereal to the boy, he is deep in thought reading the toy packaging.

JILL (CONT'D) (louder) Hey, do you like these?

The boy turns around and looks up at the box of cereal.

STANLEY Yeah, those are okay, but Mommy, can I have this?

Stanley stretches his arm up so his mother can get a good look at the toy.

JILL Is it your birthday? <u>No</u>! Is it Christmas time? <u>No</u>! (turns away) Do you keep that room of your's clean? No you don't. Don't ask me for nothing, Stanley. Now, put it down.

The woman drops the box of cereal in the basket and continues down the aisle. Stanley turns towards the shelf, pulls the front of his pants out and begins to slowly put the toy soldier down the hole. He looks up as an OLD MAN walks by. The old man sees him, points his finger, and gives an "ah ah ah" motion.

Stanley quickly pulls the toy out of his pants, drops it to the floor and runs to catch up with his mother. The old man smiles and goes on his way. Jamie pushes along a SQUEAKY grocery cart. Mark walking beside her, stops and opens a freezer door. He looks amongst the shelves consisting of different flavored ice cream.

> JAMIE Okay, over here we need eggs, milk, and butter.

Mark, in a sudden daze, stares at the bubble gum flavor for a second but reaches past it to grab another. He throws a carton of vanilla ice cream in the basket.

MARK No, get the margarine, I hate butter on my oatmeal.

JAMIE Okay, margarine, whatever. You want 2% milk, right?

MARK

Yup.

#### INT. MAGAZINE AISLE

A doorway twenty feet away from Stanley and his mother is covered with long plastic drapes from top to bottom. A sign above it reads: EMPLOYEES ONLY.

A toy sits on the floor, right at the entry way. Stanley's mother looks over the magazine display, seemingly looking for a particular issue. Stanley looks to his left at the doorway and sees the toy on the floor.

He looks up at his mother and sees her excitement in finding what she was looking for. She begins to flip through the pages of WOMAN'S HEALTH, smiling as she goes. Stanley looks over at the doorway again. The toy is still there.

He looks around in a dastardly manner. There are no employees in sight. He takes a deep breath and heads for the entry way. He moves slowly as to not alert his mother.

# INT. STOCK ROOM

He reaches the entry way and enters through the plastic drapes. He looks around, though it is quite dark. He kneels down and picks up the toy.

To his surprise, it is the same one he was looking at earlier. Suddenly, he is grabbed from the side and his face covered with a small towel. He blacks out almost instantly.

# INT. MAGAZINE AISLE

Stanley's mother, still standing at the magazines, suddenly looks up. She turns in a circle, looking for her son.

JILL Stanley. Stanley, where the heck did you go?

She puts down the magazine and walks down the aisle. She continually calls for him.

JILL (CONT'D) Stanweeny, boy, where are you?

Mark sees the woman at a distance. He recognizes her and walks over.

MARK (smiling) Hey Jill, did you lose something?

JILL (hysterical) Oh Mark, I can't find Stanley. He was right next to me a second ago. Can you help me? (shouting) Stanley. Stanley.

MARK Yeah, I'll check this side. I'm sure he's right around here.

Jill goes down the aisle, increasing her speed.

MARK (CONT'D) (shouting) Jamie.

Jamie is still a few aisles away when she hears Mark calling for her.

JAMIE (shouting back) Whatty?

Mark comes jogging up to Jamie.

MARK Hey, look for a little boy wandering around by himself.

Jamie rolls her eyes, pushes the cart to the side, and begins to walk the aisles.

INT. FRONT OF STORE

Mark walks up to one of the cash registers.

A CASHIER stands behind the counter. He is a bored-looking young man. His face is white, pale, and his blue Shopco vest is inside out. He moves like he's in his twelfth hour of work. He scans the items on the conveyer belt, slowly and lazily.

> MARK Eh man, we got a little boy missing. He's about three feet tall, six years old, Spanish and Caucasian.

CASHIER #1 (careless) How long ago?

MARK I don't know. Does it matter? Just say something over the loud speaker, would ya?.

The young man sighs, picks up the phone at the register and pushes a button.

CASHIER #1 (whispering to Mark) What's the kid's name?

MARK Stanley Suranto.

CASHIER #1 (into phone) Stanley Suranto, please come to the front of the store. Stanley Suranto, please come to the front of the store.

His voice comes over the intercom speakers posted throughout the store.

Jill frantically approaches the same cash register. She snatches the phone from the cashier and speaks into it.

JILL (hysterical) He's wearing a blue shirt and black jeans. Baby, if you can hear me, come to the front of the store. Jesus, just yell or something, baby.

Several minutes pass.

Two other MEN, wearing Shopco vests, walk up to the register. They both look at the cashier and shake their heads.

CASHIER #1 (into phone) We have a Code Adam. I repeat, we have a Code Adam. All entrances and exits will be locked.

The Code Adam procedure goes into effect. The entrance doors lock automatically and all of the CASHIERS leave their registers to cover the front entrances.

## INT. MAGAZINE AISLE

Mark, walking down the aisles, sees the plastic-draped entrance. The drapes swing outwards as if air is blowing from inside. He walks over.

INT. STOCK ROOM

He walks through the drapes and kicks the toy soldier on the ground. As he reaches down and picks up the toy, he gets a whiff of a strong odor.

MARK (to himself, frowning) What the hell is that?

He then proceeds to walk around the area. It is very dark except for one small light hanging from the ceiling on one side of the room.

> MARK (CONT'D) Stanley. Stan. You back here little man? It's Mr. Davis. Come on now, this really ain't the time for hide-and-seek. Your mom is going crazy out here.

He gets no response. He sees a door, slightly ajar, down a dark hallway. He jogs down the hallway, forcefully pushes open the door, and darts outside.

EXT. SHOPCO GROCERY STORE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Mark is now facing the receiving area of the store. There are tractor trailers parked in the lot.

# MARK (shouting) Stanley.

As he turns the corner, a couple of police cars pull into the Shopco parking lot.

INT. BOB'S BIG CHEESE PIZZA - DAY

Tony, Ray, Shawn and John, walk through the door. A big sign in the front reads: SEAT YOURSELF.

Shawn looks over and sees an empty booth by the window. He motions to the group. They follow him to the table and sit down. A small amount of teens fill the other side of the room as this side is empty.

A WAITRESS, Caucasian, early-20s, comes over. She is a fullfigured girl. Her tight top squeezes her breasts together, showcasing a man-seducing cleavage. Her blonde hair is up in a bun. The group of boys look on googly-eyed as she approaches. She speaks with a heavy, southern accent.

> WAITRESS Good afternoon boys. What can I get y'all to drink?

TONY Just bring us four waters with extra lemon please.

WAITRESS No problem. Y'all know what you want to eat?

TONY (to the group) Y'all just want the Big Cheese with the white sauce?

JOHN (mocking Tony, laughing) Y'aaaall, y'alll. (MORE) JOHN (CONT'D) I remember when you use to go back and forth during the summer. You used to sound so ridiculous. You still tryin' to shake the Kentucky Wildcat accent, huh? TONY (to John, smiling) Such a dick. RAY Leave Forrest alone, he can't help it. TONY

So, do  $\underline{you} \quad \underline{quys}$  want the damn Big Cheese or what?

SHAWN Yeah that's cool, but can we have the extra large?

The waitress writes their order down on a small note pad she's holding.

WAITRESS (to Tony) You from Kentucky, huh?

TONY (surprised) Yes, I am.

WAITRESS What part?

TONY Well, I was born in Danville, but my pops brought me out here with him in 88'.

WAITRESS Oh, okay. Well, I'm from Louisville. I spent my whole life out there. I only been out here for a few months.

TONY (looking around at the other boys) That's cool. Well anyway, enough about me. Let me make sure I got your order right. So that's four waters with extra lemon and an extra large Big Cheese with white sauce. Will that be it?

TONY That's it.

WAITRESS Okay, I'll be right back with your water.

John turns and watches with an animalistic glare as the waitress walk away.

JOHN (to Tony) Damn man, you shoulda' got the number. She looked kinda' cool. Nice chunky tailed southern belle.

Tony grins and shakes his head.

TONY Nah, a little <u>too</u> chunky for me.

RAY Telling us her life story and shit. Just go get the damn food, lady.

Ray reaches in his backpack and pulls out a sheet of paper.

JOHN What's that, homework?

## RAY

Fool, I don't do homework. This is a collection of research I've been doing on those kids.

TONY

(fumbling with the sugar packets on the table) So what'd you find out?

RAY

Well, the first thing that stands out more than anything, is that these kids are rich. I don't mean regular rich, I mean Richie Rich. Well, their folks are, anyway. The waitress walks up to the table with a tray holding four glasses. The boys go silent. She puts a glass in front of each of them. She looks around confused at the boys' abrupt silence and walks away.

## RAY (CONT'D)

Yeah, like I was saying, these are some trust fund babies. (reads off of a sheet of paper) The first kid that was taken, her dad is a flight engineer and her mom's an othro...othroped..

SHAWN (takes a sip of his water) Orthopedic.

RAY

Thank you. Damn, I can't even afford to say the word. An orth-ope-dic surgeon.

JOHN Damn, that's money.

RAY The second kid's dad, Evan Smith...

TONY

(cutting Ray off) Yeah, San Frio linebacker, two Super Bowls. I think we all knew that one.

SHAWN

I didn't.

#### JOHN

Can you say, seven-year-contract for \$120,000,000 with a \$10,000,000 signing bonus?

## RAY

The third one is the son of that real estate owner, Salvador Suranto. You know, the ad we see every time we go to the movies? That fat bald-headed dude.

