Snuff

By

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VIRGINIA, PRESENT DAY

EXT. WOODS - AFTERNOON

Massive, gorgeous oak trees stretch endlessly in every direction, fading away into the misty air. They tower into the air, their leaves swallowing up the sky. The sun peeks through the leafy canopy, streaming sunlight through the cracks in the leaves in a beautiful kaleidoscopic pattern.

AARON
(offscreen)
What the stripey tiger tits are you doing over there?

JACKSON
(from behind the camera)
Establishing shots, ya bitch.

The camera shakes a little, and it's apparent that the scene is being filmed from a handheld IPHONE.

JACKSON
I'm JJ-ing over here with some high production value trees and lens flares and... shit. Gotta save money somehow.

PAN TO

When the camera gets to CHUCK, his ass is exposed. CHUCK moons JACKSON while wiggling his butt suggestively in a circular motion.

CHUCK
(sensuously)
I got your production value right here. Triple A, homegrown butthole. And this baby's free, too.

CHUCK is an overweight, pudgy freshman in his early teens. with long hair perpetually in his face.

A rock collides with CHUCK's exposed ass. The boy falls over, grabbing his wounded cheek.
CHUCK
My ass! My moneymaker!

CUT TO

CHUCK, now wearing a thrift store astronaut suit, descends the ramp from a cardboard rocket ship. The ship isn’t particularly large, but it is impressive given the corrugated cardboard and spray paint used to build the thing.

CHUCK takes a massive, exaggerated sniff of the air. CHUCK speaks into a cardboard readout on his arm.

CHUCK
(dramatically)
This is the captain's star-vlog number 8675: I've successfully landed on the hostile moon base. This planet is... so much like earth... yet... this... smell. It's... sophomoric?

JACKSON
Sulphuric.

CHUCK looks directly into the camera.

CHUCK
Spherical?

AARON
(from offscreen, emphasizing)
Sulphuric. It's like the way your sweat smells after you choke down a chubby chili dog.

CHUCK flips off the camera.

CUT TO

CHUCK is still in his spacesuit running as fast as he can, breathing heavily. The camera – and therefore JACKSON – is trailing CHUCK closely behind him as he runs. The camera shakes badly as JACKSON tries to keep up.

CHUCK looks over his shoulder.
AARON, an awkwardly tall sophomore who hasn't quite grown into himself yet, is dressed in a cheaply constructed - but still well-designed - cardboard robot outfit.

AARON marches quickly, flailing his robot arms in hot pursuit of astronaut CHUCK. AARON trips over a branch, falling flat on his face.

AARON
Shit!

JACKSON starts laughing but almost immediately trips himself, dropping the IPHONE which skitters off into the dirt.

JACKSON
Shit!

The IPHONE lands in such a way that CHUCK is still visible. CHUCK's back is turned, and he is still running. CHUCK turns behind to see where the guys went.

CHUCK
What are you guys-

CHUCK trips over a fallen tree into a small creek bed. He flies out of view.

CHUCK
(voice trailing off as he falls)
Shiiiiiii-

CUT TO

Robot AARON is standing over CHUCK. CHUCK is lying on the ground in a defensive pose. He's pulled together a little fort of leaves around himself.

CHUCK thrusts a short, pitiful stick in AARON's general direction.

CHUCK
Back! Get back you glorified Xbox!

AARON - just out of the stick's reach - points his robot arm
at CHUCK.

AARON
(Robotic voice)
Does not compute, meat bag.

AARON's extended arm jerks up into the air as he mimics firing the "laser."

AARON
Pew! Pew! Pew!

CHUCK begins to writhe on the ground, then freezes up like he's been stunned by some powerful force.

CHUCK
(screaming)
Aaaaaaaaaarrrrggggg-

JACKSON
(Yelling over the noise)
Don't do the damn sounds yourself!
As terrifyingly realistic as your space laser noises are, we can put some better ones in during post.

AARON throws his robot arms in the air, exasperated. CHUCK stays frozen mid-writhe, his eyes looking around frantically.

CUT TO

Robot AARON is standing over CHUCK again. He aims his robot arm at CHUCK, preparing to fire.

Beat.

AARON and CHUCK simultaneously look at JACKSON.

AARON
Wha-?

JACKSON
(Interrupting)
Damnit!

CUT TO
INT. CABIN ATTIC - AFTERNOON

Robot AARON and astronaut CHUCK are in a large, poorly lit wooden attic. A stream of light flickers like an old projector between the rotting planks, bouncing through the dust suspended in the air. A little light streams in through a tiny window with the glass punched out on the far side of the room.

CHUCK pretends to be unconscious. He's slumped in an old rickety chair pulled up to a large metal desk. CHUCK's arms are tied to the chair with frayed rope.

On the desk is a SWIVEL LAMP straight from an interrogation scene in a hardboiled detective film. There's also a matte black Glock PISTOL placed equidistant between AARON and CHUCK on the table.

AARON stands on the other side of the desk across from the unconscious CHUCK.

BANG. AARON slams both fists on the desk. CHUCK wakes with a violent start.

CHUCK
Uncle Rick?!

AARON
(Robotic voice)
Where's your king, your leader, your captain?

CHUCK sits up and straightens his back in the chair. He scowls directly into AARON's eyes.

CHUCK
I'll never tell!

BANG. AARON slams his robot fist onto CHUCK's hand. Blood (that's obviously ketchup) shoots out from under CHUCK's hand as if his knuckles have been broken. CHUCK screams in pain but retains his defiant pose.

CHUCK
You think that'll-

AARON grabs CHUCK's cheeks before he can finish his
sentence. More fake blood squirts out of CHUCK's mouth.

AARON
(impersonating Christian Bale's Batman voice)
Where were the other drugs going?

CHUCK
(speaking through smooshed cheeks)
You popped my blood capsule-

AARON
(interrupting)
SWEAR TO ME!

AARON begins stage punching CHUCK all over his body. CHUCK goes with it, groaning and dramatically overreacting to AARON's punches. The scene is acted out in slow-motion.

CHUCK spits out a mashed-up pill that housed the fake stage-blood now running all down CHUCK's chin. CHUCK looks at the camera and grins widely showing off "blood-stained" teeth.

CHUCK
Daddy needs another blood pill.

JACKSON
(Resignedly)
Cut.

The camera swings down to look at the ground.

CUT TO

The scene has reset. CHUCK's face now appears beaten with a black eye and trickles of dried blood coming from his nose.

AARON
(Robotic Voice)
If you don't tell me what I need to know, I'll destroy you like I did the Gorbon King on Dyslesia 9!

CHUCK
I will never give in, I will never surrender to you, a pale imitation of life. You can kill my body, but

(MORE)
(cont'd)
the soul of humanity will burn on
all the stronger. My brothers are
coming, and they will trample you
beneath their boot heels. It is the
dawn of a new day, a new age!

AARON
So be it.

AARON again aims his robot arm at the dummy.

AARON
No more stun settings for you,
brother. Setting wrist cannon for
maximum damage.

AARON pretends to twist some imaginary dial on his arm
cannon. Once again, he steadies his aim at CHUCK.

AARON
Eat intensely refracted light, skin
sack.

CUT TO

Though AARON is still aiming his laser in CHUCK's direction,
CHUCK has clearly been replaced by a cheap dummy in the same
astronaut suit. The head appears to be made of paper mache.

The dummy's head suddenly explodes, flinging copious amounts
of red corn syrup - and what appears to be brains - all over
the camera and AARON. AARON falls over backwards.

AARON yells something, but it's intelligible. His voice
sounds digitally altered to give it a more robotic
intonation as well as a much deeper pitch.

INT. SUBURBAN ROOM - NIGHT

AARON's cardboard robot chest has burst into flames. The
real CHUCK runs over and begins stomping on his chest. The
scene is chaos. Each of the boys' voices are filtered
through the odd, robotic baritone.

The image begins to flicker, and we realize we're now
looking at a computer screen.

The three boys are sitting in JACKSON's bedroom, watching
their previously-recorded footage on his large desktop computer.

The cramped room is of modest size and quite messy, though not any messier than the average teenager's would be. Every inch of the walls are lined with classic horror and science-fiction movie posters from every era: The Shining and Star Wars IV to Iron Man and Get Out.

A small, twin bed is shoved into a corner to make space for the large, wooden desk along the far wall. It is littered with DVDs and various recording equipment: boom stands, microphones, an old-timey personal movie projector, etc.

JACKSON, an average-looking, redheaded young teen with thick, coke-bottle glasses, is manning the mouse and keyboard, scrubbing through the footage. JACKSON's face is inches from the screen as he edits.

JACKSON
That's not enough, right? Like there should be more blood and stuff? Maybe more firecrackers so the goo flies further?

AARON
You literally almost blew my literal face off. I'm not trying to die for this dumb movie.

JACKSON spins around in his oversized commander's chair and grabs AARON by the shoulders.

JACKSON
A small price to pay for art!

JACKSON slaps AARON gently across the face. CHUCK leaps up as well and gets in AARON's face.

CHUCK
Mona Lisa, Sistine Chapel, Busty Zombies 4!

With each "art example" CHUCK also gives AARON a light slap. AARON pushes back his rolling chair and stands up abruptly, warding off further attacks from CHUCK and JACKSON.
AARON
You really think that is what's going to sell this movie to the judges? 15 pounds of corn syrup and some brain bread?

JACKSON
It's got to be believable. Do you not believe?

AARON
You think more explosives are going to do that? Also, that GUN looks stupid as hell. Why would an alien robot overlord with laser arms also pack a Block?

JACKSON
GUNS just scream production value, man. It's not like your dad's using it. Besides, it really sells the Robo Noir angle which is the whole point. The GUN makes this a hardboiled detective movie with robots instead of just a robot movie with robots. I mean come on. Those indie film festival judges are going to love it so much, they're gonna need kneepads to show their appreciation for our magnum opus here.

CHUCK starts humping the air, imitating what must be extremely aggressive oral sex.

JACKSON
Gross, but yeah, good sci-fi is like cocaine to those pretentious dildos.

CHUCK
That, and quirky dramedies about divorced lesbian parents.
AARON
I'm just not sure our chances of winning are very affected by my relative willingness to be blown to bits on camera.

CHUCK
It greatly affects my personal joy and wellbeing, if that helps.

JACKSON
Science fiction movies just always look so cool. I'm trying to make that happen with whatever I can.

CHUCK
We're also trying to set you on fire. Just a little bit, geezus.

AARON grabs his BACKPACK and shoulders it. He nods at CHUCK and JACKSON.

AARON
Well, I'm going to go sleep before you two idiots decide the only way we'll win top prize is for me to jump off a cliff with a bottle rocket shoved up my ass.

JACKSON - who is back to scrolling through the explosion footage - doesn't look up.

JACKSON
Or maybe a roman candle...

CHUCK also stands, stretching.

CHUCK
I'm going to go home and delve into the magical world of Westeros until my balls fall off.

JACKSON
So you stopped watching like five minutes after you were born when your parents decided to make you a girl?
CHUCK
Five minutes after I porked Mrs. Quick so hard my smooth testes exploded. Now that would be production value. A real hot and heavy sex scene with JACKSON's hot and heavy mom? Oscar-worthy.

JACKSON
Asshole.

CHUCK
Dickbrush.

CHUCK pantomimes brushing his teeth with AARON's nearby penis.

AARON
Yep, I'm out before this becomes a full-on orgy. If you two are going to start making out, can you please wait 'til I leave? I want to pretend everything in here is 100 percent jizz-free.

CHUCK
Except that sock over there that's stiff enough to stop a bullet.

Without turning around, JACKSON flips CHUCK the bird.

CUT TO

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NIGHT

The winding, dusty road in front of JACKSON's modest rancher home disappears quickly into the inky black night. CHUCK waves back at AARON as he walks away.

CHUCK
Sweet dreams, my little prince!

AARON doesn't acknowledge CHUCK. CHUCK saunters off into the darkness humming Prince's "Purple Rain".

AARON pulls a well-worn stack of papers from his BACKPACK. The title on the first page reads THE DAY THE STARS FELL: A ROBO NOIR. AARON opens to a page, and scribbles something
out with a pen.

    AARON
    (muttering under his breath)
    Maybe it should just be a strangle robot...

Suddenly, AARON hears a HUSKY yelp pierce the silence. AARON's head jerks up at the sound. AARON shoves his papers and pen back into his BACKPACK and slings it over his shoulder.

AARON looks around. Nobody else has heard the noise. Most houses' lights are off. The blinds on the top floor of the house directly across the street close swiftly. The night is illuminated only by sparse, displaced street lamps.

Another loud yelp, followed by a MAN's angry, unintelligible voice. AARON looks around again, steels himself, and decides to investigate.

    CUT TO

EXT. BUSHES - NIGHT

AARON stealthily pushes his way through thick brush. Between the leaves, AARON can see an old SHACK. The decrepit building is nearly swallowed by overgrown vines and vegetation. Car parts and other rusted machinery litter the dusty yard. The only light comes from inside the tiny house.

EXT. SHACK - NIGHT

A skinny HUSKY is chained to the front porch, whimpering quietly. A large, overweight MAN (40s) in a wife beater and blue jeans kicks open the front screen door. He's holding a glass beer BOTTLE in his hand.

    MAN
    (to the HUSKY)
    You piece of shit animal!

The MAN smashes the BOTTLE against the side of the house, shattering half the BOTTLE so that only the jagged stem remains in his hand. He gestures with it at the HUSKY.
MAN
That's the only damn couch I got!

The MAN raises the BOTTLE over his head to swing at the
HUSKY. AARON, in desperation, bursts out of the bushes. His
shirt sleeves get pushed up his forearms slightly.

AARON
Hey! Stop!

The MAN freezes up. AARON is suddenly uncertain.

AARON
(hesitantly)
Please... stop?

The MAN slowly lowers the BOTTLE and turns to look at AARON.
The MAN seems entirely unfazed. The HUSKY also turns its
head. It looks pleadingly at AARON.

MAN
(menacingly)
What did you just say to me?

AARON swallows hard.

AARON
Don't hurt that dog, mister. I -
I'll buy him from you.

AARON reaches into his pocket, pulling out a thin, brown
leather WALLET. AARON holds it out to the MAN.

MAN
You don't want this shit dog.

AARON
Okay but please just don't... don't
hurt him. Please. He's just a dumb
dog.

MAN
Turn around and walk the hell off
my property before I get my shotGUN
and blast you off.
AARON

I can pay-

The MAN takes two steps towards AARON. The BOTTLE hangs loosely in his grip. The HUSKY whimpers again. The MAN peers at AARON's face in the semi-darkness.

MAN

I know you, boy. You're Sanders' kid, right? You want me telling your drunk-ass old man what you're doing out here? I think he'd could add a little spice to that there.

The MAN gestures with his bottle to a thick, ropy scar across AARON's wrist, peeking out from under his shirt sleeves. AARON hastily pulls his sleeve back down, covering the blemish.

AARON

No - no sir-

The MAN steps with intent towards AARON, BOTTLE out front. With his free hand, he pulls out an old FLIP-PHONE from his front jeans pocket.

MAN

I still got Sanders' fucking number. Then again... maybe I'll draw up a couple fresh scars myself. Blame it on the drunken shit. Who'd they believe anyway?

AARON

Please sir-

MAN

(interrupting)

Fucking beat it, boy! This is the end of the line.

The MAN turns around, puts the PHONE to his ear, and walks back towards the HUSKY.

