

THE FITTEST

Written by

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Fade in:

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

LISA, mid 30's, is standing in the kitchen grasping the counter top's edge. She stares blankly at the closed kitchen cupboards in silence. Her body is as still as a mannequin.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

JAMES, late 30's, unshaven and bundled in clothes, is removing boards from the side of a cabin in the woods with a crowbar and throwing them in a pile behind him.

After he removes a couple of boards he turns around and looks at the pile then he looks at a house off in the distance. He inhales deeply then exhales hard revealing a cold breath. He then puts his tools in a backpack and puts the pack over his shoulders. He starts bundling up the planks of wood in rope and hoists it over his shoulder and starts to head off in the direction of the house in the distance.

EXT. FAMILY HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

ZAC, 14, and JOHN, 9, brothers, are both lying down under a fort made of blankets. The blankets are nailed into the walls to create this massive jungle of fabric. They are reading comic books using a slither of dim light from the slightly ajar curtains. Zac and John are lying in the same position next to each other.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

James stands there looking at the rural house about 2km away up on a hill surrounded by dying trees covered in a light blanket of snow, he looks up at the grey sky then looks at an old beaten up path to his right. He chooses the path and starts following it.

EXT. PATH - DAY

James walks down an old unused pathway that could be big enough to fit a car if a car had business being in the middle of nowhere. The vegetation is very thick on both sides but barren of any bright colours and the tree limbs are hanging over his head in an arch. He walks on until he reaches a lookout point that overlooks a small lake.

EXT. LAKE LOOKOUT - DAY

James looks down at the lake, it is still with no signs of life. There is a seat perched at the greatest vantage point and at its side is a rubbish bin. James walks over to it, puts the bundle of wood down and starts to rummage around in the rubbish bin pulling out handfuls of rubbish mainly comprised of beer cans and take away food packaging.

He is almost at the bottom of the trash can when he picks up a bottle of soft drink with about half the contents remaining. He inspects it and then takes his backpack off, opens it up and puts it in. He puts the pack back on and then starts to walk around the area inspecting the surrounding bush.

Every now and then he picks up a piece of rubbish to take a closer look then he throws it back down. After doing this a few times he looks back up at the sky, pauses and then walks over to his bundle of wood. He picks it up and then heads back down the path.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Lisa is still standing in the kitchen. She runs her hand through her long matted hair when she hears a scream and she bolts fast in that direction.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/LOUNGE - DAY

The lounge door swings open and Lisa steps in with the look of panic on her face. She looks down and sees Zac sitting on Johns back, pinning him down on the floor.

LISA

Zac get off your brother and John
can you quiet down, you know you
can't be screaming like that.

ZAC

Yeah John shut up.

Lisa walks over to Zac and pulls him off John, John rolls over and sits up.

JOHN

You shut up, mum he's trying to
steal my comic.

ZAC

It's my turn.

LISA

Stop it both of you, you know you can't be using up your energy on such trivial matters, besides you have both read these comics 100 times over, nothing new has been added.

ZAC

Well what else are we supposed to do.

JOHN

Mum I'm hungry.

LISA

Your father will be home soon, we will eat then, in the mean time you boys can help me with the preparation.

ZAC

Guess I got nothing better to do.

Zac stands up and heads out of the room. Lisa walks over to John and kneels down.

LISA

Are you okay?

JOHN

Nothing broken.

LISA

Good to hear.

Lisa kisses John on the top of the head and then stands up. John stands up as well and the two walk out the door together. Lisa has her hand on Johns back.

EXT. FAMILY HOUSE - DUSK

James pauses just as he reaches his house. He looks at it for a while. He sees a glow of orange coming through one of the Windows, the rest of the white facade is lifeless and stagnant.

He turns around and looks at the sky from up on the hill. It has gotten dark and he can make out a faint glow of a fire from down at the bottom of the hill. He pulls out his binoculars that are clipped to the side of his backpack and peers through the lens.

He sees three men, JOEL, early 40's, LUCAS, early 20's, and SAM, early 20's, are gathered around a campfire laughing and drinking whisky from the bottle, each with their own can of food in one hand. He puts the binoculars away, turns back to face the house and proceeds to the front door.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/ENTRANCE WAY - DUSK

James walks into the house. He sits the pile of wood down against the wall and walks down the hallway.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

James walks through the entrance of the kitchen.

JOHN (O.S.)
Dad's home.

James walks up to the family who are busy in the kitchen preparing food. There is an oil lamp lit on the counter top. His eyes first meet Lisa, she greets his tired eyes with a warm smile.

LISA
How did it go?

JAMES
I took some more fire wood from the side of the Smith's house. I'm sure they won't mind.

ZAC
Mr Smith was an ass anyway.

LISA
Zac please.

ZAC
Sorry.

James ignores his sons comments.

JAMES
I also decided to check out Lovers Lookout, see if any drunk teenagers left anything behind.

LISA
Any luck?

James opens up his backpack and pulls out the half empty bottle of soft drink and puts it on the counter.

ZAC

Ew gross, someone's spit is in there.

John laughs.

LISA

There is also a days worth of sugar in there so don't be picky.

Lisa walks over to James and kisses him on the cheek.

JAMES

What's for dinner tonight, lobster again or maybe a roast turkey this time?

JOHN

Meatballs.

James smiles and pats John on the head.

JAMES

Sure, meatballs it is.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/LOUNGE - NIGHT

A big hearth is fired up in the room with a big pot hanging over the fire being boiled. There are several couches, mattresses and blankets scattered throughout the room with a coffee table in the centre. Four bowls sit on the table. Each family member are sitting down with blankets wrapped around them waiting eagerly for the food to boil.

The fire in the hearth is casting a nice warm glow in the otherwise dark room.

LISA

I think it's ready.

Lisa stands up and puts on an oven mitt and picks up the pot. She carries it over to the table.

LISA (CONT'D)

Heres your lobster.

She puts some of the food into the first bowl.

LISA (CONT'D)

Here's your meatballs.

She puts some into the second.

LISA (CONT'D)

And here's some canned beef stew
for us less imaginative folk.

She puts the stew into the remaining bowls.

JAMES

Thanks honey.

All four start eating immediately like dogs at dinner time
but meal time doesn't last long.

JOHN

Is there any left?

LISA

Sorry not till tomorrow.

John looks down at the floor.

JOHN

Will things ever go back to normal?

Lisa stares at James.

JAMES

We can only hope, but it will take
some time.

There is silence until Lisa speaks.

LISA

James can I see you in the bedroom
for a second?

JAMES

Sure thing boss.

James picks up the oil lamp, walks over to the fire and
lights it with a stick that he sets alight. Lisa walks out of
the room and then James follows.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

James and Lisa enter the bedroom. Lisa shuts the door behind
them. James sits the oil lamp down on the ground in the
middle of the blanket fort. Both Lisa and James sit on the
floor around the lamp.

LISA

If we are going to outlast this
crisis like you said then we don't
have much time.

JAMES

Is it the food?

LISA

Yes, thank god we did stock up for an emergency like this but the one month of supplies that we stocked is almost gone. We need to do something or we are going to starve... The boys already look like they would blow away in a gust of wind.

JAMES

I know, I'll try searching the city again, move on to the next town if I have to but you know what it's like out there.

LISA

I know but what choice do we have, growing anything seems impossible under these weather conditions and this is the end of spring for gods sake.

JAMES

I think I should take Zac with me this time.

LISA

It's to dangerous for a boy.

JAMES

It will be different this time, I bet eighty percent of the survivors left would be dead by now. Not everyone is as lucky or as prepared as us, but some are prepared even more. With two sets of eyes and hands we can be more efficient. Not to mention an imagination of a young man will come in handy for looking for things that are supposed to be hidden.

Lisa sighs.

LISA

I don't like it.

JAMES

Neither do I but we have to start preparing him for this new way of life.

There is silence in the room, you can hear the kids laughing from the other room.

LISA

What about Joel?

JAMES

What about Joel.

LISA

Have you seen him around lately?

JAMES

Yeah... Him and his deliverance buddies seem to be having a good time. I spotted him with my binoculars today. They were drinking, each with a can of spam to themselves.

LISA

Each.

JAMES

Yeah.

LISA

They must have quiet the impressive stash.

JAMES

I'd say so.

LISA

Do we have anything to trade with them? Money, maybe tools or equipment?

JAMES

I doubt it.

LISA

Do you think we could flat out ask for food?

JAMES

And why would he give us food?, the man hates me.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

In fact the only reason he and his stooges haven't stormed up here and stolen what we have is because of what happened all those years back.

LISA

Could we guilt trip him into giving us some food then?

JAMES

Probably not.

A long pause from both of them.

LISA

Could we steal his supplies?

JAMES

He has more guns than we do.

LISA

Well we're running out of options here, everything around us has already been pillaged by us or by them. I don't mind going down there and begging on my hands and knees if I have to.

JAMES

I'm not going to let my family be humiliated like that.

LISA

Your hearts always been bigger than your brain.

JAMES

Isn't that why you married me?

LISA

Well what else do you propose?

JAMES

I refuse to believe that every item of food has been found already and is in someone's care. I want to go looking near the outskirts of the city.

LISA

Isn't that dangerous. You said yourself that you would never go back into the city after the horror that you witnessed in there. You were almost killed.

JAMES

You're right, I would never go back in. I'll stay far enough away so that the city is just a speck on the horizon. My hope is that other people who see the city off in the distance will not have that same willpower and will forget about the countless surrounding buildings and will be drawn into the cities promise of food and shelter.

LISA

Well I guess we don't really have a choice do we.

JAMES

Not really.

LISA

Will you go tomorrow?

JAMES

Yes, but I want to take Zac.

LISA

Do you think he can handle what's out there?

JAMES

Zac is stronger then we give him credit for plus it will be a good learning experience. I would take you but you will have to stay with John. Don't worry to much, at the first sign of danger we will turn around.

LISA

Will you give him the gun?

JAMES

No I don't think he's ready for that. He will just be my lookout.

LISA

Okay but promise me you will never let him out of your sight and that you will bring him back without a scratch on him.

JEFFREY

I promise.

LISA

I hope to god you will find something out there.

JAMES

Me too.

Both Lisa and James stand up, James grabs the oil lamp and the two head out of the room.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. ROAD - DAY

James and Zac are walking down a road. They are walking side by side both with backpacks on and wearing many layers of clothes. Zac has a pair of binoculars around his neck.

They walk down the road for a few metres until they come across a car in the middle of the road. Its doors are wide open as is the boot of the car. James walks up to the car and has a look in. While James is looking through the car Zac stands close to him with the binoculars to his face. James looks in the glove compartment and in the back seat. He reaches under both the passenger seat and the drivers seat but comes up empty handed. He then walks around to the boot and looks in for a second.