SHAWN

(puzzled) Third one? JOHN

Man, don't you watch the news? It happened last night at that grocery store on Acorn Street.

SHAWN You don't watch the news.

# JOHN

(grinning) Mr. Goldman told the class about it 3rd period.

## TONY

(looking into his glass) Well, it's obvious that whoever is taking these kids will be asking for a ransom sooner or later. It's like he's just collecting them.

Tony looks up.

# TONY (CONT'D)

I don't think we need to worry about these kids getting hurt. We just need to find them.

## JOHN

(laughing) Why are you so sure about them being close, anyway?

## TONY

Well, think about it. All these kids' folks got some money, right? If this guy was just chopping them up somewhere, I don't think that would matter. I have a feeling they're just being held somewhere.

RAY (nodding) Makes sense to me.

JOHN Okay, what's the reward on the other two?

## RAY

Well, the first one is up to \$40,000 and the second is \$50,000. Nothing on an award for the third one yet. Shit, well he can stay where he's at then.

RAY That's horrible.

JOHN I'm just playin'.

TONY

Okay, we need to establish where we're going to look. We need to hit everywhere the cops haven't.

SHAWN

I was thinking maybe we should check out those abandoned warehouses on the outskirts of town.

TONY They had investigators out there last night.

JOHN How bout' them old ass empty houses out by highway 50?

TONY Okay, we'll start first thing tomorrow, about ten. We'll just meet here in the morning, okay? (hands Ray a list) Here is list of the spots hit by my pops and his investigators. Draw up a map.

RAY

Cool.

INT. DETECTIVE MILLS' HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tony stands at the kitchen counter preparing a sandwich. He spreads mayonnaise on one slice of bread, adds cheese, lettuce and sliced ham to the other, then slaps it together.

INT. LIVING ROOM

His father walks through the front door. The detective looks exhausted from a long day of work.

His eyes droop and his shoulders sag. He loosens his tie as he walks to the kitchen.

# INT. KITCHEN

He walks passed his son to the refrigerator. Not a word is spoken by either of them. The small kitchen is crowded but they saunter as if the other person isn't there. The detective opens the refrigerator and takes a beer from a shelf.

As he turns around, Tony is coming to the refrigerator. He contorts his body to avoid coming in contact with his son. As Tony searches around the shelves of the fridge, the detective grabs the succulent ham sandwich from the counter.

## INT. LIVING ROOM

As the detective walks to the living room and sits on the couch, he takes a monstrous bite out of the sandwich. The lettuce CRUNCHES under his teeth.

## INT. KITCHEN

The sound alerts Tony as he turns around and looks to the counter. He looks on in disbelief as his sandwich is no longer there. He slams the refrigerator door and heads to the living room.

#### INT. LIVING ROOM

Tony stands by the couch, infuriated but speechless. His father stares into the TV screen, imprudent to his son's presence. He bites into the sandwich like it's the best he's ever tasted. After about thirty seconds, Tony exhales and walks down the hallway.

# INT. HALLWAY

DETECTIVE MILLS (O.S.) Could have used a little more mayonnaise.

Tony doesn't break stride, walks into his room and slams the door in frustration.

INT. DAVISES' HOUSE - JAMIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jamie lies on her bed reading a book. Her music plays quietly on her radio. Her cellphone vibrates on the dresser. As it vibrates, it moves along the dresser, nearing the edge.

Just as the phone falls off of the dresser, Jamie catches it. She looks at the caller ID and is visibly upset at who is calling, but she answers.

> JAMIE (into phone, irritated) Yes?

A voice comes through the phone that only Jamie can hear and decipher. She looks over at her bedroom door as she hears FOOTSTEPS.

JAMIE (CONT'D) (into phone, light whisper) Yeah, yeah, okay, I'll see you Monday, I gotta go.

Denise knocks twice and pushes Jamie's bedroom door open. Jamie quickly hangs up the phone and turns to the opening door.

DENISE (suspicious) Why did you hang up so fast? Who was that?

JAMIE (nervous) Oh, it was the wrong number.

DENISE (doubtful) A wrong number that you'll see on Monday?

Jamie, looking surprised, puts the phone to her side and takes a few seconds to answer.

JAMIE Well Mom, that was Diane. I know you don't like her.

DENISE That pregnant girl? You know I don't like you being associated with filth like that. (MORE)

# DENISE (CONT'D)

Her parents should be ashamed and I'm sure they are. That girl is younger than you, isn't she?

## JAMIE

I know, but she's really having a hard time right now. We were friends before all that.

## DENISE

Yeah, I bet she is. Well, your friends always could come to you with their problems. Sometimes I worry about how you may perceive life due to some of the stupid things your friends do. No good, gets you <u>nowhere</u>.

## JAMIE

You don't have to worry about me, Mom. I don't follow anybody. I got this teenager thing by the throat.

#### DENISE

Yeah, I hope so. Come eat your dinner. I made chocolate chip pancakes.

JAMIE (stunned) Chocolate chip, Mom?

DENISE You know I make those pancakes for her every Friday night. It made me feel good today.

Tears form in Denise's eyes. She turns to walk away and speaks with her back turned.

DENISE (CONT'D) Now, come eat before they get cold.

Jamie stands there in the middle of her room, still holding her cellphone. She looks down at it and then puts it in her back pocket.

EXT. BOB'S BIG CHEESE PIZZA - DAY

CLOSE ON Tony's wristwatch showing 11:17 AM.

TONY (O.S.) Where is this fool? Didn't we say 10?

Tony paces back and forth on the sidewalk, looking at his watch repeatedly. Shawn and John are sitting against the wall of the pizza parlor. John pulls out a cigar blunt from his jacket pocket. He pulls out a small blade and splits the blunt down the middle.

After dumping out the tobacco, he then proceeds to pack it with marijuana. He licks the ends, then turns it to the side, licks the flap and folds it closed. He pulls a lighter from his back pocket and lights the tightly wrapped blunt.

Shawn sits next to him dozing off. He blinks his eyes a few times, wipes them, and then looks over at John.

SHAWN Man, you smoke more cigarettes than my mom.

John smiles and blows smoke into Shawn's face. Shawn lets out a rough, choking cough, and covers his face.

JOHN (giggling) Does that smell like tobacco, dude?

Tony continues to look down the street. Finally, he sees Ray walk around the corner. Tony throws his hands in the air and points to his watch.

TONY (shouting, irritated) Hurry the hell up. We've been waiting for you for over an hour, dumb ass.

RAY Blah, blah, blah. What do you want me to say, I overslept.

TONY Lazy bastard, let's go.

Tony motions to the other two boys. John and Shawn stand up.

EXT. CREEKWALK - DAY

All four boys, now together, walk along a creekwalk.

The creek walls are ten feet high and the water is about a foot deep. The bed and walls are covered with rocks and boulders.

Ray reaches into his backpack and pulls out a self-drawn map.

CLOSE ON elementary quality sketching of the city. Red and green circles are drawn all over it.

RAY T, I used the info you gave me and drew this up. (pointing) I've marked the spots the cops have looked in red and the green circles are where they haven't. Alright folks, the first place is the old Kennedy and Jones houses.

TONY

Eh, that's cool. Shawn, you and Ray hit the Kennedys' and me and John will check out the Joneses'.

SHAWN Can I ask why you refer to them by name like that?

JOHN

(pointing) You see them houses waaaay down there?

We see, off in the distance, a group of decrepit houses a mile away.

TONY

They're old and unlivable because of the plumbing or something. Each house is named for the last family that lived there. The guy that owns the property won't sell to the city and is too damn cheap to fix the problems, so they've just been collecting dust for years.

JOHN Oh and Mr. Kennedy shot his wife seven times. And when...

RAY When Mr. Jones came over to see what was going on... TONY Mr. Kennedy shot him.

JOHN Then he shot himself in the head twice.

SHAWN How do you shoot yourself in the head twice?

JOHN (laughing) I guess when he realized he didn't get the job done, he gave it another shot.

RAY (laughing) If at first you don't succeed, right?

EXT. JONES HOUSE - DAY

A set of two old houses sit vacant. The paint is fading and peeling and sections of the roofs are caving in.

SQUAWKING black birds perch atop the roofs. Tony and John stand on the porch of the Jones house. The front door is an off-white color. Old dusty blankets cover the windowless panes.

JOHN Should we knock first?

TONY Hell no, don't knock. We might wake up Mr. Jones.

JOHN

Not funny.

TONY (smiling) You asked, dummy.

Tony turns the knob, opens the door, and takes a step in. John follows closely behind him.

INT. JONES HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The boys look around at the empty room. It is extremely dark except for small beams of sunlight shining through the corners of the blanketed windows. Tony takes a flashlight from his back pocket and shines it in their path.

Roaches and spiders scurry across the floor as the boys take their first steps into the house. John looks down and sees the bugs crawling as they pass through a small ray of sunlight.

> JOHN Holy shit, dude, you see all them damn bugs?

TONY You want a piggyback ride or what?

Tony directs the beam to the floor. He sees the spiders and roaches scattering.

TONY (CONT'D) Yeah, that is pretty gross.

The boys hear a CREAKING noise as Tony steps onto a black tarp on the floor. The boys stop and look at each other. Tony hands John the flashlight. He then reaches down and pulls the heavy tarp back, revealing a basement door.

> JOHN (shaking his head) Hey, that's all you, buddy.

TONY Thanks, chicken shit.

John continues to flash the light onto the door. Tony reaches down and grabs the door handle. He pulls it open slowly.

Suddenly, a SCREAM is heard from outside. Tony drops the door, startled.

TONY (CONT'D) (looking at John) What the hell was that?

JOHN Sounded like Shawn. EXT. JONES HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Tony and John run to the outside of the house. Shawn is between the two homes, leaning over and breathing heavily.

