

WILL TO LIVE

by
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FADE IN:

EXT. ROAD CHECKPOINT - NEAR TIKRIT, IRAQ - DAY

Lieutenant WILL GARRICK, 30, watches fellow Army soldier Private ALEX MUNDY, 20, check the papers of an Iraqi motorist stopped at this desert checkpoint.

The driver of the car stands alongside his vehicle as Alex looks over his papers.

Will stands near a bunker constructed of sandbags and concrete slabs. He rubs the sweat from his tanned, ruggedly handsome face.

Corporal JIM DALY, 25, chugs water from a plastic bottle. He wipes his lips, looks at Will.

JIM

Hey. Thinking about asking Sara to marry me.

WILL

Really? Do it, man. Gettin' hitched was the best move I ever made.

He thumbs his golden wedding band, spins it around his finger, grins at Jim.

WILL

She'll make a man outta ya.

Alex waves on the car and it rolls through the narrow passage created by the welded steel girder barriers.

All three men wear desert camo and armor. They wield M4 assault rifles.

A white SUV approaches.

WILL

Wanna take this one, Jim?

Jim nods, walks to the middle of the road and holds up his hand. Stop signs spelled out in Arabic populate the road fifty feet in front of the barriers.

Will sips from a bottle of water, keeps one eye on the white SUV as the DRIVER gets out and hands Jim papers.

The SUV carries two passengers, a YOUNGER MAN and a BEARDED MAN in the backseat.

Will locks his eyes on the young man in the passenger seat. He looks nervous.

A black SUV pulls up behind the white one and stops. THREE MORE MEN in that vehicle.

Jim studies the Driver's papers closely.

Will leans against the bunker, subtly wraps his finger around the trigger of his rifle.

He watches as the Driver nonchalantly reaches under his waistband, produces a pistol and raises it at Jim's face.

Will ventilates the Driver with three shots to his chest.

The Bearded Man in the passenger seat fires an Uzi through the windshield and strikes Jim in the right arm.

Jim drops his rifle, falls to the ground in agony.

The two passengers of the white SUV and all three men in the black SUV jump out of their trucks and open fire.

Will and Alex duck behind the bunker. Jim rolls behind the front of the white SUV, but is trapped and unarmed.

Will kills the Younger Man from the white SUV as Alex concentrates his fire on the black vehicle.

The collective gunfire sounds like Hell shaking loose.

Alex dusts one of the men from the black SUV.

Will watches as the Bearded Man makes his way along the back of the white SUV, heading right for Jim.

WILL

Cover me!

Will runs straight into the withering enemy fire, killing another assailant from the black SUV.

He makes it to Jim just as the Bearded Man turns the corner and draws his weapon. Will puts three neatly placed bullets in the Bearded Man's forehead.

The lone assailant left from the black SUV fires from behind the vehicle. He runs out of ammo. He lays on the road, holds his shaking hands up.

LATER

The surviving gunman kneels, his wrists secured behind him in restraints.

Alex holds a rifle on him as Will tends to Jim's wounds. He wraps a tight bandage around his forearm.

WILL
Not too bad. They'll getcha fixed
up in no time.

Jim stares at him.

JIM
You saved my life, Will.

Will pats his shoulder.

WILL
That's what we do.

Will sees a metallic shimmer on the horizon. Another car speeds toward the checkpoint.

WILL
Let me take this.

Jim walks toward the bunker. Will walks in the middle of the road, raises his hand.

The car picks up speed. Will aims his rifle.

The car veers off the road, knocking over stop signs as it tries to skirt around the barriers.

Will opens fire, spraying bullets across the driver's side window and windshield.

The car slows and rolls to a stop on the desert scrub. Will looks back to Jim and Alex.

WILL
Stay back!

He sidles up along the driver's side, then quickly opens the door and holds his rifle at the ready.

His eyes widen. His mouth drops. He lowers his weapon, horror etched across his face.

INT. BEDROOM - WILL'S APT. - DAY

Will, now 33, bolts upright in bed, his hands raised in a defensive gesture.

WILL

No!

His wild eyes scan the room. Sweat covers his face and torso. He gasps for air.

After a few moments, his senses return. A look of familiarity washes over his face. This nightmare must be nothing new.

INT. LIVING ROOM - WILL'S APT. - DAY

Will walks into the living room of his drab apartment. He wears boxer shorts and a t-shirt.

No paintings or decorations of any kind adorn the walls. Unopened cardboard boxes lie everywhere.

He sits down on his couch, stares at a pile of papers on his coffee table.

The heading of the first page reads, "Petition for Dissolution of Marriage - Simplified Divorce."

He folds his hands, rests his chin on his knuckles as he gazes at the papers.

On the end table next to the couch stand two framed photos. The first shows Will with his beautiful wife CASSIE on their wedding day.

The other photo shows Will and Jim Daly, standing in Iraq next to the checkpoint in Tikrit.

Will picks up his cellphone, hits the contact page.

INSERT: He scrolls down to "Cassie."

INT. KITCHEN - GARRICK HOME - DAY

CASSIE GARRICK, 30, glowingly beautiful and very pregnant, hears her cell phone ring. The ringtone: The Beatles' "In My Life." She answers.

CASSIE

Hey. Got the papers?

INTERCUT

Will rubs his short brown hair.

WILL

Yesterday.

CASSIE

So...can we please just settle this without the lawyers and--

WILL

Cassie. Um...I don't know how many times I have to apologize, but I'll do it again. It happened once. I'm sorry. This...

He picks up the divorce papers, drops them on the table.

WILL

We don't have to do this. I'm asking you to please forgive me.

Cassie closes her eyes, shakes her head.

CASSIE

I'm a forgiving person, Will, and you know that. But there are points of no return in life. You made your choice.

Will lowers his head and grimaces.

WILL

I want to...I want to see you.

CASSIE

We've been through this.

She puts a hand on her swollen belly.

CASSIE

Hannah's due next Friday. I'll see you then. You have a right to be there.

WILL

Could we at least meet for lunch sometime this week?

CASSIE

Still drinking?

Will glances to a nearly empty bottle of Jack Daniels on the kitchen counter.

Cassie nods at his silence.

CASSIE

I'll see you at the hospital, Will.

She hangs up.

Will lowers the phone, stands, walks over to the counter.

Next to the bottle of Jack Daniels lays a framed Silver Star medal of valor. Dust and stray coins cover the glass of the frame.

Will looks at the bottle of Jack, picks it up, smashes it into the sink.

INT. SALES FLOOR - FOOD KING GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Will sets up a beer sales display along with two of his young co-workers. He wears a white Oxford shirt, darks pants and a tie. A nametag on his shirt identifies him as an assistant manager.

MIKEY, 17, sports a mop of blond hair and a perpetually curious expression.

TRIP, 18 and chunky, stares at the giant cardboard football in his hand.

TRIP

Dude, imagine if this was the actual size of a football.

WILL

Yeah...wouldn't that be something?

Will steps back and measures the display with his eyes. A seven foot tall gridiron with goalposts stands in front of stacks of twelve packs.

WILL

Mikey, push those stacks on the right in a bit.

Mikey lowers his shoulder into it, grunts and slides the stacks a few inches.

WILL

Do the same thing over here, Trip.

Trip uses his considerable bulk to move the stacks on the opposite side. The display looks perfect.

WILL

Well done, boys. That's what we call a pincer maneuver.

MIKEY

Huh?

WILL

Nothing.

Will looks up the aisle, sees a PREGNANT WOMAN reach for a jar of applesauce on an upper shelf. Her belly knocks over two jars from a lower shelf which fall to the floor and shatter.

Will runs over.

PREGNANT WOMAN

I'm sorry.

WILL

No problem at all.

Will grabs the jar of applesauce off the shelf, then turns to Mikey.

WILL

Bring the mop and bucket over.

Mikey nods, walks off. Will hands her the jar.

PREGNANT WOMAN

Thank you. I'm still getting used to this.

She pats her swollen stomach.

WILL

Got one on the way myself. Due next week, actually.

PREGNANT WOMAN

Really? So you and your wife have her hospital bag all packed?

WILL

Uh...

PREGNANT WOMAN

I know my husband packed mine when
I was like three months along.
He's a planner, though.

Will's cell phone rings. The ringtone: The Beatles' "In My Life."

WILL

Excuse me.

He strides away from the Pregnant Woman and answers his phone.

WILL

Hey, I wanted to say--

INT. LIVING ROOM - GARRICK HOME - NIGHT

Cassie sits on the floor, her back resting against a couch. She grimaces in pain, a hand on her swollen belly as she clutches her cell phone to her ear.

CASSIE

She's coming! Hannah's coming now!

INTERCUT

Will's mouth drops.

WILL

Now?! It's not supposed to be til
next--

CASSIE

Nobody told her!

She grunts.

WILL

Okay, uh...

CASSIE

Ambulance is on its way. My
sister's gonna meet me at the
hospital.

WILL

Okay, good! Good! I'm on my way!
I'll be there!

CASSIE

You're thirty miles away.

WILL
I'll make it! I'm leaving now.

CASSIE
Hurry, Will.

Will hangs up the phone, sprints for the door.
He races by Mikey and Trip.

MIKEY
Will, what about the--

WILL
Can't! Baby! Right now!

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Will bolts to his green 2003 Honda Accord. It's old, but in good condition.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

He gets in, tosses his cell phone on the passenger seat.

A half-empty, clear plastic bottle of water sits in the cup holder. A mini-bag of potato chips stands wedged into the center console bin.

In the backseat, a newspaper, a wire hanger and an old sweatshirt.

Will starts it up and takes off.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The Accord's tires squeal as the car peels out of the lot and into the road.

EXT. STATE ROUTE 61 - NIGHT

Will's car zooms along the busy road, which is a four lane thoroughfare that cuts through rugged, hilly country.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Gleaming streaks from the passing streetlights glare through the glass sunroof.

Will, wide-eyed and breathless, slices through the traffic like a NASCAR champion.

WILL

Okay, okay, okay...gonna make it.
Jesus, I can't believe this is
happening. I cannot believe this.
A week early. C'mon, kid!

EXT. STATE ROUTE 61 - NIGHT

The car passes the exit for Harbin Way.

Shortly after that, traffic comes to a dead stop. Bumper to bumper. A bright orange sign reads, "Construction Next Two Miles."

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Will grips the steering wheel like he's going to break it.

WILL

No! No way! Not now!

He looks to the gravel-lined shoulder, but it's blocked by the huge sign. No getting around it.

Next to the shoulder, a steep drop off into a thicket of woods. Just beyond the thicket, Harbin Way is visible.

Beads of sweat form on Will's forehead. He eyes Harbin Way, then looks to the traffic ahead. His eyes dance between the two. Decision time.

He jerks the wheel to the right, hits the gas.

EXT. STATE ROUTE 61 - NIGHT

The car pulls onto the shoulder, stops just in front of the construction sign. Then it reverses.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Will cranes his neck as he peers through his rear window. He hears the gravel crunch as he drives his car backwards.