He then goes over to Zac and pats him on the head then the two keep on walking down the road towards the next car.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY (LATER)

James and Zac are still walking down the road but the road has turned into a highway with trees flanking them on either side.

They are walking in the middle of the road, Zac is looking down at the ground and James is looking off into the distance.

He stops walking and then Zac who after a few steps in front of his father realises that James has stopped walking turns and looks at him.

ZAC

What's wrong?

JAMES

Look over there with your binoculars.

James points in a direction with his finger and then Zac puts the binoculars to his face. What he sees is a city far away. He can make out a few high rise buildings but nothing in detail. He can see smoke coming from one of the buildings.

ZAC

Dad that building is on fire... Does that mean there are people alive down there?

JAMES

Probably there is but I want you to promise me that you will never go there unless you absolutely have to. There are a lot of dangerous people down there and every one of them will see you as a threat, even as young as you are.

ZAC

Why would they want to hurt me?

JAMES

They would see you as a fox who is going after their chickens. They just want to protect what's theirs.

ZAC

Even if I'm just passing through.

JAMES

Yes, they won't hesitate to shoot first then ask questions later.

ZAC

I promise I won't ever go there.

JAMES

Let's move on.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY (LATER)

James and Zac are walking down the highway.

ZAC
Why can't we take a car?

JAMES
If someone's around, they will hear it.

ZAC
What if there is someone good out there?

JAMES
Finding one hundred good people isn't worth finding one bad one.

James and Zac continue walking down the highway.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY (LATER)

James and Zac are still walking down the highway. There is a few industrial looking buildings coming into view. Zac puts the binoculars to his face again and looks over the scene.

ZAC
Are we going to look in there?

JAMES
Yes, these warehouses and buildings are so big and complex I doubt everything has been taken from these sights. We're bound to find something.

ZAC
Hope so.

JAMES
You hungry?

ZAC
A bit.

JAMES
When we're inside we will have something to eat.

ZAC
Cool.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

James and Zac are sitting on a pile of timber passing a tin of fruit between each other using a spoon to scoop out its contents. Sitting on the timber is also a metal water bottle that the two take turns drinking from.

The warehouse they are sitting in appears to be a lumber warehouse where planks of wood are stacked high on countless shelves. The main room they are in is massive with some lights spilling in through windows and places where the shell of the warehouse has been damaged. There are a few signs that people have been there before like burnt wood piles acting as a campfire and broken windows and rubbish thrown around.

James has the last piece of fruit from the can and passes it over to Zac. Zac looks inside and then drinks half of the juice from the can and then passes it back to James. James pushes the can back to Zac and Zac finishes the rest of the juice, tapping the bottom of the can while it is upside down over his mouth.

JAMES

All right we got some work to do.

James pushes himself off the wood pile onto the floor then grabs Zac off it and places him on his feet. Zac leaves the empty can on the wood pile.

SERIES OF SHOTS - JAMES AND ZAC SEARCHING THE WAREHOUSE

A) James and Zac are in the main warehouse opening boxes and pulling out what ever is inside making a total mess of the place.

B) Zac is opening draws of filing cabinets in an office and tossing out paper and receipts behind his shoulder. Once the draw is empty he pulls out the draw and looks behind it. James is going through an office desk placing items from the desk draws onto the desk top.

C) Zac and James are in the warehouses break room where they are opening cupboards and emptying rubbish bins.

D) Zac and James are looking into the trucks interiors that are parked in the parking lot of the warehouse. James has to smash the drivers seat window in order to gain access.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

James and Zac are leaving the warehouse and are walking down the road towards the next building that looks like an old office building three stories high made of bricks.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

James and Zac are in the office building on the second floor searching for anything of value. James is going through several desks while Zac is kneeling, looking into a cleaning closet.

They are both very focused on their job at hand when they hear two gun shots. Zac immediately stands up and looks over at James. James is looking back at Zac. Both are still and have a scared look on their faces. They then hear a YOUNG MAN yelling.

YOUNG MAN

Now where did you go?

James ducks down, grabs his gun from his waste band and signals Zac to get down as well, James then gestures for Zac to come over to him. Zac does so walking over to him in a hunched position.

JAMES

Get under the desk.

Zac gets under the desk that is next to James and James crawls over to the window. He raises his head and looks down. He can see the young man jogging up the road with a gun in his hand. James quickly ducks back down.

YOUNG MAN

It's just a matter of time OLD MAN.

James crawls back over to Zac. They both sit there in dead silence when they hear a loud bang come from down stairs.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

You think you can hide from me.

James and Zac then hear the sound of a door being kicked in and can hear loud foot steps coming from the floor under them. James lies down on the floor and can see the hallway in front of him from the gap under the desk. He points his gun out of the gap and waits.

The two are hiding in fear when James can see someone slowly and quietly walking down the hallway towards him. All James can see is up to his knees. Zac is shaking in fear.

James has his finger hovered over the trigger but just before he can shoot another man bursts into the room.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

Found you.

A loud gun shot fills the room and the old man falls to the floor. James can see the old mans face that appears to be looking straight at him. There is a gunshot wound to the back of the old mans head.

James looks up at Zac who is trying to hold back the tears. James looks ahead and notices the young man is kneeling down. Just the bottom of his face is in view.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

This is my neighbourhood bitch.

The young man checks his pockets and steals the mans belt. He then stands up and walks away from the scene but before he leaves out of sight he turns around and looks into the office. He stands there for a while before turning back and opening the door to the stairs. James gets back to his knees and holds Zac who is still shaking.

JAMES

(whispering)

Hold it in.

Zac is hugging his dad, taking in short fast breaths.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Deep breaths.

Zac starts to lengthen his breathes and eventually stops shaking.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Good now stay here I have to check
if he's gone.

ZAC

No don't go.

JAMES

I'll just be over there.

James twists his way out of Zac's grip and he crawls back over to the window. He sees the back of the young man walking away in the direction he came from. James turns around and has his back against the wall. He lets out a big sigh.

James crawls over to Zac and kneels in front of him. James puts his hands on Zac's shoulders.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Can you move?

ZAC

Yes.

JAMES

Let's get out of here, it's not safe. It's going to get dark soon so we will need to find a secure place to sleep. We will head back come first light.

Zac still has the look of fear on his face. James stands up and holds his hand out. Zac grabs it and the two start to walk.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. CAR - DAWN

James is sitting in the front passenger seat of a car with a survival blanket over him and Zac is lying down on the back seat with a blanket over him as well.

James is awake and has a gun lying on the dashboard which has been bent inwards. He turns around and sees Zac lying there fast asleep. He turns back and stares out the front cracked windshield where he can see a large tree trunk in front of him where the car had its collision.

After a few moments he opens the car door but has to struggle with it to get it open. After the struggle he turns and sees that Zac is still sleeping he exits the car and leaves the door slightly ajar.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAWN

He walks up a bank and comes to the edge of the highway. He looks over the very unimpressive and grey sunrise and then puts the binoculars that are in his hands to his face. He looks around the area and sees nothing of concern then he hears a scream that jolts him.

ZAC (O.S.)
(yelling)
Dad. Dad where are you.

James quickly bolts back down the bank and reaches the car.
he sees Zac in a panic.

EXT. CAR - DAWN

JAMES
I'm here.

Zac's face meets James and a wave of relief comes over him.
James walks over to Zac who is half out of the car. He kneels
down beside him.

ZAC
I thought they took you.

JAMES
Sorry, I shouldn't have left you.

ZAC
Are we going back home now? Back to
mum?

JAMES
Yes. When you're ready.

Zac reaches back into the car and grabs his backpack.

ZAC
Ready.

James and Zac stare at each other for a moment.

JAMES
All right then.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. FAMILY HOUSE - DAY

James and Zac reach the house. Before they reach the front
door Lisa opens it and Zac comes running up to Lisa. They
both embrace each other in a large hug and Lisa kisses the
top of Zac's head. Lisa looks up over at James and throws him
a glare. James just looks back with an apologetic stare. Lisa
looks back down at Zac.

LISA
Are you ok?

ZAC
Yea I guess so.

LISA
Good.

John pokes his head out the door and stands there.

LISA (CONT'D)
Let's get inside.

Lisa leads Zac inside and James follows. He shuts the door behind him.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Zac and John are sitting on the floor in their fort.

JOHN
So tell me what's it like out there?

ZAC
It's not for babies.

JOHN
Come on, please.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/LOUNGE - DAY

Lisa and James are sitting on a couch, the fire is going.

LISA
So you found nothing?

JAMES
It's a lot worse out there than I thought. I didn't expect there to be other people living that close to us.

LISA
Do you think there was more than one?

JAMES
No but I can't be sure. I can't take Zac out with me again... Not yet.

LISA
Something happened to John while
you were out.

JAMES
What?

LISA
He fainted. He was over exerting
himself, said he wanted to help
with the fire wood so he started
bringing in branches to dry off. I
thought there was no harm in it but
because our rationing portions have
gotten so low he doesn't have the
energy anymore.

JAMES
Shit.

LISA
And things are just going to get
worse.

JAMES
I know.

A long pause from both of them.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I'll go see Joel.

LISA
Thank you. Shall I go with you?

JAMES
No, he's always had a hard on for
you, in these lawless times I don't
want him getting any ideas.

LISA
The mans not a monster.

JAMES
But he is a man, you never added
services to the list of things he
might want to trade for.

A long pause.

LISA
Fine I'll stay.

JAMES

Have the gun ready and loaded while I'm out.

LISA

What time will you be heading out?

JAMES

First thing tomorrow.

LISA

Okay.

JAMES

I have a bad feeling about this though.

LISA

I don't think things can get any worse.

JAMES

I do.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/LOUNGE - DAY

James and Lisa are on a mattress sleeping, both are wrapped up in blankets. Zac and John are on separate couches also sleeping. A dull light has found its way inside through the curtains. James eyes start to open.

EXT. FAMILY HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

James is walking away from the house. He is walking down a concrete driveway with his backpack on. He pauses halfway down the driveway and looks back at the house.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Lisa is standing at the kitchen sink looking through the window. She has a gun placed on the counter next to her. She raises her hand and gives an unenthusiastic wave.

EXT. FAMILY HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

James raises his hand and waves back, he then turns around and walks away from the house at a steady pace.

SERIES OF SHOTS - JAMES WALKING OUTSIDE

A) James is walking through a wooded area with several branches fallen over lying in his path.

B) James is walking past a lake on a footpath. There is a playground to his right that looks like it hasn't been used in a while and the slide has graffiti up it saying "DIE CUNTZ".

C) James is walking past a small row of shops, some burnt down to the ground, all windows are smashed, light graffiti is on the walls and everything worthwhile has been looted or broken. Random rubbish has been littered in the streets.

D) James is walking down a road with several cars either crashed or abandoned. Most of the cars have their boots and doors open. He has to climb over some of the cars to continue on his path.