Tony looks up and sees Ray laughing as he walks towards Shawn. Ray claps his hands in amusement.

RAY (laughing) Now that's funny.

JOHN What the hell were you two doin' over there?

RAY It was just a little cat . It's dark as night in that damn house. T, I guess you were the only one smart enough to bring a flashlight.

Ray walks over to Shawn and puts his hand on his shoulder.

RAY (CONT'D) As we walked in, he was in front of me. That bastard came out of the dark and jumped on him. He screamed bloody murder and knocked me down gettin' out the door.

Tony and John walk over to Shawn, who is still panting, trying to catch his breath. Tony puts his hand on his back.

TONY (lightly laughing) You alright, man?

Shawn looks up at Tony. He has a few scratches on his face.

SHAWN (panting, embarrassed) Yeah, I'm fine.

Ray takes a T-shirt out of his backpack and gives it to Shawn.

SHAWN (CONT'D) Thanks, I probably need a rabies shot now.

Shawn dabs the scratches with the T-shirt.

RAY Did you quys find anything?

INT. JONES HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Tony lifts up the basement door. It CREAKS loudly as he opens it. It slams against the floor as the door flips back. John shines the flashlight into the open space.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Tony goes down the steps and the other boys follow him. He takes the flashlight from John. He pans the room slowly with the light. He sees nothing but dusty boxes and shelves consisting of paint cans. The floor is covered with dust also.

> TONY (to the group) Man, ain't nothin' down here.

As he continues to pan the floor, he spots a foot print, then another and another.

TONY (CONT'D) Whoa, we got some foot prints, and old as this place is, they've got to be fresh.

Tony continues down to the bottom of the steps. The other boys follow him down. John pulls out his cellphone and uses it as a light.

> RAY (to the group, pointing) What's that?

Ray points at a bucket in the corner of the room. The boys walk over to it. Tony shines the light inside. They are shocked at what they see. Urine sits at the bottom of the bucket.

> TONY That's sick, man.

Tony pans into the other corner of the room with the light and sees a blanket and small mattress. Ray walks over to the mattress and pulls back the blanket revealing two pillows. There are candy wrappers and soda cans scattered about.

The boys look around at one another and nod their heads.

RAY Okay, can we get the hell out of here please? It stinks in here.

The group walks to the ladder and exit one by one.

EXT. JONES HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

They come out the front door and proceed down the street. The mood amongst them is depressing.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

RAY (quietly) That wasn't cool, man.

JOHN Nah, that shit was sick. But where the hell are they, though?

TONY Apparently, this guy must be moving the kids around.

John looks over at Shawn, who is hanging his head low.

JOHN What's wrong with you?

Each of the boys' look to Shawn. He puts one hand over his eyes. The group stops.

SHAWN (holding back tears) Um, I've never told any of you guys this before... (beat) But...um...

Tony walks over to Shawn and puts his arm around him.

TONY They found his little brother's body at Lake Shasta eight years ago.

RAY (shocked) Wow man, I didn't know that.

Shawn looks at Tony.

## TONY

My dad told me about it a while ago. You called my house for me one day. I guess he answered the phone and asked who you were. When I got off the phone with you, he asked me your last name. I told him and he told me about your family and what y'all had went through. He told me that sometime after that, he brought me to your house so we could play together. I think we went to different schools then.

Shawn wipes tears from his eyes.

SHAWN

Yeah man, seeing that shit just made me think about what Nathan probably went through. After we lost him I thought I was hurting, but my parents just lost it. I don't think they were ever the same after that.

The boys proceed down the street. Tony looks over at Shawn's reddened face and then to the ground. Tony wears a worried look. Ray pulls out the map.

RAY Alright folks, where to next?

## JOHN

(pointing to a spot) Let's check out the overpass.

# TONY

(concerned) By 27th street? Hell no. It's like a damn psychiatric ward over there.

JOHN (in a motherly voice to Tony) Ahhh, baby, don't worry, I'll protect you. (then to Ray) (MORE) JOHN (CONT'D) Eh, Ray you got some pictures of them kids, right?

RAY Yeah, I got a few out of the newspaper. With all them crazy fools over there, there is bound to be a baby snatcher amongst them.

JOHN Come on you pussies. We'll all be together. You cool Shawn?

SHAWN Yeah Johnny, I'm cool man, let's go.

RAY (pointing straight ahead, shouting) To the crazy house.

TONY (quietly) Oh, boy.

INT. OVERPASS TUNNEL - UNDER FREEWAY - DAY

The overpass stands thirty feet into the air. There is a dome-shaped walkway under the ten lanes of highway traffic. The group of boys stand at the end of the tunnel and observe the OCCUPANTS of the area.

Bonfires are ablaze and light the tunnel. Burning oil drums are surrounded by groups of MEN and WOMEN. They are all dressed in raggedy old clothing. Some lie on the ground under old blankets. Some are talking to others, some are talking to themselves.

They toss newspaper and other trash into the barrels of flame to keep the fires going. A MAN bends over by a barrel and defecates onto a newspaper page. He grabs another piece of paper and wipes himself. He then folds and picks up the newspaper from the ground and throws it into a nearby burning fire.

> TONY (disgusted, to the group) Y'all had to come to this damn place.

Ray takes out a newspaper clipping consisting of three photos, one of each child, and hands it to Tony.

He and Ray then split in separate directions. Shawn and John stand at the entrance. Their bodies are tense and ready.

Suddenly, Shawn's shoulder is forcibly jerked backward. John looks over and sees a WOULD-BE THIEF pulling on Shawn's backpack, attempting to snatch it from his shoulder. John quickly grabs the hand from Shawn's backpack and twists the man's fingers backward. The would-be thief winces in pain as he falls to his knees.

The commotion has garnered the attention of the other occupants. Now with the would-be thief to his knees and one hand twisted back, John gives him a quick right hand punch to the jaw. The man crumbles to the ground holding his mouth in pain.

A silence fills the entire tunnel.

JOHN

(shouting) We just came here to ask you nice folks if you've seen any of these kids. That's all. We didn't come here to bother you or cause any trouble, but if you fuck with me or any of my boys, then you're gonna get laid out. You got that?

RAY (shouting, holding up the photo) Amber, age seven, Samuel, age nine, and Stanley age six. If you've seen any of these kids or know anything about where they might be, then let us know. If not, then we will leave you be.

As Ray and Tony walk around holding the pictures, there is a common "no" from the group of people as the shake their heads.

RAY (CONT'D) (quietly, to Tony) Man, let's go. These people don't know shit.

The group of boys come together and start for the exit of the tunnel. As they leave, they walk past the would-be thief, still lying on the ground.

John takes the newspaper clipping from Ray, bends down and shows the would-be thief. The would-be thief shakes his head from left to right.

John pumps his fist, causing him to flinch in fear. The other boys laugh quietly. They all then proceed to the tunnel exit together.

# SHAWN

Thanks, Johnny.

JOHN (to Shawn, throwing his arm around his neck) I told you pussies I had your back, didn't I?

INT. DETECTIVE MILLS' OFFICE - DAY

The detective sits at his desk going over a report. A sentence on the page jumps out at him.

DETECTIVE MILLS (to himself) Girl seen sneaking out of the house. Where the hell is she going?

INT. DETECTIVE MILLS' CAR - TRAVELING - DAY

Detective Mills makes a right-hand turn onto Cullen St. He pulls up to the home of Mr. Dillman.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

He gets out of the car, looks across the street, and notices the chain on the Davises' backyard gate.

EXT. MR. DILLMAN'S HOUSE - DAY

The detective walks up to the door of Mr. Dillman and knocks. After a few seconds he knocks again. We hear a dog BARKING.

INT. MR. DILLMAN'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Dillman sits on his toilet grunting and rocking back and forth.

MR. DILLMAN (to himself) Hold on, damn. The king can't have no peace? He gets off the toilet, pulls his pants up, and walks toward the front door. The dog continues to BARK.

INT. LIVING ROOM

MR. DILLMAN (to dog) Shut up Elvira.

The big GERMAN SHEPARD in the backyard puts her paws up to the glass door.

Mr. Dillman reaches the front door and opens it.

DETECTIVE MILLS (holding up his badge) Hello Mr. Dillman, I'm Detective Anthony Mills with the San Frio Police Department.

MR. DILLMAN I know who you are. I seen you on the TV.

DETECTIVE MILLS (walking through door) I'm sorry to bother you sir, but I just had a few questions. I didn't catch you at a bad time did I?

The detective, with his hands in his pockets, scans the living room area as he walks in.

Mr. Dillman glares at the back of the detective, surprised at how he just invited himself in.

MR. DILLMAN (sarcastic) Well come on in, detective. Would you like some coffee?

DETECTIVE MILLS No thank you.

As the detective gets closer to the sliding glass door, the dog in the backyard goes crazy, BARKING and clawing at the glass.

The detective stops in the kitchen, ten feet away from the glass door, and looks at the dog.

DETECTIVE MILLS (CONT'D) Wow, that's a big German Shepard you got there. He doesn't like strangers too much, huh?

Mr. Dillman paces the living room with his hands on his hips.

MR. DILLMAN Nah, <u>she</u> just don't like the police.

DETECTIVE MILLS (grinning) Is that right? How long you had her?

MR. DILLMAN Oh, I've had her since she was a pup. She's half blind and half deaf, but that's my baby.

Mr. Dillman hunches over and back up again.

DETECTIVE MILLS (frowning at the old man's strange movements) You alright, sir?

The old man, holding his stomach, tilts his head toward the open bathroom door down the hall.