EXT. STATE ROUTE 61 - NIGHT

The car reaches a point where the thicket next to the shoulder has thinned out and only a grassy hill separates the gravelly path from the narrow, two-lane road below.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Will turns the wheel, takes the car down the slope. It's a bumpy descent, but he makes it to the road below.

He floors it and speeds along Harbin Way.

EXT. HARBIN WAY - NIGHT

The Accord roars down Harbin Way, which is hemmed in on both sides by thick woodland. Streetlights are few and far between.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Will glances at his phone, picks it up, hits a contact number.

EXT. FURTHER DOWN HARBIN WAY - NIGHT

About a mile from Will's location, a pair of headlights moves in the opposite direction.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

ROBERT RAINES, handlebar mustache, late forties, chugs the remaining beer from a can and crushes it. He's wasted. Country music blares from the radio.

He tosses the spent can in the back, grabs a fresh one from the twelve pack on the passenger seat.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Will holds the phone to his ear, grimaces.

WILL
Damn voicemail.

He hangs up, tosses the phone down.

Up ahead, headlights appear around a curve.

EXT. HARBIN WAY - NIGHT

The pickup truck idles in the middle of the road. The blaring music turns off.

Robert gets out, walks to the edge of the ravine, looks around. Panicked, he runs back to his truck.

The rear tires spit smoke and the truck speeds away.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Will sits unconscious, still strapped into his seat. His limp body rests against an inflated air bag.

Blood runs down the side of his face.

EXT. RAVINE - NIGHT

The cell phone lays on the muddy creek bank, near the water's edge. The display lights up, immediately followed by a ringtone: "In My Life."

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Will stirs. His eyes flutter open.

The overhead light provides a dim glow, illuminating the extent of the damage.

The sunroof is shattered, as are the windshield and all the windows.

The dashboard lies smashed, pinning Will's lower right leg between the dash and the fractured center console.

He looks around, brings a hand to his face, feels the blood.

WILL

What?

He hears the phone ring. No ringtone this time.

He looks around for the phone. He tries to turn his body, but winces in agony.

WILL

God.

He grasps his ribcage, grits his teeth. Finally, he spots the phone, not twenty feet away.

He tries to exit the car, but cries out in pain when he attempts to pull his leg free.

Will lets out a primal scream of pain and frustration.

INT. WAITING ROOM - HOSPITAL - NIGHT

JENNIFER WALTERS, 34, presses the phone to her ear. She shakes her head, runs a hand through her long, blonde hair.

JENNIFER

(into phone)

C'mon, Will, where are you?

She curls her lips back in a snarl.

JENNIFER

(into phone)

So help me God, if you don't show up, I'll--

DR. ALAN GORSKI, fifties, approaches Jennifer.

GORSKI

Excuse me, you're with Cassie Garrick?

JENNIFER

Yes. Jennifer Walters, I'm her sister.

GORSKI

I'm Dr. Gorski. Can I speak with you a moment?

Jennifer ends the call, follows Gorski.

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Gorski shuts the door behind the anxious Jennifer.

GORSKI

Has the father arrived yet?

JENNIFER

No.

GORSKI

Okay, we're having a bit of a problem with the delivery. The baby is experiencing shoulder dystocia, where the anterior shoulder of the infant cannot pass below the pubic bone.

JENNIFER

What are you...so what does this mean?

GORSKI

Our team is attempting several maneuvers to get the baby through the canal, but if those fail, we'll have to resort to a Caesarian delivery. That can be tricky in this situation.

Jennifer looks terrified.

JENNIFER

Oh my God. What should I...what can I do?

GORSKI

Just let the nurse at the desk know the moment the father arrives. I'm going to head back now and see where we're at. I'll keep you informed.

Gorski leaves. Jennifer slumps into a chair, covers her mouth with trembling hands.

INT. DELIVERY ROOM - NIGHT

A TEAM OF DOCTORS surrounds Cassie, who wails in torment. A NURSE holds her hand tightly, wipes the flowing sweat from her brow.

Cassie's legs rest in stirrups, a cloth curtain obscures her view.

DOCTOR #1 shakes his head as he removes his hands from Cassie.

DOCTOR #1

Woods maneuver failed. We're going to have to do the Caesarian right now.

DOCTOR #2
Prep for surgery.

Cassie's leans her head back and screams.

CASSIE
What's happening?! Will!

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Will tries to pull his leg free again, barks in pain.

He breathes deeply, exhales.

WILL
Okay, okay.

He moves his hand to his ribs, grimaces.

WILL
Broken ribs. At least four.

He places the hand on his right knee, shakes his head.

WILL
Leg. Damn.

The cell phone rings to life again. Will glares at it, fury in his eyes.

WILL
Shut up!

Will takes a piece of broken glass and slices through the air bag. He rips the deflated bag from the steering wheel. He honks the horn, yells at the top of his lungs.

WILL
Help! Help me!

He continues to hold the horn down.

EXT. HARBIN WAY - NIGHT

From the road, the horn can be heard, but there's no one to hear it. And the sound-swallowing trees effectively muffle the drone.

INT. SURGERY ROOM - HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Cassie lies on the table under general anesthesia as a surgical team works on her.

DOCTOR #1
Incision complete.

Doctor #2 reaches forward to deliver the baby.

DOCTOR #2
There's the head. Shoulder's
pressing on the wall of the pelvis.
Hold on.
(beat)
Got her.

He holds up baby HANNAH, who doesn't make a sound.

DOCTOR #1
Suction.

Doctor #1 uses a tube to gently suction the baby's mouth and nose of amniotic fluid. Within moments, she lets out a healthy, angry bawl.

DOCTOR #2
That's what I like to hear.

INT. WAITING ROOM - HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Dr. Gorski walks toward Jennifer, who stares at the floor and rubs her hands. She sees Gorski coming and stands.

GORSKI
The baby's fine. The Caesarian
went perfectly. And mom's doing
great.

She hugs him.

JENNIFER
Oh, thank God. Can I see her?

GORSKI
Not yet. She's still waking up
from the anesthesia. Has the
father arrived yet?

Jennifer bites her lip.

JENNIFER
No, he hasn't.

Gorski sees the concern on her face, but doesn't press.

GORSKI

Okay. It'll be awhile before you
can see your sister.

JENNIFER

Thank you, doctor.

She sits down, reaches into her purse, retrieves her phone.

She hits her contact screen, shakes her head in fury.

INSERT: She scrolls down to "Will" and hits "call."

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Will continues to slam the horn. He hears the phone ring and
stares helplessly at it.

He wipes the blood from his forehead, looks around the car.

WILL

Okay, gotta get the hell outta
here.

He reaches down, tries to lift the wrecked dashboard, even a
half inch. He groans with effort. Futility.

He slams his fist on the dashboard, then into the torn fabric
of the ceiling.

The phone stops ringing.

Raindrops begin to fall. Water seeps through the shattered
sunroof and runs onto Will's back.

The rain quickly intensifies.

Will adjusts his body, tries to sit upright despite the odd
angle the car rests at.

He stops. A thought hits him.

WILL

The guy in the truck. The guy in
the truck must've called the cops.
Had to.

He nods.

WILL
Yeah. They're coming. They're
definitely coming.

He leans his head back, closes his eyes.

WILL
Just wait it out. Take the pain.

EXT. RAVINE - NIGHT

As the rain continues to pour down, the creek begins to
swell.

Water laps up against the cell phone.

INT. CAR - MORNING (DREAM SEQUENCE)

Sunlight floods through the gaping holes in the windshield.

VOICES can be heard nearby.

Will stirs awake.

RESCUER #1 (O.S.)
It's over here!

Will looks through the shattered window, sees a nylon
climbing rope flop onto the ground.

RESCUER #1, a rugged guy in a climbing helmet and harness,
peeks through the window.

RESCUER #1
Will?

WILL
Yes.

Rescuer #1 looks back up the ravine.

RESCUER #1
He's alive! Send down the basket!

He looks back to Will, lays a comforting hand on his
shoulder.

RESCUER #1
You just relax, Will. Everything's
gonna be fine.

WILL
Thank you.

RESCUER #1
But Cassie says you broke your
promise.

WILL
What?

RESCUER #1
You promised you were gonna be
there when Hannah was born. You
lied. What kind of father are you?

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. CAR - DAY

Will's eyes snap open. He tries to move, but moans in pain.
The blood on the side of his face has dried to a flaky brown.

EXT. RAVINE - DAY

The cell phone is gone, washed away by waters that run two
feet higher than the previous night.

The left front tire lies halfway submerged beneath the brown,
murky creek.

Will rubs his eyes, looks around.

He finally gets a clear view of his right leg. Everything
beneath mid-shin is trapped within the compressed metal of
the footwell.

He tries to pull the leg again, then roars.

WILL
God damn, it hurts!

A noise makes him stop and be silent.

He hears it. The whooshing of cars from the road far above.

WILL
Hey! Down here! Down here!

He honks the horn over and over.

EXT. HARBIN WAY - DAY

Cars zip down the road at forty to fifty miles an hour.

The sound of the honking horn from below fades into the ambient noise of the traffic.

Aside from a short set of skid marks on the pavement, the thick woodland offers no hint at all that it claimed a car the night before.

INT. CAR - DAY

Will slams both palms into the horn.

WILL

Come on!

He lays off the horn, leans back, then punches the horn three times in a row.

He runs a hand through his hair, looks out the driver's side window.

He watches as a SQUIRREL sips water at the bank of the creek. The furry rodent shakes its tail as it drinks, showing off the bushy white tip.

It turns and looks directly at Will. Will stares back.

It leaps onto the tip of a boulder, the bulk of which lies embedded in the creek bank. Then it scurries up a nearby tree.

Will watches the squirrel clamber up the trunk and disappear into the branches.

He looks around the interior of the car, lets out a dry cough.

He spots the half empty water bottle lying in the far corner of the crumpled passenger side footwell.

He reaches for it, but it's too far.

He looks to the back seat, sees the old sweatshirt, the mini-bag of potato chips and the scattered newspaper. The wire hanger lies on the floor.

One of the back seats is folded halfway forward, revealing a peek at the trunk. A tire iron lays wedged under the spare tire, which has shaken loose.

Will eyes the tire iron, but it may as well be on the moon.

He turns back to the dashboard.

He spots a broken piece of black plastic molding above the speedometer.

He digs his fingernails into the crack, then pulls. A strip of molding begins to come free. After a strong tug, Will breaks off a foot-long, slender piece of hard plastic.

He reaches toward the water bottle, tries to nudge it free by poking it with the strip of plastic. No luck.

He tries again, manages to wiggle the bottle a bit. Finally he frees the bottle and it tumbles toward him, resting against the center console.

He reaches down, picks up the bottle, twists off the cap and guzzles the water.

He nearly swallows it all before he stops and looks regretfully at the meager amount that remains. He puts the cap back on and lays the bottle by his side.

He breathes deeply, listens to the distant sounds of people speeding happily on their way.

He rams both palms back into the horn.