EXT. JOELS HOUSE - DAY

James walks up the driveway to Joel's house, there is an old muscle car parked in the driveway, a van parked on the street and two motorcycles parked in his open garage.

The yard is messy and littered with junk, scraps of metal, old furnaces, barbecues, and car parts. Across the road is a park where there is a giant constructed bonfire with several mismatched outdoor furniture placed around it. Trash is scattered around the area including empty alcohol bottles and cans. James studies this area for a moment and then continues walking up the driveway. No one appears to be home.

James comes up to the front door and knocks three times but no one answers. He just stands there for a moment in silence. He raises his hand again to knock but before he can he hears a noise coming from inside the house. He lowers his hand and puts his face close to the door and can see a shape move from within but it appears to not want to be seen. James opens his mouth to say something when a voice speaks out behind him.

JOEL (O.S.)

What the fuck do you want.

James slowly turns around and makes eye contact with Joel notices he has a gun pointed at him and raises his hands in surrender.

JAMES

I just want to talk.

JOEL

We ain't got nothing to talk about.

JAMES

I'm unarmed.

JOEL

Well I am so piss off.

JAMES

It's about my family, we need your help.

JOEL

You need my help?, well shit I'll be.

James stays quiet.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Bet your starving up there ain't ya.

JAMES

And you seem to be living like kings.

JOEL

Ain't my fault you didn't prepare as well as we did.

JAMES

I think it might be more then preparedness.

JOEL

That so.

JAMES

It is.

JOEL

So I guess you're here to beg for food then.

JAMES

I'm willing to trade.

Joel laughs.

JOEL

What do you have that I want?

JAMES

I'm aware of the situation, all I can really provide is for me to work for you. I'll clean your place, chop some wood, hell I'll chop your toe nails.

JOEL

Work huh... how's Lisa doing?

JAMES

Well enough.

Both men stand there in silence for a moment.

JOEL

You got a gun?

JAMES

Yes, at home.

JOEL

Good, I'll tell you what, come back here tomorrow around dusk, there is something I need a hand with. Bring your gun.

JAMES

What do I need it for?

JOEL

It's a precaution. Your lucky you came just at the right time boy now piss off before I change my mind. I'll fill you in on more of the details tomorrow.

James slowly walks away back down the driveway and when he is far enough away Joel yells out.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Oh and cousin, say hi to Lisa for me.

James keeps on walking while Joel has a dirty smile spread across his face.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

James and Lisa are in the kitchen. James is checking on his gun and other equipment.

LISA
I don't like this.

JAMES
Neither do I.

LISA
I regret asking you to do this.

JAMES
I don't.

LISA
What if you get into some real trouble out there?

JAMES
We're in some real trouble right here.

LISA
You don't think this is some sort of trap do you?

JAMES
If he wanted to hurt us he would have done it a long time ago.

LISA
I suppose.

JAMES
But just in case, if I'm not back by the same time tomorrow then get out of here, hide in Zac's tree house, the one deep in the woods. He still has that look about him when ever I mention your name.

A long pause.

LISA
But how do you know how long you will be gone anyway.

JAMES
I don't but I'll come find you.

LISA
How long should I wait there?

JAMES
One day maximum then you take the
kids somewhere far from here.

James puts his pack on and gives Lisa a kiss on the cheek and walks out the front door but before he closes the door he turns around.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I love you.

LISA
I love you too.

James then closes the door and Lisa just stands there in silence with a worried look on her face.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. JOELS HOUSE - DUSK

James walks up the street and sees six people gathered around the bonfire. When they see James heading towards them they fall silent and two of them aim their guns at him but then Joel waves his hands and they lower their guns.

The group stays silent until James gets up close enough to recognise their faces.

JOEL
James, good decision on your part.
You probably remember all these
faces.

James looks around, he sees COREY, 14, JEFFREY, late 30's, MARIA, mid 30's, Sam and Lucas. He meets each pair of eyes with a mistrustful stare.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Of course you know my son. Corey,
ain't you in the same grade as Zac.

COREY

Yeah, we used to go skating together.

JOEL

That right, before James barred him from coming here I take it. Said you a bad influence on his character.

Corey looks down at the floor and remains quiet.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Then we have Jeffrey and his wife Maria who live to my left and these two handsome men are Lucas and Sam who live to my right. You may know their names already but I figured since the only real contact you have had with these people is speeding your vehicle past them when ever you have to drive through what do you call it "Devils Pitt" to get to town so I thought I'd give you a formal introduction.

Everyone stays quiet.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Alright then down to business. Jeffrey would you fill this man in please.

Joel throws Jeffrey a glance that lasts a little longer than it should.

JEFFREY

Ok, Sam and Lucas have scouted an area about 11km from here in the dense bush land where we believe there are FIVE PEOPLE squatting. All males and all armed to the teeth so this is going to be a stealth mission. We are going to enter undetected while they are sleeping and locate all of them before we wake them and hold them up at gun point. The place is two stories though so it could be tricky locating all of them before we take action.

JAMES

And what happens after the hold up?

JEFFREY

We threaten to shoot unless they cooperate. We hog tie them, grab their supplies then split before sunrise.

JAMES

So we are going to steal at gun point from a pack of innocent survivors, survivors just like us.

JOEL

How do you know they are innocent?

SAM

And besides you want food for your family don't you?

JAMES

Yes but not at the expense of others.

JOEL

It's survival of the fittest around here. You should know that by now.

SAM

Either you starve or they do, ain't enough for both.

JAMES

Aren't there locations we can scavenge without the threat of being fired upon. Hell with this many hands we could hit a whole town in a day.

LUCAS

Don't you think we have done that already. We have hit every major town in a 150km radius. Sure we got some food but not enough, it's never enough. If you haven't noticed nothing's growing out here. I don't know how long these conditions will last but I can't assume it's anytime soon.

JOEL

You in or out?

JAMES

What if I say no?

JOEL

You go home, I won't bother you guys again out of respect for your wife and her saving my boy's life all before this shit storm happened.

JAMES

So family means nothing?

JOEL

Nope. And if I catch you down here again I won't hesitate to pull the trigger.

Both men stand there in silence.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Plus the only reason I wanted you here tonight is because of the fact that they got just as many men as we do. This is the largest group of men we have spotted in a while which means more food. I don't want any of my men killed so having you around will increase our odds of success. I won't be needing your help again after tonight.

JAMES

How do you know they even have a stash of food?

Joel lets out a big sigh.

JOEL

Tell ya what. If you do this I'll give you three cans of fruit salad on top of what ever we get tonight.

SAM

What the fuck Joel. You know what we had to go through to get that.

JEFFREY

It's a small price to pay for one of our lives.

James looks out at the house on the hill. Dark and lifeless. The trees look as starving as the occupants inside.

JAMES

No killing.

JOEL
Not unless we have to.

James pauses for a second.

JAMES
I'm in.

JOEL
Alright then. Saddle up boys.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A white van is traveling down a highway. It has its lights on and is swerving every now and then to drive around stopped cars and fallen trees.

INT. VAN (MOVING) - NIGHT

Jeffrey is driving with Lucas next to him in the front. At the back there are seats up against the sides of the vehicle like a police unit.

Joel, James, Corey and Sam are seated at the back. They are wearing mismatched pieces of armour. They also have a random assortment of weapons from shotguns to hand guns to crossbows and military rifles.

JAMES
All these weapons from your
personal collection?

JOEL
Just things we have picked up here
and there.

Sam smiles. James looks around the van and notices Corey holding a hand gun.

JAMES
You know how to use that kid?

COREY
Dads taken me out a few times to
the shooting range.

JOEL
He's dam good too. A lot better
then I was at his age.

JAMES
Don't you think this is a bit
dangerous for a kid?

JOEL
It's not the same world we live in
anymore.

James falls silent.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Tell you what, bring your boys down
to my place after this is done.
I'll teach them about how this new
world works. Seems like their daddy
is to afraid to do so himself.

Sam starts chuckling.

JAMES
Don't tell me how to raise my boys.

JOEL
Same to you.

The men stare at each other hard. Lucas turns around.

LUCAS
We about 15 minutes away.

Joel and James don't break their stare.

JOEL
Park it up, we walk from here.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The team walk through the dense bush in pairs. Lucas and Sam up front, Joel and Corey in the middle and Jeffrey and James at the back. They are being as quiet as possible. Only Joel is carrying a purposely dull torch pointing it at his feet.

JAMES
(whispering)
So how many of these raids have you
been on?

JEFFREY

(whispering)

A few, Lucas and Sam are our scouts and they could be away for days before they return with any news. As time goes by there are less and less people spotted.

JAMES

(whispering)

Do you ever go into the city?

JEFFREY

(whispering)

That's where things are really ugly. Larger groups but more sick minds. They are a different breed out there. Some sit on mountains of food raided from supermarkets or apartment buildings.

JAMES

(whispering)

Yeah I tried to go in once, almost got hacked into pieces by a guy dressed as a wizard carrying a sword in each hand.

JEFFREY

(whispering)

Yea shits fucked up but just like out here only the strongest and smartest will be left standing.

JAMES

(whispering)

Or the most psychotic.

JEFFREY

(whispering)

No difference anymore.

LUCAS

(whispering)

Would you two ladies quit gossiping, we're getting close.

SAM

(whispering)

Alright safeties off.

JOEL

(whispering)

Ok remember the plan.

(MORE)

JOEL (CONT'D)

Sam said there should be only one guy on watch and the rest will be sleeping. Sam will incapacitate the watchman who should be at the front of the house that's why we are entering from the back. while Sam takes him out we will enter the house and locate the other four men. Obviously because it's pitch black we will have to use our torches but cover it with your hand and only let enough light spill to see about a meter in front of you.

JAMES

What do we do when we locate someone?

JOEL

Stay with him, hold him at gun point. Sam will be going around tying them up. Wait until Sam gives the signal before you relax your sight.

JAMES

This is a real sloppy plan.

JOEL

Yes but we don't want any early gunfire that would wake everybody up before we have located all of the men. Corey you stay here in the dark. Have your gun ready. If any escape then they will probably run back here. Shoot to kill.

COREY

Got it.

JOEL

Ok, Sam you first. We will follow.

Sam nods, gets up and leaves the bushes out into a clearing with his crossbow ready. He has a small light on his bow, he dims it with his hand.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

James, Lucas, Jeffrey and Joel all leave the bushes with Corey staying behind. They all creep up quietly to the back of the house. They try the back door and it opens with ease. Joel steps in first followed by Lucas then Jeffrey.

Before James steps in he hears the sound of an arrow being fired. He doesn't go investigate though, instead he steps inside the house.