AARON is losing his nerve. He looks at the HUSKY. The HUSKY lies its head back down and turns away from AARON.
Tears beginning to silently stream down his face, AARON turns and runs back through the bushes.

CUT TO

EXT. RURAL ROAD - NIGHT

AARON sobs as he runs. He stops momentarily to catch his breath. Faintly in the background the HUSKY yelps again. AARON swipes open his IPHONE and types "9-1..." but doesn't finish. He clearly doesn't want his DAD to know.

AARON's hand is shaking badly. With a frustrated shake of his head he closes his phone, wipes his nose angrily, and starts running again.

FADE OUT

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

We're inside a high school class room. The walls are white, dotted here and there with saccharine inspirational posters. One has a kitten clinging to a tree branch imploring students to "hang in there."

PAN TO

AARON is asleep at his desk. We cannot see any other STUDENTS, but we hear them writing.

A loud BELL rings, splitting the quiet.

Simultaneously a massive textbook soars through the air, smashing into AARON, waking him at his desk with a violent start.

CHUCK
(offscreen)
Lunch time, boners!

AARON
(confused)
Wha- Who?

Another book hits AARON from the other side.
CHUCK
(offscreen)
Load up the magic butt bus!

CUT TO

INT. COOKOUT - DAY

AARON and CHUCK are sitting alone in a booth. While other tables and booths are loaded with groups of students who've also managed to snag rides to the popular fast food restaurant, CHUCK and AARON are off in the corner of comparative quiet in the din of teenagers eating lunch.

AARON pushes his soggy french fries around his styrofoam food container. CHUCK's entire meal is drowning in ketchup, and he's devouring it as quickly as possible. CHUCK gestures to AARON's turgid fries.

CHUCK
(mouth full)
You eating those?

AARON, clearly preoccupied, pushes his container towards CHUCK. CHUCK lurches at it like a hungry vulture.

CHUCK
(between bites)
You are a gentlemen and a taint gobbler. My mother thanks you for helping me grow into such a healthy, sexy boy!

AARON, saying nothing, slowly pushes the container off the table onto the floor, the food splatters everywhere. CHUCK throws up his hands in disgust, mouth still full of food.

CHUCK
(mouth full of food)
The feast!

CHUCK gestures nonspecifically all around him.

CHUCK
...it's ruined.

While CHUCK is still making sense of his lost meal, KAT, an attractive blonde sophomore, 15, wearing a grungy plaid
shirt and torn up black jeans walks up to the boys. She's very pretty, but it's somewhat hidden under her thick black eyeliner and aggressive demeanor.

AARON and CHUCK are just surprised that a girl would come talk to them.

KAT
Have either of you idiots seen JACKSON around?

CHUCK, unable to swallow from the shock, slowly shakes his head.

AARON
I don't think he has this lunch period. I just rode over here with CHUCK. JACKSON's probably, like, jerkin' it.

AARON's face flushes red at his failed joke. KAT is unfazed. She doesn't even roll her eyes. KAT stares at AARON, waiting for him to say something of value.

AARON
(ashamed)
... or studying... math?

KAT
If he ever finishes, can you tell him to wash off his hands and come talk to me?

AARON
Yep, mhmm, you gotcha.

AARON starts to make finger GUNs, catches himself, and lays his head back down on the table, defeated. KAT walks away. She leaves out the front door.

CHUCK finally manages to swallow his food mass.

CHUCK
Slick moves, sweet cheeks.

AARON leaves his head down on the table. He rubs his forehead back and forth over his forearm.
AARON
(muffled)
Shut up. At least I'm not a stopped up garbage disposal of a human.

CHUCK
Neither am I.

CHUCK gets down next to AARON's face and opens his mouth wide to show that he has indeed swallowed all of his food. Having proved that, CHUCK begins to pick at the smashed plate of ketchup and fries on the floor next to him.

JACKSON enters the COOKOUT with a much older kid, KEVIN. JACKSON notices AARON and CHUCK, splits off, and hurries over. JACKSON sits down next to CHUCK, across from AARON.

JACKSON
I think I've figured it out.

AARON
KAT wants you.

CHUCK
Hard.

JACKSON
I know.

CHUCK
No, like, wants you wants you. Like hands under bathing suit areas wants you.

CHUCK lifts his eyebrows suggestively. He pats his chest and stands up to pat his butt. JACKSON ignores him, looks around, and leans in. The other two guys lean in as well.

CHUCK
(whispering)
Are we doing truth or dare right now? Are you finally going to admit you stole my damn Whole Grain Cheddar Goldfish in sixth grade, you sick bastard?
JACKSON
(ignoring him)
I was just talking with KEVIN-

AARON
(interrupting)
You hitched a ride here from the cocaine dealing drop out? That's great!

JACKSON
KEVIN's been doing some yard work for this real creepy, real pervy old rich dude. SMITH or something. KEVIN says he pays pretty good.

CHUCK
Because of the "yard work." More like "butt work," amirite?

CHUCK raises his arm looking around for a high five.

AARON
I'm still having a hard time understanding why you were hanging around KEVIN.

CHUCK
Did he touch you? Do you need me to show you the swimsuit areas again?

JACKSON
Jesus. Both of you shut the hell up for a second. When KEVIN used to date JENNY my parents fell in love with him.

AARON
And you did too, huh?

CHUCK
God is there any way your sister could be any hotter, dude? When does she get back from school, again?

JACKSON says nothing, opting to stare angrily at the other
two. They fall resignedly quiet. JACKSON clears his throat and continues.

JACKSON
So you know KEVIN and KAT ride the same bus and live in the same neighborhood, right? Well, so does MR. SMITH.

CHUCK looks up like he's going to say something but JACKSON cuts him off.

JACKSON
No, asshole. SMITH doesn't ride the bus too. He just lives there.

CHUCK frowns and closes his mouth.

EXT. YARD - DAY

KEVIN - a well-built, 23-year old former athlete - is pulling weeds from a hopelessly overgrown garden. His long hair hangs into his beautiful blue eyes and though his teeth are terrible, he's still a good looking, muscular guy.

Just a few feet from KEVIN sits SMITH, an older man, somewhere in his late seventies. SMITH sits in a rickety rocking chair, slowly rocking back and forth. His cane sits beside him propped up against the house.

KAT walks down a dusty gravel road about 100 feet from SMITH's house. SMITH starts whistling at her, though we can't hear it.

JACKSON
So every time KAT walks by, MR. SMITH starts catcalling her and shit. Keeps hitting on her, calling her names, asking her if she likes to party, does she have a boyfriend - all that.

CUT TO

INT. COOKOUT - DAY
AARON
Gross.

JACKSON
Dude. That's not even the half of it. So according to KEVIN-

CUT TO

EXT. YARD - DAY

KAT walks out of sight down the road. SMITH throws back another shot of whiskey. KEVIN ignores him.

JACKSON (V.O.)
-one day, SMITH has had way too much drink - just been downing whiskey shots left and right - and SMITH sees KAT walk by, ignoring him as always, so SMITH turns to KEVIN and says-

SMITH begins speaking though we can't hear what he's exactly saying. KEVIN is mostly ignoring SMITH.

JACKSON (V.O.)
'I'd pay good money if somebody would kill that bitch and film it.' KEVIN just pretends he didn't hear him, because it's so freaking weird, right? But the old man keeps going.

SMITH reaches over and grabs his cane, and he uses it to tap KEVIN's shoulder until SMITH has his attention. Once KEVIN turns around, SMITH keeps talking.

JACKSON (V.O.)
'She thinks she's too good for me? I used to go on four dates a week back in the day. Bitches these days have no fucking respect. But I know how to teach respect. listen to me, KEVIN, I'll pay $50,000 if you know anybody who'd do that. anybody who'd kill that bitch and put it on a dvd or something so i could watch

(MORE)
JACKSON (V.O.) (cont'd)
it. i know all you damn kids have computers and cameras and shit.'

CUT TO

INT. COOKOUT - DAY

CHUCK and AARON don't know what to say. They are staring at JACKSON, confused.

CHUCK
This story isn't exactly hilarious, dude.

AARON
Yeah... I don't get how-

JACKSON
(interrupting)
We're going to film it.

CHUCK and AARON are stunned speechless.

JACKSON
We're going to make a video, give it to this old, dirty pedo, and fund Robo Noir with the money. We can finally make it look legit. Get some better, safer explosives or whatever, maybe pay somebody to fix up a better costume, get a decent camera. We could make Robo the way it's supposed to be made.

CHUCK and AARON lean back away from JACKSON.

CHUCK
I think you're kind of blowing past the bigger issue here, man. A snuff film? Are you serious? I was wrong, this definitely isn't hilarious. This is serial killer shit.

AARON
You're not actually considering this right? Jesus, we're not going

(MORE)
AARON (cont'd)
to kill anybody. How would we even
do that, anyway? Give CHUCK a damn
chainsaw?

CHUCK leans forward again excitedly.

CHUCK
A chainsaw, huh? Suddenly, I'm
changing my mind. Since we're all
pretending how we'd kill somebody -
since there's not a snowball's
chance in AARON's pants that
JACKSON is serious - go ahead and
call me The... Mayonnaiser. Yeah, I
stuff Mayo down unsuspecting hedge
fund manager's throats while they
sleep or something. I'm not the
hero this city wants, but I'm the
hero they deserve.

JACKSON puts up his hands to calm AARON and CHUCK down.
JACKSON shushes them before they get much louder.

JACKSON
(in a calming voice)
Guys, guys. Nobody is going to
actually die. No mayonnaise, no
chainsaws... We're going to fake
it, obviously.

CHUCK and AARON look confused.

AARON
You can't fake a real death. This
SMITH guy is going to know. This is
a lot harder than stuffing a paper
mache head with M80s.

CHUCK
We already used most of the corn
syrup, and my mom definitely
noticed I replaced it with water.
Her brownies last night were
straight ass.
JACKSON
I've got an idea. Trust me.

AARON
How do we know this guy's even going to pay? How do we know he's up for it? He just sounds like some crazy, drunk old man. Just talking about doing something like this could get us thrown in jail.

JACKSON sits back, and looks around the COOKOUT. He spots KEVIN sitting just a few tables over, watching the guys talk. JACKSON subtly waves him over, and KEVIN slinks over to the table. He looks like an idiot pretending to be a spy.

KEVIN slides in next to JACKSON, he has an IPHONE in his hand.

JACKSON
They want to know how we can be sure SMITH will pay.

KEVIN unlocks the phone and slides it across the table to AARON.

KEVIN
Check it.

AARON picks up the phone and shows it to CHUCK. On it, is a picture of an open floor safe. It's stacked with piles of cash rubber banded together. It obviously has at least $100,000 and probably a lot more. AARON looks up from the phone at KEVIN.

KEVIN
It's all legit. He turned around for a second, and I picked up a stack just to see. It's real.

AARON
So he has some money to burn, how do we know he actually wants a snuff film or that he'll actually pay for one if we give him something. Keeping in mind that him telling you this is basically

(MORE)
(cont'd)
solicitation of murder which I'm 78% sure is super, super illegal.

CHUCK
Somebody's really been reading the shit out of those old detective novels, huh? You should be a lawyer.

AARON
I'm just saying, right now it all sounds like the ramblings of a wistful pervert.

KEVIN put his hand on his pants pocket but hesitates. JACKSON nods at AARON and CHUCK.

JACKSON
Show them.

KEVIN looks around furtively, checking to make sure nobody's looking.

KEVIN
This is how I know he'll pay.

KEVIN pulls out a second IPHONE wrapped with cheap Apple earbuds. The phone is dirty and chipped and has a slightly cracked screen.

KEVIN
I asked him the same questions you guys are. I tried to make it all joking, right? Like, you know, some 'hypothetically... if I knew a guy...' shit.

KEVIN quickly slides the phone across the table, grabbing back his other phone in the same motion.

KEVIN
He has another safe with a couple of these bootleg-looking DVDs. He... He showed me one of them.

AARON and CHUCK look down at the phone. JACKSON sits back and looks away. KEVIN stares directly at AARON.
AARON slowly unwinds the earbuds, hands one to CHUCK, and they each put one ear in. AARON hits the play button in the center of the touchscreen.

CUT TO

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

A single, exposed light bulb swings back and forth, throwing shadows into motion across the bare, concrete basement. In the center of the room is a GIRL tied to a creaky wooden chair. She's wearing a torn tank top, and she has a black hood over her head. She's thin and doesn't look much older than 14.

A HOODED FIGURE dressed in a long, dark cloak like the GRIM REAPER but wearing a baby mask, steps towards the GIRL. The FIGURE is holding a long, shiny knife. As the lightbulb swings around the room it throws crazy reflections off the pristine blade.

GIRL
Hello? Is somebody... please help.
Please, it's so cold.

WOMAN
What are you doing?! I- I'm pregnant! Like two months, please.

Silently, in one smooth motion, the HOODED FIGURE rips off the GIRL's hood and slices her throat with the massive knife.

Before she has even had the chance to scream, the GIRL clutches at her throat, desperately trying to stem the flow of bright red blood spurting between her fingers. The GIRL collapses to the floor, gurgling quietly. The HOODED FIGURE stares straight into the camera.

CUT TO

INT. COOKOUT - DAY

KEVIN swiftly grabs the phone off the table, simultaneously detaching the earbuds, and stuffs it back into his pocket.
CHUCK rips out his earbud and throws it on the table. CHUCK buries his head in his hands. AARON seems too stunned to say anything or move.

CHUCK
Jesus. Oh Jesus. Jesus, Jesus.

AARON is suddenly very aware of his surroundings. He looks around at the throng of students crammed into the COOKOUT. He looks as if he feels exposed.

KEVIN
(monotone)
SMITH showed me that shit. Just... showed me. Like it was nothing. I thought about beating his ass right there.

CHUCK
Why the hell didn't you?

KEVIN
SMITH said he paid 20 grand for that one, but he doesn't want to keep going back to the same dude. Thought he was sketchy.

CHUCK
You never can trust those guys that murder women for money and film it. There's just something off about them.

KEVIN
SMITH still said it was worth every penny. But he wants more of a story next time. That one was too quick, not enough... drama.

AARON swallows hard, clearly shaken by the video, he looks suspiciously at KEVIN.

AARON
How did you get ahold of the clip? He just text it to you?
KEVIN
Nah. The old geezer can barely see, so when he played me the DVD he had to focus really hard on the screen, so I just sort of bootlegged it on my old IPHONE. It’s got my old pictures and shit on it. Doesn’t call anymore, but can still do video okay.

KEVIN sits back.

KEVIN
Look. This is all legit. All you guys have to do is find a place to film it. KAT and I were thinking like a hanging or something. Should be pretty easy to fake.

JACKSON
We could do it at that old cabin out near my parent’s house. We were already trying to film something else back there anyway.

KEVIN
Yeah, I know that place. Creepy as shit, right? That’s perfect.

As KEVIN and JACKSON have been speaking, AARON has been getting angrier and angrier.

AARON
(speaking too loudly)
Why... why did you not turn him in? Give that clip to goddamn somebody.

AARON stands up. He’s very visibly upset. A few curious students at a nearby table look over at him quizzically.

JACKSON
(whispering angrily)
Sit the hell down.

AARON collapses back into his chair. The students return to their food. He points at KEVIN’s pocket.
AARON
Give that shit to the police.

KEVIN looks at JACKSON nervously.

KEVIN
You said they'd be okay with this, dude. I don't need any more fucking trouble.

JACKSON
Look, guys. Yes, it's screwed up and yes this sack-dragger is a sick shit, but we're not going to kill anybody. Once he sees our film - well, KEVIN's film, technically - and buys it off us, we'll anonymously leak that video to the police.