INT. PATIENT ROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY

Cassie lays back in her bed and holds baby Hannah in her arms. She kisses her gently and nuzzles her.

Jennifer smiles and strokes Hannah's cheek as she sits on the side of the bed.

JENNIFER

So beautiful. Gave us a scare you
little pumpkin.

Cassie looks to her sister.

CASSIE

Will?

Jennifer shakes her head.

JENNIFER

Not a word. Not answering his
phone. I called his work. They
said he left last night.

CASSIE

Something happened to him, Jen. I know it.

JENNIFER

I called the police already. They said there were no accidents reported along route sixty-one. And no accidents anywhere near here involving a green Accord.

CASSIE

What about a...a missing person report?

JENNIFER

They have to be missing for forty-eight hours before they start the search. But they're sending someone over today to take the report.

Cassie's eyes well with tears.

JENNIFER

Cassie...do you think Will might have...I don't know...taken off? Like maybe he freaked out when you told him the baby was coming--

CASSIE

No. He wouldn't. He wouldn't do that.

JENNIFER

You also thought he wouldn't cheat on you.

Cassie glares at her.

JENNIFER

Sorry. Shouldn't have said that. It's just...any man who would do that to his pregnant wife is capable of--

CASSIE

Jennifer!

Jennifer holds up her hands.

JENNIFER

Wrong time. I'm sorry. How can I help?

CASSIE

Go out and look for him. He takes sixty-one every time. If something happened it would have...

Jennifer lays a comforting hand on her sister's shoulder.

JENNIFER

Okay, okay. You just relax. I'll go out and look. It'll be alright.

Cassie nods and squeezes her sister's arm.

Jennifer gets up and walks for the door.

EXT. RAVINE - DAY

The shrill honking rings through the ravine.

INT. CAR - DAY

Will presses his palm into the horn, laying in with all his body weight.

He stops, rests his forehead on two fingers, shakes his head.

He turns his head, leans out the broken window, looks up at the thickly wooded ravine.

WILL

You people must be deaf!

He honks "Shave and a Haircut Two Bits."

He coughs again, covers his mouth with his hand. When he looks at his palm, he sees blood. His eyes widen.

WILL

Damn.

Will swallows hard and winces. He grabs the water bottle, looks at the precious drops that remain.

He hesitates, then swallows it down.

INT. JENNIFER'S CAR - DAY

Jennifer drives slowly in the right lane, peering at the thickets of trees and bushes just off the shoulder.

She passes the exit for Harbin Way. No more roadwork sign. She keeps on driving, searching.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Robert, driver of the pickup truck, works with a crew securing rebar to a concrete building foundation.

He takes off his helmet, wipes the sweat from his brow, gazes at the ground.

A burly FOREMAN notices his odd demeanor.

FOREMAN
Hey, Robert. You alright?

Robert immediately snaps out of it and gets back to work.

ROBERT
Yeah. Yeah, I'm fine.

INT. CAR - DAY

Will shifts uncomfortably in his seat. He looks at the empty water bottle, unzips his pants, positions the bottle down there.

He urinates into the bottle. A look of relief rolls over his face.

He glances outside, sees the squirrel is back. It stares right at him.

WILL
Oh, it's you again. You mind, buddy? I got a shy bladder.

The squirrel continues to stare.

WILL
Got some rude frickin' squirrels round here.

He finishes, then dumps the urine outside.

The squirrel keeps staring.

Will caps the empty bottle, looks back over at the squirrel.

WILL
Got a name? No? How 'bout, uh...

Will taps a drumbeat on the steering wheel.

WILL

...let's see...hey, you like music?
Cassie and I are old school. Love
the Beatles. You're kinda quiet.
How 'bout I call you George? How's
that?

George shakes its tail, scampers back up the tree.

WILL

See ya around, George. Not like I
have somewhere to be or anything.

He grimaces, grabs his broken leg, bites his lower lip.

WILL

God...

He grunts and shudders as waves of pain run through him.

Through the agony, he starts to honk the horn again.

EXT. RAVINE - DUSK

The gloaming saturates the sky in shades of pink and lavender.

Steady honks resound through the ravine.

Then, the horn fails and produces a distorted warble.

INT. CAR - DUSK

Will slams the horn and it makes the same weak trill.

He presses it again. Nothing.

He lets out a deep breath, looks around the car, then holds his leg.

A look of realization crosses his face. He grips the steering wheel.

WILL

They'll all think I took sixty-one.

He sits there and listens to the sounds of the forest, the breeze swaying the trees, the distant rush of cars.

WILL
No one's coming.

INT. PATIENT ROOM - HOSPITAL - NIGHT

DETECTIVE TOM DANIELS, 45, stands before Cassie's bed. He writes something in a small notebook. He wrinkles his grizzled brow as he scribbles.

A nurse gently takes Hannah from Cassie's arms and leaves the room. Jennifer sits in a chair in the corner.

DANIELS
And what is Will's cell phone number?

CASSIE
761-555-4328. But he hasn't answered since last night.

DANIELS
Does his phone have GPS?

CASSIE
No. He always said he didn't need it.

DANIELS
We might be able to locate the phone anyway, as long as it's working. Now, uh, the two of you are currently separated, correct?

CASSIE
That's right. He lives in an apartment in Glenridge.

He nods, skepticism already showing on his heavily lined face.

DANIELS
Alright, Mrs. Garrick, that's all I need for now. I'll be in touch.

He walks for the door.

CASSIE
Hey.

Daniels stops and turns.

CASSIE
He didn't run.

He nods his head.

DANIELS
Of course not.

He leaves.

Cassie looks unconvinced by his answer.

JENNIFER
I searched that road for hours,
Cass. No sign of a car, no sign of
an accident. I think Will
just...needed a break. He'll show
up soon.

Cassie thinks about it for a moment, then picks up her cell phone.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DALY HOME - NIGHT

The photo of Jim Daly and Will in Iraq stands framed on an end table.

Jim, now 28, sits on a couch and watches a college football game on TV. He's still in great shape from his time in the Army.

CHARLIE DALY, 2, spitting image of his dad, wanders into the room.

JIM
Hey, tough guy. Who ya like in
this game?

Charlie shrugs and plays with blocks on the floor.

JIM
Uh-huh.

The cell phone on the coffee table rings. Jim picks it up.

INSERT: The display reads "Cassie Garrick."

Jim smiles as he answers.

JIM
(into phone)
Cass, when's that baby--

His smile instantly fades and he hits the mute button on the TV remote.

JIM
 (into phone)
 How long?

SARA DALY, late twenties, walks into the room and bends down to play with Charlie. She notices the grave expression on her husband's face.

JIM
 (into phone)
 Alright, Cassie. I'm on my way.
 I'll be there tomorrow, first
 thing. We'll find him, I promise
 you that.
 (beat)
 Hold tight. I'm coming. Bye.

Jim hangs up the phone, slowly puts it back on the coffee table, stands up.

SARA
 What is it?

JIM
 It's Will Garrick. He's missing.
 I...need a ride to the airport.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Will uses his thumb to slide his golden wedding band around and around his finger.

He looks out to the nearby tree, home to George the squirrel.

WILL
 Hey George, you up there? I'm a
 father by now, man. Can you
 believe it? If I had cigars, I'd
 toss you one.

He manages to grin.

WILL
 Her name is Hannah. She looked
 really cute on that sonogram. I'm
 hoping she got her mother's looks.

He repositions himself, rests the back of his head against the busted door frame.

WILL
 You should see Cassie. Totally
 outta my league, dude.
 (MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

I'm not sure how I got her. But I did. We just clicked, you know? Chemistry, whatever you wanna call it. We had it.

He glances back up at the tree.

WILL

Did I ever tell you how we met? No? Okay, fun story. I landed a job at this company that made airplane parts.

Will taps his fingers on the steering wheel.

WILL

Over in Norwood. You ever been? No? You'd like it. Lotsa trees and...nuts. So, Cassie was a secretary over there. Every guy in the place had his eye on her.

He points his finger up at the tree.

WILL

But Cassie just iced 'em all. Shot 'em down like cropdusters.

He pretends to shoot planes out of the sky.

WILL

I didn't think I had a chance. But I had to try. So, I found out that she collected pot holders. I know, right? But the girl loves pot holders.

He smiles and nods.

WILL

So I left a new one on her desk every day for a week. She had no idea who it was. I gave her one that looked like a lobster. One that looked like this buck-toothed redneck. Then on the last day, I dropped one on her desk that said, "Date Tonight?" I had this old lady at the dry cleaners stitch that on.

Will thumps the crumpled panel of the door.

WILL
And now we got a kid.

His smile fades.

WILL
Yet somehow...I managed to blow it.

He looks over to the empty water bottle on the passenger seat.

WILL
I'm so god damn thirsty. Shouldn't have drank all the water. I know better than that, George. Lived in Iraq for two and a half years.

He struggles to clear his throat.

WILL
Stupid, stupid. Forgot my training.

He looks back to his wedding band, shakes his head.

WILL
This has to be killing her right now.

He looks to his trapped leg.

WILL
Alright.

He grabs his leg below the knee with both hands.

He leans back, lifts his left leg and braces it against the dashboard.

He breathes deeply in and out several times.

WILL
This is it. One...two...three!

He yanks his leg back and screams. He continues to pull.

EXT. RAVINE - NIGHT

Will's cries of anguish echo across the ravine.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Will grips his face with his left hand, clenches his broken leg with his right. He lets out a guttural groan.

WILL

That was maybe not a good idea,
George. Definitely a compound
fracture. God, I thought I knew
what pain was.

He lets out a long exhale, looks down at his pinned leg.

WILL

There has to be another way.

Twigs snap in the darkness.

Will whips his head toward the sound.

Another footstep crunches leaves and needles.

WILL

Hello? Somebody out there?

No response.

WILL

Hello?

He peers into the trees and brush, but sees no movement.

WILL

Hey, I need help. Can you hear me?

Three more footsteps. Closer.

Will sees something move in the woods, maybe forty feet away.

He leans further out the window as he focuses on the shape, which moves slowly toward the creek.

Whatever it is, it walks on four legs and has real bulk. Looks to be about four feet tall at the shoulders.

Will leans back into the car. He watches as the creature reaches the creek and lowers its head to drink.

He keeps one eye on the silhouette as it takes a few steps closer to the car. It gets to within about thirty feet, then stops within the dense brush.

Will stiffens as he listens to the animal sniff the air. It takes two more steps toward the car.

He sees a glint of red eyeshine as it stares directly at the car.

Then, it turns and ambles away. Will hears the sheer weight of the thing as it lumbers through the woodland.

Moments later, silence returns.

Will lets out a relieved breath, glances up at the tree.

WILL

Rough neighborhood you got here,
George.

He lays back, closes his eyes.

INT. PATIENT ROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY

Jennifer stands over Cassie's bed and watches her sister cradle Hannah in the crook of her arm.

Cassie holds her cell phone in her other hand and scrolls down to a music selection.