INT. CABIN/HALLWAY - NIGHT

James keeps his torch at the ground and he starts to walk through the cabin. Both Lucas and Jeffrey have gone upstairs so he and Joel stay downstairs. He checks the first door to his right as Joel goes to the door to his left. He opens the door to find it's a bathroom with no occupants so he backs out and puts his head in the door that Joel went into.

INT. CABIN/BEDROOM - NIGHT

He sees Joel standing there with his gun pointing at the floor. James follows the sight of the torch and can see a sleeping man.

James starts to back out when he notices Joel waving his hand around. He steps back into the room and Joel points his torch at a second man sleeping in the room. James then walks in and stands over the man with his gun aimed at his head. His hands are shaking.

Both men are now just standing there quietly waiting for Sam to come in and tie them up. After a few moments of this they hear a loud thump from upstairs then they hear a man shout something from upstairs but it's muffled due to its location.

James looks down and notices the man he is standing over has his eyes wide open in panic and is staring at James. The man on the floor then reaches fast for something lying on his side then you hear a loud bang and a flash of light accompanies it. James looks over to Joel and realises that Joel has shot the man James was covering.

Within the next few seconds the house fills with gunfire. Shots are heard both inside his room and upstairs. After a few seconds of this the gunfire ceases and everything goes eerily quiet. James opens his eyes and looks over at Joel who is standing as still as a statue with his eyes wide open looking back at James.

After a moment of silence you can hear footsteps from upstairs. Joel reacts instantly and crouches down behind the door with his gun still drawn. Some unknown person can be heard walking around upstairs. Then they start to descend the stairs that creek with every step.

JEFFREY
(whispering)
Who's down there?

JOEL
Joel and James, are you okay?

JEFFREY
I'm fine but Lucas.

JOEL
Is he dead?

Silence.

JEFFREY
Yes.

Joel lowers his head.

JOEL
Fuck.

JEFFREY
Are you two okay?

JOEL
Yea, looks like James has frozen up
on us though.

James raises his head.

JAMES
I'm okay.

JOEL
We're coming up to you now.

Joel exits the room leaving James still standing there quietly and alone for a moment then Joel pokes his head back in the room.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Upstairs now, this ain't over yet.

James walks towards the door and out into the hallway.

INT. CABIN/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Joel is at the base of the stairs while James walks towards the stairs like a zombie. His gun is at his side when a sound is heard coming from down the hallway.

JOEL

Watch out.

James snaps out of his shock and raises his pistol. He points the torch down the hall to reveal Sam walking towards him.

SAM

Don't shoot it's me.

James lowers his gun but stays silent.

SAM (CONT'D)

What the fuck happened?

JOEL

I don't know but Lucas got shot.

SAM

Shit. Where is he?

JOEL

Upstairs, we got two of them down here.

JEFFREY (O.S.)

We got two up here as well.

SAM

I got the one on guard so that should be all.

JOEL

Be on your guard just in case.

Sam walks past James bumping into his shoulder in a hurry and goes upstairs followed by Joel then James.

INT. CABIN/UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - NIGHT

James is the last to enter what looks like to be a bedroom. Inside a dead man is lying against the wall with a bullet wound in his head.

Another man is lying half in the room half out with a gunshot in his back. The man lying inside the bedroom is Lucas. There is brain matter and blood all over the wall behind him. It looks like he was shot close range from a shotgun. Sam is kneeling beside Lucas looking him over. Jeffrey is facing the door, away from the mess. Joel is standing next to Sam. James suddenly bolts out of the room.

INT. CABIN/UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

James starts throwing up with his arm propped up against the wall. Jeffrey exits the bedroom and walks over to James.

JEFFREY

You okay?

James wipes away the vomit from his mouth.

JAMES

Not really.

Sam bursts out of the bedroom.

SAM

(yelling)

Fuck.

JEFFREY

Not so loud.

Sam storms over to Jeffrey and points his crossbow at his head.

SAM

Fuck you. My brothers brains are scattered all over that room, don't tell me to be quiet. Now what the fuck happened in there?

Joel entered the hallway.

JEFFREY

I don't know, we took separate bedrooms. I had a guy in mine so I was holding my gun over him, waiting for you when I heard a loud thump. Maybe Lucas tripped I don't know but the next thing is I hear a gunshot so I shot my guy, walked into the hallway and see another stranger's back so I shot him too.

JOEL

We heard the thump too and so did the guy James was covering. He reached for his gun so that's when I shot him.

JEFFREY

Yeah, I guess while all this was going on the forth guy was walking around and he heard the thump too and went into the room Lucas was in to check it out.

JOEL

Our friend James here was frozen when the action started. Almost got us killed.

Joel is glaring at James. Sam is breathing heavily and then he puts his crossbow down. He then goes back into the room where Lucas was shot. Joel sighs.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Alright, let's do what we came here to do. Take anything which you think might be useful. We will ration out our findings when we get back home. Leave Sam alone for now. We will mourn when it's safe to do so. Jeffrey you take upstairs, James downstairs, I'll go get Corey and check outside and the garage.

James just stands. Jeffrey walks slowly out of sight into another room. Joel walks over to James and gets right up in his face.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Today, and if you pull another stunt like that I'll shoot you myself.

Joel then goes downstairs leaving James alone. James slowly makes his way towards the stairs.

SERIES OF SHOTS - JAMES SEARCHING THE HOUSE

A) James is going through cupboards and draws, pulling each draw out and checking behind it.

B) James is shaking a pill bottle then puts it in his bag that is holding other random scavenged items.

C) James is going through the pockets of the dead men Joel shot. He puts anything of use into his bag.

D) James is throwing couch cushions off the couch to one side then pushes the couch across the room and checks under it.

E) All five men including Corey are walking down the hallway towards the back door. James is in the back. They are all quiet. They pass through the door and head into the bushes where it has now become day. They all walk past a freshly packed grave.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The van is driving down the road back the way it came.

INT. VAN (MOVING) - DAY

Sam, Joel and Corey are in the back of the van with James and Jeffrey up front. All men are quiet and looking off into the distance. Sam has his head bowed.

EXT. JOELS HOUSE - DAY

All of them including Maria are standing around a picnic table covered in the days loot. Joel grabs an empty backpack and fills it with food, water and an assortment of other useful things and passes it to James with a heavy thrust. James takes it. Joel then passes James a second gun.

JOEL

This is your share.

James nods and turns to head off back to his house.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/ENTRANCE - DAY

James walks into the house, drops the bag as Lisa runs up to him and embraces him in a big hug, James drops to his knees crying as Lisa just kneels with him and holds him.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. FAMILY HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

We see the house that James and his family are living in. It's still and quiet.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/LOUNGE - DAY

James and Lisa are sitting down, James has his head clasped in his hands. He raises his head and looks at Lisa.

JAMES

I'm not going out with him again.

Lisa sighs.

LISA

I'm not asking you too. I'm just saying thank you. Thank you for doing that last night. You bought us a lot more time with that food. I'm sorry for what you had to go through to get it but I'm not sorry that we get to eat tonight.

JAMES

People died, innocent people.

LISA

You don't know that they are innocent.

JAMES

Innocent until proven guilty.

LISA

The same laws don't apply anymore.

JAMES

You sound like one of them.

Lisa sends James a sharp stare.

LISA

I'm not asking you to go out again, I would still rather you alive than dead. We wouldn't last very long without you.

James just sits and stares at Lisa when we hear a knock at the door. Both Lisa and James stand up with a gun each. They exit the room.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/HALLWAY - DAY

JAMES

I'll check the front door, you go to the kids.

Lisa nods and heads off down the hallway. James heads into the kitchen.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

James walks across the kitchen and looks out the window that overlooks the front door. He sees Joel and Corey but doesn't relax. He exits the kitchen.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/HALLWAY - DAY

James walks up the hallway to the front door.

JAMES
What do you want?

JOEL
Just checking up on you. Plus Corey
wants to see Zac.

James stands there and after a few seconds he opens the door.

JAMES
Lisa it's ok, it's Joel and Corey.

Lisa then walks up the hallway with the gun still in her hand.

LISA
What do you want?

JOEL
Hello to you too Lisa, that's a
good look for you.

Joel grins.

LISA
I ought to slap you for what you
have put James thorough.

JOEL
Put food on the table didn't it.

Lisa stays quiet.

JOEL (CONT'D)
But it's true, I'm sorry for how
that went down. I've been on about
a dozen or so trips and that was
definitely the messiest one yet.
Lost a good man too. Darn shame
that one.

Corey pushes upfront.

COREY
Can I see Zac?

James looks at Lisa.

JAMES
(yelling)
Hey Zac.

Zac comes out into the hallway.

ZAC
Corey, your still around.

COREY
Barely.

Corey walks into the house and meets up with Zac.

JAMES
You two stay in the lounge, don't
leave the house.

ZAC
Yes dad.

Zac and Corey walk off into the lounge.

JOEL
So how you holding up?

JAMES
Haven't been sleeping much.

JOEL
It's an ugly new world but one
we're still living in.

LISA
If you call this living.

JOEL
It's better then starving to death.

LISA
Maybe not in gods eyes.

JOEL
I think God would call this his
rapture which means he's gone
leaving us sinners behind.

LISA
We hadn't sinned before last night.

JOEL
Do you regret it?

Lisa stays quiet.

JOEL (CONT'D)
That's what I thought and that's
why I am here. I want to offer you
another chance to come out with us.

JAMES
Not happening.

JOEL
This time will be much different.

LISA
How so?

JOEL
There is just one this time, male.
Spotted him camping in a house we
have already raided. We will simply
surround him and he will have no
choice but to surrender.

JAMES
How do you know he will give up so
easily?

JOEL
I don't but we will stay far enough
back that if he decides to fight,
we flee. The forest will provide
cover for us.

JAMES
No deaths.

JOEL
Don't plan on it.

JAMES
Is Sam stable?

JOEL
For the most part. Think he's
acting appropriate given the
situation.

JAMES
I don't like his temper.

JOEL
So you in?

JAMES
I will have to discuss it with my
wife.

JOEL
Discuss it now, we have to leave in
a few hours. We don't want this guy
eating anymore of what he has.

LISA
We will talk privately.

JAMES
Give us a minute.

James and Lisa leave the door open and head into the kitchen.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

James and Lisa enter the kitchen. James leans on the bench
with cupboards behind him. Lisa faces him and leans against
the opposite bench.

LISA
It's your decision.

JAMES
I don't want to go.

LISA
That's understandable.

JAMES
But I think I have to. I can't do
this sort of thing on my own.

LISA
We could. Just you and me.

JAMES
I'm not leaving the kids alone.

LISA
We can go back to scavenging.

JAMES
Joel and his boys have hit up all
the places around us.

They stay silent for a moment.

LISA
I can't tell you to go but I'm not
going to stop you if you do.

JAMES
It does sound less risky but also
less reward.

LISA
Do you trust them enough not to
kill?