AARON's face starts to soften a little bit, but he still doesn't seem sure. CHUCK lifts his head back up.

CHUCK
Or we could got to jail. Forever.

JACKSON
Or we can get the money we need to finish our Robo and we do some real good. Put this guy behind bars. Maybe get him the chair or whatever. Who knows? Don't we deserve a little reward for taking this creep down?

JACKSON glance back and forth between AARON and CHUCK. JACKSON stares directly at CHUCK.

JACKSON
This is how you do it, man. This is how you make it to LA. How you translate your fat mouth into fat stacks.

JACKSON turns to AARON, he averts his eyes.
JACKSON
(quietly)
And you - of all people - should jump at this chance to get out of here. To just leave.

AARON instinctively grabs at his covered forearm, clutching it. Angry tears well in his eyes.

AARON
(barely audible)
Fuck you.

Phone and watch alarms all over the restaurant start going off indicating it's time to get back to class. Students start getting up from their lunch and throwing away their trash. JACKSON and KEVIN stand up.

JACKSON
Think it over. I think we've found our ticket out of this shit town, but I can't do it without you guys. I won't do it. KAT's already on board, but I need you guys to have my back.

JACKSON and KEVIN turn and leave with the rest of the students. CHUCK gets up angrily, slams his chair back under the table and storms away.

AARON continues to sit, staring. The roaring din of the restaurant grows louder and louder until-

CUT TO

INT. SCHOOL BUS - MID-AFTERNOON

AARON is still sitting in the same position, with the same distant look in his eyes, but in the back of a school bus. Out-of-focus students are screwing around, talking, and laughing as they ride home for the day. They're all just excited to be done with school.

The bus stops.

AARON gets up slowly, and walks towards the exit door. After a few steps, he trips on some kid's BACKPACK that's been
left out in the aisle. All of the students laugh as AARON catches himself and rushes the rest of the way off the bus.

CUT TO

INT. TRAILER - AFTERNOON

AARON slams the front door behind him and walks into the kitchen. The trailer isn't an outright hellhole, but it's definitely messy and there are several outlines where it's clear pictures that used to adorn the walls have been taken down. AARON reaches into the refrigerator and pours himself a glass of milk.

DAD
(slurred speech)
Hey, bud. Where... Where the hell you been?

AARON's DAD is sitting on a large, overstuffed chair watching sports highlights. He sits amongst a sea of beer cans as well as a couple of liquor bottles. He's so drunk, he can barely speak coherently, much less move.

DAD
You do school?

AARON
Yeah, DAD. I did the hell out of some school. You do beer?

AARON chugs his milk, and unceremoniously drops the glass in the crowded sink.

DAD
(coughs slightly)
You know it.

AARON stomps off down the short hallway to his bedroom.

INT. TRAILER BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Unlike JACKSON's room, AARON's is almost entirely bare. There's virtually nothing on the walls, and the raggedy carpet is mostly exposed except for a few articles of clothing here and there.

AARON sits down on his tiny bed in the corner. On the
nightstand is a frame about the size of one of the blank spaces on the living room wall.

The picture shows a three-year-old AARON, his DAD, and what appears to be AARON's MOM outside a drive-in theater boasting a showing of *Batman Begins*. The glass in the frame is broken, and a large section of glass over AARON's MOM's location in the photograph is missing.

AARON picks up the frame, looks at the photo. After a second, AARON - clearly upset - places the photo down, and opens the nightstand drawer. AARON instinctively reaches for his arm. We cannot see what's inside.

Beat.

AARON slams the desk closed and pulls out his IPHONE. AARON unlocks it and dials.

    JACKSON
    (on the other line)
    Hey, man.

    AARON
    Let's get the fuck out of here.

    JACKSON
    Hell yeah.

CUT TO

EXT. WOODS - DUSK

AARON, CHUCK, JACKSON, and KAT are trudging through the woods. JACKSON is carrying an old, handheld mini DV camera and tripod, and CHUCK is lugging a large boom mic. AARON's carrying a long, thick rope, trailing it behind him as he walks - almost like he's trying to distance himself from it.

    CHUCK
    I'm not going to lie. I was pretty upset there for a hot minute, but it didn't take very long for me to realize that I'd really love some money. I'd like that very much.
AARON
Shocking.

CHUCK
I actually called JACKSON right after I dropped you back off.

AARON
Again, massive surprise.

CHUCK
I said, 'Show me the money!'

KAT
I feel like the thing that's important here is that it's all fake, anyway. We'll nail this old man and make a little cash. Everybody wins.

CHUCK
I haven't nailed any old men since middle school.

JACKSON
Robo Noir can finally have some real production value. Wow some judges.

CHUCK
We can get a prostitute, a little cocaine, maybe a decent deli spread for once. Make it like a true movie set.

JACKSON
That's probably the only way you'll get any...

CHUCK
If the only way I'll get any decent sliced turkey is by killing people, then somebody hand me a shotgun.

JACKSON and CHUCK continue to argue and joke with each other, but the group separates slightly and the quieter, more contemplative AARON lags a little behind. KAT falls in
step with him.

KAT
So what's your deal?

AARON snaps out of his mild stupor.

AARON
My deal with what?

KAT
Why do you want to kill me?

AARON is taken aback and laughs awkwardly.

AARON
I don't want to kill you.

KAT
Come on... Not even a little?

AARON
I mean if you keep suggesting it...

KAT laughs.

KAT
No, really. Like what brings you out here? You know, technically, we've known each other for like twelve years. Yet I know almost nothing about you.

AARON
Wait. You went to Miller?

KAT
Ouch.

AARON
Sorry! I just... I don't remember a lot of people from elementary school. Honestly, I don't remember much before...
KAT
(quietly)
Your MOM?

AARON

Yeah.

AARON and KAT fall silent. They walk a few more steps.

AARON
I want to remember, obviously, but it's just... it's all fuzzy.

KAT
No I get you. I'll admit, I'm a little glad you don't remember me. Most people don't. Thankfully.

AARON
What do you mean?

KAT looks over at AARON a little embarrassed.

KAT
You don't recall that little girl, big bushy pigtails, overalls around her feet, who came running into MRS. THOMPSON's room, ass out, crying about not being able to wipe? Ring any bells?

AARON
(incredulously)
Yes! Holy shit, that was you? How did I forget it was you?

KAT
You haven't seen my bare ass in awhile?

AARON
(snorts involuntarily)
Well, that's not really... I just mean that particular memory almost exists as some sort of crazy, formless dream in my head. Like, I - until just this second - I wasn't

(MORE)
even sure it was 100 percent real. Just a story I'd heard I had once when I was a kid all doped up on grape juice or something.

KAT
It's 100 percent real, baby. You got an early look at the real deal.

AARON
Why... why don't I remember it being you, though?

KAT
I switched over to Cale the next year. Not because every child at Miller knew my cooch, but because we moved just outside the district. County stuck us all back together in middle school, but by then I had these rockin' tits, and I'm not sure anybody looks at my face long enough to put two... and two... together.

With each "two" KAT grabs a breast with one hand and then mashes them together when she says "together." AARON can't help but sneak a peek. He realizes just how beautiful she really is under all that heavy makeup and baggy clothing. KAT lets go of her breasts and AARON quickly, awkwardly looks away.

KAT
But enough about my rack, I asked you a question. Why are you out here in these gorgeous woods, getting ready to murder a girl? Just for some money? To finish a movie about robotic lingerie?

AARON
Lingerie?

KAT
Boudoir? Robo Boudoir?
AARON
(laughing)
Noir. Not boudoir. Although we'd probably sell way more tickets with a sex robot.

KAT
(annoyed)
What the hell is a noir?

AARON
It's like French for "dark," but it also just sort of means a detective movie. Like from the forties with the fedoras and the goofy voiceovers.

AARON pretends to take a drag of a cigarette.

AARON
(doing his best 40s American accent)
She had legs that went for miles, see, and the dame barely knew what was coming for her, see.

AARON looks at KAT who is very much amused at his little performance. Abashedly, AARON flicks away his imaginary cigarette.

AARON
Technically, it's way more complicated than that, but that's the gist.

KAT
Oh. So you're out here to, what, pick up dames?

AARON
No-

KAT
(interrupting and doing her best 40s American accent)
Because killing a dame makes loving her up way easier, see.
AARON
You caught me. I'm a necrophiliac looking in for love in all the wrong cadavers.

KAT
I knew it.

Beat.

KAT
And yet somehow, you've still managed to avoid my question for what seems like a thousand miles through this creepy-ass forest.

AARON walks quietly for a few more steps.

AARON
Honestly?

KAT
Preferably.

AARON
I need to get out of here.

KAT
Join the club.

AARON
Ever since MOM... I just don't feel like I have a home here.

KAT just looks at AARON, waiting for him to say more. AARON stares at the ground as he speaks.

AARON
I guess I'm hoping if we make a good enough movie... I can get a job somewhere else. A life somewhere else. You know?

KAT
(quietly)
Yeah. I do.
AARON
Everything scares me. I want to help people... help myself. I'm afraid, terrified of everything... I'm useless.

Beat.

KAT
(quietly)
Everybody feels useless. None of us actually are.

The little group breaks into a clearing and looks. Sitting directly in the center is a small, dilapidated shack. It's built from a warped wood that looks ready to collapse at any second. The roof is perforated with tiny holes from falling acorns and hail.

KAT
Here?

JACKSON
Here.

KAT
I'd say that I wouldn't be caught dead in a shithole like this, but I guess that's obviously not true.

AARON
(steeled himself)
Let's make the best damn snuff film anybody's ever seen.

CHUCK
Since ISIS, anyway.

JACKSON turns around and smiles at AARON, pleased that he's coming around.

JACKSON
Our ticket out.

AARON
Right the fuck out.
KAT
Alright ladies, who's ready to hang me?

CHUCK grabs the rope from AARON with his free hand and points to himself.

CHUCK
Ya boy!

CUT TO

INT. ABANDONED SHED - DUSK

The group opens the door. There's very little furniture left, and dust has settled in over everything that remains. and starts up the creaking, rickety stairs. CHUCK - who is bringing up the rear - steps through one of the steps.

CHUCK
Damnit. My fresh kicks.

They reach the top floor. The desk and chair from the Robo Noir's interrogation scene are still set up. The red corn syrup from the CHUCK's paper mache death has dried but still gives the impression that some horrible crime has occurred. A little light streams through the punctured roof, illuminating the hanging dust, but it's obvious there isn't much daylight left.

JACKSON
We need to move if we're going to make this happen before the sun goes down.

JACKSON unslings his camera and begins filming establishing shots again.

JACKSON
CHUCK, get that boom mic set up and start checking levels. AARON, can you set up our makeshift gallows?

KAT
If it's all the same, can I set it up? This is my death after all.
AARON
I'll just grab the desk.

KAT seems maybe a little nervous, but quickly grabs the rope from AARON, drags the chair from behind the desk, and begins setting up a makeshift gallows in the center of the room. CHUCK and AARON get to work while JACKSON continues to look for the perfect angle.

KAT
How's it look?

The guys look up from everything they're working on. KAT teeters on the chair, the rope - affixed to a beam across the ceiling - is sitting on her neck. She curtsies slightly.

CHUCK
You look like you're at the end of your rope.

KAT
That sounds about right.

JACKSON places his camera on a tripod next to CHUCK's boom mic set up and starts making small adjustments to line up the shot.

JACKSON
(without looking up)
AARON, can you come back over here? I'm going to need you to do your best man-voice.

JACKSON looks up, walks over to the desk, slides open a drawer and out the GLOCK. JACKSON holds it out to AARON.

JACKSON
You're going to yell at KAT, tell her to step off or you'll shoot her.

AARON
What? No way-

JACKSON
(interrupting)
KAT, you'll scream a little and beg

(MORE)
(cont'd)
for your life and then you-

JACKSON turns back to AARON. AARON still hasn't taken the
GUN. JACKSON shakes the GLOCK a little to get AARON's
attention.

JACKSON
-are going to shoot this thing
straight in the air. Literally
straight up. We're not trying to
kill anybody.

AARON
(quietly, almost to himself)
I really don't want to do this,
man. I... I've never shot anything
before.

AARON is still staring at the GUN. JACKSON shakes it again,
a little more angrily this time.

JACKSON
Wake up. Light's leaving. Let's
make a decision here.

CHUCK
Everything sounds good on my end. I
don't know what a GUN is going to
do the levels, though.

JACKSON
It'll be fine as long it feels
real. AARON. Take it.

Finally, AARON reaches out and takes the GLOCK. JACKSON
points to the safety.

JACKSON
It's loaded right? Don't turn off
the safety until right before you
fire, and flick it back on
immediately.

AARON
It's my dad's damn GUN isn't it? I
know how to use it... I just - I
just haven't.
JACKSON turns back to KAT.

JACKSON
After he fires, you'll scream and jump. The rope is going to be a little loose, so your feet will touch the ground, but only barely. CHUCK will snap this stick we brought to make it sound like your neck broke, so you won't need to do pretend to struggle to breathe or whatever. Just twitch around a little to give old SMITH a show.

KAT nods slowly. CHUCK gives a thumbs up with the hand that's holding the stick.

JACKSON
Any questions?

AARON
Can I not do this, please?

JACKSON
It's a fucking movie, dude. It's also $50,000. Just do it.

KAT
AARON. Let's get this over with, okay? Please?

AARON takes a peek at KAT. She's got the noose around her neck, and a ray of light from one of the holes is illuminating her face.

CHUCK lifts his shirt up and grabs his breasts.

CHUCK
Do it for these, AARON. Suckle some courage from my plucky teats.

KAT
Ignore them, AARON. You're not scared anymore. You're braver than you think.

AARON cocks the GUN, and stands up. He stretches a little
and takes a deep breath, slowly releasing it.

    JACKSON
    We good?

JACKSON looks at AARON. AARON nods slowly. CHUCK pulls his shirt back down.

    CHUCK
    Works every time.

Nobody else sees it, but KAT winks at AARON.

    KAT
    (quietly)
    You got this.

JACKSON puts his hand up in the air.

    JACKSON
    Okay then... 3-2-1, action.

As JACKSON counts down, AARON's fear melts away. After "action" AARON raises the GLOCK and points it up to the ceiling, his finger on the safety.

    AARON
    Step the fuck off!

    KAT
    No, God, no please.

    AARON
    Am I not being clear? STEP OFF!

    KAT
    Why are you doing this? I don't even know you-

    AARON
    (interrupting)
    No more talking!

AARON snaps off the safety and fires the PISTOL.

    BANG. The explosion and kick are so loud and surprising that AARON drops the PISTOL on the floor. In his surprise, JACKSON accidentally knocks the camera over and trips into
CHUCK.

Simultaneously, KAT screams and slips off the chair. Her orange Chuck Taylors slam into the floor, but the rancid wood immediately collapses under her weight. The rope slips, and KAT falls all the way through to her waist. Pink bubbles begin to foam at the edges of her mouth.

Beat.

KAT is just hanging, swinging slightly.

AARON

Oh fuck.

Without saying anything else, AARON starts running down the steps, away from KAT. The shot from the GLOCK has put an incredibly loud whine in AARON's ears, but as he runs we can hear JACKSON yelling at CHUCK.

JACKSON

We have to go right now. Right fucking now. LOOK AT ME! Grab your shit and let's move.