MR. DILLMAN If you don't mind, I gotta finish a little business. I got that irritable bowel problem with my guts.

DETECTIVE MILLS (gesturing to the bathroom door) Oh, by all means.

INT. HALLWAY

Mr. Dillman frantically rushes down the hallway to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM

He pulls his pants down and sits on the toilet.

The detective walks closer to the sliding glass door.

DETECTIVE MILLS (quietly, to dog) I'm one of the good guys, girl.

The dog, still BARKING, continues to gnaw and claw at the glass with fierce intent.

MR. DILLMAN (O.S.) (speaking loudly from the bathroom) What'd you want to ask me about, detective?

The detective looks around the living room. He goes to the kitchen, then back to the living room, scanning both areas.

INT. LIVING ROOM

DETECTIVE MILLS (shouting) Well, I just wanted to follow up on some of the things Officer Nell talked to you about.

He hears a CREAK as he steps on a throw rug in the middle of the floor. He kneels down and pulls one corner back, revealing a basement door with a lock on it. He throws the rug back over and continues to pace around the living room.

> DETECTIVE MILLS (CONT'D) (shouting) You mentioned to my officer that you've seen the older Davis girl sneaking out at night. How often was that?

He gets closer to the sliding glass door and sees the dog, now content, lying down and gnawing on a dirty teddy bear with a red ribbon and bell around it's plush neck. He looks at the teddy bear as if it looks familiar to him.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. DETECTIVE MILLS' OFFICE - DAY

The detective grins at a photo he's holding.

CLOSE ON photo of Amber Davis holding her teddy bear.
INT. LIVING ROOM

The detective looks over towards the area rug, suspiciously.

INT. BATHROOM

MR. DILLMAN (grunting in between words) Uhhh...I don't know...maybe a few times a week.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Detective Mills takes his radio from his belt, eyes fixed on the dog and teddy bear.

DETECTIVE MILLS (into radio, quietly) This is Mills, I need two units at 935 Cullen St., North Village. <u>Now</u>.

The toilet FLUSHES just as the detective puts his radio in his belt and draws his gun.

Mr. Dillman adjusts his belt as he walks around the corner and into the living room to a 9mm Beretta pointed at him. The detective stares down the barrel, his target locked.

> DETECTIVE MILLS (CONT'D) (stern) Hands up, you son-of-a-bitch.

MR. DILLMAN (adjusting his belt) What is this about, detective?

DETECTIVE MILLS I said hands up and turn to stone or I pump one in your heart.

MR. DILLMAN (throwing his hands high) Okay, okay.

The detective steps over to Mr. Dillman, turns him around and pushes him face-down on the couch.

He climbs on top of him, pulls a set of handcuffs from his back pocket and shackles the old man.

INT. MR. DILLMAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER Two officers, BANE and CHO, enter through the front door.

> DETECTIVE MILLS (to Bane) Check the house.

Officer Bane takes off down the hallway. The other officer and Detective Mills go to the area rug in the floor.

DETECTIVE MILLS (CONT'D) (to Mr. Dillman) Where's the key?

Mr. Dillman is on the couch, hands behind his back.

MR. DILLMAN You wanna tell me what this is about, detective?

DETECTIVE MILLS I think you know exactly what this is about. Now, where's the damn key?

Mr. Dillman motions his head toward a key hanging on the wall in the kitchen. Officer Cho walks over and grabs it.

> MR. DILLMAN I haven't been down there in a while.

The officer comes over to the area rug, kneels down, and unlocks the bolt with the key. He stands up and pulls the basement door open, slamming it back against the floor.

Officer Cho comes into the living room shaking his head.

CHO Nothing, sir.

DETECTIVE MILLS (pointing to Mr. Dillman) If he moves, shoot him in the knee cap.

Detective Mills goes down the ladder and Officer Bane follows him.

INT. WINE CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

The officer reaches for a light switch. He flips it and a small light hanging from the ceiling shines dimly. The two look around.

There are wine shelves on each wall consisting of various bottles. The officer takes a bottle off of one of the shelves and examines the label.

BANE Damn, 1902. Check this out, detective.

# DETECTIVE MILLS Put that shit down.

The officer quickly puts the bottle back in place on the shelf. He then proceeds to examine the shelves and surrounding floor with his flashlight.

The officer shines his light into the corner of the room and spots something on the otherwise empty floor. He kneels down and picks up a small balled up piece of cloth.

# BANE Sir, I think I've found something.

The detective takes it from the officer, holds it up to the light and unravels it. It is a small, pink sock with a heart design.

Detective Mills looks at the officer with a definitive look. The officer darts to the stairs and up. The detective follows.

INT. LIVING ROOM

The detective walks up to Mr. Dillman.

DETECTIVE MILLS (holding up the sock) Well, Oliver, you are under arrest for the abduction of seven-year-old Amber Davis and any of those other kids I can connect you with. Now, where the hell are they? Where'd you move them to? MR. DILLMAN Well, <u>Anthony</u>, I don't know what the hell you're talkin' about and I ain't sayin' shit else til' I see a lawyer.

The detective signals for the officers to take him away. He follows behind them. Officer Bane begins reading the man his Miranda Rights.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

The room is dimly lit. A ten-foot-long, metal table sits in the middle of the four gray walls. A man in his 40s sits in a chair directly across from Mr. Dillman. He is AGENT MARCOS, Cuban, dark blue suit, and a face of stone that looks like it has never smiled. A manila folder sits on the table in front of him.

The men sit, staring at each other, as if waiting for the other to blink. Detective Mills stands next to Mr. Dillman's chair, arms folded.

DETECTIVE MILLS Okay, we're gonna get straight to it Oliver.

Mr. Dillman sarcastically looks around the small room.

MR. DILLMAN I don't see no lawyer around here, do you?

# DETECTIVE MILLS

(angry) Look, we have enough evidence to throw your old ass in a cell right now. We got the kid's bear in your backyard, the sock in your basement. These families' are going through hell and I frankly don't have time to be bullshitting around with you. I know you know where they are. (pounds his fist on the table) So, I'm gonna ask you one...more...time. Where are the

fucking children?

MR. DILLMAN (frowns) What children? AGENT MARCOS Amber Davis, Samuel Smith, and Stanley Suranto.

MR. DILLMAN What I want with some bad-ass kids? I got a dog.

The agent opens the manila folder and looks over a group of papers inside.

AGENT MARCOS I have a report here from ten years ago involving charges against you for molestation. We also have the two items found at your home. What we have here is concise enough to point to you as our number one suspect in this case. You can give us the location of these children or you can die by lethal injection before your next birthday. Your call.

He pushes the open folder to Mr. Dillman's side. Still cuffed, the old man leans over to look at it.

DETECTIVE MILLS You really like little boys and girls, don't you Oliver?

Mr. Dillman smirks and looks away.

MR. DILLMAN This is all BS, detective. My exwife was fillin' my grandbaby's head with a bunch of crap. You can see in there that there wasn't no proof. The charges were even dropped. I never saw my grandbaby again after that. I got Elvira and told myself I'd never be close to no toddler again.

AGENT MARCOS Do you know what circumstantial evidence is, Mr. Dillman?

## MR. DILLMAN

Y'all must think I'm a damn fool? I know you need more than some tenyear-old lies to get me on a circumstance. I watch Court TV. The detective gets in Mr. Dillman's face, about three inches from his nose.

DETECTIVE MILLS You really think so?

Mr. Dillman looks directly into Detective Mill's eyes.

MR. DILLMAN (sniffs and nods his head) I think that mix of liquor and musty ass cologne is why my dog don't like you.

The detective grins, turns away, and exits the room. As the door closes behind him, he stops and sniffs his shoulder. He looks up and meets eyes with a nearby male OFFICER.

OFFICER #2 (confused) What?

INT. DARK ROOM - NIGHT

A small lamp shines dimly from the corner of the room. Spider webs hang from the ceiling like jungle bush. Shelves of paint cans, boxes, old beat-up chairs, and tools surround the room. It has a resemblance to an old stock room.

Stanley lies unconscious on the floor. Amber sits next to him on her knees. She continuously nudges him, trying to wake him up.

> AMBER (O.S.) Hey little boy, wake up. Wake up little boy.

Another young boy walks over to Stanley and pours a bottle of water on his face. He still doesn't move. The boy, Sam, looks puzzled. He looks at Amber.

SAM It works in the movies.

Amber pulls her hand back and slaps Stanley in the face. His legs start to move, then his head. He MURMURS and lifts his head. He begins crying. Amber caresses his forehead.

AMBER

It's okay. What's your name?

Stanley stands up. He has trouble coming to his feet. Sam and Amber help him.

STANLEY Where's my mommy? (looking around) What is this place?

SAM We don't know what this <u>place</u> is.

AMBER He just brought you here a little while ago.

STANLEY Who brought me here?

SAM Some crazy fool who's luck is gonna run out as soon as my dad finds him.

AMBER He brought all of us here. He says he won't hurt us though.

Stanley walks around the room. He walks over and pulls the lamp shade off of the lamp. The room brightens.

STANLEY

So we've been captured? How long have you guys been in here?

AMBER

I don't know.

SAM I think it's been a couple days. My name is Sam, by the way.

AMBER

And I'm Amber. I'm seven and he's nine. How old are you?

STANLEY

I'm six. My name is Stanley Salvador Suranto.

Stanley continues to walk along the wall looking for something.

AMBER

What are you doing Stanley? Don't mess with that window. You're going to make him really mad.

Stanley now stands in front of a glass window on one side of the room. He pulls on it, but it is locked from the outside by a piece of wood jammed in the sill.

#### SAM

# We tried that already.

Stanley walks over to the lamp in the corner, takes it off the small table and puts it on the ground. He pulls the small table over to the window and climbs on top of it.