JAMES
No, but I could maybe stop them
from doing it if the opportunity
arose.

LISA
Just don't do anything stupid.

JAMES
I won't.

LISA
So your going?

A tear rolls down Lisa's face.

JAMES
Yes.

James stands up and exits the kitchen. Lisa stays standing in
the kitchen and wipes away the tear.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/HALLWAY - DAY

JOEL
So.

JAMES
I'll go.

JOEL
Okay, we will need the extra man
power on account of losing Lucas.
Corey we're going.

Corey and Zac come out of the lounge and head up the hallway.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Grab your stuff.

ZAC
You're going too?

JAMES
Yes but I'll be back tonight.

ZAC
Can I come?

James turns and faces Zac.

JAMES
No, protect John and your mother.

ZAC
Okay.

James turns and faces Joel again.

JAMES
I'll be out in five.

JOEL
We will be waiting.

ZAC
Bye Corey.

COREY
Catch ya.

James closes the door.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. WOODS - DAY

James, Joel, Sam and Jeffrey are huddled around together in the woods. James is looking through the binoculars at a man, LUTHOR, 52, in a rundown house. He appears to be sifting through the houses contents to find something of value. James also notices a rifle lying on the bench in the house. James puts the binoculars down.

JAMES
He has a rifle.

JOEL

If we are quiet enough we can get to him before he has a chance to spit at it.

SAM

Let's go then.

JOEL

Ok. Sam, James, come with me. Jeffrey you stay behind and whistle if something unexpected starts to go down.

Jeffrey nods. Sam stands up and starts to slowly descend the hill. Joel and James follow and are as quiet as they can be. The three men move through the woods slowly and arrive at the house.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

The three men stop a few meters away from the house. Joel waves a hand signal that sends Sam off running up to the house.

JOEL

(whispering)

Follow him.

James then runs up to Sam's position and they start to walk around the house. James looks behind him and he sees Joel run up to the house but walk in the opposite direction. Sam and James keep walking till they get to the door.

They check if it's unlocked and it is. Sam slowly turns the handle and opens the door.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Sam and James enter the house. They can hear noises just ahead of their location. Sam turns to James and puts a finger to his lips. Sam then continues to walk up the hallway and when they get to a bedroom they can see the mans back. Both Sam and James raise their weapons.

They then see Joel come down the hallway from a different direction. Sam and Joel look at each other then Sam walks into the bedroom and shouts.

SAM

(yelling)

Hands up.

The man turns his head and freezes. His eyes are wide open.

SAM (CONT'D)

I said hands up. I will kill you.

The man puts his hands up, he is shaking. Joel enters the room slowly with his gun pointed right at his head.

JOEL

Do you have any weapons on you?

LUTHOR

No sir.

JOEL

What's your name?

LUTHOR

Luthor.

JOEL

Ok Luthor, here's the deal. We won't shoot if you co-operate with us.

LUTHOR

Yes sir.

JOEL

Lay down on the floor and put your hands behind your back.

LUTHOR

Okay sir.

Luthor lays on the floor with his hands behind his back. Joel walks over to him, puts cable ties around his wrists and searches him. He grabs a few items from his pockets and put them in his own.

JOEL

Where are your things?

LUTHOR

I stashed them in the oven.

JOEL

You don't have any friends with you?

LUTHOR

No sir.

JOEL

James go get his bag and gun and anything else he has left lying around. We will take him to the van.

James walks off through the house.

INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

James walks over to the bench and picks up the rifle. He puts the sling over his shoulder then he walks over to the oven. He opens the oven where there is a bag stuffed in. He takes it out and puts it on the bench. He opens it up and takes a look inside. There isn't much inside, a few food cans and other items. He sighs, closes the bag, puts it over his shoulder and proceeds to leave the kitchen.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

James walks up the road towards the van. He sees Jeffrey leaning against the truck.

JEFFREY

Find much?

JAMES

Not much. Not after we split it anyway.

JEFFREY

Not every time is a winner.

JAMES

At least no one died this time. I'll take it.

Jeffrey stays silent.

JAMES (CONT'D)

What do we do with him?

JEFFREY

We usually strip them and let them loose in the woods.

JAMES

They are sure to die in this cold.

JEFFREY

Reckon so but I guess it's the more humane thing to do, if they have the fight in them then they will survive. Better that than them finding us and taking back what's theirs.

James stays quiet. Joel pops his head out from the back of the van.

JOEL

James, in the back with us. Let's move while there is day light.

James gets in the back of the van and closes the door while Jeffrey gets in to the drivers seat and starts the van.

INT. VAN (MOVING) - DAY

James is sitting next to Joel opposite Sam and Luthor. Luthor is looking down at his feet. Sam still has a gun locked on to him.

LUTHOR

Are you going to kill me?

JOEL

No, but if I see you around these parts you will not be so lucky next time.

LUCAS

Yes sir, thank you sir.

EXT. WOODS - DUSK

The van is parked at the edge of the woods. All five men have exited the van and are standing near the rear of the van.

JOEL

If you run I'll shoot you.

Joel walks over to Luthor and cuts the cable ties with a knife off his belt.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Take off your shoes, pants and your jacket.

Luthor does so. Folding the items of clothing before placing them on the ground.

JOEL (CONT'D)

James, Jeffrey stay here.

Sam grabs Luthor by the arm and starts to walk off into the woods.

SAM

This way.

JOEL

We will be back soon.

Joel walks off in the same direction that Sam went. Sam's gun is still pointed at Luthor's back. When Sam, Joel and Luthor are out of sight Jeffrey and James get back into the front of the van where both men remain silent.

INT. VAN - DUSK

James rubs his hands together to warm them up and blows on his fingers.

JEFFREY

What you experienced last trip was not the norm. This one today is. I don't like killing as much as you don't.

JAMES

I'm not so sure that Joel and Sam share our love for life.

JEFFREY

Maybe they are smarter than us. More evolved.

JAMES

This sort of behaviour seems more like a de-evolution to me.

JEFFREY

Our society has been thrown back thousands of years. I guess more adapted is a better way of putting it. They can easily tap into that survival gene that we created for ourselves a long time ago when we actually needed it to survive. Guess that's why we are here too. To ensure the survival of ourselves and our families. I'm willing to turn a blind eye if it means keeping Maria alive.

James stares at Jeffrey then both men hear a bang on the side of the van. Jeffrey looks into his rear view mirror and sees Joel standing there.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

They are back.

The back of the van opens, Joel and Sam pile in.

JOEL

Let's get back.

Jeffrey turns the key and starts driving back to their base.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. FAMILY HOUSE - NIGHT

James is standing out the front of his house, he is looking at the glow of the fire down below near Joel's house. He puts the binoculars to his eyes and he sees Joel sitting there next to the fire. He is sitting on an easy chair. He has a glass in his hand with a brown liquid in it. He is alone and starring right at James as if he can see him from that distance. He is just sitting there staring.

James lowers his binoculars looks in his direction and sees nothing. He then puts the binoculars back to his face and sees James still sitting there staring, not moving. James finally puts the binoculars down and walks off towards his house.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/LOUNGE - NIGHT

James and Lisa are sitting in the lounge eating their dinner by the fire light. The kids are sitting on the floor playing cards.

LISA

You seem much calmer than when you went on the last trip.

JAMES

It was a much calmer situation.

LISA

So you don't regret going out this time?

JAMES

I feel a bit sorry for Luthor but
no one was killed.

LISA

So you think Luthor will make it?

James falls silent.

LISA (CONT'D)

If every trip is like this I
wouldn't mind you going out. Hell I
would go out myself. I need to do
my part too.

JAMES

I'm not leaving you alone with
Joel. Or Sam for that matter.

LISA

You still don't trust him.

JAMES

Not one bit.

LISA

What if he asked you to go out
again?

JAMES

He already did.

LISA

When did that happen.

JAMES

On the ride back.

LISA

What did you say?

JAMES

I said I would have to think about
it.

LISA

And what are you thinking?

JAMES

I saw his supplies when we got back
to his place.

INT. JOELS HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

James is standing in Joel's kitchen conversing with Joel. He looks away from Joel for a few seconds and sees Corey open the pantry, put some items into it then closes it again. He then resumes eye contact with Joel.

JAMES (V.O.)

Corey was opening the door to their kitchen pantry to put away what little we got from our trip and when he opened it I saw the shelves lined with canned goods, packet foods like you get in the army, candles, batteries the works. He and his son could live on that for about a year if they ration properly.

LISA

So you think that's from all his raids?

JAMES

Either that or he was the first out when the shit hit the fan and he single handedly looted the supermarket in town.

LISA

(whispering)

Don't take me too seriously but would stealing what he has be an option?

JAMES

(whispering)

I know you mean that to be a serious question and yes I considered that but I'm not willing to put you all in danger. There are just too many of them. we couldn't get away safely. Sam is one hell of a tracker.

LISA

So is that a yes to Joel's proposal?

JAMES

Only if the stakes are low. I know that means less spoils but I'm not going to put my kids at risk of losing their father.

LISA
I can appreciate that.

JAMES
But the moment our stock grows big
enough for us to live for about a
month I am thinking we hit the
road.

LISA
Why is that?

JAMES
I don't want Joel and the others
getting the same idea that we just
did.

James and Lisa look over at the kids who are still playing
cards and laughing loudly, yelling "snap" every now and then.

LISA
Okay.

James stands up and walks over to the kids and sits on the
floor with them

JAMES
Deal me in.

ZAC
But you always lose, there's no
challenge.

JAMES
That's what you think, I've been
going easy on you.

JOHN
Yeah right dad.

Lisa laughs.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/LOUNGE - DAY

James, Lisa, Zac and John are all sitting on the floor in the
lounge. Lisa is wearing a novelty nurses hat. The coffee
table in the lounge is covered with medical supplies.

Lisa is sitting next to James on one side of the table and Zac is sitting next to John on the Other side of the table.

LISA

Hello class this is your favourite teacher Mrs Parker and todays lesson will be on cleaning and dressing lacerations. Does anybody here know what I mean by laceration?

ZAC

It's like when...

LISA

Ah raise your hand.

Zac rolls his eyes and raises his hand. Lisa smirks.

LISA (CONT'D)

Yes Zac.

ZAC

It's like when you get a cut.

LISA

Correct. Lacerations are more serious then superficial wounds which we have already covered and should be cleaned and bandaged as soon as possible to not cause any further complications like infection but the first thing we should do is stop the bleeding. How do we do that?

All three students put their hand up.

LISA (CONT'D)

Yes John.

JOHN

Hold the blood in with your hand.

LISA

Partially correct. Only use your bare hands as a last resort. You want to push really hard onto that cut but with a clean piece of material in between your hand and the cut, a piece of material like this.

Lisa holds up a piece of medical cloth from the table.