CUT TO

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

It's pitch black. The sky bursts and a torrential downpour starts falling, turning the ground to thick mud. AARON runs wildly headfirst through the ensuing tempest, crashing through branches and tripping across roots. A twig whips into his face causing a few droplets of blood to plop onto AARON's shirt. AARON slips.

Grabbing his face, AARON gets back up and begins stumbling through the darkened woods and the rain.

CUT TO

INT. ABANDONED SHED - NIGHT

KAT is dangling from the rope. Her eyes are open and staring. Blood is pouring from her mouth. Buckets and buckets.

CUT TO
EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

AARON throws up, but keeps moving. Eventually he makes it within sight of his trailer.

INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

AARON's DAD is so completely passed out, he doesn't hear AARON burst in, and AARON doesn't turn on any lights to disturb him. AARON sneaks down the hallway towards the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

AARON locks the door and turns on the light with shaky hands. AARON looks into the mirror and sees his face is coated with blood and mud swirled around by tears. AARON turns on the shower, and crawls in almost immediately. He's still fully clothed. As the water runs over him, he sits down, rocking back and forth. Crying.

FADE OUT

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

AARON is sitting in a brightly lit elementary school classroom. There's a chalkboard at the front of the room. On it is a list of words labeled "SPELLING TEST." The words below it are simple ones like CAT, DOG, BEE, etc. Upon each wall hangs posters about the joys of learning and the differences between primary and secondary colors.

AARON is seated in the back row in a chair and desk that are ridiculously small. And while AARON is still 15, every other student is 6 and 7 years old. AARON is back in first grade. At the front of the room is MRS. THOMPSON.

MRS. THOMPSON

Alright who wants to try and spell "cactapus." It's a mix between a cactus and a pussy cat. AARON? You look like you know your way around a pussy.

AARON is stunned, and doesn't know what to say.
MRS. THOMPSON
(menacingly)
I said, you sure look like a sick fucker.

Suddenly, KAT bursts through the classroom door. She too is the same age, but her hair is tied up in bushy pigtails. She's dragging neon pink overalls around her ankles.

KAT
(screaming)
HELP ME!

The entire classroom of little kids begins pointing and laughing at the distressed KAT.

CHARLIE
She can't even wipe herself! Look!

MRS. THOMPSON
Now, now, CHARLIE. That's not very polite. It's not her fault.

MRS. THOMPSON whips her finger at AARON.

MRS. THOMPSON
It's his.

Blood starts pouring out KAT's mouth. KAT furiously tries to brush away the blood gushing all over her shirt, legs, and overalls.

KAT
(quieter now)
Help me.

KAT falls to her knees. The blood is pouring around her. The kids just keep laughing. KAT looks directly at AARON who is horrified.

KAT
Help.

The entire class turns to look at AARON. But AARON looks away, tears are streaming down his face.
AARON
No, I can't... it's not my fault...
it was an accident... I didn't -

MRS. THOMPSON
Help her, AARON. Come on, don't you
just love the way she looks right
now?

MRS. THOMPSON walks up behind KAT and spanks her on the ass. KAT falls to her knees and looks at AARON pleadingly.

KAT
help.

CUT TO

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

AARON wakes with a start. Blood and dirt still coat his face. He hasn't even managed to change out of his filthy clothes. Desperately, he reaches over to his nightstand, flinging the drawer open, rattling the picture of his mother.

Inside the drawer is a piece of glass that matches the hole in the picture. It's badly smudged and tinged with what looks like dried blood. Without pausing or thinking, AARON rolls up his sleeve revealing dozens of small, think scars. He grabs the piece of glass with his free hand, crying. AARON looks back at the picture of his mother.

CUT TO

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

AARON walks down the school hallway. Along the walls are several banners promoting the upcoming homecoming dance. A tiny trickle of blood sneaks from under his sleeve. Hastily, he wipes it away with a handkerchief he has in his pocket.

While almost every student is blurred out with all the noises running together, AARON keeps seeing KAT walking through the crowd. Every time he turns to look, though, it turns back into another girl, another student.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY
Finally, AARON finds his class and sits at a desk as far away from the front as possible. He puts his head down, overwhelmed.

Directly in front of him sit two, preppy girls — BROOKS and AMBROSE. Clearly they're older, possibly seniors. They're both gorgeous, but they speak like Valley Girls.

BROOKS
Have you seen KAT today?

AMBROSE
Why no I have't, BROOKS. I mean, I didn't look through every trashcan for used condoms, but usually they aren't that hard to find when she's around.

BROOKS
Actually, I heard she doesn't use condoms enough.

AMBROSE
Intriguing, explain.

BROOKS leans in.

BROOKS
(quietly)
You know that KEVIN guy?

AMBROSE
The coke guy?

BROOKS
Yeah, the super hot guy that I guess graduated awhile ago but still brings his shitty weed to, like, every party.

AMBROSE
I don't know him as intimately as I'd like, but yeah I could spot his ass in a crowd.
BROOKS
More like a lineup.

AMBROSE
More like down my pants. What's your point?

BROOKS
Well, STERLING says he was hooking up with KAT.

AMBROSE
Wow, getting that older boy dick, huh?

BROOKS
You know it.

AMBROSE
That, much like KAT's vag, is juicy.

BROOKS
That's not all. STERLING thinks he knocked KAT up.

AMBROSE
No shit? Man some girls have all the luck.

BROOKS
I'm just saying. Maybe she's getting an abortion or something.

AMBROSE
I never get to skip class for an abortion. Usually it's the opposite.

BROOKS
pretends to put her hand up like she wants to be called on by the teacher.

BROOKS
MR. JOHNSON, I think I'm squirting period juice over here!
AMBROSE
Works every time!

BROOKS and AMBROSE start laughing. AARON can't believe what he's heard. As if it were possible, AARON begins to feel even worse.

AARON
(barely audible)
Pregnant?

AARON's pocket vibrates. He pulls out his IPHONE and pulls up a text message thread titled, "BIG BOOTY BITCHES."

JACKSON (TEXT)
Just saw KEVIN. Kept asking about film. Hasnt heard from kat. We need to talk

Beat.

JACKSON (TEXT)
NOW

AARON puts down his phone for a second and takes a breath. He picks it back up and responds.

AARON (TEXT)
After school. We cant skip. Too suspicious

JACKSON (TEXT)
Where?

CHUCK (TEXT)
COOKOUT? Hotdogs?

AARON (TEXT)
3:30

JACKSON (TEXT)
Done

CHUCK (TEXT)
Im going to be a little late probably. Theyre trying to put me academic probation again. AARON r u ok walking?
AARON (TEXT)

That's fine

CHUCK (TEXT)

Sorry

AARON puts away and slumps down even further in his chair. Furiously, he rubs his hands into his eyes. His IPHONE vibrates again.

JACKSON (TEXT)

Also. I'm texting you guys the vid. We should each have a copy in case something happens. We may need it.

As AARON is looking at the screen, a video message pops up from JACKSON. The thumbnail is entirely dark. AARON's thumb hovers over the play button as he debates whether to watch the video.

MR. JOHNSON

Okay, class. Did anybody do the homework? Anybody at all? I'll give everybody a 100 for the year if just one of you... Nobody? AARON. You do some problems on your phone or what?

AARON snaps out of it, remembering that he's in school surrounded by classmates that knew KAT. He puts his phone on sleep and stuffs it back in his pocket.

AARON

No sir... I- I didn't do it.

MR. JOHNSON

Shocking. Well we're still going to learn no matter how hard you all fight me...

As the TEACHER continues to lecture, AARON leans back with a heavy sigh.

FADE OUT

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY
AARON walks up a small hill next to a road. There's a strip mall on his left full of typical small town establishments like a nail salon and a Chinese restaurant promising "CHEAP SHRIMPS!"

AARON passes a GAS STATION. KEVIN is there.

KEVIN is filling a red, plastic container with GAS. AARON, terrified, desperately looks for a way to cross the street before KEVIN sees him. The traffic is too thick to cross.

    KEVIN
    AARON!

AARON slowly turns back around. KEVIN puts the pump back in the handle.

    AARON
    KEVIN.

    KEVIN
    (yelling)
    Get over here! I want to hear how the shoot went!

AARON flinches and looks around quickly, afraid somebody is listening to KEVIN's yelling. He rushes over, hoping to reach KEVIN before he can yell anything else about what AARON was doing yesterday.

    AARON
    Yeah- yeah it was fine. Good shoot.

    KEVIN
    Oh yeah? How so? KAT hasn't responded to any of my calls or text. Pretty weird.

KEVIN reaches into his back pocket. AARON tenses, but KEVIN is just grabbing his wallet and taking out his credit card.

    AARON
    She hasn't been responding to us either. It was a pretty tense, emotional shoot you know? I mean she had to...

AARON's words get caught in his throat. He swallows hard.
AARON
...she had to really die and stuff.

KEVIN swipes the card and starts typing in his zip code.

KEVIN
I can imagine. I'm glad I wasn't there, probably would have freaked me out. I would have been all 'what if something goes wrong? What if she slips?' I would have been a freaking mess.

KEVIN finishes the transaction, puts his credit card back in his wallet and begins screwing the top on the container.

KEVIN
I would have just been a major distraction, basically. Best to leave it up to the professionals.

KEVIN slaps AARON on the shoulder.

AARON
Makes sense to me.

KEVIN
Of course it does. We wouldn't want to screw anything up. Hey, do you have a clip of it? I'd love to see what you guys filmed yesterday. I bet it looks crazy.

AARON
What's the gas for?

AARON points to the container now in KEVIN's hand, trying to quickly change the subject.

KEVIN
Oh, our good friend MR. SMITH's lawnmower is entirely out of gas, so I'm here buying more. He better pay me back this time too. Stingy old bastard.
AARON
I thought he was rich?

KEVIN
Right, of course. He just doesn't always pay right away.

AARON
That's no good.

KEVIN leans closer to AARON.

KEVIN
Well, he may not pay for gas right away...

KEVIN looks around.

KEVIN
But you better believe he'll pay fast once he sees that little video you guys shot. Can I see it?

AARON
I don't have it on me, unfortunately. JACKSON still has it. We haven't edited it yet... gotta make it look convincing and stuff.

KEVIN
Right... I guess you guys know best.

KEVIN opens the door to his brown 1987 Jetta and gingerly places the container onto the passenger's seat.

KEVIN
I'd love to see the footage as soon as possible. Maybe I'll stop by JACKSON's or something sometime.

AARON
Oh, you don't need to do that. We'll be finished with it soon.

KEVIN looks at AARON for a minute, like he might be suspicious that AARON isn't telling him the full truth.
After a moment, KEVIN shrugs and gets in his car. KEVIN leans out the driver's window.

    KEVIN
    I gotta get back to work. Maybe
    I'll see you guys soon. Can't wait
    to see the look on MR. SMITH's face
    when he gets ahold of that DVD.
    Until then, I'll just keep mowing
    his damn yard I guess. Like a good
    little boy. Next time we see each
    other...

KEVIN starts pulling away from AARON.

    KEVIN
    (yelling)
    ...we're going to be rich, bitch!

KEVIN pulls the old Jetta out into the road and drives away. AARON waits a moment, before rushing to the nearest trashcan and puking his guts out.

    CUT TO

INT. COOKOUT - DAY

Once again, COOKOUT is packed with high schoolers. Apparently, it's never empty. JACKSON and AARON are sitting at a table. They're not talking.

After a few moments. AARON looks up.

    AARON
    That really happened yesterday,
    right?

JACKSON nods.

    JACKSON
    I... I checked my camera this
    morning to make sure... got the
    whole thing.

CHUCK comes in the door, looks around for the guys, sees them and comes and plops down next to them.
CHUCK

MR. SMITH is going to love that video we made, yeah?

AARON

(angrily)

What the hell is wrong with you?

JACKSON makes a shushing motion. AARON leans in towards CHUCK.

AARON

(whispering furiously)

Can you not take anything seriously you fat shit?

CHUCK

I... I don't really know what to do. You know me. Sometimes, I just joke. It's what I do. I can't-I can't really process anything.

JACKSON

Both of you. Shut the hell up. We're going to figure this out, okay? It was an accident. KEVIN is the only person that knows we went out there.

CHUCK

So what? We murder him?

AARON

I just saw KEVIN.

JACKSON

Holy shit. What did you tell him?

AARON

Nothing. I just told him it went fine, and he could see the footage soon, but it wasn't... it wasn't ready yet.

Beat.
AARON
He asked about KAT.

CHUCK
God.

AARON
I don't know how long we have before KEVIN realizes something's up.

JACKSON leans back in his chair.

JACKSON
We need to go back.

CHUCK
No way. No way. No way in hell.

AARON
Why would we go back? We should go to the police.

JACKSON
We are going to go to the police. But before we do... We need to go back and make sure we remember what happened. Get our story straight.

AARON
What's there to get? We have evidence that it was all an accident. You filmed it all, right?

JACKSON
What we filmed was you screaming at KAT and firing a goddamn PISTOL.

AARON falls silent.

JACKSON
You didn't happen to pick up that PISTOL did you... Your dad's PISTOL? The one even our shitty police could immediately trace to you.
AARON
I mean... No, but it was an accident. We were making a movie.

JACKSON
I fucking know that, but before we turn the tape over, we need to go back and look... just make sure they don't find anything extra that'll incriminate us. We can't just leave a GUN you own at the scene.

CHUCK
She wasn't actually shot though...

JACKSON
No she wasn't but... I don't know, man. I don't know. I'm not some criminal mastermind. I just want to make sure we're above reproach on this.

Beat.

JACKSON
(quietly)
I mean... what if she wasn't dead right away?

CHUCK
Fuck.

JACKSON
I'm just saying... we sort of booked it out of there. What if she managed to crawl back up or something?

AARON
Jesus.

JACKSON
If we abandoned her while she was still alive, we could get in huge trouble. We need to know what the police are going to see.
AARON
But...I... I don't want to go back.

They sit in silence for a moment.

CHUCK
I think he's right. We have to know.

CHUCK puts his hand on AARON's shoulder.

CHUCK
They'll have your GUN, man.

AARON
Goddamnit.

CHUCK
We have to be sure we did everything we could, right?

JACKSON
Before anybody else does. Just to be safe.

JACKSON puts his hand on AARON's shoulder.

JACKSON
(quietly)
I'm trying to help you. The video... it's not great.

AARON
Jesus. Fine. Let's just get it over with. As soon as we get there, though, I'm calling the cops. Right away.

JACKSON
Of course.

CHUCK
And I'm going to puke. Immediately.

AARON
CHUCK. I will kill you!

AARON catches himself.
AARON
(fumbling over his words)
I mean...

AARON's statement hangs in the air awkwardly between the three boys.

JACKSON
Let's move. The longer we wait, the worse it looks for us. The more likely somebody finds something.

The boys all stand up.

CUT TO

EXT. WOODS - AFTERNOON

The three boys are walking in silence. AARON can hardly focus on his next step. AARON keeps hearing what happened over and over.

AARON (V.O.)
Step the fuck off!

KAT (V.O.)
No, God, no please.

AARON stops walking and reaches up to his head. His temples are pounding. He tries to massage away KAT's voice.

AARON (V.O.)
Am I not being clear? STEP OFF!

KAT (V.O.)
Why are you doing this? I don't even know you-

AARON (V.O.)
No more talking!

BANG. A loud gunshot followed by a scream.

AARON barely manages a step before it starts again. The forest blurs as the camera spins and the scene loses focus around AARON.
BROOKS (V.O)
That's not all. STERLING thinks he knocked KAT up.