CASSIE

This is mommy and daddy's song,
Hannah.

"In My Life" plays. Cassie smiles at Jennifer, turns back to Hannah.

CASSIE

I remember when the wedding planner
asked us what song we wanted for
our first dance. We both answered
at the same time. In My Life.

Jennifer looks away, unmoved by her sister's sentimentality.

JENNIFER

That was a long time ago, Cassie.

Jim walks into the room, immediately walks over to Cassie and hugs her.

JIM

Cass.

CASSIE

Jim. Thank you for coming.

He looks to Jennifer and shakes her hand, then turns to Hannah.

JIM
And who's this little stranger?

Cassie hands her to him. He looks down and smiles.

JIM
Got your old man's eyes.

Cassie laughs, but quickly stops herself and wipes away a tear.

JIM
Cassie, we're getting him. Alive
and well. And that's all there is
to it.

He reaches into his jacket pocket, pulls out a map and folds it open.

Jim runs his finger along route sixty-one, between Glenridge and Norwood.

JIM
So he's somewhere here. This
stretch. It's about twenty-seven
miles. And he never deviated from
this route?

CASSIE
No. I don't think so. It's the
fastest way here, by far.

He nods, puts the map back in his jacket.

JIM
You ladies stay strong. I'll bring
him back.

Jim leaves.

Jennifer pats Cassie's shoulder.

JENNIFER
Be right back.

She follows Jim out.

INT. HALLWAY - HOSPITAL - DAY

Jennifer walks up behind him.

JENNIFER
Jim.

He turns to her.

JENNIFER

I know Will's your old war buddy,
and I know you came here with the
best intentions. But, I don't
think you should get her hopes up
like that.

JIM

What do you mean?

JENNIFER

I mean I think Will is somewhere in
a motel room right now, sweating
out his next move.

Jim takes obvious offense at this, but shields it.

JIM

And you come to this conclusion
based on...

JENNIFER

Based on the fact that he cheated
on my sister when she was five
months pregnant. Based on the fact
that he's had a drinking problem
since he got back from Iraq.

JIM

You have no idea what went on
there.

JENNIFER

Please. A lot of soldiers come
back and manage to stay faithful to
their wives and kids. Will was a
mess from the moment he stepped off
that plane. The stuff Cassie had
to put up with--

JIM

Okay, this is not a good time for
this conversation. My lieutenant
is out there, somewhere, and I
intend to find him.

He turns to walk away, but spins back toward Jennifer.

JIM

And keep that negative crap out of
your sister's head.

He walks away. Jennifer fumes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - WILL'S APT. - DAY

Someone knocks at the door. A few moments later, someone pounds at the door.

Jim breaks in the flimsy door with his shoulder.

JIM
Will! You here?!

He runs to the bedroom, walks back past the kitchen, spots the shattered bottle of Jack Daniels in the sink.

He sees the framed Silver Star on the counter and picks it up. He wipes off the dust, stares at it.

He glances at his right forearm, to a nasty scar from his bullet wound. He sets the frame back down, exits the apartment and closes the door behind him.

INT. CAR - DAY

Will sleeps, the sweatshirt from the backseat used as a pillow.

Chapped, cracked skin covers his lips.

He stirs awake, then licks his lips and lets out a dry cough.

Will shields his eyes, turns away from the daylight.

He grimaces, grips his broken leg.

George scurries halfway down the trunk of the tree. It looks directly at Will.

WILL
Oh, hey. Good morning. I ain't gonna lie, George, that was a bad night.

Will coughs again, sees specks of thick blood on his hand. He wipes it off on his shirt, glances back at George.

WILL
Hungry enough to eat a squirrel.

He groans as he reaches back to the small bag of potato chips. He turns over the bag, reads the wrapper. "Salt and Vinegar."

Will winces, runs a finger over his parched lips.

WILL

Had to be.

He stares the bag for a few seconds, then shakes his head and lays it on the passenger seat.

WILL

Not gonna make a mistake like that again, George. Gotta rehydrate before I can eat those.

He turns, locks his eyes on the tire iron in the trunk. It's well and truly wedged beneath the spare tire.

Will reaches to the halfway folded-down back seat, manages to pull it down an inch further. Still, there's not much of a gap leading to the trunk.

WILL

I need...

He looks around the front of the car, then grasps his seat belt. He stretches it out, measures its length with his eyes.

WILL

Yeah.

He picks up a shard of glass, begins to slice into the belt.

INT. DETECTIVES' ROOM - POLICE STATION - DAY

Jim sits across the desk from Detective Daniels.

DANIELS

I heard back from Will's phone carrier. There's no signal coming from his cell. They at least need a roaming signal to triangulate the location.

Daniels settles back in his chair.

DANIELS

Can you think of a reason why he might turn his phone off?

Jim runs a finger across his lips, considers this.

DANIELS

Could it be...just maybe...the phone call from his wife put a scare into him and--

JIM

No. Never. Not this guy.

DANIELS

I've seen it before. More times than you can believe. Runaway brides. Panicking fathers. Maybe Will just needed a few days to clear his head and--

Jim leans in closer, stares into Daniels.

JIM

Let me explain something to you, Detective. The man we're talking about is a war hero. Silver Star recipient. He's also the man who saved my life. He did not and would not run. Let's be clear on this.

Daniels lowers his head a bit, nods.

JIM

Now what you can tell me about his phone records?

Daniels lifts a piece of paper from his desk.

DANIELS

The last call he made was recorded at nine thirty-two p.m. Thursday night. The signal was received by tower one-three-one B, which the carrier tells me is located...

Daniels stands, walks to a map on the wall. Jim follows him.

Daniels points to a spot on the map.

DANIELS

Right about here.

Jim locates state route sixty-one, then runs his finger toward Daniel's finger.

JIM

That's about, what...fifteen miles away from Norwood?

(MORE)

JIM (CONT'D)

That means he made it at least this far. This is good, this cuts our search area almost in half.

DANIELS

It'll be another twenty-four hours before we can declare him missing.

JIM

And then what happens?

DANIELS

We have a search team, Mr. Daly, but you need to understand we have limited resources.

JIM

I want them out there as soon as possible.

DANIELS

They will be.

JIM

Thank you, Detective.

Jim turns and leaves. Daniels watches him exit, nonchalantly goes back to his paperwork.

INT. FOOD KING - DAY

Jim stands with Mikey, who scratches his head in disbelief.

MIKEY

Missing? Will? I don't believe it.

JIM

Did he say anything to you before he left?

MIKEY

No, he just ran by me. Said something about a baby coming right now. I mean, he flew outta here.

Jim nods, pats Mikey on the shoulder.

JIM

Okay, thank you.

He turns to leave.

MIKEY

Hey.

Jim turns back to him.

MIKEY

If you need any help with the search, count me in. Will got me this job. I owe him.

JIM

I know what you mean.

INT. CAR - DAY

Will ties a square knot in the seat belt, fastening the metal buckle to the end.

He then grabs the wire hanger, straightens out the triangular part and strings it the through the hole in the buckle.

He bends the metal, loops it back through and repeats this several times. He pulls on the jury rigged grappling hook to confirm its strength.

With his line ready, Will looks back to the trunk. He tosses the hook toward the gap in the back seat.

It misses the gap, bounces off the seat cushion. He tries again. Another miss.

He pulls back the hook, aims, launches it through the gap.

He slowly pulls back. The hook slides over the wheel, but fails to dig into anything.

Will pulls it all the way back, aims, and tosses it onto the wheel again.

It rattles off the wheel.

WILL

This might take a while.

He reels the hook back in.

EXT. STATE ROUTE 61 - DAY

Jim stands next to his car, which is parked on the shoulder of the road. He studies a map splayed out on the hood.

Two cars pull up behind him and park.

Mikey gets out of the first car and walks toward Jim.

Trip gets out of the other car.

They converge at Jim's car.

MIKEY

This is Trip.

JIM

I appreciate it, you guys.
Alright...

Jim points to a mile marker staked into the shoulder which reads, "Mile 132."

JIM

We'll conduct this search by mile markers. From here all the way to Norwood.

He points to the map. Mikey and Trip gather round.

Jim taps a spot highlighted with an X.

JIM

This is the cell tower where Will's last call was received. So...

He taps a spot on route sixty-one, points back to the mile marker.

JIM

Right about here is where the reception area begins for that tower. I'll start at this marker, walk along the edge of these woods for one mile...

He points to the wooded area that stretches to the horizon.

JIM

And then double back, walking deeper into the trees. We're looking for a green car, so it could really blend in with this brush.

Jim looks to Mikey.

JIM

I want you to drive to marker one thirty-three and do the same thing.

Will turns to Trip.

JIM

And you take the next one. Anyone
sees anything, call me.

He hands them two business cards.

JIM

My number. Any questions?

They shake their heads.

JIM

Okay, let's get to it, fellas.

The two young men run back to their cars.

Jim waves to them as they speed down the road. He then looks
to the seemingly endless treeline, breathes deeply and walks
toward the woods.

EXT. RAVINE - DAY

Mosquitoes and gnats hover over the shallow water of the
creek.

INT. CAR - DAY

Will sweats profusely as he pulls his grappling hook back
from the trunk.

He rubs his right shoulder, exhales.

All the while, traffic whooshes in the distance.

WILL

Alright, here comes attempt
number...three hundred thirty-
seven. Got a good feeling about
this one.

He tosses the buckle and hook through the gap leading to the
trunk. It lands directly on the wheel.

Slowly, carefully, Will pulls it back. The tip of the hook
lies right next to the central hub hole.

WILL

Almost there.

He pulls a little further and the hook skips right over the hole.

Will lets out an exasperated sigh, then reels back the hook.

WILL

Three hundred thirty-eight. Got a good feeling about this one.

He launches another perfect toss which lands directly on the wheel.

Will jerks the belt to the left slightly, aligning the hook directly over the hub hole.

WILL

That's it.

He drags the hook back toward him and it falls into the hole.

WILL

Yes!

His eyes widen with excitement. He slowly pulls on the belt.

The hook catches. The tire moves forward an inch.

WILL

Nice 'n easy.

He pulls again. The tire slides forward, pulling the tire iron along with it.

Will considers his next move. He needs to maneuver that tire iron closer to the back seat.

WILL

Just one more good pull.

Again, he tugs the belt toward him.

The tire catches on the back wall of the trunk. The square knot securing the buckle to the belt loosens.

Will tries to free the tire by jostling the belt.

WILL

Come on now.

He pulls.

WILL

Come on!

The knot loosens more, then gives way. The belt snaps back toward Will as the buckle and hook fall into the central hole of the wheel.

Will stares at the ragged edge of the seat belt, then drops it. He slams his fist on the dash, then punches a new hole through the already shattered sunroof.

WILL

Damn it!

He looks at his bleeding knuckles, then gazes around the ravine.

Will's fingers shake.

WILL

I'm sorry, Cass. I couldn't do it.

He holds his hand over the window and rivulets of blood spill from his knuckles and run down the door.

Daylight fades.