He kicks at the glass window, but fails to break it. He kicks again, but with more force, nothing happens. Sam notices what Stanley is doing and walks over to help.

Sam gets up on the table and kicks the glass, but it still doesn't break. Stanley steps down to the floor. He motions to Sam to get off of the table also. They move the table from the window.

Stanley lightly pushes Sam aside and takes a few steps back. He takes a karate stance and rushes the glass, delivering a powerful roundhouse kick that SHATTERS the window.

## STANLEY

(shouting) Hiyaaaaa.

Stanley then screams and falls to the ground in pain, grabbing his leg. The glass has cut into his pant leg. He lies on the floor crying hysterically and holding the wound.

Amber rushes over and leans down next to him.

AMBER (concerned) Let me see, let me see.

She grabs his pant leg and rolls it up. She sees a small cut made by the sharp glass.

AMBER (CONT'D) (reassuring) Oh Stanley, this is tiny.

She takes some toilet paper and dabs the blood. Stanley continues to cry. She motions to Sam to give her something on the ground.

Sam hands her an old dusty roll of tape. She folds some tissue, puts it over the cut and tapes around Stanley's leg. She then folds his pant leg down. He wipes tears and winces in pain as he comes to his feet, shaking his doctored leg. AMBER (CONT'D) (proudly) See, now good as new.

Sam walks back over to the broken window. He picks up a piece of wood and knocks the remaining glass pieces from the window panel. He looks over at Amber.

SAM I'll go get help.

AMBER (quietly) Sam don't, he's probably out there.

With that, Sam pulls the table back over, climbs on top and proceeds to climb out the window. He bends and twists his body trying to avoid the glass shards still attached to the window panel. He eventually reaches the outside.

EXT. SIDE OF BUILDING - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

He goes to stand up and is grabbed from the side. A MAN dressed in all black and wearing a ski mask puts his hand over Sam's mouth and starts to drag him. Sam swings his arms and kicks his feet, but the man is too strong. The man speaks in a deep voice with a southern accent.

> MAN #2 Where you goin' boy? I was coming to bring y'all some food. Now guess what?

He drags Sam, still fighting, through a passageway.

INT. PASSAGEWAY

He opens a door with his free hand and throws Sam inside.

INT. DARK ROOM

As he falls to the floor, Amber rushes to his side.

AMBER You alright, Sam?

SAM (coming to his feet) Yeah, I'm fine. The two kids turn and glare at the man, his body engulfed in the shadows.

MAN #2 (loudly) I told y'all to chill out in here. I told you I wasn't gonna hurt you, didn't I? Now you can thank your buddy here for your stomachs goin' hungry tonight.

The door slams shut and LOCKS.

INT. PASSAGEWAY

The man walks back down the passageway to the side of the building.

EXT. SIDE OF BUILDING

He pushes an old metal dumpster, on wheels, in front of the broken window.

He locks the wheels, picks up a greasy paper bag from the ground, opens it, takes out a handful of french fries, tosses the bag into the dumpster, and walks away.

INT. DAVISES' HOUSE - JAMIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jamie lies on her bed facing a wall. She speaks softly into her cellphone, her stereo BLARING.

JAMIE (into phone) You know he called me Pebbles the other day? He hasn't called me that in forever.

INT. TONY MILLS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

TONY

(into phone) Oh yeah, the best I get is dumb ass, and that's when he's in a good mood. He stands in front of his holy grail everyday and thinks about what I <u>haven't</u> become. He says I have no goals and I'm moving on a one way street in the wrong direction. (MORE)

## TONY (CONT'D)

No matter what the hell I do, it's never good enough. He thought he could bring me out here and mold me like some damn Play-Doh into his quintessential idea of a son.

INTERCUT with Jamie's bedroom.

## JAMIE

(into phone)

I remember last year when Amber got a F on a reading test. It was for some book that she conveniently forgot to read. Oh my God, you should have heard him. He was telling her how she was gonna be a fuck-up just like me. He said she failed the test like he's failing again as a father.

#### TONY

(into phone) Hey, it'll be alright. Just think about it. After all this, he'll realize how special both of y'all are to him.

## JAMIE

(into phone, quietly) No, it's not alright.

#### TONY

(into phone) What do you mean?

## JAMIE

(into phone) You know, after all this, one thing won't stop eating away at me.

## TONY

(into phone) What's that?

JAMIE (into phone, voice cracking) None of this is her fault.

Jamie buries her face into her bed comforter. For a few seconds, aside from the radio, there is an uncomfortable silence between the two. She brings her face up, reddened, tears flowing.

# JAMIE (CONT'D) (into phone, sniffing) I don't know. This is starting to be too much. My mom is going crazy, she hardly says a word. My dad is a freakin' mess.

## TONY

(into phone, angrily)
What the hell are you saying? You
told me you couldn't stand them and
how it's always about little Amber.
You said you wanted to leave this
shitty place with me. You forget
about me?
 (beat)
You forget about <u>us</u>?

## JAMIE

(into phone) No...I don't know. I just don't think I thought this through. Maybe I was just angry? I don't know. I love my family and seeing them go through this is killing me. I'm sorry, I know you're upset.

## TONY

(into phone) Of course I'm...oh fuckin' whatever.

He hangs up. Tony flops onto his bed and stares up at the ceiling as if looking for the answers to all his problems.

INT. DARK ROOM - NIGHT

Amber, Stan and Sam sit together on the floor. The lamp in the corner gives off a light, yellow hue. Amber slaps at a spider web tangled in her hair.

> AMBER Ewwww, I hate creepy crawlies.

SAM What's a creepy crawly?

AMBER They're creepy and they crawl on you. They even bite you sometimes. The group watches as a spider crawls on the floor in front of Stanley's knee. With one powerful THUMP, he smashes it with his fist.

## STANLEY

No more creeping for that one.

#### SAM

Who is this guy? What does he want with us?

AMBER I don't know, but I don't like him at all. He came in my room and took me out of my bed. Then he told me that he would kill my mommy and daddy if I made any noise.

SAM

I was at the park in the bathroom when he came in and put something over my face. It was like that laughing gas at the dentist. Next thing I knew I was waking up on the floor with you above me. You think our parents are looking for us?

## AMBER

My daddy's looking for me. I know he is. How did he get you, Stanley?

#### STANLEY

I don't remember anything. I saw a toy, then I saw you.

Stanley scans the room as he speaks, his forehead wrinkled, his eyes peering. There are cardboard boxes stacked in the corner, a ladder leaning against a wall, and a number of shards from the shattered window on the floor. He surveys the items intensively, like his brain is working out a math problem.

> SAM What school do you guys go to?

AMBER I go to Wilson and my teacher is Mrs. Clary.

SAM Jefferson.

# STANLEY (still looking around) I have home school.

AMBER Why do you have home school?

## STANLEY

(looks at Amber) My mom says it's cause' I don't get along with the other kids. Last year this big boy took my sandwich from me. I went home and told my brother and he said that if he tries it again to give him a sandwich he'll never forget.

#### SAM

A knuckle sandwich, that's funny.

## AMBER

What the heck is a knuckle sandwich? That sounds gross.

## STANLEY

I knocked two of his teeth out. After that I kinda' just took over and started punkin' the other kids, even the older ones. Then the principal found out and she told my mom that I couldn't go to public school no more.

AMBER

I'm sorry Stanley, but you've got to remember that no good gets you nowhere.

## STANLEY

I sit at home, watch TV and play with my toys and Xbox all day.

## SAM

Lucky.

## STANLEY

(sadly) I do miss my mommy and my brother, though. My big brother Miguel is in the army.

AMBER Is he in Iraq? STANLEY Yeah, looking for Osama Been Hidin'. That's what he calls him. He said they're gonna find him, hang him upside down like a pinata, and beat him to death.

Stanley comes to his feet and gingerly walks along the wall, looking down at the floor. He bends down and picks up a glass shard from the floor. He grabs a roll of toilet paper from a box and begins to wrap up one side of the glass.

Sam and Amber sit and watch the young boy at work. He has the look of a soldier preparing for battle.

STANLEY (CONT'D) (pointing) Can you throw me that tape?

Sam leans over, picks up the tape from the ground and tosses it to Stanley. He catches it with one hand and proceeds to overlap the tissue, tightly with the tape.

Stanley then holds the finished product in the air to show the other two.

STANLEY (CONT'D) You guys know what this is?

AMBER Did you just make a knife, Stanley?

SAM No, that's a shiv.

STANLEY No, it's our way out of here.

INT. THE SPOT - DAY

The billiards joint has pool tables and arcade cabinets scattered around the room. This must be the after-school hangout, as a plethora of boisterous TEENAGERS are sprinkled about the area. They shoot pool, slap air hockey pucks, and mash on game buttons.

Tony and John stand side-by-side in a dark corner, playing a game, secluded from the other teens. No one is in hearing distance.

ON GAME MONITOR: Two men in karate uniforms punch and kick each other.

BACK TO SCENE

The boys smash on the buttons and move around the joysticks. Their bodies move with the joystick movements, back and forth, side to side.

TONY Hey, can I ask you something?

JOHN Yeah, what up?

TONY What are you gonna do after you graduate?

JOHN After I graduate? (laughs) I guess I ain't really thought about it. Well, I know ain't trying to go to no college or no shit like that. I'm gonna join a trade school or something. That's why this money will be hella cool for me. I can lay back for a while, help my mom pay some bills, and get me a new ride. Did you ever tell your uncle about the Celica?

TONY Nah, he's gonna be pissed though.

ON GAME MONITOR: One character gives the other a deadly kick to the head.