AMBROSE (V.O)
No shit? Man some girls have all the luck.

BROOKS (V.O)
Yeah, I'm just saying. Maybe she's getting an abortion or something.

Girls laughing.

Everything snaps back into focus. JACKSON is right in AARON's face.

JACKSON
What's going on? You okay?

CHUCK
You look like you just diddled a ghost.

JACKSON takes a swing at CHUCK which he dodges easily.

JACKSON
Asshole.

CHUCK
Goddamnit. I'm nervous. Let's just go.

AARON
KAT was pregnant.

JACKSON and CHUCK freeze. Slowly they turn around to look at AARON.

JACKSON
Oh my god.

AARON
Heard some girls talking about it in class.
CHUCK
With who?

AARON
KEVIN.

JACKSON
What? That's... that's crazy.

CHUCK
Jesus, he's going to kill us.

AARON
Yeah.

JACKSON
But that's why we're doing this.
Make sure we know what's up, call
the police and just let them handle
it. They'll protect us.

CHUCK nods vigorously. AARON still seems unsure about the
prospect of heading back there.

JACKSON
To get that GUN.

AARON looks up at JACKSON.

JACKSON
(quietly)
We might actually need to use it.

AARON
I'm not going to fucking shoot
anybody.

Beat.

AARON
(quietly)
Again.

JACKSON
You never shot anybody in the first
place. It's not your fault. Let's
just get this over with.
CHUCK
Come on it's getting dark, and I don't want to be caught out here any longer than we have to.

The boys pick up the pace. After just a few minutes, they enter the familiar clearing. Everything looks exactly like the day before. AARON pulls his BACKPACK's straps tighter.

AARON
Let's finish this.

CUT TO

INT. CABIN LOBBY - AFTERNOON

JACKSON, CHUCK, and AARON open the front door. After taking a second to collect themselves, they slowly creep up the stairs.

CHUCK avoids the broken step that caught him up the day before. After what feels like hours, they reach the attic.

INT. CABIN ATTIC - AFTERNOON

AARON forces himself to turn his head and look where KAT was hung...

...there's nobody there.

AARON
Where?

The noose hangs limply over the jagged hole where KAT fell. Incredulous, the boys walk closer.

CHUCK
Is she... is she alive? Where the hell is she? Is this a joke?

AARON
I... I don't know.

AARON notices the PISTOL on the floor. Tentatively, he bends over and picks it.

AARON looks up and sees the hole in the roof punched out by the bullet he'd fired. He stuffs the GUN into his BACKPACK.
AARON looks back at the floor and notices the spent shell casing. He walks over and scoops that up as well, putting the shell into his front pocket.

As he's grabbing the shell, AARON notices a thin trail of dried blood on the floor leading away from the hole. Without saying a word, he follows the trail. JACKSON and CHUCK continue to inspect the hole and the noose.

The trail leads AARON down the steps and out the front door.

EXT. CABIN PORCH - AFTERNOON

The blood trail continues off the porch and disappears in the long grass. He looks around, searching for signs of where KAT might be.

    JACKSON
    (from the attic)
    Holy shit! AARON! You gotta come see this.

AARON looks around one more time.

    AARON
    (under his breath)
    Where the hell are you?

    CHUCK
    (from upstairs)
    AARON!

AARON turns around, and heads back into the cabin.

CUT TO

INT. CABIN - DUSK

AARON reaches the attic. JACKSON and CHUCK are hunched over the hole. AARON walks up to them.

    AARON
    What?

JACKSON points to the edge of the hole.
JACKSON
Do you see that?

AARON looks closer. The hole stretches between two floor beams. The jagged wood on the inside of the beams, the ones closer to the hole, look old and rotted. But the wood outside the beams looks totally different. Not shiny and new, but certainly not rotted.

AARON
The rotted wood? I mean that's what she fell through, right?

JACKSON
Why is the wood only rotten right where she fell through?

AARON looks again. There's a noticeable coloration difference.

AARON
I don't get it. Why is the wood so bad here but not there?

JACKSON
Look, the wood here is shittier, but the nails there are freaking brand new. They look like they were just bought at Lowe's like a week ago.

JACKSON is right. The nails holding the edges of the rotten wood look shiny and clean. Too clean. The nails elsewhere in the attic are rusted.

CHUCK
It looks like somebody just put that shitty wood in recently.

JACKSON
Somebody knew we were coming. Knew we were going to film a hanging scene, and swapped out the wood.

AARON stands up, he's reeling from this revelation.
AARON

You're saying...she was... she was murdered?

JACKSON nods his head slowly.

JACKSON

How else do you explain this?

Beat.

AARON

That's not even all.

CHUCK

What do you mean?

AARON

Look.

AARON points to the blood trail on the floor.

AARON

She was dragged out of here.

CHUCK

Oh my god.

JACKSON

Somebody knew exactly what they were doing.

AARON

Who?

Beat.

CHUCK looks up.

CHUCK

Fucking KEVIN. He's the only one who knew we were doing this. He must have set up this whole thing.

JACKSON

But... why? I mean why KAT?
AARON
Because she was pregnant.

AARON stands up and begins pacing. JACKSON and CHUCK stand up also.

AARON
KEVIN's like, what, twenty three?
KAT is only fifteen. If KAT was pregnant with KEVIN's kid... he could go to jail for a long time.

CHUCK gets up and walks over to the tiny window at the far side of the room. He stares out at nothing in particular.

CHUCK
That's straight up statutory.

AARON
JACKSON, did you ever actually meet SMITH? Like... do we know he's real?

JACKSON
KAT talked about him. I know he's like a real guy.

AARON
But did you or KAT ever actually confirm he bought snuff films? Or was that all KEVIN.

JACKSON
(quietly)
Just KEVIN.

CHUCK
Holy shit.

AARON
KEVIN got us to kill KAT and make it look like an accident he had nothing to do with.

CHUCK
This is so fucked up.
JACKSON
But why remove the body then?

AARON
She was pregnant. If they did an autopsy, they'd find out pretty quick.

JACKSON
But... we have her death on tape.

AARON
If there's no body, it's hard to prove she's dead. No matter what's on the tape. That was the whole point of the fake snuff film in the first place. It's not like she looked pregnant either.

CHUCK
Wouldn't the police wonder where the body is?

AARON thinks for a second.

AARON
Maybe he'll say wolves took it or maybe he'll say she's alive. Really her doesn't have to say anything. Without a body - and without him being at the scene - it'll be tough to connect him to her death anyway.

CHUCK
Goddamn.

JACKSON
(quietly)
It's not like we checked.

Suddenly, CHUCK tenses up. He peers intently out the window, and the jumps back with a start.

CHUCK
(whispering)
KEVIN!
AARON
Here?!

CHUCK
Outside. Right now. Right fucking now.

JACKSON scans the upstairs for places to hide. There's nothing.

JACKSON
Move, move. There's nowhere to hide up here.

The boys run downstairs as quickly and quietly as they can. At the bottom, they notice a small closet at the base of the stairs and all jump inside.

INT. CLOSET - DAY

The front door bursts open. KEVIN enters the room carrying the red, plastic container from the gas station.

JACKSON slowly picks up a sharp piece of wood lying on the ground and prepares to defend himself. KEVIN doesn't notice anything amiss.

KEVIN walks up the stairs to the top floor. He's up there for some time. The boys hear him shuffling around. It sounds like he's moving the desk and the chairs.

CHUCK
He's been up there for like 5 minutes. Let's just make a run for it. The door's right there.

JACKSON
I think we can make it without him seeing, right?

JACKSON begins to push on the door. AARON pushes his hand away and pulls the door back.

AARON
Are you crazy? If he killed KAT then he's an actual murderer. If he sees us, he'll kill us.
JACKSON waves his stick back and forth a little bit.

JACKSON
There are three of us. We can take him.

CHUCK
You guys can take him. I can scream really loudly and attack him with the power of sound.

AARON
No way. It just isn't worth-

The boys hear heavy footsteps on the stairs. KEVIN is coming back down. Immediately, AARON falls silent.

KEVIN comes back into view. He walks around the first floor of the cabin, sloshing clear liquid from his container everywhere.

CHUCK
(whispering)
What the hell?

JACKSON sniffs the air.

JACKSON
(whispering)
That's gas. Jesus, he's burning it down.

KEVIN empties his container. From his back pocket, he pulls out a small MATCHBOX. KEVIN walks to the front door, looks around one last time, strikes a match, and tosses it.

WHOOSH. The floor instantly catches fire, almost entirely obscuring the front door. The fire whips around where the boys are hiding and into the back of the cabin.

KEVIN shuts the front door. After just as second of hesitation, JACKSON kicks open the door of their hiding place.

JACKSON
MOVE!

The boys try and run for the front door but they're blocked
by a wall of flames. They turn behind them, but it's just as bad. The only opening is the staircase.

AARON
*Upstairs!*

Just a few steps ahead of the fire, the boys run upstairs as quickly as possible.

INT. CABIN ATTIC - DAY

Everything is fire and black, roiling smoke. CHUCK coughs badly, his lungs are unable to cope with the thickening air.

Frantically, they scramble looking for an exit. On the far side they notice the small window with the glass broken out. AARON runs over to look out.

AARON
*(yelling over the flames)*
I don't know, man. It's so high.

JACKSON pulls the wooden chair up to the hanging noose, and begins untying it.

JACKSON
It's all we've got!

JACKSON points to the heavy metal desk.

JACKSON
Grab that!

CHUCK and AARON run over to the desk and drag it to the window. JACKSON isn't far behind. He ties the rope to the leg of the table.

The fire is now almost entirely upstairs. The far end of the room is obscured by flames. Everywhere the air is choked with smoke. JACKSON tugs at the end of the rope.

JACKSON
Move, move, move!

With only a few seconds of hesitation, CHUCK grabs the rope and clambers out the window. The desk begins to slide, but JACKSON sits on it to keep it from lifting up.
CHUCK
(from outside the window)
I'm down!

JACKSON
Go.

AARON grabs the rope and slides out the window, the rope chafes his palms.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

AARON hits the ground and looks up. Smoke is pouring from the tiny hole.

AARON
JACKSON!

CHUCK
Come on!

Beat.

There's no movement.

Suddenly, JACKSON leaps out the window holding onto the rope. The rope holds for just a second before giving way. JACKSON falls ten feet to the ground, landing awkwardly on his ankle. JACKSON cries out in pain.

The roof of the cabin collapses as the fire takes hold. CHUCK and AARON help JACKSON up, each sliding under one of his arms. They drag him into the night away from the fire.

CUT TO

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

CHUCK and AARON collapse with JACKSON on his front porch, exhausted. They're dirty with bloodshot eyes. JACKSON tests and stretches his ankle.

JACKSON
I think it'll be okay. Probably just a sprain.
CHUCK
I can't believe we almost just died.

AARON
I can't believe KEVIN tricked us into killing someone.

CHUCK
Always one-upping me.

JACKSON
We need to go the police. Like right now.

AARON
We know KEVIN did it and that he has KAT's... body somewhere.

CHUCK
Can we prove it? I mean... we don't exactly look like a bunch of heroes on that video. We also sort of look like we just burned something down...

JACKSON
We've got the video, and I think it'll show that it was an accident.

AARON
Either way, we can't wait any longer. KEVIN might kill us too to keep us from revealing anything.

CHUCK
That would suck.

JACKSON
Let's go inside and change real quick. I'll grab the hard copy of the tape. If we hurry my parents won't ask too many questions.

AARON heaves himself up, and presses the doorbell. Within seconds the door opens...
...It's KEVIN.

KEVIN
Oh hey, guys! Been out having fun?

AARON is stunned into silence.

KEVIN
Who wants stir fry?

CUT TO

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

JACKSON, CHUCK, and AARON are sitting on the right side of a long dinner table in a clean, modern dining room. Pictures of JACKSON and his sister JENNY adorn every available mantle and section of wall.

On the left side of the table sits MR. and MRS. QUICK. Between them sits KEVIN.

MRS. QUICK
KEVIN was just telling us that you guys are making another movie. That's so great! What's this one about? Not another violent one, I hope.

KEVIN
Well, MRS. QUICK, JACKSON says it is kind of a horror movie.

KEVIN looks directly at JACKSON.

KEVIN
I haven't seen it yet. I hear it's really something special.

MRS. QUICK
Oh my goodness! Like E.T.?

KEVIN
Exactly!
MRS. QUICK
Wow, scary! JEFF and I actually went on one of our first dates to see that movie.

MR. QUICK
She was clinging to my arm the whole movie!

MRS. QUICK
I was just thankful I had such a big, strong man to protect me!

KEVIN, MR. and MRS. QUICK all laugh.

JACKSON
Right so... why the hell is KEVIN here? Sorry - why the hell are you here, KEVIN?

The laughing stops.

MR. QUICK
Check yourself, JACK. He's a guest.

MRS. QUICK
Does he need a reason? Just because he and JENNY aren't still together - unfortunately - doesn't mean we don't want to see him.

KEVIN
It's okay, it's okay. Actually, JACK, I was just in the neighborhood and wanted to see how my favorite in-laws were doing.

MRS. QUICK
You make us sound so old!

KEVIN
Now MRS. QUICK, you know I only dated JENNY to get to you!

MR. QUICK
(jokingly)
Watch your back young man! This

(MORE)
They all begin laughing again. JACKSON pushes his plate away in disgust. His tuna casserole is untouched. CHUCK stealthily slides the plate over to himself and dumps the uneaten food onto his plate.

JACKSON
This has been just fantastic. I think we're going to go upstairs and edit our E.T.-style horror movie a little bit.

MRS. QUICK
Why don't you show KEVIN what you guys are working on? I bet he could be a huge help.

MR. QUICK
Always helps to have an outside eye.

KEVIN
Well, I've got two of those!

Again, they all laugh.

JACKSON
Yeah... I think we're good.

MR. QUICK
(sternly)
JACK, be polite, okay?

MRS. QUICK
You're always so secretive. Just let him see a little.

KEVIN
I won't tell anybody. I swear.

JACKSON doesn't see any way out of the situation. He looks back and forth from his parents, to CHUCK and AARON, to KEVIN.
JACKSON
Fine. Just real quick.

MRS. QUICK
Splendid! Let me know what it's like, KEVIN. JACK never lets me see anything he's working on.

KEVIN
Oh, I will.

KEVIN smiles at JACKSON and winks.

CUT TO

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

KEVIN stands at the door and ushers the three other boys into the room. He quietly closes the door behind them. JACKSON is limping badly, but he can walk.

KEVIN
Where's the fucking tape? Why hasn't anybody been answering my calls? Are we still trying to make money or what?

JACKSON
Cut the bullshit, KEVIN. You know exactly what happened.

KEVIN
I'm not sure I know what you mean, JACKSON. Did something go wrong?

JACKSON
It sure fucking did, you asshole.

KEVIN
What are you implying?

AARON
We're implying that you murdered KAT, and then went back to burn up all the evidence.
CHUCK
We were at the cabin like an hour ago.

CHUCK shows KEVIN his blistered and raw hands.

CHUCK
It got pretty hot in there.

KEVIN doesn't react to the accusation. He simply folds his arms.

KEVIN
Wait, are you saying KAT is dead?
Jesus, what happened out there? You didn't...

KEVIN leans in just a little bit.

KEVIN
You didn't have a little... fun with her did you? Things can get a little exciting out there in the woods all alone, no adults...

AARON
(disgusted)
No- what?

KEVIN throws his hands up in the air.