INT. PATIENT ROOM - HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Cassie stares at a tray of food, but pushes it away. Jennifer swings it back.

JENNIFER

You have to eat, honey.

CASSIE

I can't.

Jim walks in, sweaty and bedraggled. The look on his face tells Cassie everything.

Her expression crumbles and she cries into her hands. Jennifer quickly comforts her.

JIM

I wish I had better news. We searched everywhere. The whole fifteen mile stretch.

Jennifer leans back against the wall, crosses her arms.

JENNIFER

So, what does that tell you?

Jim notices her superior tone.

JIM

Tells me he didn't take sixty-one.
When the police join the search
tomorrow, at least we know where
not to look.

Jim walks to Cassie, stares into her eyes.

JIM

You believe me, right? You believe
Will's out there and that he needs
us?

Cassie studies his face, looks to Jennifer's skeptical frown.
She turns back to him.

CASSIE

Yes.

Jim nods, pats her leg, walks out of the room.

EXT. RAVINE - NIGHT

Darkness grips the ravine. Crickets chirp, owls hoot,
insects buzz.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Will lies asleep in his seat. His cracked lips have turned a
pale pink as pieces of desiccated skin crust over.

Footsteps nearby. They approach slowly. Then, silence.

Something nudges the car, causing it to rise a couple inches.
It approaches the driver's side.

The sound of a tongue lapping Will's blood off the door.

As Will sleeps, a mucous-covered porcine snout appears in the
window, inches from his face.

A blast of hot breath causes Will's eyes to flutter open.

He finds himself face to face with the massive head of a wild
BOAR.

Slowly, he leans away from the boar, which stares at him.
The thing is huge, covered in coarse black hair and sporting
a fearsome set of tusks.

Will reaches toward the rear view mirror, wraps his hand
around it.

The boar continues to stare, then lets out a heart-stopping squeal.

Will rips the mirror from the windshield.

The boar jumps forward, pushes its head through the window, gnashes its powerful jaws at Will.

Will uses the mirror to club the animal, but it has little effect. It pushes in further, the broken glass of the window tearing into its neck.

Will grabs the severed seat belt, holds it between two hands and shoves the length into the boar's mouth.

The beast instinctively bites down. Will wraps the remainder of the belt over and around the snout and pulls tight.

The boar squeals as it attempts to free itself. It can barely fit back through the window.

Will uses the rear view mirror to club the boar in the eye over and over.

Its razor sharp tusks gouge a tear through the front seat.

Finally it gives up and retracts itself from the window, seat belt still wrapped around its mouth.

It squeals as it tramples through the trees and disappears.

Will recovers from the shock of the attack. He stares at the blood, skin and hair that cover the jagged row of glass along the bottom of the driver's side window.

He leans forward, peers into the darkness, sees no sign of the boar.

Will grimaces as he returns to his position on the shredded driver's seat. He grips his broken leg as the pain from the sudden, violent movement of the attack sets in.

He places the sweatshirt on the window frame, then buries his face in it.

EXT. CHECKPOINT - NEAR TIKRIT, IRAQ - DAY (DREAM SEQUENCE)

Will edges up along the driver's side of the shot-up car, then throws open the door.

His eyes widen. His mouth drops. He lowers his rifle, horror etched across his face.

WILL
No! Down here! Down here!

The sound of the helicopter fades. Will hangs his head.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

Several search and rescue SUVs are parked on the shoulder of the forested road.

Jim stands with Detective Daniels and OFFICER MARSHALL, leader of the Search and Rescue Team.

They stand around a folding table with a map laid over it.

MARSHALL
I'll have the chopper circling this entire stretch along here. My team and I will take this sector near exit forty-two.

Jim circles an area on the map.

INSERT: His finger encircles the area around Harbin Way.

JIM
Then I'll check this area here.

Daniels looks to the sky.

DANIELS
Better hurry. Don't like the looks of those skies.

INT. CAR - DAY

Will coughs into his fist, the resulting noise sounds like a arid rattle.

WILL
They can't see me, George.

As if on cue, the squirrel runs down the trunk of the tree and scampers onto the tip of the boulder that crops out of the ground.

Will reaches into his back pocket, pulls out his wallet. He removes all the cash he has: forty-three dollars.

He throws it on the ground.

WILL

That's forty-three bucks. It's yours. Just bring me some of that water.

George looks at the green paper on the ground, then scurries to the creek and drinks.

WILL

You know what's funny? Cassie begged me to see a therapist when I got back from Iraq. Begged me. Wouldn't do it. Kept telling her I didn't need it. But here I am, spilling my guts to a damn squirrel.

He shakes his head, scratches his forehead with dirty nails.

WILL

I wanted to tell her so bad. What happened that day. I couldn't.

A wave of light-headedness hits him and he struggles to retain consciousness.

WILL

Uh, God.

He looks around the interior.

WILL

Think my brain's starting to go, man.

He breathes in deeply through his nose, holds it, then slowly exhales.

WILL

They might not find me, George. Not for a long time.

He listens to the occasional whoosh of the cars passing by far above.

He reaches to the glove compartment, forces it open. He grabs the drivers manual, which is sealed in a plastic sheath. He also grabs a pen.

He pulls out the manual, flips to the blank pages at the end.

He puts pen to paper, hesitates for a moment, starts to write.

WILL (V.O.)
Cassie. I don't know if you'll
ever understand just how happy you
made me.

INT. PATIENT ROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY

Cassie watches as Jennifer plays with Hannah on the bed.

WILL (V.O.)
Things happened in Iraq. Things I
could never bring myself to share
with you. I allowed it to destroy
me, but I want you to know I never
stopped loving you. Will.

INT. CAR - DAY

Will closes his eyes, steadies himself. He turns the page
and begins to write again.

WILL (V.O.)
My dearest Hannah. We've never
met, but I already love you more
than life itself. I'm sorry I
won't be there to watch you take
your first steps, or speak your
first words.

INT. PATIENT ROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY

Cassie smiles, holds out her arms as Hannah crawls toward
her.

WILL (V.O.)
But anytime you want to talk to me,
just close your eyes, call my name
and I promise I'll be listening.
Always remember...your daddy loves
you.

INT. CAR - DAY

Will drops the pen, then seals the driver's manual back in
the plastic and lays it on the passenger seat.

With that, he rests his head back against the sweatshirt and
closes his eyes.

INT. JIM'S CAR - DAY

Jim drives onto the exit for Harbin Way.

EXT. HARBIN WAY - DAY

Jim's car nears the skid marks that lead to the ravine.

INT. JIM'S CAR - DAY

His cell phone rings as he's nearly upon the tire marks. The moment he reaches down to answer his phone, he passes Will's location.

JIM
(into phone)
Cass. Nothing yet. Search and
rescue is out looking. They have
the chopper up.
(beat)
Right. I'll let you know. Bye.

Jim hangs up, scans the forested ravine as he rolls by.

JIM
Come on, Will. Where are you?

INT. PATIENT ROOM - HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Cassie lies in her bed, alone in the dark room.

A dim light above the bed provides the only illumination.

She stares out blankly, tries to stifle a cry. She can't hold it back. She holds her face in her hands as she weeps.

EXT. RAVINE - NIGHT

The residents of the woodland ring out like a nocturnal symphony.

Will lays his head against the door frame, eyes half-open.

He unintelligibly mumbles the lyrics to "In My Life."

His eyes glance to the tree, where he sees George scamper halfway down the trunk and stare at him.

WILL

Join in, George. You know the words.

(sings)

Some are dead and some are living...in my life...I've loved them all.

He picks up a shard of glass, studies it, watches the moonlight glint off its jagged edge.

He holds it to his left inner wrist.

WILL

Wonder how long it would take to just...fall asleep.

He presses the glass to his skin.

WILL

Can't take this pain anymore, George. I'm not as tough as I thought I was.

A faint RUMBLE in the distance.

Will doesn't notice and continues to stare at the pulsating arteries of his wrist.

Another RUMBLE, this time louder.

Will lifts his head, looks around.

WILL

Sounds like...

THUNDER. The booming rumble rolls over the ravine.

Small raindrops dot the shattered windshield.

Will holds his hand out the window, feels the raindrops. He licks the moisture off his palm.

The rain intensifies.

Will smiles, grabs the sweatshirt, tosses it up through the sunroof so it lays on the roof of the car.

Within moments, the rain turns into a deluge. Water begins to pour through the sunroof.

Will rests his head under a corner of the sunroof, allowing water to pour directly into his mouth.

He gasps in relief as life rolls back into his body.

EXT. RAVINE - NIGHT

The storm continues. Rain falls in sheets. Wind whips through the treetops.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Will continues to guzzle rain as it pours from the sunroof.

He grabs the bag of potato chips, stuffs his face with handfuls of the salt and vinegar chips.

He empties the crumbs into his mouth, swallows them, then washes it down with more rainwater.

He holds the empty water bottle under the sunroof and begins to fill it.

He looks over at the tree and laughs.

WILL
You believe this, George?!

EXT. RAVINE - NIGHT

The creek level reaches the top of the left front tire.

Finally, the rain begins to ebb.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Will caps the full bottle of water.

He then reaches up to the sunroof, pulls the sleeve of the sweatshirt through the hole and squeezes the fabric.

A burst of water splashes into his mouth.

Will holds the water in his mouth for a few moments, then swallows.

WILL
Best...water...ever.

Small raindrops dot the windshield, but the storm has passed.

Will licks his lips, lays back against the seat.

WILL
I can do this. I can last.

He closes his eyes.

Another RUMBLE. This sounds different, though.

Will opens his eyes, looks up through the broken windshield.

No more rain.

The RUMBLING gets louder.

WILL
What the hell is---

He turns to his right and freezes in terror.

A six-foot high wall of black water surges toward him.

The flash flood swallows everything in its path.

Will has just enough time to brace himself before the violent impact.

EXT. RAVINE - NIGHT

The water lifts the car onto its side.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Will grips the steering wheel as the power of the water flips the car upside down.

He howls in pain as the car lands on its roof.

The interior immediately fills with rushing water. Will is submerged within moments.

He tries desperately to pull his leg free, but can't.

EXT. RAVINE - NIGHT

The water pushes the inverted car along the ground. The force of the current rips the windshield away.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Will flails, kicking and punching the dashboard that traps his broken leg. Bubbles shoot from his mouth.

The car comes to a sudden stop. Will turns and sees the roof trapped against the tip of the boulder that rises from the creek bank.

EXT. RAVINE - NIGHT

The flood increases in power. The surging, swirling water roars as it blasts through the ravine.

Moments later, the sheer force lifts the car back up on its side.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Will gasps for air as the car flips rightside-up and splashes back into the water.

The water pushes the car and smashes the center of the driver's side into the thick trunk of the tree that George calls home.

Will, underwater again, struggles to lift himself toward the sunroof. A torrent of black water thunders through the interior, threatening to pull Will through the driver's window.

He fights the current and manages to poke his mouth through the sunroof.