JOHN (O.S.) Oooh, nice.

BACK TO SCENE

JOHN (CONT'D) Come to think of it, I should make that asshole dad of your's get me some new wheels.

TONY You know he wants me to go in the army like he did?

JOHN Oh, hell no. He wants you to go to war and shit? TONY Yeah, I guess so. I don't think I'm down for any of that though.

The game concludes. Tony's character is victorious. The win is overshadowed by the discussion. The boys turn to each other.

JOHN He's still pissed off about what you did last year?

# TONY

(defensive) My mom is out there with two kids in a one bedroom apartment. The support wasn't doing shit for her. She was going to lose everything out there. Ya know, I just felt like, if he wasn't gonna help her, then I had to. He's always hated my ass anyway. That didn't make it any worse. He treats me like a fucking leper already.

JOHN

(laughing) Man, you gave her what, twothousand and something dollars of his money? You think he wasn't gonna' be upset?

Tony's attitude goes south. He is visibly shaken by the discussion.

JOHN (CONT'D) (serious) But hey, I ain't tryin' to judge you, bro.

TONY

I know, man.
 (beat)
But I'm still his son. He treats
me like the stranger that ruined
his life. He doesn't even talk to
me unless he's smashed.

JOHN You must hate your dad, huh? TONY Nah man, I don't hate him. (beat) I just wish he didn't hate me.

JOHN So, what, you planning on taking off after this?

TONY Yeah, I think so.

JOHN Where you gonna go? What happened to making this a business and all that?

TONY Well, when we get this money, we'll be set. I don't think I'll have anything to worry about after this is done. Regardless of how it goes down, I need to get away from here. I realize that me and him can't have a normal relationship.

John takes a step back, and tilts his head to one side.

JOHN (suspicious) <u>When</u> we get this money? You talk like we've found them already?

TONY (quietly) Hey Johnny, I know, out of anybody, I can trust you, right?

Tony leans to the side, putting all of his weight on the arcade machine. He scans around the area.

JOHN (folding his arms) What?

TONY Well..... (hesitant) the kids...um...

Tony puts his head down and back up again. All of a sudden, Shawn and Ray walk through the door.

John continues to gaze at Tony, confused. Tony looks back at John and shakes his head slowly.

TONY Where y'all been?

RAY That asshole Mr. Nichols gave me thirty minute detention cause I was late this morning. (slaps Shawn in the arm) This dude was standing outside my class when I got out.

SHAWN (to Ray) Well, since my last period is next door, I decided I may as well wait for you. (to John) We knew you guys would be here playing this damn game. So, what's the hot spot for today?

John continues to glare at Tony.

JOHN Why don't you ask the fearless leader where we're going today?

Tony looks back at John, eyes fixed.

TONY We're gonna check out the old mill today, fellas.

EXT. CREEKWALK - DAY

The boys walk together along the creekwalk. John is visibly not himself. Ray is the first to notice.

RAY (to John) Your fish die or something? What's the matter?

John looks over at Tony who is having a conversation with Shawn.

JOHN (quietly) Nothing, man. RAY John, what the hell? You speechless for once? John throws his backpack to the ground. Ray jumps away and there is silence amongst the group. John gets in Tony's face. JOHN (angrily) What did you do? Tony looks around at the group. SHAWN What are you talking about, Johnny? JOHN (angrily) Answer me godammit! What the hell did you do? Tony looks up in the sky and back down. TONY I gotta tell you guys something. RAY Oh shit, what? Shawn and Ray stare at Tony. John has his fist balled up as if ready to throw a punch. TONY Now y'all are my best friends, right? You know I wouldn't hurt a fly if it was buggin' me. RAY Oh shit. JOHN Where are they, Tony? RAY (shocked) Dude, are you serious? You, T. No way, man.

90.

Shawn turns and walks away.

SHAWN I don't want no part of this shit.

RAY Shawn, man, hold up.

TONY Nah, let him go. He doesn't need to be a part of this anyway.

RAY (to Tony, walking backward) Man, this is still over a hundred grand we're talking about here.

Ray turns around and starts after Shawn.

RAY (CONT'D) Shawn, come on man. I'm sure the kids are fine. Let's just go get them and go claim this money.

Shawn, being twenty feet away from the group now, ignores Ray's plea. Ray, walking faster, finally catches up to Shawn. He puts his hand on Shawn's shoulder. Shawn shrugs him off and takes off running.

> SHAWN (shouting) All you assholes are crazy.

Shawn runs very close to the edge of the creek wall. Ray, running at top speed, catches up to him and tries to grab his backpack.

At the same time, Shawn starts to slow down. Ray inadvertently runs into him and his momentum knocks Shawn down. Shawn tumbles down the creek wall and slams his head onto a boulder, knocking him unconscious. He slowly rolls down to the ground and stops near the water.

Tony and John, seeing the fall, run to catch up with Ray. John heads down the creek bed to get Shawn. Ray grabs his arm.

RAY No, let's go get this money, man. JOHN Dude, we can't just leave him down there.

RAY You wanna join him? Me and T can split this bread two ways just fine.

John rushes toward Ray in a fit of anger. Tony stands between them and holds them apart.

JOHN (belligerent) Oh, you wanna threaten somebody now, bitch?

TONY (commanding) Look you guys, we need to hold it

together. Now, Shawn was probably gonna rat us out. We all know how weak he was.

John pulls away from Tony and darts down to the creek bed. He kneels down and puts a hand on Shawn's chest and neck, feeling for a pulse or heartbeat.

JOHN

(to the others) He's still alive.

TONY

Come on, we need to get the hell out of here. We gotta get this done tonight.

JOHN

What do you mean <u>we</u>? I'm down for a lot of shit, Tone, you know me. But this shit is twisted. Little kids, bro?

TONY

\$40,000 for the Davis kid, \$50,000 for the Smith kid and \$40,000 for the other one. That's \$130,000 between us. How twisted is that, huh? That's like forty-three grand apiece. Tell me you can't use that kind of bread? Your mom could pay a whole lot of bills with that. As John climbs back up to the top of the creek wall he speaks to Tony.

JOHN (angrily) Hey, lay off that. Don't you ever mention my mother again, you understand me?

John walks around in a circle with his hands on his hips and his head in the air. He looks down the creek and points to Shawn.

JOHN (CONT'D) And what about him?

Tony and Ray look down at Shawn's body.

RAY

Don't you think it'd look a little odd, us dragging his body out of there? (looking around) Shit, somebody could be watching us right now. You know he would have given us up the first chance he got.

JOHN No, you asshole, I mean, we can't just leave him down there.

TONY Look, the kids are at the steel mill. Let's get there and I'll call 911. I'll tell them I saw some teenager running and he fell into the creek or something.

John exhales. He walks up to Tony and Ray and glares into their eyes.

JOHN (sternly) After this shit is over and we got our money, I don't ever want to hear from either one of you again. We're done, you got that?

John turns and walks away from them. The two boys walk to catch up. The group walks with a warranted silence amongst them. They exit the creekwalk through a hole in the fence. Old vessels and blast furnaces stand high. The entire area is blanketed in fog and desolate as a ghost town. The three boys stand at the outer gate of the mill. It is a ten-foot-high fence with a chain and lock holding it shut.

> RAY We used to come here all the time and it wasn't ever locked.

Tony pulls out a key and unlocks the padlock. The heavy chain falls to the ground.

RAY (CONT'D)

Oh.

Tony pulls out his cellphone from his pocket. He looks over at John as he dials 911. He speaks into the phone with a heavy southern accent.

TONY

(into phone) Hello sir, I live at South Gray Gardens across from Swan Creek. Well, I was peekin' out my bedroom window and saw a young man fall into the creek. I don't know if he was commitin' suicide or what, but he ain't come back up yet. (pause) No sir, I'm in a wheel chair. (pause) Oh thank you, sir. I sure do hope the boy is alright.

Tony hangs up the phone. John beams at him angrily but doesn't say a word. Both look away.

## EXT. STEEL MILL - CONTINUOUS

The area is extremely dark as there are no lights. The moonlight gives off just enough light so the boys can see where they are walking.

Tony leads the way. They walk around the back of one of the buildings and come to a passageway. Tony leads the boys away from the dark entrance. He signals for them to come closer to him. The group huddles up. TONY (quietly) Look, now you two just follow my lead, alright? I don't care what you say, just work with me. The door is right down that passageway. RAY (quietly) No prob. JOHN (quietly) Whatever.

INT. PASSAGEWAY

The boys part and begin to walk down the passage towards a door.

TONY (loudly) Hey guys, I found a door over here.

RAY (loudly) Well, open it. They might be in there.

Tony takes out a key and gingerly sticks it into the bolt on the door. He turns the key slowly, trying to not make a sound. The bolt unlatches and he pockets it. As he slowly pushes the door open, the old hinges CREAK slightly.

INT. DARK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is pitch dark. The three boys, with Tony leading the way, step inside. A small ray of moonlight shines through the opening of the door.

A YELL comes from the darkness, and a hand grasping a shiv, swings through the air towards Tony. Ray catches the arm and snatches the homemade shiv from the hand. It is young Stanley.

> RAY (to Stanley) Whoa, little man, we're here to help you.

Stanley is huffing and puffing. He is exhausted from his attack attempt. Tony flashes the light into the corner of the room. Amber and Sam stand ready with shivs of their own.

TONY Kids, we've come to get you out of here. You can put down the knives.

The kids do as Tony says and drop the shivs. Sam walks over and turns the lamp on. As John walks over to the children, Amber runs up and gives him a hug. She wraps her little arms around him with all of her strength.

> AMBER I'm so happy you came to save us.

Sam walks over to Tony and Ray. He holds his stomach with one hand.