KEVIN
Hey, she's a beautiful - was - a beautiful girl. I know that can be tempting sometimes.

AARON
Oh yeah, asshole? You would sure know a lot about that. You know given that she was fucking pregnant.

KEVIN doesn't acknowledge AARON.

KEVIN
Let me see the tape.
JACKSON

No way.

KEVIN

I think I have a right to know what you're accusing me of. I wasn't even there, man.

KEVIN points at the JACKSON's computer where the mini-DV camera is still plugged in via a converter cable.

KEVIN

Just play the goddamn tape, or I'll beat the shit out of the fat one.

JACKSON stands for a moment, furious, unsure what to do. After a moment, he lets out a frustrated sigh and boots up the computer.

KEVIN

Thank you. It's important to listen to the adults in your life every once in awhile.

JACKSON clicks through to a private file. The file name is simply "CABIN." He double clicks and a video clip opens. KEVIN peers intently at the screen.

KEVIN pulls out his two IPHONEs, and begins filming the scene with his newer one. The other he sets down on the desk.

We can't see what's playing onscreen, but we can hear it.

AARON (V.O.)

Step the fuck off!

KAT (V.O.)

No, God, no please.

AARON (V.O.)

Am I not being clear? STEP OFF!

KAT (V.O.)

Why are you doing this? I don't even know you -
AARON (V.O.)
(interrupting)
No more talking!

BANG> A loud GUNshot. KAT screaming. Choking.

JACKSON (V.O)
We have to go right now. Right fucking now. LOOK AT ME! Grab your shit and let's move-

The clip ends and KEVIN stands back up, putting his newer IPHONE back in his pocket.

KEVIN
Jesus, guys. You really fucked her up, huh? Nice touch with the PISTOL, AARON. Really sells that shit.

AARON
This is all your fault. We saw the rotten wood. You played us... You played KAT.

CHUCK
We saw you burn down the cabin.

KEVIN
Playing Devil's advocate here... what I'm seeing is a tape where KAT appears tied up in a noose, AARON over here fires a GUN causing KAT to slip and, I guess, die. Then somehow the cabin magically catches on fire and somehow KAT's body just... disappears. Which, by the way, sounds goddamn crazy for a bunch of kids that claim they're so innocent.

AARON
You burned down the cabin and took the body! I saw the trail of blood!

KEVIN looks at AARON quizzically. KEVIN gestures around him as if he's looking for something.
KEVIN
I don't see any evidence here that points to me for anything that's happened so far. You can't prove I've done anything. I haven't done anything.

The guys look at each other, instinctively touching their pockets. To their horror, they realize none of them had actually bothered to film KEVIN at the cabin.

KEVIN
Forgot to whip out the ol' IPHONE, eh? It's funny how quickly we forget everybody has a camera with them at all times. Everything here - from the tape to your soot-covered hair - points directly to you all. Especially you, AARON. You sick motherfucker.

AARON's grip tightens on the BACKPACK in his hand. His hand palms the PISTOL's outline.

JACKSON
Even if we can't prove you destroyed the evidence, the snuff film was still your idea. We did it because of what you said.

KEVIN
I don't know what you guys are talking about. I was at my mom's house when this was going down. And I don't know what you think I told you, but I definitely never said you should murder KAT. That was some crazy wrinkle you threw in there.

JACKSON
This is bullshit.

AARON
What about SMITH, huh? What if we got the cops to check on him?
KEVIN throws back his head and laughs.

KEVIN
Go for it! MR. SMITH is basically senile. He's about as dangerous as CHUCK here is to a Cobb salad. He probably doesn't even know who I am. He sure as shit doesn't own a DVD player, I'll tell you that. Sure, he likes to cat-call high school girls a lot, but he honestly has no idea where is. Oh, and he's probably broke.

AARON
You said-

KEVIN
(interrupting)
I say a lot of stuff. The important thing is that what we have here is a classic I said, three murderers caught on tape said.

KEVIN walks away from the computer and plops down on JACKSON's ratty couch.

KEVIN
The way I see it, you've got two options here.

KEVIN lifts a finger.

KEVIN
One, you turn yourselves in, give them the tape and say it was an accident. You could try and blame me, of course, but I wasn't fucking there, so good luck. A lot of people can vouch for it. KAT might not have been able to, but... you know. AARON yelling and shooting that GUN doesn't exactly scream innocence in my opinion.

KEVIN lifts up another finger.
KEVIN
Or two, you say nothing. We just pretend this never happened. KAT must have just run away, right? I mean the police won't think to look in the woods, especially not in some burned-down wreck of a cabin.

KEVIN leans in.

KEVIN
In my opinion, I'd recommend the second option. Keeps things simpler, you know? I'd just as soon start smashing that hard drive to delete all the copies of the tape, but I know it's probably up in the cloud somewhere. You'd have to do it yourselves. At least I've got my own copy now. You won't be able to doctor it any.

KEVIN stands up off the couch. He walks over to the door and puts his hand on the knob.

KEVIN
Either way, you've really got nothing on me. It just depends on how much you want to go to jail for at least involuntary manslaughter of not something way worse. Is that worth it?

AARON
At least people would know the truth.

KEVIN
When has the truth ever made anybody happy? Isn't that what all these damn movies are anyway?

KEVIN gestures to the posters on the walls.
KEVIN
Fun lies? Nothing ruins entertainment more than some idiot looking for fucking truth.

KEVIN opens the door and leaves the room.

Beat.

JACKSON
FUCK!

In a rage, JACKSON pushes everything off of his desk. He stomps on various DVDs of old projects he's worked on.

JACKSON detaches the hard drive with the clip on it. He hoists it over his head to smash it onto the ground.

JACKSON
This is all my fucking fault!

CHUCK and AARON run up to JACKSON and grab his arms. After a brief struggle, AARON takes the hard drive from JACKSON's hands, and puts it back down.

AARON
Don't. We can't... we need to talk about what to do with the tape.

JACKSON collapses to the floor, his nose is running and his eyes are blood shot.

JACKSON
I should have listened to you guys. I- I'm the reason we shot this shit.

CHUCK sits down with his back against a wall, too stunned to really contribute.

AARON
It's not your fault. It's my fault... I should have said no. I'm the one who scared her so bad with the GUN that she fell so heavily through the floor...
CHUCK
None of us said, "no." We all screwed up.

AARON
And now she's dead.

The boys fall silent.

CHUCK
So what do we do?

AARON
Like KEVIN said. Nothing.

JACKSON
Are you sure? Somebody will hear eventually. Shouldn't we get ahead of it?

AARON
It's me on the tape. I'm going to be the one in trouble so... I'd rather stay out of jail for now.

CHUCK
I think he's right... AARON has the most to lose.

JACKSON looks intently at AARON.

JACKSON
I'm not going to do anything if you don't want me to.

AARON
I'm going home. I can't do this right now.

Without waiting for a response, AARON scoops up his BACKPACK, shoulders it, throws open the door and walks into the hall.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

AARON reaches the bottom of the steps and puts his hand on the front doorknob, about to leave. He can see into the kitchen where KEVIN is helping MRS. QUICK with the dishes.
MRS. QUICK
MR. QUICK never helps me with these! You sure know the way to a girl's heart.

KEVIN
I'm just trying to be helpful, MRS. QUICK. You made a delicious meal.

KEVIN looks over his shoulder at AARON.

KEVIN
I always repay my debts.

MRS. QUICK
Goodness that sounds serious! It was just tuna casserole.

AARON opens the door and steps outside.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NIGHT

AARON steps out into the dark night. He only just makes it to the edge of the yard before he clutches his stomach. AARON keels over and vomits into the street.

In the distance, he hears a HUSKY yelp. It's followed by a MAN's angry voice. Immediately, AARON starts openly weeping.

AARON
You coward.

AARON wipes his mouth, and runs. In the background we can hear few more weak yelps, but AARON doesn't stop until he reaches his trailer.

INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

Although it's definitely night time, it's not unbearably late, and AARON's DAD isn't completely drunk yet.

When he sees AARON come in, his DAD is at the counter getting ready to reheat some cold pizza. The plate sits next to a large bottle of Jack Daniel's Whiskey. He doesn't look up.
DAD
You want some of this action? I just got off. I- I'm kinda hungry.

He laughs a small, embarrassed laugh. As if maybe he wished he wasn't drunk, but is sort of resigned to it.

DAD
I haven't seen you much recently.

AARON is so overwhelmed and breathing so hard he can't respond to his DAD's question. AARON just stands there, swaying and trying to catch his breath between heavy sobs.

After a couple seconds of AARON not responding, his DAD looks up from what he's doing. As soon as he sees AARON, he leaves his plate and rushes over to him.

He's not very stable, but he immediately swallows AARON up in a huge hug.

DAD
Shhh. I've got you, I've got you.

AARON shoves his DAD away.

AARON
(angrily)
No you don't. You don't "got me."

DAD
Well, I'm just saying as your dad-

AARON
(interrupting)
You're not saying shit. You haven't been my dad in 3 years.

DAD
(quietly)
That's not fair...

AARON
You know what everybody thinks about you, Dad? They think you're a drunk. A slobbering drunk who beats me.
DAD
I've never-

AARON
(interrupting)
You might as fucking well, though.
Jesus. I mean you already killed MOM.

AARON's DAD takes a step backward, like he's been physically struck by AARON's words. He goes back to the little kitchen and sits at the table.

AARON
Maybe if you weren't drinking all the time you could have been looking for a new job. Maybe MOM wouldn't have to work two jobs just to pay for your endless whiskey shots.

AARON angrily wipes his nose. He's mostly caught his breath, but the tears still slide down his face.

AARON
(quietly)
Maybe she wouldn't have had to work that night.

AARON's DAD hasn't moved. He's just been staring at the wall, thinking.

DAD
You know, when you were 3, there was this crappy little drive-in theater about ten miles from our house. You probably don't remember, but there was a stretch there when we went there every single Friday, just to see whatever was new. Your MOM loved all those earlier comic book movies like X-Men and Batman, but you and I just wanted to see the animated stuff. You know, happy movies. You liked the bright colors, and I just liked watching you. You were so damn smiley,
always laughing.

AARON's DAD gets up and walks back over to the counter. Absentmindedly, he starts messing with the Jack Daniels bottle.

DAD
But no movie was able to hold your attention for very long. No sir. After like thirty minutes you'd get all fidgety and start buzzing around like a little hummingbird. You were a freaking wild man. One time, during Robots - when your MOM and I weren't looking - you literally climbed onto the roof of the car. I still don't see how that's possible.

AARON's DAD laughs. He reaches up into the cabinet for a glass and sets it down on the counter.

DAD
Then things got hard, you know? Factory work was disappearing like crazy. No matter how fast I worked, no way I could make a better chair than those goddamn machines. Perfect. Every time. So fast, too. And then the Recession hit, and the work dried up completely. I... I lost myself, I guess. I couldn't find a point in anything.

DAD shakily pours himself a glass of whiskey, spilling some of the amber liquid on the counter. He tries to wipe it with his shaking hands, but he only smears it around. He doesn't drink it yet.

DAD
Your MOM... she tried so hard. When she started at the bar... I know she hated that job. Hated the men, and the smell. But I didn't know what to do. I couldn't find shit to do, and I wasn't even really sure what I wanted anyway. Who wants a

(MORE)
(cont'd)
forty year-old chair maker? Goldman Sachs? I fucking guard a damn movie theater in the mall. During the day. Who wants to sneak into a mall movie theater, anyway...?

AARON
So you just let MOM do all the work then? Work every day and every night until... until she couldn't stay awake anymore?

DAD finally takes a big gulp of the whiskey, gently setting the empty glass back on the counter.

DAD
I did. I did and I hate myself for it. For not standing up and doing something. I lost my... my wife, because of that.

DAD pours another glass.

DAD
I know I haven't really been there for you... I honestly thought you'd be better without me... Your MOM would have been.

AARON
When MOM died, I had nobody. It's like you were right there, parked on that damn couch, but you were a hundred miles away. Floating away on your goddamn whiskey... I don't have any parents.

Tears being rolling down DAD's face as he lifts the shaking glass to his lips. He drinks then holds the glass in the air.

DAD
I know... I don't know what to do. You're a man now.
AARON
You know what, DAD? I'm not a man. I'm a fucking boy. I'm a coward, like you... I don't want to be. I don't want to be like you. I can't. That's how people die.

DAD tries to set the glass back on the counter, but he's too drunk and emotional and...

...SMASH. The glass misses the counter and smashes on the floor.

AARON
You need to figure something out, DAD... We both do.

DAD steps gingerly over the glass and collapses in a chair at the table. He puts his head down and cries into his sleeves.

AARON leaves his DAD and walks down the hallway to his room.

INT. TRAILER BEDROOM - EVENING

AARON marches straight to his nightstand and throws open the drawer. He pulls out the piece of glass. Some of the blood looks fresher than it did last time. He holds it up and looks at it.

AARON looks down at the photograph of their little family. He focuses on his MOM, on the chuck of glass broken out.

AARON looks back at the piece of glass. He's been gripping it so tightly that he's cut his hand a little bit and blood begins to drip around the edges.

Beat.

AARON releases his grip. He places the glass down into the frame where it fits, over his MOM. Blood still stains the outside edges of the glass but the picture is now whole.

AARON
(whispering)
I'm still afraid, MOM... But I can't... I can't let that stop me. Nobody else should be hurt because

(MORE)
AARON takes the photo frame and sets it upright on the night stand. The glass stays firmly in place, held partially by the congealing blood from AARON's palm.

AARON leaves the room.

INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

AARON's DAD is asleep at the table. He's snoring loudly. AARON barely pays him attention as he heads back out the door and into the dark night.

CUT TO

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

AARON is running back towards JACKSON's house. He's breathing heavily, but he is determined.

JACKSON's house passes on AARON's right, but he ignores it and keeps going. After a few more moments, AARON comes to a stop.

EXT. SHACK - NIGHT

AARON stands in front of the MAN's old shack. Outside is chained the skinny HUSKY who looks freshly beaten. When it sees AARON, the HUSKY lifts it's head slightly. It's tail starts wagging almost imperceptibly.

AARON
(yelling)
Hey old man! I want that dog!

AARON hears a rustling inside the old shack. The MAN is cussing and sounds like he was just woken up. The MAN kicks open the door. He has no BOTTLE. He isn't even wearing a shirt.

MAN
What the fuck are you doing back here? Didn't get enough last time?

AARON calmly puts down his BACKPACK.
AARON
Give me the dog.

MAN
You deaf, boy? The only thing I'm going to give you is the beating of your short life.

AARON
Give me the dog.

The MAN starts marching up to AARON. He looks ready to kill somebody.

MAN
I don't care how old you are, boy. You're trespassing and I'm fixing to change that along with the direction your arm bends.

AARON calmly reaches into his BACKPACK and pulls out the PISTOL. He cocks it, and aims it directly at the MAN's face.

The MAN stops dead in his tracks.

AARON
Give me. The dog.

MAN
That shit ain't-

BANG. AARON fires the PISTOL just a few feet over the MAN's head.

The bullet blows out a chunk of the shack's roof. The PISTOL's report splits the quiet night. The MAN dives to the ground.

MAN
Fuck, man, fuck! Are you crazy?

AARON
Probably.

Keeping his PISTOL trained on the MAN, AARON puts his BACKPACK back on and walks over to the HUSKY. AARON undoes the chain. The HUSKY tries to get up, but can barely move.
AARON scoops the dog up, but still manages to keep the PISTOL trained with his free hand.