His lips barely break the surface of the swollen creek, but he's able to gasp lungfuls of air before disappearing into the raging, murky waters.

LATER

The waters have receded, exposing the upper half of the vehicle.

The car lays crushed against the tree, the frame bent into a horseshoe shape from the awesome force of the flood.

Will stands, his arms splayed over the sunroof. He rests the side of his head on his arm, too exhausted to move.

EXT. RAVINE - MORNING

Will still stands, head and shoulders poking through the sunroof. He looks asleep on his feet.

Water drains from the interior of the car, spilling onto the muddy creek bank.

Will lifts his head, rubs his eyes.

He lets out a shell-shocked, bone-tired groan.

He looks around the ravine, then down at his car.

INT. CAR - MORNING

He sits down into the soaked seat cushion. The brown water ripples around his knees.

He watches as a small fish swims around the dark water in the passenger footwell.

He glances to the backseat, jolts back to his senses.

The spare tire lays there.

Will lifts it, searches for the tire iron.

WILL
Come on. Please. Please, God.

He looks around, but can't find it.

WILL
Come on! Come on, damn it!

No sign of it.

He sits back in his seat, shakes his head.

Then, he looks to the fish swimming in the passenger footwell. He sticks his hand into the murky water, feels around, smiles.

He lifts the glistening tire iron, stares at it like he just found the Holy Grail.

EXT. RAVINE - DAY

The remaining flood water drains from the bottom of the car's fractured door frame.

INT. CAR - DAY

Will jams the long, tapered end of the tire iron between two masses of metal that trap his leg.

He yanks the steel rod. Nothing budes. He does it again. And again. And again.

LATER

Will appears to have made a slightly wider gap between the deformed slabs of wreckage that hold his leg hostage.

He moves the tire iron a few inches lower, struggles to find a crease, then thrusts the rod back and forth. The veins of his toned forearms bulge with the effort.

He stops to catch his breath.

An acorn falls onto the hood of the car.

Will watches George clamber down the trunk of the tree that the car is presently wrapped around.

George hops onto the hood, picks up the acorn and starts to nibble it. He stares at Will through the gaping hole where the windshield used to be.

WILL

Here for the show?

Will yanks on the tire iron again, glances back at George.

WILL

So, what's your story, George?
Wife? Kids?

George shakes his tail as he eats.

WILL

Oh, bachelor, huh? You wild man.

Will puts his entire body weight onto the tire iron as he pushes down.

He continues to thrust the iron back and forth.

He removes the rod, inspects his progress.

WILL

Okay, I'm getting somewhere. Slow
and steady, George. Slow and
steady.

He re-inserts the tire iron, strains to pull down. The rod slips and hits his broken leg. Will's face twists in pain. He grits his teeth and hisses.

He looks up to George, who stares placidly.

WILL
Pain is weakness leaving the body.
I had a drill sergeant who always
used to say that.

Will regains his breath.

WILL
Yeah, that's bullshit.

INT. FOYER - GARRICK HOME - DAY

Jennifer opens the door and walks in, followed by Cassie, who holds Hannah.

Jim walks in behind them, carries two bags of luggage and sets them on the floor.

JIM
Alright, guys, I'm gonna head back
out and--

He stops himself when he sees a photo framed on the wall.

The photo shows a platoon of fifteen Army soldiers in full camo and armor. They stand within a village in Iraq. Jim and Will stand at the front of the group.

Jim approaches, studies the photo.

JIM
Oh, man.

Cassie and Jennifer walk over.

JIM
That was our first day in Tikrit.

Jim nods, points to a soldier in the photo.

JIM
That's Johnny Knowles. He was
killed three days after this
picture was taken.

He points to another soldier.

JIM
Matt Hammond. Killed by an IED
about six months later.

Jim shakes his head.

JIM
I'd say...five of these guys never
made it home. We saw some bad...

His eyes start to tear as he stares at the picture.

JIM
Cass, there's something I have to
tell you about Will.

CASSIE
What?

He turns, watches her cradle Hannah, then sees Jennifer's
skeptical glare.

JIM
Nothing. I'm gonna go hook back up
with search and rescue.

JENNIFER
You do that.

He leaves.

Cassie leans against a wall, rocks Hannah in her arms.

CASSIE
So I just sit here and wait?

JENNIFER
That's right. Jim can go on this
wild goose chase if he wants. You
have a baby to take care of.
Whatever you do, just stay home.

Cassie thinks about it, arches her eyebrows, looks to her
sister.

INT. CAR - DAY

The thick cord muscles of Will's neck bulge as he devotes
every ounce of strength to pulling the tire iron.

Metal creaks as he inches the iron forward.

He stops, lays the iron on the passenger seat, grabs his
knee.

He grimaces as he raises his knee. He's freed the leg down
to the ankle, which still remains encased in twisted steel.

WILL
Yeah. C'mon.

He grabs the tire iron, wedges it into the metal over his ankle.

His face reddens as he tries to budge it.

INT. FOYER - GARRICK HOME - DAY

The doorbell rings. Jennifer opens the door.

ANDREW HEINEN, 42, slickly handsome and dressed in a suit, stands on the front porch.

Behind him, a CAMERAMAN holds a news camera on his shoulder and a SOUNDMAN stands with headphones and coils of cable.

A van with "Channel 3 News" emblazoned on its side sits in the driveway.

HEINEN
Mrs. Garrick?

JENNIFER
Uh, no, that's my sister. Please
come in.

Heinen and his crew enter.

Cassie walks over, holding Hannah.

CASSIE
I'm Cassie Garrick.

She shakes hands with Heinen.

HEINEN
Andrew Heinen. Your call intrigued
me. Is there somewhere we can set
up?

CASSIE
Right over here.

Cassie points to the living room. Heinen grabs two chairs and sets them up across from each other.

The Cameraman sets up a tripod as the Soundman unspools cable.

Jennifer pulls Cassie aside.

JENNIFER

I still say this is a bad idea.
Once Will sobers up and comes back,
you're gonna look so foolish--

CASSIE

Not now, Jennifer.

EXT. RAVINE - DAY

George sips water at the creek. He glances over at the wrecked car.

Grunts and groans sound through the ravine.

INT. CAR - DAY

Will strains as he jerks the tire iron back and forth.

The last strip of metal holding his leg begins to loosen.

Will senses imminent freedom, and belts out a primal roar as he forces the tire iron to one side.

Metal snaps.

Will looks down, slowly raises his leg.

With some painful effort, it pulls free.

WILL

Yes! Yes!

He gapes at his right foot, seeing it for the first time in days. It's bent at an unnatural angle, but it's still there.

WILL

Yes!

Will tosses the tire iron out of the window.

He stands on his good leg, then grabs both sides of the sunroof and hoists himself through.

EXT. RAVINE - DAY

He lays on top of the crumpled roof for a moment as dapples of sunlight filter through the tree canopy and shine over his face.

He slides onto the trunk of the car, then carefully lowers his left leg to the ground.

He slides to the ground, sits against the car, a broad smile on his face.

INT. LIVING ROOM - GARRICK HOME - DAY

Cassie sits in a chair. Heinen sits across from her. Both of them are wired for sound.

Heinen notices Cassie wringing her hands.

HEINEN
Just relax, Mrs. Garrick.

The Cameraman gives Heinen a countdown.

EXT. RAVINE - DAY

Will still sits against the car, gathers his strength.

He looks up at the ravine. It's densely wooded and incredibly steep. The angle must be one hundred and ten degrees.

WILL
Damn. Didn't realize how steep
that was.

He looks back to the tree, looks around for George but doesn't see him.

WILL
How far up you think the road is,
George? Hundred yards, maybe?
Hundred-fifty?

He lets out a deep breath, stands up.

WILL
Let's do it.

He hops on one leg toward the steep incline, but stumbles after a few feet.

He pushes himself back up, hops his way to the sheer slope.

He plunges his hands into the soft, saturated dirt.

LATER

Will makes progress. He sinks his fingers into the loose ground, creates a toehold with his left foot and pushes up.

He grabs onto bushes and small saplings to prevent from sliding back down.

WILL

Alright, Cassie. On my way. Get Hannah ready. I'm gonna be a mess the first time she sees me.

The ascent is painfully slow. Will nearly loses his grip and has to plant his elbows into the dirt to keep from tumbling.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The sun sits low in the afternoon sky. Detective Daniels stands with Officer Marshall.

The search and rescue team pack their equipment back into trucks.

Jim pulls up in his car. He steps out, sweaty and filthy from a long day of searching.

He walks up to Daniels.

JIM

I covered about ten miles of back road. Right around--

He notices the officers stowing their equipment.

JIM

(to Daniels)
What's going on?

Marshall darts a glance between Daniels and Jim, then walks away.

DANIELS

The search for Will Garrick is suspended as of sundown tonight.

JIM

What?!

The outburst causes several of the search and rescue team to turn, then they get back to their packing.

DANIELS

Believe it or not, Mr. Daly, we have other cases to deal with. You think this is the only missing person in town? I need to prioritize, and right now everything in my gut tells me Will Garrick flew the coop.

Jim's upper lip curls in anger.

JIM

Flew the coop, huh? So my friend's life comes down to a funny feeling in that fat gut of yours?

DANIELS

Well, that and the facts of the case. Separated couple. Problem drinker. Disappearance on the day of his kid's delivery. Also, the sister-in-law happens to agree with me.

JIM

You talked to Jennifer?

DANIELS

That's my job, Mr. Daly.

Daniels walks toward the search and rescue team.

DANIELS

Alright, guys, lets head out.

Jim watches as the SUVs depart, one by one. After a few moments, he stands alone in the field.

EXT. RAVINE - DAY

Will makes it halfway up the ravine.

His face drips sweat as he pulls himself up another few feet.

He breathes heavily, rests the side of his face on the cool dirt.

WILL

I thought basic training was bad. Whew. But damn, I could use my drill sergeant right about now.

He grabs onto the exposed root of a tree, digs his left foot into the earth and hoists himself up a little further.

He rests and listens to the cars zipping by above him.

WILL

Oh, that sounds like an SUV.

He listens to another high-pitched rev.

WILL

Mustang. Know that sound anywhere.

He stabs his fingers into the dirt, continues to advance upward.

WILL

I think...I think my car might be beyond repair. Just a hunch. Gonna need a new ride. I'm not...not gonna be a minivan dad. Sorry, Cassie, it's just not me.

He wraps his hands around a bush and pulls himself forward.

WILL

Gotta be something with a little juice to it. I'll go American this time.

He looks up. The road is still hidden by the thick wildwood.

He continues to climb.

INT. TV ROOM - GARRICK HOME - DAY

Cassie and Jennifer watch the TV. Hannah sleeps in a crib.

The Channel 3 Evening News returns from commercial break.

A graphic behind the ANCHORMAN reads, "Local Man Missing."

CASSIE

Here it is!

ANCHORMAN

A local man from Norwood has gone missing, and authorities are combing the area for any clues to his disappearance. Andrew Heinen has the story.