LISA (CONT'D)

You can also use gloves or plastic bags or a clean shirt if you have to it just depends on what you have on you at the time. The most important thing is to stop the bleeding. And what would we do after we stop the bleeding?

James raises his hand.

LISA (CONT'D)

Yes James.

JAMES

Clean the wound.

LISA

Very good James. Now this too depends on the resources available to you which in these times might not be very much. Water works well to clean the wound and you can use a mild soap to help remove any debris or bacteria. After that if you have antibacterial ointment...

Lisa holds up a tube of antibacterial ointment from the coffee table.

LISA (CONT'D)

Apply a small dab to the wound. And what should we do after that class?

All three raise their hands.

LISA (CONT'D)

John.

JOHN

Bandage it up.

LISA

I'll be calling you doctor John soon.

John smiles.

LISA (CONT'D)

Yes that's exactly what we should do. Now is the time for our practical part of the lesson, bandage making

EXT. FAMILY HOUSE/LOUNGE - DAY (LATER)

James is bandaging Lisa's arm while Zac is bandaging Johns arm.

LISA
You're actually pretty good at this.

JAMES
What's my prize Miss Parker?

LISA
Come by my office later, I'll give you a gold star.

JAMES
Can you leave the hat on?

LISA
A naughty nurse is not complete without her hat.

JAMES
Kids have you finished yet?

James looks over at John and Zac.

ZAC
Ta-da

John holds his arm out for Lisa and James to see.

LISA
Looks good. Let me have a closer look.

Lisa starts to inspect the bandage on Johns arm.

LISA (CONT'D)
Nice and firm. If this was on a real cut you may have saved Johns life.

JOHN
Yay.

LISA
Now take the bandage off and John you try to bandage Zac's arm, I'll be back to check on you soon.

ZAC
Where are you going?

LISA

James is feeling a little under the weather so I'm going to lie him down in the other room.

James starts to cough.

JOHN

Do you want me to fix you daddy.

JAMES

No it's okay John, your mother will take good care of me.

James and Lisa smile at each other and stand up. Lisa grabs the stethoscope, a bandage and a needle lesssyringe off the table and both exit the room sheepishly, closing the door behind them. Zac looks at John.

ZAC

Oh no John, you're bleeding on your head, I better bandage that up quick.

JOHN

What, I can't feel anything.

John touches his head and brings his hand down to look at it. Zac grabs another bandage off the table.

ZAC

Just sit still, I'll take care of it.

JOHN

Hurry.

Zac starts to wrap a bandage around Johns head, covering half of his head including his eyes.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. FAMILY HOUSE - DAY

James is cutting wood outside under the car port. He is sweating and panting holding a large axe and has a gun in his belt.

JEFFREY (O.S.)
Need some help?

James turns quickly and has his hand over his gun.

JAMES
Jesus Christ Jeffrey. You want to
get shot?

JEFFREY
Don't worry, I know you're not the
quickest on the draw.

JAMES
You been talking to my kids?

JEFFREY
What was that?

JAMES
Nothing, what brings you up here?

JEFFREY
New job, tonight.

JAMES
How many?

JEFFREY
Two, a man and a woman.

JAMES
Armed?

JEFFREY
They always are. That's how they
get this far.

JAMES
Where?

JEFFREY
They are camping in a clearing in
the woods. Just off the highway.

JAMES
Heading for the city or away from
it?

JEFFREY
Sam says away which means they are
probably stocked to the gills. You
in?

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

I trust you more than any of them,
would you say this would be a
smooth job?

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Smooth as could be. We will
surrounds them in the woods during
the day, ask for a surrender. If
they put up a fight Joel said we
will retreat and return during the
night. See if we can catch them
with their pants down, Literally.

JAMES

Are they a couple?

JEFFREY

Sam reckons so.

James pauses for a second.

JAMES

Okay I'm in.

JEFFREY

Great, we need you for this to
work. Even Corey will come to give
us the numbers. Joey asked if maybe
your boy wants to join.

JAMES

Not happening.

JEFFREY

I didn't think so. Anyway, we are
leaving now. Don't want them moving
too far off their last spotted
location. Sam said it looks like
they are set up to stay the night.

JAMES

I'll get my pack and tell my wife.

Lisa walks out the side door into the car port holding
James's bag.

LISA

It's okay, I heard everything in
the kitchen. Amazing how quiet this
place is without technology beeping
and birds chirping.

Lisa hands the bag to James.

JAMES

Jeffrey this is my wife Lisa. Lisa, Jeffrey.

JEFFREY

Pleasure to meet you mam. My wife Maria would like to invite you down to our home one day. She was thinking about starting a knitting circle.

LISA

I would love to meet her but I'm afraid I can't knit.

JEFFREY

That's okay, neither can she but she figured if you two get your heads together you can figure it out.

Lisa laughs.

LISA

Worth a shot I suppose. The kids could do with some more socks.

JEFFREY

Well alright then, it's a date. Now let's get going James, Joel is waiting.

James walks over to Lisa and kisses her on the cheek.

JAMES

I'll be back.

LISA

I know you will be.

James turns around and heads off down the driveway with Jeffrey.

JEFFREY

You should also really consider moving down into Devils Pitt. There are plenty of abandoned houses. It's not easy climbing up here just for a chat.

JAMES

Not happening.

JEFFREY

Thought so.

FADE OUT.

B) EXT.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

James is hiding behind a tree, a gun is in his hand.

JOEL (O.S.)

Just throw your weapons down and
surrender.

James looks over to his right and sees Joel about 20 feet
away also hiding behind a tree.

SAM (O.S.)

We have you surrounded.

James looks straight across from him and can see Sam's head
poking out from behind a tree.

BOB (O.S.)

How about you come and get us?

A shot goes off and it hits the tree that Sam is hiding
behind. James pokes his head out from the tree for a second
and looks into the clearing. There is a two person tent
pitched next to a large fallen tree.

A cliff side is to the campers backs and there are trees
surrounding the clearing. The two people, BOB, 25, and PAM,
24, are crouched down behind the fallen tree log.

SAM (O.S.)

It would be my pleasure.

Sam fires back at them, hitting the log. James looks over at
Joel.

JOEL

Don't be stupid kids, we got more
bullets than you do.

You can hear Bob and Pam loudly whispering to each other,
arguing.

PAM (O.S)

How can we trust that you won't
just kill us?

JOEL

You can't. All I can say is I made
a promise not to.

James looks over at Corey who is hiding well behind a tree near Joel. He looks terrified and is not facing the clearing at all with his back against the tree. James looks back at the clearing.

BOB

Well what good is that for these
days.

JAMES

The fact of the matter is we have
you surrounded, is this not the
forth voice you have heard?
Surrender your weapons and I as a
father and a husband guarantee your
lives will be spared.

Bob and Pam start to argue behind the log and then a gun comes flying over the log.

BOB

What the fuck Pam.

PAM

What choice do we have?

Pam stands up and holds her arms up in the air.

PAM (CONT'D)

I surrender.

JOEL

Come out from behind the log and
lie on the ground away from the
weapon.

Pam does so but there is no sign of Bob.

JOEL (CONT'D)

We could have killed her by now Bob
but we haven't. The choice is
yours. Either you both live or both
die.

A few moments pass.

BOB

Ahh shit.

A second gun flies over the log and Bob stands up with his hands raised.

JOEL

Now lie next to your girlfriend.

Bob does so.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Don't make any sudden movements or I will shoot. We are going to come over to you and search you.

Joel and Sam walk slowly over to the couple with their guns drawn. They both kneel down and start to frisk the couple. Joel on Bob and Sam on Pam.

PAM

Watch it pervert.

BOB

Hey don't touch her like that.

Sam puts his hands up.

SAM

Frisky one ain't we.

Joel looks at Sam, shakes his head and looks back down at Bob.

JOEL

So what's your name?

BOB

Bob, who the fuck cares, now let us go.

JOEL

Not so fast Bob, it ain't going to be that easy. We are going to go for a drive and then we will set you free.

BOB

Where to?

JOEL

The point is for you not to know.

BOB

And I take it you will be taking all our shit, leave us nothing to live by?

SAM
That's right.

BOB
Fuck you.

SAM
I think it is you who is fucked.

Sam laughs.

JOEL
Jeffrey, James, Corey, grab their
stuff, we are moving out.

Jeffrey, James and Corey move out from the woods and move
towards their camp.

INT. VAN (MOVING) - DAY

Pam and Bob are sitting in between Joel and Sam. James is
opposite them. Jeffrey and Corey are up front. Pam and Bob
have their hands cable tied together. Bob looks at James.

BOB
Is that your kid?

JAMES
No.

BOB
Well I bet they are real proud of
what you've become.

JAMES
They are alive, I'm proud of that.

BOB
And what a time to be alive.

The van slows down then stops.

INT. VAN - DAY

JEFFREY
This should do.

JOEL
Corey, James and Jeff, stay here.

Sam cuts both cable ties from the couple.

JOEL (CONT'D)

You two strip down to your underwear.

PAM

But we will die out there.

SAM

Either die out there or in here, decide.

Jeffrey walks around the back of the van and opens the doors. Sam leads Bob out and Joel leads Pam out. They both start to slowly strip off their clothes. Sam whistles while he looks Pam over.

SAM (CONT'D)

Darn shame to let you go.

BOB

I will break your dick off if it goes anywhere near her.

SAM

Is that so.

Sam gives off a dirty smile.

JOEL

Come on let's go get this over with.

Sam cable ties the prisoners hands again after they have striped down to their underwear. Joel and Sam then walk off with Pam and Bob. James watches them walk away until they can no longer be seen. Jeffrey makes his way back to the drivers seat. James then turns his head to talk to Corey who is still in the front seat.

JAMES

Hey Corey can we switch places, I want to talk to Jeffrey?

COREY

Okay.

Corey and James both exit the van and switch places. Corey now in the back and James in the passenger seat. They both shut their respective doors. James starts to talk to Jeffrey in a low tone.

JAMES

Are you sure they will be okay?

JEFFREY

Joel has Sam on a pretty tight leash.

JAMES

That may be but I don't trust Joel for that matter.

JEFFREY

We got the goods, they are being let free in the woods, what more could you ask for?

JAMES

I just don't like the look in Sam's eyes.

Silence passes for a moment.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Speaking of eyes, what did you mean by turning a blind eye?

Both James and Jeffrey stare at each other for a long time, neither men speak. James starts to tense up and grasps the door handle. Jeffrey looks at him with the look of sorrow in his eyes. James flings the door open.

EXT. FOREST/EDGE - DAY

James starts to run in the direction that Joel and Sam went.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

James walks through the forest with a quick pace until he hears some twigs breaking up ahead followed by a male grunting. He slows down his pace and looks out into the woods.

He reaches the top of a hill where he looks down and can see Bob lying on the forest floor with two stab wounds on his back. His back is covered with blood. Joel is sitting on a large log looking into the distance.