AARON
If you ever try and come take this dog, I will kill you. I fucking will, too. You wouldn't be the first.

The MAN says nothing and continues to lay on the ground quivering. AARON takes the HUSKY and walks off into the night back towards his house.

Once they're out of sight, AARON slips the BACKPACK off of one shoulder, stuffs the PISTOL back inside, and readjusts.

As AARON is doing this the HUSKY weakly tries to lick AARON's sweaty face. AARON let's out tired laugh.

AARON
Let's get you out of here, bud.

CUT TO

INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

AARON kicks open the front door. He's sweating heavily and still carrying the HUSKY.

AARON's DAD has woken up and is brewing himself some coffee.

He pauses, surprised to see the HUSKY.

DAD
Holy shit, whose dog is that?

AARON puts the HUSKY on the ground. DAD crouches down and starts petting him. The HUSKY looks up and licks DAD on the face.

AARON
Yours.

DAD
What?
AARON
I... I don't know if I'll be around much anymore.

DAD
What the hell does that mean?

AARON
Take care of him, okay?

DAD
I don't know how to take care of a damn dog.

AARON kneels down beside his DAD and puts his hand on his DAD's shoulder.

AARON
You're not going to run away this time.

DAD looks up at AARON. His eyes are welling up. He nods.

DAD
Okay, but what are you doing exactly?

AARON
I can't run away either.

AARON gets up and walks back out the door.

CUT TO

EXT. FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Moving swiftly, AARON rounds the side of the trailer. Chained up to a utility pole is a rusty BIKE. It's small, and an embarrassing shade of yellow, but it should get the job done.

AARON
Just need to get there.

AARON undoes the chain and swings his leg over the BIKE. He's a little too large, so he stands up on the pedals and rides away into the night.
EXT. RURAL ROADS - NIGHT

AARON's legs pump furiously. Trees whip by on either side of him as he flies down the dusty road. In the distance, we can see he's approaching a small cluster of lights - a small town.

AARON breathes heavily, but he isn't crying. He starts pedaling faster, determined to go as quickly as possible.

CUT TO

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

AARON and his little BIKE squeal to a stop in front of the local police station. A sign out front simply says "POLICE STATION".

The station is a small, brick building with only enough space to hold probably 15-20 occupants. It's clearly never needed to test that capacity.

The lights are on, and a POLICE OFFICER is pushing ahead of her a handcuffed CRIMINAL. The CRIMINAL sees AARON and his tiny BIKE and laughs at him.

CRIMINAL
You lost, sweetie?

The CRIMINAL makes a kissing face at AARON. The POLICE OFFICER shoves the CRIMINAL in the back, causing him to stumble.

CRIMINAL
Fuck, I got rights.

POLICE OFFICER
You ain't got shit.

Still arguing, the CRIMINAL and the POLICE OFFICER reach the front door, open it, and head inside.

AARON looks around for a place to put the BIKE. He looks at the bike and notices anew how crappy it is. AARON dumps the BIKE in the grass.

AARON pulls out his IPHONE. He opens up the message thread where JACKSON sent him the video. AARON looks at the screen
for a moment, thinking.

With finality, AARON stuffs the IPHONE back in his pocket and marches towards the door of the station. After only a few steps, the IPHONE buzzes. AARON pauses, unsure whether to keep going or to answer.

AARON pulls the IPHONE out of his pocket... It's JACKSON. AARON answers the IPHONE.

AARON
What?

AARON glances at the station door.

Another POLICE OFFICER is inside looking out at him quizzically, wondering why AARON isn't coming inside.

AARON waves slightly, and walks back out into the parking lot. He paces back and forth.

AARON
I'm kind of in the middle of something here.

JACKSON (VOICE)
Stop doing what you're doing and get over here.

AARON
I don't think so. I've really got to do this.

Beat.

JACKSON (VOICE)
KEVIN left his old IPHONE on my desk.

JACKSON (VOICE)
I found it on the floor as I was cleaning up.

AARON
Okay? He said it doesn't do calls or anything any more. It's not like it'll GPS track where he was or

(MORE)
AARON (cont'd)
 whatever.

JACKSON (VOICE)
 No... but it did have that first
snuff video on it.

AARON stops pacing.

CUT TO

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

A single, exposed light bulb is swinging back and forth, 
throwing shadows all over the bare, concrete basement. In 
the center of the room is a GIRL tied to a creaky wooden 
chair. She has a black hood over her head.

Silently, in one smooth motion, the HOODED FIGURE rips off 
the GIRL's hood and slices her throat with the massive 
knife.

CUT TO

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

AARON
 Oh shit. If MR. SMITH doesn't 
really have any snuff films...

JACKSON (VOICE)
 Then where did that film come from? 
Exactly.

AARON
 Holy shit.

JACKSON (VOICE)
 That's not all, either. I found a 
couple pictures on here of him with 
the girl on the video. I think they 
used to date.

AARON
 She says in the video that she was 
pregnant too. KEVIN must have found 
out it was his kid so he killed her 
too. He's done this before.
JACKSON (VOICE)
I think so.

AARON
Is CHUCK still with you?

JACKSON (VOICE)
Yeah.

AARON
Okay, I'm coming over right now, we might not be-

Before AARON can finish his sentence, SOMEBODY grabs him around the neck with one arm, and shoves a HANDKERCHIEF in his face. The HANDKERCHIEF is soaked in an anaesthetic that causes AARON's vision to immediately go fuzzy.

AARON can barely struggle, but he looks desperately towards the police station. Nobody is looking in his direction.

Nobody notices.

A black hood like the one in the first snuff film is pulled over AARON's head.

CUT TO

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

AARON slowly comes to. His eyes have difficult adjusting. The light seems to be flickering and constantly changing direction, making it hard to focus.

KEVIN
Good morning, sleepyhead. I wasn't sure you were ever going to wake up.

AARON jerks fully awake. He tries to stand up, but his arms are tied straight down to the base of the wooden chair he's sitting in. Similarly, AARON's legs are tied to the legs of the chair.

AARON looks around and realizes he's in the same basement from the first snuff film. The only source of light is the single, naked lightbulb dangles from a string, swinging.
AARON
You... you killed that other girl.

KEVIN
Who, MARY? I mean kinda, yeah. But I'm pretty sure you killed KAT. I guess that makes us even then, huh? I kill one, you kill one...

KEVIN comes into focus. He's wearing a robe and a baby mask. He stands about ten feet away from AARON. Next to KEVIN is his newer IPHONE on an IPHONE-specific tripod.

In KEVIN's hand is a massive knife. Its blade is disgusting and coated in dried blood.

KEVIN
If we're going to keep doing this, we're going to need a name for ourselves. It obviously needs to play off film directors or something, right? Since we both love movies so much and snuff films are sort of our thing. Let's just try and riff on some famous ones and just see where the night leads us.

KEVIN puts the knife up to the chin of his baby mask and cocks his head like he's thinking really hard about something.

KEVIN
Okay- okay... The Wachopski brothers? No I guess they're both women now - maybe they could be like our rivals or something. What about the Chokin' brothers - that doesn't even make sense... Holy shit I've got it.

KEVIN throws his arms out wide, slicing the knife through the air as he does so.
KEVIN
The Snuffer brothers! You know, like the guys that made Stranger Things? Eh, you're probably too young to appreciate that stuff anyway. Damn kids and their comic book movies.

AARON
You're actually insane.

KEVIN brings his arms back down and puts them at his side.

KEVIN
Am I though? If anything, I think I'm sort of brilliant. I managed to trick KAT into thinking SMITH would pay money for a film of her being killed, I convinced you all to kill her for me, and I managed to get rid of any and all ties to me. Does that sound "insane" to you, AARON?

AARON
Yes.

KEVIN
(angrily)
What the fuck do you know, anyway? you're the insane one! you were about to turn yourself in! And what, hope they'd somehow prove that i was involved? How many times do I have to say, 'I didn't do it'?

KEVIN lifts up his baby mask with his free hand and gives AARON a quick wink. He pulls the mask back down over his face.

KEVIN
The whole thing here is that I really should just date more chicks that know how to use birth control. Like JACKSON's sister! Of course she got a little too old for my taste, but at least she wasn't trying to crap out babies every

(MORE)
KEVIN (cont'd)
five seconds.

KEVIN leans in close to AARON.

KEVIN
I just don't think I'm ready to be a father right now. I think I've got a little growing up to do. I still want to see the world: climb Mount Everest, drink wine under the Eiffel Tower, shake the hand of some fucking guy in Paraguay or whatever.

KEVIN straightens back up and cracks his back. AARON notices his BACKPACK on the floor only a few feet away from the chair.

CUT TO

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

In slow motion, AARON stuffs the PISTOL back into his BACKPACK, zipping the front pocket.

CUT TO

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

The front of AARON's BACKPACK is partially unzipped. Inside he can see a hint of the PISTOL's handle. KEVIN doesn't notice.

KEVIN
Anyway, the point is, that - unlike you - I've got a lot of life left to live. And if we're swapping kills back and forth, I'm pretty sure it's my turn. You got KAT, so now I'm going to get you.

KEVIN pulls his newer IPHONE out of his pocket. He opens it.

KEVIN
The only problem is, I need to get your stupid friends over here first. I know I left my damn phone over there like a goober, and I'd
really like for them to bring it back.

AARON
They're not going to listen to you. They've probably already turned it over to the police. SWAT is probably.

KEVIN
Even if that were true - which it isn't - how are they going to find you, exactly?

KEVIN points to AARON's phone on the floor. It has been smashed to bits.

KEVIN
Your GPS is seriously fucked up. Really hard to track.

KEVIN dials a number and puts his phone up to his ear. He holds out a finger to AARON.

KEVIN
No more talking.

KEVIN points to his IPHONE and silently mouths "I'm on the phone."

After a second, KEVIN pulls the IPHONE away from his ear and inspects the screen. KEVIN takes the IPHONE and holds it up over his head. He's looking for a signal, but can't find one in the dingy basement.

KEVIN
Verizon can suck my butt.

KEVIN walks over to a staircase in the corner. He plants one foot on the first step and then looks back at AARON.

KEVIN
Don't you go leaving or anything now. We still need to talk about whether you're going to die with or without those smooth testicles of yours. I'm kinda leaning towards

(MORE)
KEVIN (cont'd) 'without.'

KEVIN laughs and runs up the stairs, skipping every other step as he bounds up to the first floor.

KEVIN slams the door shut, shaking dust off the basement ceiling into the air.

AARON cranes his neck to confirm that KEVIN actually went upstairs. AARON sees nobody.

Immediately, AARON struggles against the ropes. He pulls at them until blood begins to drip down his palms from his wrists.

KEVIN (VOICE)
(through the ceiling)
You better get your asses over here with that tape in the next fifteen minutes or your boy here is going to lose everything that makes him a boy.

Working faster, AARON fights against the ropes. He loosens them slightly, but doesn't manage to actually free his hands.

In desperation, AARON heaves his body weight in the direction of the BACKPACK. The chair tips over. He hits his head in the fall, and is momentarily dazed.

Collecting himself somewhat, AARON reaches out for the BACKPACK but isn't quite able to grab it. Using tiny movements, AARON inches his hand closer and closer.

KEVIN (VOICE)
I'll see you in fifteen, then. Come alone.

KEVIN's voice is right outside the basement door. AARON arches his back and reaches for the BACKPACK.

The door opens. KEVIN clambers down the stairs. He sees AARON collapsed on the floor.
KEVIN
Woah, woah, woah! Look who's escaping!

KEVIN kneels down next to AARON's face.

KEVIN
We've got a regular Harry Houdini over here. Which reminds me. Do you know how Houdini died? He got punched in the fucking gut.

KEVIN slams his fist into AARON's stomach so hard that AARON spews bloody bile all over KEVIN's robe. KEVIN jumps back in disgust, brushing at the front of his robe.

KEVIN
You fucking asshole. This is my favorite murder robe.

AARON
(weakly)
Sorry.

KEVIN stares at AARON for a second.

KEVIN
You do have a little fight in you, huh? I always took you for the pussy type. Well, I can respect that, I guess. Let's get you back up so you're not too damaged before I blow your dick off in front of your friends. Can't have you passed out before then.

KEVIN reaches under AARON and his chair and pushes the whole thing up. KEVIN stands back up and returns to brushing his robe.

KEVIN
This is just gross. It's not like I can take this shit to a dry cleaner, either. 'Oh hey, yeah I was just beating the shit out of some punk-ass teenager in my basement. Anyway, think you can get

(MORE)
KEVIN (cont'd)
his bloody bile out of my murder robe? That would be greaaaaaat.'

It's difficult to see in the semi-darkness, but AARON's hand is wrapped around the butt of the PISTOL. AARON quietly clicks off the safety.

With some effort, AARON contorts his fingers around the back of the PISTOL to pull back the hammer.

CLICK.

KEVIN perks up at the noise, and spins around.

KEVIN
The fuck...?

AARON
Actually, I think it's my turn for a kill.

Though AARON's hand is still tied, KEVIN is close enough that AARON is able to fire the pistol at KEVIN.

The first bullet strikes KEVIN in the stomach, doubling him over. The bullet exits out KEVIN's back flinging blood all over the back wall.

AARON fires again, this time nicking KEVIN in the neck, severing his carotid artery. Blood pours out like a fountain.

The recoil from the second shot throws the PISTOL from AARON's hand, breaking his trigger finger. AARON screams out in pain.

KEVIN writhes on the floor, bleeding profusely. One hand is clutched around his neck. KEVIN looks over and sees the knife on the floor. Still holding his neck, KEVIN inches over to the knife and grasps it weakly with his free hand.

KEVIN turns back to AARON. KEVIN drags himself closer and closer to AARON. AARON still cannot move. AARON desperately tries to kick himself away from KEVIN but only manages to knock the chair back over onto its side.

KEVIN gets closer, dragging the knife. Blood is gurgling out
of his mouth as he smiles through red-stained teeth. AARON continues to struggle, but he's going nowhere.

Mustered all the strength he has left, KEVIN raises the knife and brings it down hard on AARON's upper thigh.

AARON screams in pain as the rusted blade slowly sinks one, two, then three inches into AARON's leg. He jerks his leg violently to avoid the blade, but KEVIN continues to push. Blood begins to bubble around the blade as it sinks deeper.

AARON cannot handle the pain any longer. He loses consciousness.

FADE TO

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

AARON slowly comes to. He's wearing a medical gown and lying in a hospital bed. His leg is suspended and wrapped in a massive cast. It looks like he's had surgery on it.

In the corner, his vitals are beeping at a normal pace, and though AARON is hooked up to an IV, nothing suggests he's in any danger.

Sitting at the foot of his bed is his DAD.

DAD
Hey, bud. You awake?

AARON nods slightly, still adjusting to the harsh light of the room.

DAD
You scared us there for a little bit. How are you feeling?

AARON
(croaks)
Terrible. My leg...?

His DAD touches AARON's leg gently.

DAD
The doctor says it's going to be fine. It's probably never going to be 100 percent - and it'll be a
DAD (cont'd)
bitch when you get my age - but you're going to be able to walk BARK WAHLBERG just fine.

AARON
The hell is a BARK WAHLBERG?

AARON's DAD leans over and pulls out his IPHONE. He flips through pictures of the HUSKY and him hanging out and playing catch at a park.

DAD
You weren't around, so I figured I had to give him a name. Been watching a lot of Entourage recently.

AARON
Jesus, DAD. That's worse than drinking.

DAD laughs.