The video cuts to Heinen standing outside the Garrick home.

HEINEN

I'm standing outside the home of Cassie Garrick here in Norwood. Her husband Will has been missing since leaving his job at a grocery store in Glenridge on Thursday night.

A current photo of Will appears on screen.

INT. ROBERT'S TRAILER - DAY

Robert Raines sips a beer, wipes the suds from his handlebar mustache as he reclines on his couch. The trailer is cluttered and cramped.

He prepares to dig into a microwave dinner when he looks up and sees Will's photo on the TV.

HEINEN (V.O.)

Mrs. Garrick gave birth to their daughter Hannah early Friday morning, but Will was nowhere to be found. She's convinced something went horribly wrong for her husband.

Robert flinches.

The video cuts to Cassie sitting in the living room across from Heinen.

HEINEN

If your husband could hear you right now, is there anything you'd want to say to him?

Cassie faces the camera.

CASSIE

We love you. Please hold on, wherever you are.

The video cuts to Heinen walking along the shoulder of state route sixty-one.

HEINEN

If Will Garrick did indeed meet some unfortunate fate on his way to the hospital, it most likely would have happened somewhere along this stretch of state route sixty-one between Glenridge and Norwood.

Robert slowly sets down his beer on the chipped coffee table. He stares at the floor.

INT. TV ROOM - GARRICK HOME - DAY

Cassie and Jennifer lean forward in their chairs, enthralled by the broadcast.

On TV, Detective Daniels appears as Heinen interviews him at the police station.

HEINEN

Detective, is it possible that foul play may have been involved?

DANIELS

It's possible, but we don't believe so.

HEINEN

And what is the likelihood that Mr. Garrick simply skipped town?

DANIELS

Unfortunately, that's always a very real possibility in these cases.

Cassie covers her mouth with her hands, hits mute on the remote.

She shakes her head in disbelief. Jennifer tries to lay a hand on her sister's shoulder but Cassie shrugs it off and stands.

INT. ROBERT'S TRAILER - DAY

The TV continues to blare, but Robert doesn't listen. He stares blankly at the wall, then glances at the phone.

EXT. RAVINE - DAY

Daylight fades as Will nears the top of the ravine.

The edge of the road is within sight.

His hands shake with fatigue as he claws into the moist earth.

He looks up. The final fifteen feet to the top is a sheer, ninety-degree drop-off nearly devoid of vegetation.

He gasps for breath, summons his strength.

WILL

Okay, gotta plan this out.

He eyes a sapling that grows out of the edge of the precipice.

INT. ROBERT'S TRAILER - DAY

Robert still sits on his couch. He gazes at his phone, picks it up. He dials a number.

INT. FOYER - GARRICK HOME - DAY

Jim bursts through the front door, sees Jennifer trying to console Cassie.

JIM

What did you tell him?!

JENNIFER

Who?

JIM

Daniels. What did you tell him?

She takes a step back, unnerved by the force of Jim's tone.

JENNIFER

I just told him I thought Will might have...left for a little while--

JIM

Mission accomplished, Jennifer. They called off the search.

CASSIE

What?

JIM

Cops are done. They think Will ran.

Cassie looks to her sister.

CASSIE

Why?

JENNIFER

I--

CASSIE

Why?!

Hannah screams from the commotion. Cassie runs to her. Jim punches a wall as he storms by Jennifer.

INT. ROBERT'S TRAILER - DAY

Robert holds the phone to his ear. A DISPATCHER picks up on the other end.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Sheriff's department. Hello?
Hello? Is anyone there?

Robert hesitates, hangs up, sets the phone back on the coffee table, stares blankly at the wall.

EXT. RAVINE - DAY

Will raises his left foot, digs a hole into the dirt, creates a firm foothold.

He clenches his fingers, breathes in and out slowly.

He locks his eyes on the sapling above.

WILL

Now.

He uses his left leg to launch his body upward, then scrambles to scale his way up using only his hands.

Just as his momentum stalls and he begins to fall backwards, he snags the thin trunk of the sapling with both hands.

He hangs, then struggles to pull his body up.

His head rises above the edge of the precipice. He sees cars driving by.

The sapling DETACHES from the ground, roots and all.

Will falls through the air for about ten feet before he lands squarely on his back.

The impact knocks the wind out of him. The free fall begins.

His body tumbles end over end, picking up speed as he desperately tries to grab onto the trees that blur past him.

He somersaults, careens and flips through the air.

He lands hard on his broken leg and lets out an agonized howl.

Will continues to plummet. The side of his face strikes a pine tree, ripping off skin and knocking him semi-conscious.

Finally, his limp body rolls to a stop near the wrecked car.

Will flutters his eyes, tries to raise his head. He groans and passes out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - GARRICK HOME - NIGHT

Jim and Jennifer stand on opposite sides of the room, arms crossed.

Cassie walks into the room, stands between the two of them.

CASSIE

She finally went to sleep.

JENNIFER

Okay...I didn't think the police would call off the search. Let me just say that right now. That detective started asking me questions about Will and I answered them honestly.

JIM

Just admit it: you never thought for a second that something bad might have happened to Will. In your mind, he bolted. Period.

Jennifer takes a few steps forward, puts her hands on her hips.

JENNIFER

Yes. I admit it. And frankly, I'm sick of apologizing for it. Let's be real, Will was never the same after he got back from Iraq. He drank. He fought. He lost jobs. Anytime Cassie tried to talk to him about it, he shut her down.

She looks to Cassie.

JENNIFER

And getting those divorce papers? C'mon, Cass, you told me yourself how shook up he was.

Cassie listens to her sister, seems to bend toward her logic.

JIM

I'll agree he should have gone to therapy. The Army offers it, but a lot of soldiers are afraid of the stigma.

JENNIFER

Stigma. You just never run out of excuses for him, Jim. You were in combat, but you didn't turn into some brooding freak when you came home!

Jim eyes her coldly as she rants.

JENNIFER

You never got drunk and cheated on your pregnant wife! Did you? And you were in the same platoon as Will. You went through the exact same things he did!

Jim hesitates a few moments before he replies.

JIM

No I didn't.

The solemn delivery of Jim's words shuts Jennifer up.

He turns to Cassie.

JIM

I'm going to tell you something, Cassie. Something Will made me promise to never tell you or anyone else.

He paces a few steps, thinks about his words. He holds up his right forearm, bares his scar.

JIM

It happened the same day he saved my life. We were stationed at a checkpoint in the desert outside Tikrit. Two SUVs pulled up. Everything seemed fine. And then...

EXT. RAVINE - NIGHT

Will remains unconscious. Blood bubbles from his lips and drips from the red, exposed skin sheared from the side of his face.

Underneath his lids, his eyes oscillate wildly.

EXT. CHECKPOINT - NEAR TIKRIT, IRAQ - DAY (DREAM SEQUENCE)

Will sidles up along the driver's side of the bullet-riddled car. He throws open the door and aims his M4 inside.

His eyes widen. His mouth drops. He lowers his weapon, horror etched across his face.

JIM (V.O.)

He didn't know. He couldn't have known.

Within the car, a young Iraqi HUSBAND, late twenties, sits dead against the steering wheel. Blood leaks from two bullet wounds in the side of his head.

In the backseat, an OLDER WOMAN cloaked in a black abayah lies deceased.

In the passenger seat, a beautiful YOUNG IRAQI WOMAN stares at Will. She holds a hand over her pregnant belly. Blood pours from five bullet holes in her womb.

Will staggers back.

The Young Woman remains alive just long enough to retain eye contact with Will. Tears roll down her cheeks. Moments later, she stops breathing.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

EXT. RAVINE - NIGHT

Will wakes up from the nightmare, his hands shielding him.

WILL

No! No!

He looks around, tries to remain conscious, but passes out again.

INT. LIVING ROOM - GARRICK HOME - NIGHT

Cassie and Jennifer sit on the couch, stunned into silence.

JIM

At the review, they said he acted accordingly under the circumstances. And he did. But he was never the same after that day. Even when he got his Silver Star, it didn't matter to him. He didn't care. The guilt tore him apart.

Jim looks at Cassie.

JIM

He made me swear never to tell you. I'm breaking my word now. But you need to know this.

He looks at Jennifer.

JIM

You both need to know this.

He takes a few steps back, sits in a chair.

JIM

I guess hittin' the bottle eased the pain. Temporarily. I'm not forgiving him cheating on you, Cass. I just want you to understand what he's been carrying inside him.

Jennifer wipes tears from her eyes. She gets up and walks out of the room.

EXT. RAVINE - DAY

The morning sunlight shines on Will's blood-caked face. His eyes open.

He groans as he props himself up on his elbows. He brings his hand to his face, winces at the sting when he touches the raw, exposed skin.

He sits up, cringes as he holds his ribs. He looks down at his broken leg, then back up at the ravine.

His eyes narrow as a look of pure determination crosses his face.

WILL

Let's do this one more time.

He stands on his left leg, takes a couple hops toward the incline.

A GRUNT from the nearby bushes freezes him. He balances on his leg as he scans the thick brush.

The BOAR emerges from the bushes, about twenty feet away. It's a monster razorback, five hundred pounds at least.

It raises its head toward Will, assumes an aggressive posture. Saliva drips from its five inch tusks.

WILL

Jesus.

Will's eyes dart to the tire iron, which lays on the ground about ten feet away.

He hops toward the tire iron.

The boar responds by grunting and faking a charge.

It chomps its massive jaws, producing a clapping noise like a couple of two-by-fours being smacked together.

Will drops to the ground. He moves slowly on his forearms, inching toward the steel rod.

The boar takes another threatening step.

Will tenses his body, hesitates. Then, he leaps for the tire iron.

The boar charges.

Will grabs the iron just before the beast plows into him.

The force of the impact knocks Will into the side of the car.

He holds the tire iron with both hands and shoves it into the boar's mouth as it attempts to bite him.

The animal chews down on the steel, grunting and squealing wildly. Strips of slobber rain down on Will's face.

He repels the first attack, but the boar lowers its head and gores its tusk into the calf of Will's wounded leg.

Will yelps out in agony as the boar bites into his broken leg and drags him backward. It shakes him like a chew toy.

He clubs the animal on the head with the curved end of the tire iron. No effect.

The boar bites down harder.

Will screams, then shoves the tapered end of the iron directly into the hog's right eye.

The animal squeals as blood gushes from the ruined eye.

It rams Will into the side of the car again. He gasps at the force of the impact.

The boar swipes its head at him, one of the tusks ripping into Will's ribs.

Blood pours from the fresh wound, exciting the beast even more.

Will cries out in pain, then manages to use the iron to pry his ribs free of the tusk.

In desperation, he attempts to leap on to the trunk of the car, but the boar rears up on its hind legs, grabs Will's left leg and yanks him back down to the ground.

It shakes its head violently as it attempts to rip a piece of meat from Will's left thigh.

Will sticks his thumb into the animal's destroyed eye socket.

It squeals in pain and drops him, allowing Will to back up toward the car.

It thrusts forward and attempts to gore Will's face.