SAM (weak) Is my dad here?

Ray and Tony look at each other.

JOHN No kid, it's just us. Why are you holding your stomach? You hurt?

SAM No, I'm just hungry, sir.

TONY Come on kids, let's get y'all outside.

Amber snaps her head up and gives Tony an awkward look, as familiarity strikes her.

Ray leads the three kids outside and down the passageway.

JOHN (whispering to Tony) You're sick, you know that?

TONY (to John) Come on, let's get outta here.

Tony pulls his cellphone from his pocket.

INT. DAVISES' HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mark and Denise lie asleep in their bed when the telephone RINGS. Mark, half asleep, rolls over and answers the phone.

MARK (groggily, into phone) Hello.

DETECTIVE MILLS (V.O.) Mr. Davis, this is Detective Mills, we found your little girl safe and sound.

Mark's eyes widen. He drops the phone in excitement, wipes his eyes with his fists and SLAPS himself in the face. Denise awakens to the noise. Mark picks up the phone from the floor.

> AMBER (V.O.) Daddy, are you there?

Mark begins to sob. He holds the phone to his ear.

AMBER (V.O.) (CONT'D) Daaadddy? Hellooo.

MARK (into phone, sobbing) Yes, baby I'm here. Are you alright, baby? Are you hurt?

Denise hearing Mark's words, jumps over to his side of the bed and snatches the phone.

DENISE (into phone, hysterical) Amber, is that you baby?

AMBER (V.O.) Of course it's me, Mommy. Who else would it be?

DENISE (into phone) Where are you?

AMBER (V.O.) I'm with the police.

Denise gives the phone back to Mark. She rushes to the closet and frantically throws on one of Mark's bathrobes and her slippers. She opens the bedroom door and runs down the hallway.

MARK (into phone) Baby, tell Detective Mills that we will be there in five minutes, okay?

AMBER (V.O.) (to Detective Mills) He said he'll be here in a minute.

MARK (into phone) Okay, baby I love you.

AMBER (V.O.) I love you too, Daddy.

INT. JAMIE'S BEDROOM

Jamie remains asleep in bed as the SCREECHING of car tires are heard.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Two news vans and a CROWD of people have collected in front of the station. Sam and Stanley's parents pull into the parking lot at the same time, slamming on their BRAKES, almost ramming into each other.

Mark and Denise pull up, seconds later, in their Porsche. The three sets of parents barrel through the collected crowd. NEWS REPORTERS, trying to get a word, are pushed aside by the parents as they desperately rush to get to their children.

They finally reach the front door. An OFFICER unlocks the door from the inside and lets them in.

All three kids, Sam, Amber, and Stanley run for their respective parents. Warm embraces and smacking kisses are delivered by all. An exuberant aura of love and tranquility fills the air.

INT. DETECTIVE MILLS' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The detective sits at his chair. He taps a pen on the desk as he glares suspiciously at the boys, who sit across from him. All three of them sit in chairs along the front of his desk.

> DETECTIVE MILLS So, the old steel mill huh?

TONY Yeah, we looked at a bunch of places though. DETECTIVE MILLS (to Tony) How'd you figure they would be out there? I had investigators scheduled to go out there tomorrow.

TONY

I guess it was just a hunch.

DETECTIVE MILLS (smirking) A hunch, huh? Ya know, I should be pretty pissed that you kids decided to run your own little investigation without telling me. (beat) But, you did find them.

JOHN Yeah, we gotta thank your boy here. He was the mastermind of this whole operation.

Ray's eyes widen as he looks to John then back to the detective.

RAY (nervously) Yeah, your boy really knows his stuff. We couldn't have found them if it weren't for his determination.

Sam and Amber's parents come walking over to the office where Detective Mills and the boys are. The detective stands up, walks over, and opens the door. The other boys stand up and walk over.

EVAN Are you the ones who found my boy?

RAY (proudly) Yes sir, we are.

Evan reaches out to shake Ray's hand.

EVAN

I cannot express enough gratitude. Thank you a million thanks, to all of you. I thought my boy was dead. You've restored my faith.

Mark comes over to the boys and reaches out his hand to Tony.

MARK Mr. Smith said it all for us, I think. I'm sure we can never feel that we've thanked you enough.

DENISE

(to Tony) You know our daughter, Jamie, don't you? You've been to our house.

## TONY

(nervously) No ma'am, I don't think I've been to your house, but yes, I think we all know your other daughter. We all go to the same school.

DENISE Well son, believe me when I tell you that you are more than welcome to come by anytime.

Denise grabs Tony and Ray with both arms and embraces them.

DENISE (CONT'D) Thank you so much.

Stanley's mother also hugs the three boys. Mark, Evan, and Stanley's father Salvador, huddle up a few feet away. After a few words, Evan looks up and signals to the boys to follow him.

> EVAN Boys, come with me outside. We have an announcement to make.

The boys, looking confused, proceed to follow Evan and the other parents outside.

# EXT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The crowd, which has now doubled in size, erupts in applause as the teen heroes come into view. After a couple minutes of cheering, Evan raises both of his hands in the air and motions to the crowd to quiet down. DETECTIVE MILLS (through megaphone) Please, everyone quiet down. Mr. Smith would like to say a word.

Evan puts both hands on Tony and John's shoulders as they stand on either side of him. It is a heartfelt sight as the, nearly seven-foot-tall, behemoth cannot hold back his tears. Detective Mills stretches high into the air to get the megaphone to Evan's mouth from behind him.

> EVAN (sobbing) These boys found my kid. This past week has felt like an eternity. I can't thank these kids enough for what they've done for us. (looking around) For all of us.

He bends down and kisses his boy Sam, who is standing in front of him, on top of the head.

EVAN (CONT'D) I would like to announce right now, in front of the city folk and TV crews, that I am increasing my reward to \$60,000 and Mr. Davis will add another \$10,000 to his. We all wanted to bring the total to \$50,000 apiece for these heroes. No one is more deserving.

The crowd erupts in applause. The boys are visibly shocked. They embrace each other. John, though reluctant at first, sells the loving embrace along with them. Detective Mills walks over to a nearby OFFICER and whispers in his ear.

> DETECTIVE MILLS Something ain't right here. I wanna keep an eye on these guys.

The officer looks at the detective, befuddled.

DETECTIVE MILLS (CONT'D) (looking at Tony) And yeah... (beat) ...especially him.

Tony smiles from ear to ear as he talks with reporters.

A bevy of cameras flash in the boys' direction. Two news cameras record the celebration.

INT. DAVISES' HOUSE - JAMIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jamie lies sound asleep in her bed, SNORING. Mark, Denise and Amber quietly walk into her room. Mark nudges Amber towards Jamie's bed. She climbs up on her bed, leans over and kisses Jamie on the cheek.

Jamie awakens. She blinks her eyes a few times then wipes them. She looks up and sees Amber smiling down at her. With the moonlight shining through the window, Amber resembles a heavenly angel. Jamie looks over and sees her parents by the door. She sits up and embraces Amber with loving arms.

> JAMIE (whispering) God, I hope I'm not dreaming again.

AMBER (whispering) I hope I'm not dreaming too.

Denise smiles and puts her head to her husband's chest.

TWO WEEKS LATER

EXT. MILLER HIGH SCHOOL - FIELD - DAY

Tony and Ray stand in the middle of a huge field, away from the other students. They are both dressed in expensive looking cloths and tennis shoes. Ray sips on a soda and Tony bites down on a hotdog.

> TONY You been to see Shawn?

RAY Yeah, I went the other day.

TONY If he wakes up, you think he'll rat?

RAY Man, he probably won't remember shit. That's what the doctor said, anyway.

TONY And if he does? RAY Well, I've got plenty of bread left. If he wakes up then we'll both go talk to him. We'll let him know that everything went good and none of the little kiddies were hurt. (laughs) That's of course, if he remembers anything.

A group of three GIRLS call and wave at the boys from a distance away.

GIRLS (shouting in unison) Hi heroes.

RAY (shouting back, smiling) Wassup ladies.

Tony looks at them and smiles. To the right, he sees a familiar face. It is their old friend John Williams. He walks in the opposite direction of the girls.

TONY

What about that guy?

Ray looks over his shoulder and sees John.

RAY

Shit, that fool is the least of our worries. You know that Mr. Suranto helped his mom get a new house? He bought himself that new Infiniti coupe. We don't need to worry about him at all. What about the old dude? How's that working out?

TONY

They didn't really have much to charge him with the kidnapping. I screwed up with the whole sock thing because the girl was wearing footed pajamas.

RAY

Oh. Well didn't one of the cops say the old dude hit them or pushed them or something? TONY

Yeah, my pops said they charged him with resisting arrest and assaulting an officer. I think they feel like they need to hold someone accountable. Pops feels like someone has to pay for every crime, especially those cases that he's involved in. He's still digging for shit on that old bastard. He'll be in there for a minute, I'm sure.

RAY

(confused)
Okay, you say he couldn't charge
him with the kidnapping?

TONY

Nope. The kids said he didn't fit the physical description and the whole thing with the sock. Pops has his eyes wide open. I just gotta keep my nose clean, watch my back, you know what I mean?

RAY

(exhales nervously) Alright, man. I hope you know what the hell you're doing, cause this shit could get real bad, real quick for us.

The school bell rings. The two boys grab their bags from the ground and give each other a fist pound.

TONY (confident) Don't trip, bro. I got it under control.

RAY Alright, peace brotha. I'll meet you at The Spot after school. We got a score to settle.

TONY Man, I'll even let you pick my fighter today. You know I'll whoop you with any of them?

Ray laughs and flips Tony off as they walk off in different directions.