James looks around to Joel's right and can see Pam with her face pushed up against a tree trunk. Her panties are down around her ankles and Sam is raping her from behind, grunting with each thrust. James looks in horror for a few moments and in his blink-less stare he starts to pat his sides and realises that he doesn't have a gun on him. He looks behind him then looks forward at the scene one more time. He spots Sam's gun lying in the dirt but it's very close to Joel.

Just as he takes a step forward Sam let's out a big sigh and walks away from Pam. He walks over to his gun, and picks it up. Pam collapses to the ground sobbing. Sam wipes his forehead with his forearm.

SAM
She's all yours.

Joel stands up and slowly walks over to Pam, undoing his belt as he walks. James then turns around and starts to walk back to the van.

EXT. VAN - DAY

James swings open the drivers door and pulls Jeffrey out and slams the door shut. He throws Jeffrey up against the van.

JAMES
Did you know?

Jeffrey stays silent, James bangs him against the van again.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Did you know?

JEFFREY
I suspected.

JAMES
Why didn't you tell me?

JEFFREY
These guys keep me and my wife
alive.

JAMES
These guys are rapists and
murderers.

JEFFREY
I do what I have to do.

JAMES
Does Maria know?

JEFFREY
No.

JAMES
Why not?

JEFFREY

I'm trying to protect her from the harsh realities of our new life.

JAMES

Our lives don't have to be like this.

JEFFREY

Yeah they do and when those two get back you're not going to say anything and you know that.

JAMES

I'll kill them.

JEFFREY

Why haven't you already then, why haven't you grabbed a gun and marched back there. Because you need them. Just like I do.

James falls to his knees and starts sobbing.

JAMES

I'm out, I'm leaving tomorrow, my family will take our chances elsewhere. I'm not being a part of this.

JEFFREY

Don't you think I tried the same thing when I found out? We came crawling back the next week, starved and cold and it will be even harder for you, you have a whole family to look after.

JAMES

I'll take my chances.

JEFFREY

Think about it first.

JAMES

I won't take advice from you.

JEFFREY

Well they are going to be back soon, better make your mind up as to how you are going to go about this.

JAMES
Today will be the last day you see
me.

JEFFREY
So you're leaving then.

JAMES
I'm not going to start a gun fight,
it's four against one.

JEFFREY
You think I will defend them?

JAMES
I do.

Both men stare at each other.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Where is Corey?

JEFFREY
In the back.

JAMES
Shit.

JEFFREY
It's okay, he's got his ear muffs
on, he probably didn't hear much of
what we were talking about.

James walks to the back of the van and opens the door. Corey
is sitting there with his ear muffs on whittling a spear from
a stick with a pocket knife. He lifts his ear muffs off of
one ear.

COREY
They back yet?

JAMES
Not yet.

James closes the door and goes to the passenger side but
before he gets in Jeffrey stops him.

JEFFREY
Come by my house before you go,
I'll give you some food for your
kids.

JAMES
No thanks.

James enters the passenger seat and closes the door.

INT. VAN - DAY (LATER)

JEFFREY
They're back.

James swallows hard and keeps his face forward. Joel and Sam open the back door of the van and pile in.

JOEL
Let's head back.

Jeffrey starts the engine.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Everything fine up there?

JAMES
Splendid.

EXT. VAN (MOVING) - DAY

The van drives off into the distance.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. WOODS - DUSK

James is looking up at his house from a distance. He has his backpack on and has stopped walking, he is just standing there staring, puffing heavily from the trek up. You can see his breath as he exhales.

EXT. FAMILY HOUSE - NIGHT

James reaches the front door and opens it hastily. He enters the hallway.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/HALLWAY - NIGHT

JAMES
(shouting)
Lisa.

Lisa comes out from the kitchen into the hallway carrying a lit candle.

LISA
Thank god your back.

JAMES
Pack our things, we are leaving
tomorrow morning.

LISA
What happened?

JAMES
I knew I shouldn't have trusted
them, they are rapists and
murderers Lisa.

Lisa's eyes get wide and her mouth opens in shock.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I saw it with my own eyes.

LISA
Do they know you know?

JAMES
I don't think so but there is a
chance and that's why we are
getting out of here.

LISA
What do you think they will do?

JAMES
They know I won't be going with
them again so I am of no use to
them, just more competition for
food.

LISA
And you think they would kill us
over that?

JAMES
Yes, especially Sam.

LISA
What will we do for food and
shelter?

JAMES
Don't worry, I won't let anything
bad happen to our family, that's
why we must leave now. Go tell the
kids.

Lisa stops and just stares James over. She then opens her mouth to speak but just turns around and walks off to the lounge. James walks quickly to the kitchen.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

James pulls out a candle and a lighter from his bag and lights it. He sets it on the counter. He places his gun next to the candle from his waste band. He opens his bag widely and starts to open the kitchen cupboards, putting anything he finds of value into the bag.

Lisa then enters the kitchen, looks at the gun and then walks deeper into the kitchen with a bag of her own. She then opens it and starts putting random things in.

LISA
Will we be coming back?

JAMES
It's not safe.

LISA
Where will we go, to the city?

JAMES
Maybe, I know they won't follow us there, but before that I have an idea.

LISA
And what's that?

JAMES
We camp near Devils Pitt, when the boys are out we break into Joel's pantry. Only Maria is down there guarding their stash when they go out. Sometimes Corey too.

LISA
This sounds dangerous.

JAMES
I don't think so, not if we are smart and patient about it.

LISA
While you have been out I have been teaching the boys how to shoot.

James pauses and looks at Lisa with wide open eyes.

LISA (CONT'D)

They haven't shot any real bullets as we didn't want any attention but they know about loading, aiming, safety and all that. They shouldn't be too bad if any one gets close to them.

JAMES

Why didn't you tell me?

LISA

I knew you wouldn't like it.

JAMES

I don't.

James and Lisa continue packing their belongings into the night.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/LOUNGE - NIGHT (LATER)

James and Lisa are on a mattress on the floor with blankets over them watching the kids sleep who are across from them on couches. A dwindling fire light is cast across them. Suddenly they hear two loud knocks at the door. Lisa and James sit up immediately.

LISA

Is it them?

JAMES

Probably.

LISA

What do we do?

JAMES

Shit.

James grabs his gun from under his pillow.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Take the kids and head to the back door, have your gun ready. If you hear anything other than talking then run into the woods and hide. It's pitch black out there so they shouldn't be able to find you easily.

LISA

What will you do?

JAMES
Just talk to them, it might be
nothing.

LISA
At what must be 3am. You think
there is more than one of them?

JAMES
Yes, now go.

They both then hear three more knocks, even louder this time.
Lisa kisses James on the lips.

LISA
I love you.

JAMES
I love you too.

James stands up and walks out into the hallway and to the
front door.

INT. FAMILY HOUSE/HALLWAY - NIGHT

James stands behind the door with his gun held at his side.

JAMES
Who is it?

JOEL
It's Joel.

JAMES
What do you want?

JOEL
Can you open the door?

James pauses and then repositions the gun behind the door on
his right hand side while he opens the door with his left
hand. He opens the door, keeps the gun out of Joel's sight
and sees Joel there alone holding an oil burner.

JAMES
What do you want, my family are
sleeping.

JOEL
Good, just wanted to tell you about
our next job, Jeffrey spotted him
while driving back.

JAMES
I didn't see anything.

JOEL
But Jeffrey did.

JAMES
Okay.

JOEL
We are heading out now before they
move on so grab your shit.

James looks back down the hallway and then looks back at
Joel.

JAMES
I can't go this time?

JOEL
Why not?

JAMES
I don't want to leave my family at
this hour unprotected. I've seen
what others do to each other now
days. Leave it till the morning and
I will meet you down in the Pitt.

JOEL
That's just not going to do.

JAMES
Take it or leave it.

JOEL
I had a feeling you would say no.

JAMES
That so.

JOEL
Well not so much a feeling but a
guess. An educated guess at that.
Want to know how I became so
educated about this matter?

JAMES
Would it make you leave any
quicker.

JOEL

It might. See my boy Corey, he said he heard you and Jeff arguing, mind you he only heard a few words but those words are big words. Rape, murder, leaving but my favourite is kill.

James slams the door in Joel's face and yells out.

JAMES

(shouting)

Lisa run.

The front door flings open as James is running down the hallway. He turns the corner just as he hears a gun shot behind him. He makes it to the back door that is wide open and then he runs through it.

EXT. FAMILY HOUSE/BACK - NIGHT

James runs out to the back of the house and looks to his right where he can see a mass of black but can't quite figure out what it is.

SAM

Stop right there or I'll slit her throat.

James hears a rustling in the direction of the black mass. He stops in his tracks.

JAMES

You fucking coward.

Sam screams out in pain.

SAM

You bitch.

LISA

Protect the kids James. They ran into the forest.

James stands his ground but can hear Joel's footsteps in the house and runs off into the woods. Two more shots are fired from Joel's gun that lights up the scene for a split second where we can see Sam holding Lisa from behind and covering her mouth with his now bleeding hand.

James disappears into the woods but gets hit by the second bullet fired. He grimaces in pain but does not scream out. The bullet entered the back of his thigh.

He grasps it with both hands but still continues to move forward. He stops a few meters ahead and rests his back on a tree. He is panting and sweating heavily.

JOEL (O.S.)
(shouting)
Shes mine now.

James whimpers in pain but stands up again and keeps on moving.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

When he is deeper in the woods James sits on a log. He takes his jacket, his jersey and his shirt off. He rips the shirt in half and wraps it around his bleeding leg and pulls it tight. He then puts his jersey and jacket back on. He is visibly exhausted. He then stands up and starts to whisper loudly.

JAMES
(whispering)
Zac, John. Zac it's your dad. Are you around here, Zac, John. I can't see anything. Is the tree house around here. Zac.

ZAC
(whispering)
Dad, it's over here.

JAMES
(whispering)
Keep talking.

ZAC
(whispering)
Wheres mommy, is she okay?

JAMES
(whispering)
Is John with you?

JOHN
I'm here.

James hands happen upon a tree with a ladder nailed on to it. He puts his gun in his jeans and he starts to slowly climb the ladder, grinding his teeth every time he uses his wounded leg.

INT. TREEHOUSE - NIGHT

He reaches the top and climbs in. The treehouse only just fits all three occupants. The two boys are on their knees looking down at their father who is lying down. John is crying. James looks over to the boys.

JAMES

Are you two alright? Are you hurt at all?

ZAC

We are okay. Where's mum?

JAMES

John you okay?

JOHN

I'm scared.

JAMES

Me too buddy.

ZAC

Where's mum?

JAMES

Joel took her.

ZAC

Is she going to be okay?

JAMES

I don't know?