He ducks just in time.

The razor sharp tusk punctures the sheet metal of the car like it was paper. The boar attempts to free itself, ripping across the door.

Will seizes the opportunity and stabs the sharp end of the tire iron into the exposed neck of the beast. Blood squirts from the wound. He does it again.

Flailing wildly, the boar frees itself, tearing out a huge piece of sheet metal which clings to its tusk.

It staggers and backs away, blood shooting from the two neck wounds.

A breathless, wild-eyed Will holds the tire iron in front of him like a spear.

He watches as the razorback drops to its side. It struggles to breathe, then stops moving.

Will gulps, regains his senses. He looks down at his bleeding legs. Blood pours from the gore wound in his right calf.

He pulls the tie from his neck, undoes the knot, then wraps it around the wound and pulls tight. He yells in pain as the tourniquet binds over his broken bones.

He holds pressure over the bite wound on his left thigh. The boar ripped a large piece of fabric away with a good amount of flesh.

He hesitates, then lifts up his shirt to examine the gore wound in his right ribs. It's a nasty gash. Blood flows down his side.

He lays his head back, looks up at the ravine. It looms like Mount Everest.

He looks over to the creek, drags himself toward the water with his forearms.

Blood paints the ground as he moves along.

He makes it to the creek's edge, lowers his head, drinks from the murky water.

He looks to his left. George sips water about ten feet away and glances over at Will.

WILL
Hey, buddy.

Will submerges his face in the water, then raises his head and lets the blood, sweat and mud drip away.

He looks over at George, nods toward the ravine.

WILL
Headin' back up. Probably won't make it.

He breathes deeply, spits out a spray of water.

WILL
But at least they can't say I didn't try.

He uses his forearms to turn himself around, then inches his way toward the ravine.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Robert stands next to a pay phone at a gas station. He holds a piece of paper in his hands. He looks down at it.

INSERT: On a torn piece of paper from the phone book, a number is circled in blue ink: "Garrick, Cassie, Norwood, 761-555-9812."

Robert picks up the receiver, then puts it back down. He shakes his head, paces around the phone.

INT. KITCHEN - GARRICK HOME - DAY

Jim stands with Cassie, who holds Hannah. Pot holders cover an entire wall of the kitchen.

She looks at one of the pot holders, manages to smile. The words stitched onto the fabric read, "Date Tonight?"

JIM

I'm heading back out. Lotta back country to cover today.

CASSIE

Thank you. For...trusting me. I wish Will would have...

JIM

I know. But let me go find him now.

JENNIFER (O.S.)

I want to go with you.

They turn to see Jennifer in the hallway.

JENNIFER

Please. I want to help.

She extends her hand to Jim. He looks at it, then shakes it.

JIM

I'll take all I can get.

Cassie smiles at her sister. The phone on the kitchen wall rings and Cassie turns to answer it.

Jim looks to Jennifer, points to the front door.

JIM

Let's go.

CASSIE
(into phone)
Hello?

ROBERT (V.O.)
Harbin Way.

CASSIE
(into phone)
What? Who is this?

INTERCUT

Robert holds the receiver to his ear, watches the traffic roll by.

ROBERT
You need to go to Harbin Way.

Cassie furrows her brow.

CASSIE
What are you talking about? Harbin
Way?

Jim hears what Cassie says and immediately walks back to the kitchen. Jennifer follows him.

Robert scratches his head nervously.

ROBERT
Just...just go to Harbin Way. He's
there.

Cassie looks to Jim and shakes her head. He holds out his hand and she hands him the receiver.

Robert grips the side of the pay phone.

ROBERT
A mile or two from the off ramp. I
forget exactly.

JIM
(into phone)
Who are you?

ROBERT
Just...tell him I'm sorry.

Robert hangs up and runs away from the phone.

Jim hangs up the phone, pulls a map from his back pocket, spreads it over the kitchen table.

JIM
Harbin Way. I know that name. I
think I...

He locates it on the map. Jennifer and Cassie look on as he taps his finger on the map.

JIM
Right there. Let's move.

He folds up the map.

JENNIFER
What if it was just some crank?

JIM
It wasn't.

CASSIE
How do you know?

He looks at her.

JIM
Because he said he was sorry.

He runs for the door. Jennifer runs after him.

EXT. RAVINE - DAY

A blood trail on the ground leads to Will, who's made it about twenty feet up the ravine.

His legs drag uselessly behind him as he fights for every inch.

EXT. JIM'S CAR - DAY

The car turns off route sixty-one and onto the exit ramp for Harbin Way.

INT. JIM'S CAR - DAY

As he pulls onto Harbin way, Jim slows the car down.

JIM
Guy said a mile or so down from the
off ramp. Look for anything. Any
sign.

Jennifer looks at the wooded ravine off the shoulder.

JENNIFER

God, look at how steep that is.

EXT. RAVINE - DAY

Will's fingers dig into the crumbling earth. He pulls himself up another couple of inches.

He lays the side of his face in the dirt, spits out a mouthful of blood.

His breathing comes in ragged gasps.

INT. JIM'S CAR - DAY

Jim slows the car to a crawl as he and Jennifer look for any indication of an accident.

An angry driver behind them blares his horn and passes.

JIM

Just keep looking. He's here. I feel it.

Jennifer looks ahead, narrows her eyes.

JENNIFER

What...what's that? Are those tire marks?

She points and Jim leans forward. He sees the tracks leading off the pavement toward the ravine.

JIM

That's it!

He pulls up onto the shoulder.

EXT. HARBIN WAY - DAY

They both exit the car and run to the edge of the ravine. She sees just how steep it is.

JENNIFER

Oh my God.

Jim cups his hands around his mouth.

JIM

Will! Will!

EXT. RAVINE - DAY

Will lays unconscious in the dirt.

EXT. HARBIN WAY - DAY

Jim kneels by the precipice.

JIM
I'm going down.

JENNIFER
Be careful.

He hesitates, then leaps down. He lands on a patch of open dirt and skids down.

EXT. RAVINE - DAY

Jim nearly loses control as he descends, but snags onto a tree about thirty feet down.

Jennifer shouts down to him.

JENNIFER
Are you okay?

JIM
Yeah!

He slides his way down the ravine, using the heels of his boots as brakes.

He spots something ahead.

JIM
Please.

He makes it to Will, who remains still.

Jim quickly looks at his face, then checks his pulse.

He cups his hands to his mouth, shouts up the ravine.

JIM
Jennifer! Call nine-one-one!

He puts his hand on Will's back.

JIM
Hey, Lieutenant. We're taking you home.

EXT. HARBIN WAY - DAY

Three search and rescue SUVs and an ambulance stand parked at the side of the road. Officer Marshall directs the operation.

An electric winch attached to one of the SUVs slowly reels in two nylon ropes.

Will comes into view. Still unconscious, he's strapped into a rescue basket, two search and rescue members by his side.

Jennifer covers her mouth when she sees him.

Jim climbs next to Will as he ascends.

They pull him over the precipice. A team of men disconnect the ropes, then load him into the back of the ambulance.

Officer Marshall extends his hand and helps Jim back onto the shoulder of the road. Jim nods in gratitude.

Jim and Jennifer stand together as they watch the ambulance speed down the road, sirens blaring.

She begins to cry and buries her face into Jim's shoulder.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Andrew Heinen stands in front of the hospital, mic in hand. His crew stands before him as he speaks into the camera.

HEINEN

An absolutely astounding ending to the disappearance of Will Garrick, a local man from Norwood. Garrick was found barely alive today at the bottom of a heavily wooded ravine off Harbin Way.

INT. ROBERT'S TRAILER - DAY

Robert presses a clenched fist to his lips as he watches Heinen on TV.

HEINEN

Police say his car went off the road four days ago and they're currently investigating the cause of the accident.

(MORE)

HEINEN (CONT'D)

Garrick underwent emergency surgery upon arrival and a hospital spokesman had no comment on his prognosis.

Robert closes his eyes, clasps his hands together in prayer, drops to his knees.

INT. PATIENT ROOM - HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Will sleeps in his bed. A gauze bandage covers half his face. His right leg hangs in traction.

An IV drips liquid into his system. The steady beat of a heart monitor breaks the dark silence.

The door to the room opens. Cassie walks in, freezes when she sees him.

She fights back tears as she approaches, then gently strokes his face.

Will's eyes flutter and struggle to focus on Cassie. He smiles.

WILL

I made it.

Cassie smiles, kisses his chapped lips.

CASSIE

You did.

WILL

Hannah...

CASSIE

Wants to meet her daddy. But sleep now.

She sits next to him and strokes his hair as Will passes back into unconsciousness.

INT. PATIENT ROOM - HOSPITAL - DAY

Cassie sits by Will's side and holds a mug as he sips water from a straw.

CASSIE

Doctor says your leg should be fine, but you're lucky you got it out when you did.

WILL
 Luck had nothing to do with it,
 honey. Believe me.

Jennifer pokes her head in the room.

JENNIFER
 Excuse me, I have a visitor here
 who demands an audience.

She walks in cradling Hannah in her arms.

Will sits up, grunts at the pain but still smiles.

Jennifer hands off Hannah to Cassie.

Will studies her face.

WILL
 Oh my God. It's really her.

Cassie laughs.

WILL
 Look at her.

Hannah holds her arms out toward him. Cassie gently gives
 her to Will.

WILL
 Hello, Hannah.

He kisses her head, lays his cheek against hers. He closes
 his eyes, revels in the contact for a few moments.

Hannah turns to him, looks him up and down.

WILL
 I promise I'm usually not this
 ugly.

JIM (O.S.)
 Matter of opinion.

Will turns to see Jim walk in the room. He carries a bag and
 a vase of flowers. Will grins.

WILL
 Flowers for me, Corporal? You
 shouldn't have.

JIM
 I didn't. They're from Sara.

Jim places the flowers on a table, to go along with the many other arrangements that already decorate the room.

He walks over to Will, extends his hand. Will clasps it, pulls him in for a hug.

WILL
You saved my life.

Jim stands back up.

JIM
That's what we do.

Will nods, fights back tears.

Jim nearly chokes up himself, then looks at a tray of food nearby.

JIM
How's the food in this joint?

WILL
I've had worse.

JIM
How 'bout I bring dinner tonight?
Up for some ham?

WILL
Funny.

JIM
Oh, just one other thing.

Jim reaches into the bag in his hand, pulls out the framed Silver Star. The freshly polished glass sparkles.

Will watches as Jim stands the frame on an end table.

JIM
Just want everyone here to know who
they're dealing with.

He salutes Will. Will salutes back, then stares at the medal.

He looks over to Cassie.

WILL
Cass, there's things...things I
need to talk to you about.

Cassie nods.

Jim looks over at Jennifer. She gets the message and walks for the door.

JENNIFER

We're gonna give you three some time.

Jim waves to Will and Cassie.

They leave.

Will cradles Hannah, grabs Cassie's hand, pulls her close. He wraps his arms around his family.

FADE OUT.