Amber and Jamie sit together on a swing set at the playground. They talk and giggle playfully as they swing gently back and forth.

#### AMBER

Mommy really missed me, huh? She drives me to school, walks me to Mrs. Clary's class, then waits for me by the door after school.

## JAMIE

(laughing) She'll probably be doing that until you're in college. Maybe later.

Jamie pats her front and back pockets, seemingly searching for something.

JAMIE (CONT'D) But yes, Mommy missed you very much. Everybody missed you, kid.

AMBER I missed everybody too, especially...

JAMIE

(interrupts her) Hey, I promise, on Friday when I get my allowance, I'm gonna buy you the biggest teddy bear at Toys R Us.

AMBER (quietly) No, I missed you.

Jamie looks back at her with her own eyes glazed over. They look into each others eyes like they have had a connection that they have never had before. Jamie stands up off of her swing. She reaches out to Amber.

> JAMIE (tears in her eyes) Come here.

The two sisters embrace.

JAMIE (CONT'D) (under a whisper) I'm so sorry. Denise stands in the laundry room throwing clothes into the washer. She looks exhausted as she is still wearing her hospital scrubs from work.

She checks the jeans and shirt pockets before tossing them into the wash. She picks up next, a pair of Jamie's purple jeans. She reaches in the back pocket and pulls out a folded piece of paper. As she unravels the folded paper she notices that it is one of her husband's bank statements.

CLOSE ON bottom corner of yellow paper reading \$227,784.

She looks at it carefully and is not surprised by the total sum.

INT. LIVING ROOM

She walks into the living room where Mark is asleep on the couch. She nudges Mark until he opens his eyes. She puts the bank statement in his face.

DENISE What is this?

MARK (groggily) Uh, it's a bank statement, honey. Okay, what do I win?

DENISE (irritated) No, smart ass. Why was it in your daughter's pants pocket?

Mark slowly sits up and grabs the statement from Denise.

MARK We told that girl before to stay out of our damn mail.

Mark gets up and heads towards Jamie's room. Denise follows behind him.

INT. HALLWAY

DENISE The girls went to the park.

Mark pushes open Jamie's bedroom door.

INT. JAMIE'S BEDROOM

The first thing he notices is her cellphone vibrating on the dresser. He walks over and picks it up.

ON CELLPHONE SCREEN: NEW TEXT MESSAGE.

Mark looks at Denise with a grin. He then pushes the mail button.

ON CELLPHONE SCREEN: I MISS U, WHY AREN'T YOU PICKING UP, ARE YOU MAD AT ME? - T

MARK Who the hell is T?

DENISE Tony Mills, the detective's son.

MARK How do you know?

DENISE Well, he had flowers sent to all of us girls last week. The card said, from Super T.

A faint smile comes across Mark's face.

MARK

Super T, huh? Cute.

Mark continues to scan the old text messages on the phone. Denise gives him an awkward look.

MARK (CONT'D) (grins mischievously) Hey, if that little shit can go through our mail then I can peek at her stupid text messages.

Mark continues scanning the messages until he gets to one that turns his smile upside down.

MARK (CONT'D) Whoa, what the hell is going on here?

He continues to scan through the messages. Suddenly, an exuberance of anger emits from his body. He throws the phone onto the bed and storms out of the room.

INT. KITCHEN

He slaps a flower vase off of the kitchen counter as he walks by. It SMASHES onto the kitchen floor into a hundred pieces. He leans against the counter. He covers his face shamefully with both hands.

> MARK (to himself, quietly) I can't believe this shit.

Denise, shocked and confused, grabs the phone from the bed and reads the message. She covers her mouth in horror and tears welt up in her eyes.

ON CELLPHONE SCREEN: AFTER THIS IS ALL OVER, WE CAN LEAVE THIS PLACE - SETTING UP THE OLD MAN WILL BE HELLA EASY -DON'T WORRY, I GOT IT ALL TAKEN CARE OF - T

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. MR. DILLMAN'S FRONTYARD - NIGHT

The street lights shine dimly onto the sidewalk. Tony, dressed in all black and wearing a ski mask, creeps slowly through the frontyard. He comes to the gate leading to the backyard.

He reaches into his jacket pocket, pulls out Amber's teddy bear and tosses it over the fence.

EXT. BACKYARD

The dog, Elvira, is sleeping by the sliding glass door. The stuffed animal lands a few feet away from her. The bell around the neck of the bear CHIMES lightly, waking Elvira.

She props her head up and sees the teddy bear. She slowly comes to her feet and limps on a bad leg, over to it. She lies back down and commences to chewing on the bear.

After accomplishing his plan of getting Amber's toy to the dog, he walks around to the front of the house. The porch CREAKS as he steps onto it. He kneels down in front of the door knob, pulls a paper clip and tension wrench from his pocket and begins picking the lock.

INT. MR. DILLMAN'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER The front door opens slowly from the inside.

# BACK TO PRESENT

INT. DAVISES' HOUSE - JAMIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Denise holds the cellphone, still reading.

ON CELLPHONE SCREEN: JOHN CAN KISS MY ASS - I DIDN'T HURT ANY OF THEM BRATS

INT. LIVING ROOM

Jamie and Amber walk through the front door, smiling and laughing. Mark stands in the kitchen, adjacent to the front door, with his arms folded. He glares at Jamie with a look that could burn through lead.

## INT. HALLWAY

Denise comes out of Jamie's room and leans back against the wall in the hallway. She holds the cellphone in one hand and the bank statement in the other.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Jamie wipes the smile from her face and looks at both of her parents with her eyes widened.

MARK (eyes fixed on Jamie) Amber, go to your room, turn on your TV and don't come out until I tell you.

Amber looks at her father and then to her teary-eyed mother.

AMBER What's wrong, Mommy?

MARK (shouting angrily) Now.

Amber runs to her bedroom. Mark walks over to Denise and grabs the statement and the phone from her. He walks over to his older daughter. She stands there, trembling, and silent.

> MARK (CONT'D) Did you have a part in this?

Mark turns around and slams the phone and statement onto the kitchen table. He turns back around to face Jamie, his anger increased.

MARK Don't play dumb with me, young lady.

Mark reaches down and grabs Jamie by the collar of her shirt. He points his finger in her face.

> MARK (CONT'D) Did you or did you not have a part in this?

Jamie, trembling with fear, begins to cry.

JAMIE I...I'm sorry daddy.

INT. HALLWAY

Denise covers her face and drops to her knees.

DENISE (crying) How could you do this, Jamie? That's your sister. Your sevenyear-old baby sister.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Mark, boiling with anger, walks over to a living room wall and punches a hole through it. He then walks over to the house phone, picks it up, and starts to dial.

INT. DETECTIVE MILLS' OFFICE - DAY

The detective sits at his desk pouring coffee into a mug. The RINGING phone startles him. He puts down the coffee pot and answers.

> DETECTIVE MILLS (into phone) This is Mills.

MARK (V.O.) You need to get over here right now, detective.

DETECTIVE MILLS (into phone) Whoa, whoa, what's wrong Mr. Davis?

MARK (V.O.) Just get over here.

CLICK. Mark hangs up. Detective Mills pulls the phone from his ear and looks at it strangely before hanging it up.

EXT. TWO-STORY HOUSE - NIGHT

Two police cars pull up to a new-looking, freshly painted, two-story house. Both OFFICERS step out of their cruisers and walk up to the door. One of them knocks and a WOMAN answers.

# OFFICER #3 Ms. Williams?

She nods her head. One of the officers, looking over the woman's shoulder, notices someone running through the house and the two officers barge in. Minutes later, they come out with John in handcuffs.

The woman, John's mother, kicks and screams at the officers as they throw her son into the back of the police car. A YOUNGER BOY pulls the woman away from the car as it drives off.

EXT. THE SPOT - NIGHT

Two police cars pull up to the arcade. Two OFFICERS and Detective Mills walk in through the front door.

JAMIE (V.O.) We were never going to hurt any of them. We were just going to take them somewhere for a few weeks. The plan was to have the rewards skyrocket and as soon as everyone gave up, we would have our big reveal.

Moments later, Ray and Tony are brought out in handcuffs. Groups of TEENS look on in disbelief.

JAMIE (V.O.) (CONT'D) I checked out the parents' work schedules, the baby-sitters, everything. We had our targets setup weeks ago.

## INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Shawn lies, comatose, in a hospital bed. A heart monitor BEEPS, rhythmically, next to him. A bandage is wrapped around his head and a thick cast surrounds one leg.

A number of colorful balloons and flower baskets fill the room. His mother, DINA, sits in a chair at his bedside, holding his hand. Her head lies on his leg as she is sleeping.

# JAMIE (V.O.) The other boys were just pawns. He felt that having a team would make the whole "Kid Rescuer" thing more believable. We even set up a room at the Jones house to keep it interesting for them. They had no idea what they were getting into. Well, not at first anyway.

CLOSE ON the Dina's hand as Shawn squeezes it.

She awakens abruptly as she feels the pressure from his hand.

He slowly opens his eyes.

SHAWN'S P.O.V. - A SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS BALLOON

She kisses his hand and presses it to her cheek. Tears pour down her face like a running faucet.

SHAWN (faintly whispering) Spongebob, Mom? Really?

His mother smiles and kisses his hand.

JAMIE (V.O.) I don't think either of us knew what we really wanted. I thought I wanted to be the little princess again. Detective Mills sits in the passenger front seat of the car. He is turned around in the seat and screaming belligerently at his son. His words are muted.

Tony stares at his father, but through him, his mind elsewhere.

TONY (V.O.) (shameful) All I wanted was for him to notice me, be proud of me, to see me as a hero.

FADE OUT:

THE END

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