DAD
At the next meeting I'll make sure to mention that I'm one week sober from alcohol, but I'm spiraling out on douchebag power fantasy HBO series.

AARON
Honesty is the first step to recovery.

DAD puts the IPHONE away.

DAD
Hey... I'm so sorry, for everything. You're a stronger man than I am, AARON. When they called me...

DAD pauses as his words catch in his throat.

DAD (CONT'D)
...when they called me, I was afraid I'd failed you for the last

(MORE)
DAD (CONT'D) (cont'd)
time. I spent so many years
screwing up, and suddenly I was
afraid I was going to lose you. You
needed help, and I couldn't stop
drinking... You're a brave man,
AARON. I'm never going anywhere
again.

AARON begins to tear up. He isn't able to say anything in
response.

DAD
If a psychopath ever tries to frame
you for murder again, I sure hope
you can talk to me.

AARON laughs, snot shooting out of his nose and onto his
gown.

AARON
If that ever happens, you'll be the
very first person I'll call.

DAD
Shouldn't be too hard, because I'll
be moving into your dorm room
whenever you go to college.

AARON and his DAD hug. They separate.

DAD
You've got some dumbass friends
who've been using your hospital
visit as an excuse to skip school
and play Nintendo Switch games in
the hallway here for a week
straight. I think I can convince
them to leave Hyrule long enough to
come in here and give you a cursory
handshake or something.

AARON
I don't even want them.

DAD
Well, I sure as hell don't want
them.
DAD gets up from his chair, goes to the door, opens it and steps out into the hallway.

    DAD (VOICE)
    Get in here, morons.

    CHUCK (VOICE)
    I'm almost done kicking Jacky's ass. It's not like AARON's going anywhere.

DAD takes a few steps further and we hear him wresting control of the device from CHUCK.

    CHUCK (VOICE)
    Aaah! You're going to make me lose all my powerups.

CHUCK comes careening through the door, clearly shoved by DAD. JACKSON comes after, though he's obviously doing so of his own volition.

    CHUCK
    Perfect time to wake up. I was just about to clear the damn shrine. You couldn't have waited five more minutes?

    AARON
    Sorry to disappoint, asshole.

    CHUCK
    I'm just saying you've been asleep all week and right when I'm about to cement myself as the greatest warrior Hyrule has ever-

JACKSON slaps CHUCK upside the back of his head.

    JACKSON
    Idiot.

All three of them laugh.

    AARON
    So...uh... what happened?

JACKSON and CHUCK look at each other. They each grab a seat
and sit down.

JACKSON
Do you remember KEVIN calling us? We rushed over as fast as we could.

AARON
Did you tell anybody? Like did you call the cops?

JACKSON
We didn't think we had time, plus we didn't want him to do anything crazy.

CHUCK
We weren't sure what sort of freaky sexy swing he'd put you in.

JACKSON
Right and we didn't want to interrupt whatever you all were doing.

AARON
Naturally.

JACKSON
So we get there, and we go up to the house and knock on the door and stuff, but nobody answered. So I had CHUCK go call the police and I went inside to see what was going on.

AARON
And what was going on? I don't... I don't really remember much.

JACKSON pauses and looks down at the ground, remembering.

JACKSON
It was awful.

Tears start to form in JACKSON's eyes.
JACKSON
I thought you were dead... I mean there was blood everywhere. On the walls, on the floor. That knife was buried so deep in your leg. Neither of you were moving.

JACKSON chokes a little.

JACKSON
I just thought you were gone.

CHUCK
It was brutal. What's crazy though is the doctor says that KEVIN buried the knife real deep and all, but because it didn't get pulled out, you didn't lose too much blood.

JACKSON
He missed the major arteries and stuff. Apparently, you weren't in much trouble at all.

AARON
It sure felt like I was in trouble.

JACKSON
Jesus, I bet.

CHUCK
The cops and an ambulance showed up pretty quick and they untied you and took you outside, knife still sticking out of your leg like a fucking flag pole, and rushed you over here.

AARON
And KEVIN?

JACKSON
Dead.
CHUCK
Dead as shit. Seriously, man.
You're like a goddamn superhero. Or
James Bond or something. How in the
world did you manage to pull that
off? You like Jason Bourn-ed his
ass so good. God it's getting me so
hard just thinking about.

AARON laughed.

AARON
That's why I did it. For your
sexual arousal.

JACKSON wipes his nose and collects himself.

JACKSON
For real, though. You're a hero
now. The news has been talking
about you nonstop. Saying you took
down a serial killer.

CHUCK
They identified the girl from the
first video, the one on KEVIN's
phone. Apparently, she's from like
Rockingham County or something.
Disappeared two years ago.

JACKSON
KEVIN must have been sneaking up
there. She was only fourteen...

CHUCK
A goddamn super hero man. I'm
telling you, we need to get you a
cape or something. Your super power
is apparently procuring GUNs and
blowing away serial killers while
you're still tied up. What is that,
like, extra-limber man? Stretchy
Digits? We'll work on it.
AARON
Please don't.

CHUCK leans over and kisses AARON on the forehead.

CHUCK
Shh. Shh. Shh.

AARON tries to swat him away but his arms are too weak.

JACKSON
Yeah so... the police know everything and they're going to want to talk to you soon. They found enough stuff on KEVIN to put him away for years.

CHUCK
If you hadn't already put him away for life, son.

JACKSON
And we've already explained the tape and everything.

AARON
Did they... did they find KAT yet?

JACKON and CHUCK look at each other.

JACKSON
Not yet.

CHUCK
It's actually sort of weird. Like they don't understand why they haven't found her yet.

JACKSON
They found just a little bit of blood over by the cabin on the front porch, where you said.

CHUCK
The trail kind of disappears after that.
JACKSON
They've got dogs and stuff out there so hopefully they'll find her soon...

AARON
(quietly)
I hope so. I just... I just want this to all be over.

CHUCK
Amen to that.

JACKSON
I can't believe it almost is.

The guys fall silent for a minute.

CHUCK
So... can I play video games now? I don't know if you heard me about the shrines but I'm like so freaking close. Hyrule needs me-

AARON weakly swings at CHUCK who dodges the attack with ease but ducks straight into a powerful slap from JACKSON that knocks CHUCK back into his chair. The guys all start laughing and joking with each other.

FADE TO

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

What appears to be a RICH BUSINESSMAN is asleep in bed. He couldn't be more than 19 years old. He's dressed head to toe in an expensive three-piece suit and his black hair is slicked back with gel. He's snoring loudly.

THE MAYONNAISER dressed entirely in a white body suit sneaks over to the side of the bed. In his hand is a massive jar of Duke's Mayonnaise.

MAYONNAISER
(whispering)
This is for America, you corporate stooge.

THE MAYONNAISER begins pouring mayonnaise down the RICH
BUSINESSMAN's throat. He wakes up and begins struggling. After a few moments of thrashing around, he stops.
MAYONNAISER
Now that's a taste too good to waste, bitch.

JACKSON
Cut!

JACKSON steps out from behind the camera. He's now older, probably 21. He's got the beginnings of a crappy little hipster beard growing on his face.

Standing next to him is and older AARON holding a thick script. Both are alongside several other college-aged students filming in somebody's dorm. THE MAYONNAISER unzips out of his costume so his head is visible.

It's CHUCK.

CHUCK
I think we nailed it.

The RICH BUSINESSMAN immediately wakes up and spits the mayonnaise everywhere.

RICH BUSINESSMAN
That's so, so disgusting!

The RICH BUSINESSMAN pukes everywhere.

CHUCK
That's what you get for destroying the housing market!

AARON and JACKSON laugh.

AARON
(speaking to the entire crew)
Tomorrow at 5pm, right? Nobody has class past that?

The various crew members all nod or say their affirmatives and everybody begins tearing down the set and leaving.

JACKSON goes over to talk to CHUCK and the RICH BUSINESSMAN.

AARON gathers up his BACKPACK, the same BACKPACK as before just a little more worn, and heads out the door, limping
slightly.

CUT TO

EC. STARBUCKS - EVENING

AARON is sitting at a table outside a coffee shop. He has a steaming mug of coffee next to an open laptop. AARON has earbuds in. He’s watching back MAYONNAISER footage from earlier in the day.

KAT
Oh my god, are you the guy from Robo Noir?

AARON looks up from his laptop and is shocked to see KAT standing across from him.

KAT smiles brightly at AARON. She's older now too. Her hair has been cut short.

AARON pulls the earbuds out of his ears.

AARON
How-

KAT
Yeah. Crazy right?

AARON
You're alive.

KAT
I like to think so. Vivacious, even.

AARON
I don't understand.

AARON picks up his coffee mug and looks down inside.

AARON
Is there meth in here or something?

KAT
You wish.
AARON
(quietly)
What are you doing here, how are you... I- I watched you die.

KAT's smile fades a little.

KAT
Yeah it probably looked that way.

AARON
You bet your ass it did.

KAT
Would you like to know what happened, or are you just going to keep telling me I'm dead?

AARON says nothing. He gestures to the seat across from him.

KAT
Okay then.

KAT shifts in her seat a little bit to get comfortable.

KAT
I knew KEVIN was creep from the moment I saw him. He was hitting on me at the snack shack by the pool where I was working. I knew it, but I didn't really care. I honestly didn't care about a lot of stuff in those days. I just liked that somebody seemed to like me. When he asked me out on a date, I said, 'Sure' because he seemed like an okay guy and he was old enough to have a car and pay for food.

AARON
Checked every box.

KAT
Exactly. So we go on this date, and at the end, he sort of forces himself on me and even though I don't want to have sex, I can't

(MORE)
KAT (cont'd)
really think of a good reason not
to, so I just sort of went with it.
It was... awful, and I didn't talk
to him for a month after that. I
just felt disgusting. But then I
found out I was pregnant, and so I
called KEVIN to let him know that
he was the father and that I was
thinking about maybe keeping it.

AARON
Why keep it?

KAT
Honestly... I'd just watched Juno,
and I didn't feel like I had the
right to choose what happened to
this kid. Like, I dunno, everything
turned out so shitty for me, maybe
I could help this one person have
something better. I'm not saying I
thought it through, I just
wanted... I wanted some kind of
redemption.

AARON
I think I get that.

KAT
So I tell KEVIN about it and he
immediately is like, 'Let's run
away together, I have this great
plan.' He tells me all about MR.
SMITH and the snuff films, and,
look, no offense, I knew
immediately that it was all
bullshit. But I thought it could be
a cool ticket out without anybody
knowing. I said I'd go along with
it, and I mentioned JACKSON and you
guys.

AARON
Really appreciate that, by the way.
KAT
(quietly)
I know, I know. I'm sorry. It was so selfish.

Beat.
I knew KEVIN was going to do something sketchy...

CUT TO

INT. CABIN ATTIC - DAY

KEVIN is ripping up the planks underneath the primary beam in the upstairs attic. He's replacing it with old, rotten planks and nailing it all back into place.

KAT peeks over the top of the stairs, watching him.

KAT (V.O.)(CONT'D)
...so I followed him around, and I saw him replace the wood at the cabin. I knew he was going to try and get me to actually kill myself. I decided to use that.

CUT TO

INT. CABIN CLOSET - DAY

KAT is hiding in the same closet the guys hide in later on. KEVIN leaves out the front door, carrying the extra wood with him.

CUT TO

INT. CABIN KITCHEN - DAY

KAT walks into the kitchen, underneath where the wood has been replaced. There is a long, thin beam right across the middle the rotten planks.

KAT (V.O.)
I saw there was like this, beam, running underneath all that rotten wood. It was about six inches away from the ceiling, but I figured if I gave the rope enough slack, I

(MORE)
KAT (V.O.) (cont’d)
could crash through the floor and
catch myself on the beam. That's
why I needed to set the rope.

CUT TO

INT. CABIN ATTIC - DAY

AARON, JACKSON, and CHUCK talk in the background while KAT
ties the rope to the beam and makes sure she gives herself
just enough slack.

CUT TO

EXT. STARBUCKS - EVENING

AARON stares at KAT, stunned.

KAT
The best part was when I saw that
little vial of blood capsules or
whatever fall out of CHUCK's
pocket.

CUT TO

INT. CABIN ATTIC - DAY

A little bottle of pills slips out of CHUCK's pocket and
rolls away. KAT walks over, sneaks out a pill, pops it in
her mouth, and hands the vial back to CHUCK who accepts it
without even looking up.

KAT (V.O.)
Then I just needed to time it all.

CUT TO

AARON fires the PISTOL, KAT slips off the chair and
deliberately aims her feet at the center of the rotten wood.

CUT TO

INT. CABIN KITCHEN - DAY

We see from underneath her feet landing perfectly on the
beam and balancing.
INT. CABIN ATTIC - DAY

KAT bites the blood capsule, and her mouth looks like it is foaming pink blood. The guys flip out and run away.

CUT TO

EXT. STARBUCKS - EVENING

KAT
Then I just had to make a little blood trail and get out of there.

CUT TO

INT. CABIN ATTIC - DAY

KAT stops pretending to be dead. She hoists herself up from the hole and unties the rope.

KAT deliberately paces a trail from the hole, down the steps, and out the door. As she walks, she spits drops of "blood" to make the trail that AARON saw.

CUT TO

EXT. STARBUCKS - EVENING

AARON can't believe what he's hearing.

AARON
I thought I killed you. For years, I thought I was a murderer.

KAT
(quietly)
I know.

AARON
That is so beyond fucked up, I don't even have words to describe it.
KAT
(quietly)
I just thought it'd be seen as a simple accident. You guys wouldn't get in trouble, and eventually it'd come out that it was all KEVIN's idea and that he'd set it all up. I needed it to feel real so nobody would really question why there was no body.

AARON reaches for his leg.

AARON
I almost died because of you.

KAT
Yeah... I- I didn't think it would all get out of hand like that. But it wasn't like I could just come back when I read about it. That's why I'm here now. To thank you and to say sorry. You... you saved me.

AARON
It's not like I had a choice.

KAT stares at AARON for a second. She digs a photograph out of her purse.

KAT
You didn't just save me, AARON.

KAT hands the photograph over. In it is a picture of a little boy, about 6 years old. He's smiling and wearing a Batman BACKPACK.

KAT
That's AARON. He's in first grade now.

AARON looks up.

AARON
AARON? Really?

KAT's face flushes.
KAT
I mean... you're more important to his life than anybody else. You didn't just save me... you saved him. You're his hero. I tell him about you all the time.

AARON looks back down at the photograph. He begins to lose some of the tension he's holding.

AARON
He's a pretty damn cute kid.

KAT smiles.

KAT
The cutest. This might sound a little weird.

KAT takes back the photograph from AARON.

KAT
Are you... are you doing anything right now? I've got a babysitter until 11, and I didn't know if you wanted to just... I don't know... hang out or something... Sorry, that's too weird.

AARON looks at KAT. She's somehow more beautiful now that she was when she was fifteen.

AARON
Did you ever actually see Robo Noir?

KAT laughs.

KAT
No! I didn't even know you'd finished it.

AARON clicks something on his laptop and pushes it over towards KAT. AARON gets up and drags his chair over to where she's sitting.

AARON takes one end of an earbud and puts it in his ear. He offers the other one to KAT.
AARON
I'm about to ruin the very idea of
filmmaking for you.

KAT laughs and smiles at AARON. She puts in the earbud.

KAT
I can't imagine I'll hate this any
more than your last movie.

Robo Noir begins to play on the laptop. KAT cannot help but
laugh hysterically at how terrible the film is. AARON smiles
and looks over at her.

FADE TO BLACK