ZAC

Well why aren't we leaving? Let's go get her back.

JAMES

We will but we need to be smart about it. Do you have any of the packed bags on you?

Zac passes over two bags and James opens them up. He takes out a mini flash light and he looks over the bags contents. He first takes out a gun and then takes out some water. He drinks the water then takes out a bandage and starts to properly bandage his wound.

JOHN

Daddy.

ZAC
You got shot.

JAMES
I'll be okay.

JOHN
Do you want me to bandage your leg?

JAMES
It's okay John, I got this but
thank you.

James finishes bandaging his wound then he turns to Zac.

JAMES (CONT'D)
So you can shoot.

There is a pause for a moment.

ZAC
I think so.

James hands over the second gun to Zac.

JAMES
I hope so, with the condition I'm
in I need you. I need you both.

ZAC
When are we leaving?

JAMES
At dawn.

ZAC
That's too long.

JAMES
I know but in this darkness we
won't even be able to find our own
house again let alone your mother.
She's a strong woman, the strongest
women I know. She will be fine till
then, now how well do you know
Corey's house.

ZAC
Pretty well. I stayed over a few
times.

JAMES

Good. Now you two get some rest if you can. I'll wake you up in a few hours.

ZAC

Are we going to shoot Joel?

JAMES

If it comes down to it.

ZAC

What about Corey?

JAMES

I don't know.

ZAC

He's not a bad guy.

JAMES

I know and if he stays out of it he will be fine. Now sleep. Here are some blankets.

James unwraps a couple of survival blankets and they all huddle together under them. Zac and John have their eyes closed but James's eyes remain open and alert. He is holding the gun to his chest.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. TREEHOUSE - DAY

James is shaken awake by John.

JOHN

Daddy wake up, daddy Zac is gone.

James eyes suddenly burst open. He looks over at John and he sits up. Grimacing in pain.

JAMES

Where is your brother? Where did he go?

JOHN

To get mummy. I told him to wait.

JAMES

Why didn't you wake me earlier?

JOHN

Zac told me not to, he said you need to rest to get better.

JAMES

Shit, how long ago did he leave?

JOHN

Not long, I'm sorry daddy. He said you will just slow him down.

JAMES

We have to go, now.

James grabs one of the bags and opens it. He takes some pills out and swallows them dry. He then shuffles over to the ladder groaning in pain while he does so. He descends the ladder and when he reaches the bottom to stand up he stumbles and grabs a tree for support. He is sweating profusely. John starts to climb down the ladder and when he reaches the bottom they both walk away through the forest.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

James and John are walking down the hill as fast as they can. James keeps tripping up and holding anything he can to stay balanced including John. He is sweating and panting like he just ran a mile.

Suddenly they both hear a gun shot in the distance followed by another two. Both James and John pause and just look off into the distance, as still as can be. They both have a look of horror in their faces.

JAMES

Zac.

James then hurries himself down the hill in a panic. He seems to ignore the pain in his leg. He is running down the forest towards the Pitt like a mad man.

John is struggling to keep up. James and John continue running through the forest until they reach an opening that brings them to a road.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

James starts limping down the road with the gun in his hands. He seems to have stopped blinking.

Not far down the road some houses come into view. James turns to John who is weeping and just looks at him.

JAMES

John stay here, go hide in the woods. I'll be back for you.

John does not disobey. He runs into the nearby woods and disappears behind a tree. James then looks forward and continues up the road. His pace slows down as he comes upon the first house. He hides behind it and peers around the corner looking directly at Joel's house. It seems eerily quiet and no one can be seen or heard.

James weaves between houses backyards seemingly undetected until he gets to Joel's house.

EXT. JOELS HOUSE - DAY

James has his firearm ready and pushes his back up against Joel's house under a window. He then turns around and raises his body so he can look through the window which looks into the lounge. He sees nothing. He continues to walk around the house when he comes across the back door. It's wide open. James steps in.

INT. JOELS HOUSE/HALLWAY - DAY

James walks up the hallway and just where the hallway turns the corner he can see a foot lying on the ground. He limps over to it hastily and kneels down to inspect it. They are big shoes.

He pokes his head around the corner, checks it's clear and then he moves around to the body. He lifts the shoulder and can see Joel's dead face staring back at him. He was shot in the chest. He drops the shoulder and stands back up again. He continues to move through the house. He then reaches the kitchen.

INT. JOELS HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

He enters the kitchen and freezes immediately as he can see Corey from behind. He is pointing a gun at something. Corey hasn't noticed James yet. James takes another step in and can now see that Corey and Zac have their guns pointed at each other. Both their hands are shaking.

Zac suddenly notices James has entered the room and shifts his gaze in his direction. Corey notices this and panics. He quickly turns and shoots his gun blindly.

The bullet hits James in the side of his torso and James drops his gun. Seconds later Zac shoots his gun and kills Corey instantly while James is on the floor in pain. James sees Corey fall to the floor with the look of surprise on his face. Zac is standing there frozen in shock. James screams out in pain.

JAMES

Zac are you okay?

No response from Zac. James then props himself up and can see Zac frozen.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Zac it's okay.

James holds the side of his stomach and hobbles over to Zac who still has his gun drawn in front of him. James pushes down the gun and kneels down to his level.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Zac.

ZAC

I had no choice.

JAMES

I know. You did good. Have you seen your mother?

Zac snaps out of his frozen state and turns his head and looks at a bedroom down the hallway. James stands up, raises his gun and starts to walk in that direction. James turns to Zac.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Follow me and be on your guard.

Zac does so but in an emotionless and unfocused way. James exits the kitchen with Zac behind him and walks up to a bedroom that has its door slightly ajar.

INT. JOELS HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

James enters the bedroom and his face instantly changes from cautious to horror. In the bedroom Lisa is handcuffed to the bed. She is naked. Her face is barely recognisable from the beatings that must of incurred earlier. Her face is swollen and covered in blood. There is also bruising all over her limbs and a trickle of blood running down her thigh.

JAMES
(whispering)

No.

James hobbles over to Lisa as quick as he can.

JAMES (CONT'D)
(yelling)

No.

James falls to his knees crying. He takes Lisa's hand into his own. He starts weeping as he covers her body with a blanket with his free hand. Lisa is conscious but it's hard to tell what emotions she is portraying.

LISA
James.

JAMES
Honey I'm sorry.

James starts to cry uncontrollably.

LISA
Are they dead?

JAMES
Which ones did this to you?

LISA
Joel and Sam.

James stands up and raises his gun.

JAMES
Zac stay here, protect your mother.

LISA
Where's John?

SAM (O.S.)
He's with me.

James, Lisa and Zac turn their heads around and see John standing there in the door frame with a gun visible to his head but Sam is hidden around the corner. Only his hand is slightly visible.

SAM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Quite a mess you've made.

James, Lisa and Zac are struck silent.

SAM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Now throw your weapons out the
door.

LISA
(screaming)
Let him go.

SAM (O.S.)
Not unless you cooperate.

JAMES
Your just going to kill us anyway.

SAM (O.S.)
No no, you've got me all wrong. I'm
not like that. That's my brother
your thinking of.

JAMES
Bullshit you coward, hiding behind
a boy.

SAM (O.S.)
A dead boy soon if you don't all
surrender your weapons.

Zac throws his gun out into the hallway.

SAM (CONT'D)
I'm not that stupid, I know you
have at least one more. Don't make
me count to ten.

James stands there quietly.

SAM (CONT'D)
One, two, three.

James moves slowly towards the door frame. His gun held in
front of him.

SAM (CONT'D)
Four, five, six, seven, eight,
nine.

James quickly steps out into the hallway ready to shoot Sam
but as he does he hears a gun shot and his face gets
splattered with blood. He freezes in shock and he has stopped
breathing. He looks down at John who appears to be fine. He
then looks up at Sam who is now missing half of his head. He
is still standing in place until he falls down behind Johns
feet.

When Sam falls down James notices that Jeffrey is standing there in the entrance way with a smoking gun still aimed ahead. The two men stare at each other for a while until Jeffrey lowers his gun, turns around and walks off.

James finally breaths out a sigh of relief but starts a coughing fit. He coughs out blood that splatters onto the white painted walls.

JAMES

Shit.

James walks back into the bedroom and walks over to the bed. He leans against the wall and slides down leaving a blood streak on the wall.

LISA

James.

James looks up to the ceiling.

JAMES

I'm sorry Lisa.

John is still standing in the door frame crying.

ZAC

Dad.

Zac walks over to James.

JAMES

Protect the family okay.

Zac starts to cry, he wipes away the tears.

ZAC

Okay.

Zac leans down and hugs James. James closes his eyes.

LISA

(screaming)

James don't you go anywhere. James,
James.

Zac walks back to Lisa and hugs her

LISA (CONT'D)

(screaming)

James.

John walks over to Lisa and hugs the opposite side that Zac is hugging.

LISA (CONT'D)
(screaming)

James.

All three are crying on the bed.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. JOELS HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Zac is cutting the head board with a hacksaw while Lisa just lays there hugging John. She is staring at James's lifeless corpse. She has stopped crying and wears an emotionless mask.

INT. JOELS HOUSE/HALLWAY - DAY

Lisa has a blanket wrapped around her and exits the bedroom with one side of a pair of handcuffs around each wrist. She is flanked by John and Zac.

INT. JOELS HOUSE/MAIN BEDROOM - DAY

Lisa enters the bedroom and sees a dresser. She walks slowly over to it and opens the draws. She sees a mix of random clothes and she drops the blanket to the floor and starts to get dressed. Zac and John are sitting outside the room. They are sitting on the floor with their backs to the doorframe. One boy on each side.

INT. JOELS HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Lisa opens the pantry. She is wearing a random assortment of males clothes. She looks over all the food and supplies but no smile breaks across her face. Zac and John are sitting at the kitchen counter looking down at the counter top.

EXT. JOELS HOUSE - DAY

Lisa, Zac and John are standing on the porch. They look off into the distance and see Jeffrey and Maria pushing a loaded shopping kart and wearing backpacks. They are walking off into the distance and suddenly Jeffrey turns around and stares back at them. Maria turns and looks as well but then the couple turn back around and keep on walking.

EXT. HOUSE - DUSK

Lisa and Zac are shovelling dirt onto James's body which is wrapped in a bed sheet and stuffed in a shallow hole outside a random house located within the Pitt. John is on a seat crying and watching them bury his father.

EXT. HOUSE - DUSK (LATER)

Lisa and Zac are standing outside the front of the house and are about to enter. John is kneeling at James's grave and places something on top of the dirt. Lisa turns around. John stands up and runs over to Lisa.

The three walk into the house slowly and shut the door behind them. A homemade cross is sticking out of the lawn near the freshly tossed dirt and on top of that dirt is a freshly picked daisy. A glow can be seen inside the house.

FADE OUT.

The end.